



Welcome to my weekly series!

ASK THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

SPRIGS & TWIGS HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS AND WE ARE OPEN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH CT GOVERNOR NED LAMONT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 7H, DATED MARCH 20, 2020.

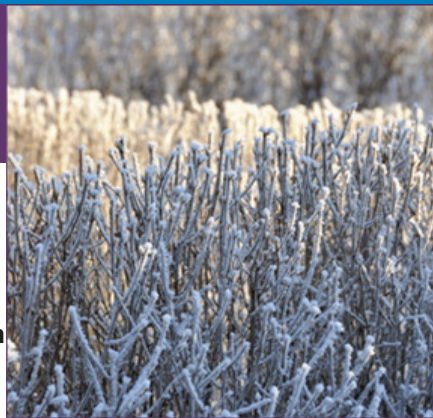
Hello Linda - I am wondering if hedges can be pruned at this time of year. We usually prune our hedges twice a year, but last year we only did it once and now they are quite tall. Can I cut them back now, or do I have to wait until springtime?... Mary

Hi Mary,

I would wait to cut back your hedges until late April or May. At that time, the sap is rising from the roots of the plant into the stems to produce new growth and leaves. If the hedge is pruned then, the pruning will stimulate new stem growth and thicken the shrub. If you prune your hedges now while they are dormant, the hedge will not produce new growth and it will remain thin and sparse.

When you prune, it is best to use sharp hand pruners and loppers for the larger branches. Only use hedge shears during the growing season and only on the non-woody (green) growth. Make sure to get them sharpened each year. If they haven't been sharpened recently, they will not cut cleanly and will damage the plant by tearing the stem and create broken, uneven cuts that allow a pathway for insects and disease to enter. Hedge shears are only intended for formal shearing of the green growth in straight lines, they have no other purpose. Do not prune all of the stems on the sides and top of your hedge at the same length. Hand prune the woody stems at various lengths down from the top and in from the sides by reaching into the hedge. You can still maintain the overall straight appearance of each side and top. This method will promote new growth that will thicken the hedge from the inside out. Also, and this is very important, you should prune your hedge in a somewhat tapered shape, narrower at the top than at the bottom. If hedges are pruned straight up and down or wider across the top than at the bottom, sunlight will be shaded from reaching the lower part of the side of the hedge and you eventually see die-back of the lower branches. If you only prune using hedge shears and do not hand pruning at various lengths, your hedges will become very thick at the top and sides but will have a hollow inside, which is the perfect cool, dark environment for disease and insects.

If you would like Sprigs & Twigs to come and prune your hedges (or show you how), just give us a call. Thank you for a great question.



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