



# ask the landscape professional

Celebrating 21 Years!  
Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

## Welcome to my weekly series!

Email or mail your questions to: [info@sprigsandtwigs.net](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or  
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs  
Best Landscape Company and Best Tree Service Every Year!

Give us a call if we can be of service!

**Question this Week:** *Hi Linda: I have a question for you, our church has started to let ivy grow on the building and now it is approaching the window area, is this going to do damage over time to the building, as the building is a brown stone (built in the 17 hundred's). I would appreciate your thoughts on this matter. Thank you!*

### Linda's Answer:

Hi,  
Thank you for a great question. The bottom line is - do not allow the ivy to grow on your building; a maintenance nightmare is being created. There are four specific problems that ivy creates:

- 1) Ivy will eventually grow in very thickly; it holds moisture and does not allow the moisture to evaporate. A stone building will absorb that moisture creating a perfect place for moss to grow. Moss will stain and eventually erode the stone.
- 2) Ivy has a sticky, chemical substance on the tips of the roots that allow it to adhere to vertical objects. When ivy is removed, it leaves a stain that cannot be easily removed.
- 3) Ivy roots find their way into hairline cracks in the stone and as the roots grow thicker, the cracks widen allowing water to enter areas where it should not be. In the winter, the cracks get worse by expansion and contraction as the water freezes and thaws. Major water damage can occur over time. The widened cracks caused by the ivy also create a moist, dark place for insects to live and may allow them to get into the building at some point.
- 4) Ivy also grows up tree trunks, into the canopy of trees and eventually smothers and kills the trees.



My advice for your church or any other property with ivy would be to remove all the ivy off the building and from the garden beds. Having Ivy anywhere on the property creates an incredible amount of maintenance to keep cutting it back to keep it in check. There are too many awesome groundcovers available without the worry and hassle of ivy. If you would like suggestions on what alternatives there are to ivy, give me a call. I'd be happy to help.

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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