

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 of the Week: *A local landscape company just mulched my property and I am concerned how they mulched around my trees, a picture is attached.*

Answer: This mulch "Volcano" will kill this tree!

Your landscaper should never have mulched in that manner, even though it seems like you see this type of job all over. Unscrupulous and/or inexperienced landscapers are selling you mulch that you don't need and causing damage that is intolerable. Mulch piled like this is commonly referred to as a 'Mulch Volcano' and it will most certainly kill the tree. A mulch volcano around a tree can cause a number of problems including:



- 1 Keeping moisture up against the tree trunk which will cause rotting and decay and become a vehicle for fungi, insects and disease to enter the tree.
- 2 Tree roots will actually start growing in the mulch and circle around the stem of the tree. This will cause 'girdling roots' and will eventually strangle the tree.
- 3 Extremely thick layers of mulch will become matted and difficult for rain water to penetrate. The hardened mulch will actually direct the water away from the tree trunk and the root system

If your landscaper has used dyed mulch as well, you have double trouble as I wrote about several weeks ago. Never use dyed mulch around any plants or trees, it can be toxic and not worth the risk.

You need to go out in your yard and kick the mulch pile from around the tree. Make sure there is only a very fine layer near the base of the tree and the mulch doesn't touch the tree trunk. Also, make sure the 'root flare' of the tree is exposed. If you make the mulch bowl-shaped, it will collect rainwater and provide it to the tree. Edge around the perimeter of the ring and remove all lawn and weeds within the mulch ring. The edge will help keep the mulch within the ring and not on the lawn. The mulch should be no more than 2-3 inches thick and can be of any diameter you like. The larger the ring, the less grass you have to cut.

If your mulching job doesn't look like this picture, call us.

If your original landscaper is unwilling to return to fix his mess, give us a call and we can help. Also, if you need a bulk delivery of 10 yards or more of organic, natural brown (not dyed) mulch, we can deliver that to you for \$35/yard.



A Sprigs & Twigs properly edged and mulched, tree and garden done last week.

Sprigs & Twigs

**100%
Organic Shredded
Brown Mulch!
Bulk Deliveries of
10 yards or more!
\$35/yard**

Linda K. Lillie is the President of Sprigs & Twigs, Inc, the premiere 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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