



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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Question this Week:

Dear Linda- My lawn has brown spots all over where my dog urinates. Is there anything I can do? Thank you for your help.
Kristin

Linda's Answer:

Dear Kristin - Thank you for your question about a common problem facing most dog owners.

There are a number of misconceptions when it comes to dead grass spots from dog urine.

Misconception # 1) Only female dogs cause spots: not correct. Urine spots in lawns are more of a problem from dogs, male or female, that squat to pee because they tend to concentrate the pee in one localized spot.

Misconception # 2) Spots show up because the pH of dog urine is too high (or too low - either too basic or too acidic): not correct. Lawn spots occur because dog urine contains a high level of nitrogen. When it's deposited in a concentrated area, the nitrogen burns and kills the grass the same way over-fertilizing your lawn kills grass.

Misconception # 3) There are supplements over-the-counter that you can give you dog to lessen the effect of spots: not correct. There are no supplements that have been proven scientifically effective. Never consider doing that.

The most obvious and most effective way to solve the problem is to train your dog to urinate in an area that doesn't have grass or won't become an eyesore like a mulched area or in the woods. The other approach requires diligence on your part. Dog urine won't hurt the lawn if it is very well diluted with water. So if you don't mind following the dog around and dowsing the area with a bucket of water where the dog urinates, your lawn should be fine.



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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