

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:
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QUESTION THIS WEEK:

Dear Linda- Our neighbors had a Pepperidge tree cut down and now there are seedlings coming up everywhere in their lawn and ours! We keep trying to dig them up but the roots are enormous!!! We are past customers of yours and hope you can give us advice. Our river heritage birch you planted here is gorgeous!! Thanks in advance for your time... Cheryl

Linda's Answer:

Dear Cheryl,

Unfortunately, Pepperidge trees (also known as Black Gum trees) send up a lot of sprouts when the mother tree is cut down.

I recommend painting, with a sponge brush, straight white vinegar or a super saturated salt solution onto the freshly cut stems of the sprouts in the **FALL ONLY** when the tree is naturally pulling its carbohydrates (sugars), in liquid form, down from the leaves to the roots to prepare for winter. Painting in the spring and summer will have no effect. The end of September to the end of October is a good time to do this.

Alternatively, you could continue to cut the sprouts (without painting them) which would help weaken the remaining root system. Cut the sprouts to below ground level as soon as you see them. Don't allow them to get big because as soon as the stem emerges above ground, the cells in the stem and the leaves start photosynthesizing and transporting more carbohydrates (sugars) to the roots (keeping the roots alive).

The painting approach will be quicker, but either of these approaches will take years until the stored food reserves in the underground roots are depleted. This is not an overnight fix or even a one season fix. The overall object is to deplete the stored food reserves in the roots system by removing new growth (sprouts) after it draws upon the stored food but before it begins to return food to the roots.

Good Luck. Be patient. It will work.



Pepperidge Tree

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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