

Welcome to my weekly series!



Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs

ask the landscape professional

SEND ME YOUR QUESTIONS ... 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**

Linda's Question of this Week:

Before my lawn got covered with snow, I was noticing the damage from last summer's mole tunnels. Do moles go away once the cold weather comes?

Linda's Answer:

Unfortunately no. Moles do not die or even hibernate in the winter; they just burrow deeper and wait for the ground to thaw. So if you had mole issues last year, there is a high probability they will be back this 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 each have their own territory.



Their primary food is earthworms which moles follow by digging their tunnels deeper when the soil is dry and shallower when the soil is wet and soft. You will not see moles in hard, dried-out soil. Because they eat earthworms and insects, moles belong to a group of mammals called insectivores- they are not rodents.

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.

So how do you combat them? 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 mole's body when the trap is triggered. Virtually all other methods are a waste of your money. There are sonic and electronic devices, ground vibration machines and the like on the market as well as a host of homegrown recipes like crushed glass, castor oil, razor blades and chewing gum that just do not work. There are even toxic baits and poisons in various forms that are non-selective and very risky- they kill cats, dogs and other animals too. Setting up and using the traps requires some practice and patience, but there are number of models readily available with complete instructions. You are fighting a war of attrition and now is the time to get prepared, because once the ground thaws, you'll start to see those tunnels again!

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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 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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