



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
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QUESTION THIS WEEK:

Hello Linda, I love your column in the local paper! I'm hoping you have some insight into what has been wrong with my beautiful black-eyed Susans. They have been in our yard (one side for at least 5 years) and newer ones for about 3 years. Up until this summer, they bloomed profusely and really made a statement in our yard.

This year, at least two of the newer ones didn't bloom at all and the others were not profuse. Most of the older ones did much better but a few of them were very thin and had some blackish leaves. The leaves on some of the other ones were black and ultimately crispy as well. I don't know if this is weather or fungus related and hoped you could comment.

Many thanks for your column and wonderful information! ...Orlene

Linda's Answer:

Hi Orlene,

Have you fertilized the Black Eyed-Susans this year? Or put compost or leaf litter as fertilizer around the plants? Are they in a particularly wet or dry area? Black Eyed-Susans do not do well in very dry areas or in very wet/moist areas. In order to bloom they need fertilizer. I use Flowertone because it is organic, slow release and only needs to be put down once in the spring. As far as the leaves turning black, I would need a photo to accurately answer your question. I would dig out the ones that had the blackish leaves and do not plant more Black Eyed-Susans in these areas. If it is a fungus that has infected your plants, the fungus is in the soil too and will re-infect the new plants that you plant. Do not fertilize now, but fertilize the plants that did not bloom next spring and see what happens. Another possibility is that the clump is too large which can affect flowering. If you suspect that, dig them up and separate them. Send me a photo of the black, crispy plants. I had some black, crispy plants in my yard this year too. I just pulled them out. Thank you for your question.



Black Eyed-Susans

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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