



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:

I took this picture at a local restaurant. I can't imagine that this is good for the tree.

Linda's Answer:

You are absolutely right.

This tree should never have mulched in that manner, even though you see this type of thing all over. Unfortunately, many times businesses and consumers accept the low bidder and get inexperienced landscapers who have no idea they are causing great harm. Mulch piled like this is commonly referred to as a 'Mulch Volcano' and it will most certainly kill the tree. 'Mulch Volcanos' cause a number of problems:



1. Moisture is kept up against the tree trunk which will cause rotting and decay and is 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

I can also see from your picture, that black dyed mulch was used as well, which is double trouble as I wrote about two weeks ago. Never use dyed mulch around any plants or trees, it could be toxic and not worth the risk.

To safely and properly mulch a tree, only use non-dyed, natural brown mulch that smells pleasant, not like chemicals. 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; depending on how the tree was planted, you may have to dig down a bit to expose the flair (where the tree widens). If you make the mulch bowl-shaped, it will collect rainwater and provide it to the tree. Edge around the perimeter of the mulch 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 the ring can be of any diameter you like. The larger the ring, the less grass you have to cut.

If you need a bulk delivery of 10 yards or more of organic, natural brown (not dyed) mulch, we can provide that for you. Give our office a call for pricing based on your location.

Sprigs & Twigs is a highly regarded, professional, full service, national award winning Landscape Design, Installation, Maintenance, Tree Care and Lawn Care Company. We are completely organic. Visit our website or call us for more information.

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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 18 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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