

# 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](mailto:info@sprigsandtwigs.net) or Linda Lillie, Sprigs & Twigs Inc, PO Box 245, Gales Ferry, CT 06335

**Question of the Week:** *My neighbor and I have a bet. He says fallen oak leaves make soil more acidic and I say that's not true. Can you settle this?*

### Answer:

Actually, you are both right in a way. Acidity is measured by a term called pH which is represented by a number scale from 0 to 14. A pH of 7 is neutral; pH below 7 is acidic and pH above 7 is basic (or alkaline). Back a hundred years ago, a Danish

chemist first developed the concept of pH (which means 'power of hydrogen'). Since then, it has been universally used in most fields of science. When oak leaves first fall off the trees, they have an acidic pH in the range of 4.5 to 5.5 depending on the type of oak tree they came from. If you were to mix them into the soil immediately, they would temporarily slightly acidify the surface layer of the soil, but as they quickly decompose, the soil would become more alkaline.

The net effect is that the oak leaves would not acidify the soil in the long run. Leaves are actually a good thing to work into your soil. As they decompose, they become food for the microorganisms that are essential for a healthy soil eco-system. They also help with minimizing soil compaction and keeping the soil structure loose. It is good practice to remove thick layers of leaves from your lawn to keep them from matting down and inhibiting the grass growth in the spring. Running your mower over the remaining leaves is really helpful to the organic matter content of the soil. I know some folks like to remove the leaves from their woodlands because they like the appearance, but keep in mind you are depriving the trees of their natural fertilizer.



**I have decided to expand "Ask The Landscape Professional" by offering periodic classroom lectures on a variety of topics.** The sessions will be open to the public and will be held in our Gales Ferry office at 41 Kings Highway, Suite 207. Space is limited and you need to call the office (860-235-0752) to make a reservation. **The first lecture will be "Top Ten Low Maintenance Garden Habits," which will be held on January 21 from 3:00-4:00pm.** I look forward to meeting you there!

Sprigs & Twigs is booking 2014-2015 Snow Removal services now and scheduling appointments for 2015 Garden Design, Spring Garden Spruce-ups, Landscape Maintenance, Organic Lawn Care, Mowing and Trimming Services, Stonework and Custom Carpentry Services. Go to [www.sprigsandtwigs.net](http://www.sprigsandtwigs.net) for details. **Call us anytime to discuss your landscape needs and to meet with our staff.**

**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 [www.sprigsandtwigs.net](http://www.sprigsandtwigs.net) or call us for more information.**

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# 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 19 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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