



ask

Celebrating 21 Years!

the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: info@sprigsandtwigs.net or
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs
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Question this Week: *Hi Linda: I love your column and hope you can shed some light on the issue with my weeping cherry tree. The tree is at least 15 years old, and has grown quite well over the years. A couple of years ago I noticed that one side of the tree was blooming before the other side. And this year the blooms on one side are pink, while the other side is white. Prior to this the tree bloomed all at once and the blooms were all pink. The photo below shows the left side blooming pink, while the right side's white blossoms are still coming in. Can you explain this odd phenomenon? Thank you! ... Barbara*

Linda's Answer:

Hi Barbara,

Let me start by giving a bit of background on weeping cherries.

A weeping cherry is actually a tree made up of two completely different parts: the weeping (top) part of the tree was originally 'grafted' to the trunk of a standard upright cherry. Grafting is a horticultural technique used to join parts from two or more plants usually of the same species (or a relative that is compatible) so that they appear to grow as a single plant. The upper part (scion) of one plant grows on the root system (rootstock) of another plant. Weeping cherries are propagated this way to take advantage of the weeping branch shape at the top and the root strength of a cherry variety with hearty rootstock. Weeping cherries are most commonly grafted about 4 to 5 feet above the ground where the trunk of the base tree is sawed off and the weeping branches are attached into intentionally created cracks in the trunk which are then covered with grafting compound. After the graft heals and as the tree grows, any branches that grow out of the base need to be trimmed off as well as any branches that grow straight up. They should be cut off back at their point of origin as soon as you see them to maintain the weeping habit of the tree.



In your case, you have what is called a "reverted" weeping cherry. The upright growth you see is the host tree of the base growing through the graft of the weeping upper branches. Your tree is trying to revert back to its "usual" habit of growing upright instead of the weeping habit you want. Unfortunately, because of the many upright branches, it's too late to cut them to reestablish the weeping tree. If you prefer the weeping form, you would have to purchase another weeping cherry. Otherwise, enjoy the multicolored blooms. Thank you for a great question!

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 21 years. She is a graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, an accredited NOFA Organic Land Care Professional, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation projects..

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