

Welcome to my weekly series!

ask the landscape professional

Linda K. Lillie of Sprigs & Twigs



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: *I often have to prune a tree on the corner of my house to keep it off the siding. Can anything be done, like moving the tree?*

Linda's Answer:

Unfortunately, that tree is too close to the house and at this point there is nothing you can do but to have the tree removed and plant another one in a better location. It's very common to see trees and shrubs that are planted too close to houses. Many times when people plant immature trees, they locate them where they look great the day they are planted and forget they will grow a tremendous amount. Another thing I notice a lot, is the wrong tree planted in the wrong environment. For example, Dogwoods are what are called understory trees. They grow best at the edge of the woods, under larger trees in part shade. That's not to say that the ones that you see planted in full sun will die, they just won't thrive there.



When you go tree shopping at the nursery, read the tag to get the tree's characteristics and full-grown size. If that information is not on the tag, do an internet search and make sure the area you have is sufficiently large for the tree and the environment you are planting the tree in is correct for your chosen tree. Most of the time trees are sold as "balled and burlapped" and may have cages around the roots as well. When you get them home cut the burlap away and inspect the roots. If they wrap around the tree rather than outward from the tree, you have "girdling roots" which will strangle and kill the tree. Call the supplier and exchange the tree. Also, pull the soil away and expose the root "flare" of the tree (the spot on the trunk where it gets wider and starts the transition to the roots) and make sure it is not covered with soil.

When you are happy with the roots and root flare, completely remove all of the burlap and wire cage. If left in place, both of these will inhibit proper root growth. The next step is to dig the planting hole. From the information you got from the tag on the tree or from your research, you know the full grown height and width. If the full grown diameter is 40ft, you will need to plant the tree 20 feet or more from an obstacle like a building. If it grows 40ft tall, make certain you are not planting under electrical service wires. The hole you dig must be at least a foot wider than the root ball all around, but not too deep. Measure the vertical height of the root ball from the bottom to the root flare. You want the root flare to be just above ground and not covered by soil or mulch when you are finished. Keep the newly planted tree deeply watered for the first growing season and it a good idea to put a dirt "moat" around the trunk to help retain water.

If you need any help with planting trees or with other tree care needs, give us a call.

Sprigs & Twigs

**100% Organic
Shredded Brown Mulch!**
Bulk Deliveries of 10 yards
or more! **\$35/yard**
Delivery charge may apply
depending on your location.

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.

860-235-0752

