

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**

Question of the Week: *As I get ready for spring, I am wondering if I need to put landscape fabric down before I mulch my gardens.*

I would strongly recommend that you not use landscape fabric! One of the biggest myths perpetuated on consumers is the need for landscape fabric to prevent weeds in their gardens. Even inexperienced landscape companies routinely use it. Not only is it a waste of your money, it doesn't work and actually makes the job of weed removal mulch harder, not to mention the fact that it looks terrible. Ultimately, using it just adds more plastic to landfills. Landscape cloth or weed barrier is generally a porous plastic or a fiber material that is widely available in home improvement stores and garden centers. While weeds may have a tough time growing up through it, virtually 100% of weed seeds are airborne and germinate and take root from above the barrier. The weeds then grow down and through the barrier, creating a major problem in removing them. Weeding them tears the fabric and makes it a worthless mess. If you have fabric down now, rip it out because it'll just get tougher to get out in the future and if you are not using it don't. Also the roots of the plants planted in the garden bed tend to grow just under the barrier and not deep into the ground. The deeper the roots are growing in the soil the higher the survival rate during a drought.

Weeds Growing From Above Through Landscape Fabric



The absolute best approach to weed control is to use a thick (4") layer of natural (not dyed) shredded brown mulch. (See my article several weeks ago about the risks of using colored dyed mulch - don't use it). With a thick layer of natural mulch, the few weeds that make it through can be easily weeded out. Sprigs & Twigs never uses weed cloth or fabric and never uses dyed mulch. Beware of those companies that do.

If you like to do your own mulching, Sprigs & Twigs is now selling bulk deliveries of safe organic brown, natural mulch, delivered to you in 10 yard loads or more @ \$35/yard delivered. Call the office 860-235-0752 to order.

If we can help you with any of your landscape needs, including mulching, feel free to call.

Sprigs & Twigs

Linda K. Lillie is the President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc, the premier landscape tree care & lawn care company in SE Connecticut for the last 17 years. She is a 1995 graduate of Connecticut College in Botany, a Connecticut Master Gardener and a national award winning landscape designer for her design and installation work.

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