



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:

I'm noticing mole tunnels all over my lawn this fall. How do I get rid of them?

- Kathy, Essex

Linda's Answer:

Hello Kathy – we have had wet weather this fall and the ground is soft, so moles are tunneling near the surface looking for earthworms and insects. When soil is hard and dried-out, moles tunnel deeper and you won't even see them. Moles are called "insectivores" because they belong to a group of mammals that eat earthworms and insects; they are not rodents.

Over the winter, moles do not die or even hibernate; they just burrow deeper and wait for the ground to thaw. So if you have mole issues now, there is a high probability they will be back next year. Moles mate in February and March and generally have one litter of young 6 weeks later. A month or so after birth, the newborn moles head out to their new territory. So by the time mid-May to June rolls around, you will have the older mature moles digging their tunnels looking for food, joined by a new group of young ones. Moles are solitary animals so they will all spread out and each will have its own territory.

Moles are strong, amazing creatures with voracious appetites. They can tunnel up to 18ft in an hour and travel (either forward or backward) 80ft a minute through existing tunnels. They eat over half of their body weight each day and in Connecticut they can get to be up to 7 inches long.

Research and many experts agree that the only effective way to deal with moles is to "trap" them - using traps set in or on the ground that pierce the moles body when the trap is triggered. Virtually all other methods are a waste of money. Setting up and using traps is not difficult and there are dozens of models readily available on Amazon.com and in local stores with prices in the \$10 to \$40 range. Things that just don't work are sonic and electronic devices, ground vibration machines, crushed glass, castor oil, razor blades and chewing gum. There are toxic baits and poisons in various forms available, but I don't like them because they are non-selective and very risky because they can kill cats, dogs and other animals as well. You are fighting a war of attrition and now is the time to get started, because they'll be back next spring after the ground thaws! Good luck and thanks for your question.



Mole

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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