



Celebrating 22 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 info@sprigsandtwigs.net or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335



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QUESTION THIS WEEK:

Dear Linda, We bought this tree Sept 2015 and planted it in fresh loam and fertilized it as recommended by the nursery where we bought it. The tag says "Thundercloud Flowering Plum, Prunus cerasifera". It looks healthy, but it has never blossomed. It's soft leaves all have round holes from insect bites. The amount of leaves look sparse. We have never seen beetles, caterpillars or any other bugs on it. We have used Bayer insect spray as directed. We fertilized once each spring. Why doesn't it bloom as stated on literature?...Irene and Jim

Linda's Answer:

Dear Irene and Jim,

The Thundercloud Flowering Plum is an early blooming tree. We had an extremely cold winter this past winter and most likely the flower buds were killed by the cold. Since 2015, we have had three very cold winters (2015, 2016 and 2018) that have killed the flower buds on hydrangeas, apples, peaches and any early blooming shrub or tree. Last year, 2017, was a good year for the early bloomers. Since it is a young tree, it may take 3-5 years for it to fully bloom. It may produce 1-2 flowers year one and 5-7 flowers year two and so on. Thundercloud Plums have a lot of disease and insect issues. I would stop using the Bayer insecticide since you really don't know what is eating the tree. Allow the birds and other insects to help take care of the insects on the tree. Using insecticides stresses the tree further. Next, I would dig a 3-4 ft diameter circle around the base of the tree, remove the grass and add compost and mix it into the soil very well; then apply a 2-3" layer of mulch. Do not touch the trunk with the mulch. The mulch will keep the roots cool and moist during hot weather. And make sure the tree is well watered during dry weather. Water twice a week with one (5 ) gallon bucket of water until the end of September. Hopefully, the tree is planted in full sun (7-8hrs of full sunlight) and not in shade. Be patient and see what happens next year. You may have to think about a different tree as a replacement. If you need any suggestions, I'm here.



Thundercloud Flowering Plum

Linda K. Lillie has been President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc. for the last 22 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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