

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 TO:
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, Even though "weed season" has passed, the weeds and crabgrass in our lawn were incredibly bad this summer. We leave our grass long as you recommend, but it didn't seem to help. What happened to our lawn this past summer? –Chris

Linda's Answer:

Hi Chris,

Actually what you saw happened all over New England this year; the bottom line is things should return to normal next year if the weather cooperates. Here's what happened in 2018. Our desirable turf grasses are "cool season" plants and crabgrass and other weeds are "warm season" plants. This spring throughout New England, temperatures were too cold initially and then got too hot too quickly for cool season plant growth. Once the temperature got hot, it



Crabgrass

stayed hot. As a result, the cool season turf grass growing season was cut very short (it was half as long as it was 2017). The warm season plant (crabgrass and other weeds) was significantly lengthened compared to last year (it was twice as long as it was 2017). The result was all over New England there was less turf grass establishment and a significant increase in crab grass. The good news is that the crab grass situation should improve next year assuming the weather and temperatures get back to normal.

Leaving your lawn grass long (3-1/2 to 4") is a good thing because it shades the soil and keeps it cooler which helps deter crabgrass. If you had cut it short, your crabgrass would have been much, much worse. Thank you for your very good question.

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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