



Celebrating 21 Years!

ask the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

Welcome to my weekly series!

Feel free to send me questions you'd like to have me answer and I will do my best to address the ones of most general interest.

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
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Thank you Readers for Voting Sprigs & Twigs
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Question this Week: Hello Linda, Thank you for writing your column and offering assistance with unknown plants! I have this plant up against our home foundation, I think it may get be called Yucca? I would like to remove it, but I've dug it up multiple times and still it comes back. Would you have any recommendations as to how to permanently remove it? Thank you so much! Maura

Linda's Answer:

Hi Maura- Yes, you have a Yucca and Yucca's are a hard plant to get rid of. They have an extremely long tap root and if the entire root is not removed, it will grow back. You will have to dig down about 3 feet to reach the base of the thick root. Do your best to remove the entire root. Do not leave anything behind. If it does grow back, as the new plant pokes through the soil surface, cut it back to below the soil level. Do not allow the new leaves to unfurl and start photosynthesizing (a process by which the plant absorbs the sun's energy within its leaves and stems and transforms this energy into food for the roots and the rest of the plant). The quicker you remove the leaves, the less energy gets to the roots which will cause the roots to die back from lack of nourishment. This process will work but you really have to stay on top of it. Use cardboard or black plastic to cover plants if you cannot get to it right away when the new growth breaks ground. Also, do not allow the existing Yucca to stay above ground over the winter. It has evergreen leaves that will continue to photosynthesize and feed the roots. Dig it out to below ground level. It should not continue to grow in the cold weather.



Another thing you can do to help kill the plant is to soak the area with water. Allow the soil in which the Yucca's are growing to become water-logged (especially before the ground freezes for the winter). Yucca usually thrives in very dry, sandy soil. Being surrounded with a water-logged soil will encourage the root to rot and help kill the plant from the root up. Good Luck.

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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