

What is the Spotted Lanternfly?

You may have heard about the newest pesky insect invading our area. The Spotted Lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*, is an invasive insect that poses a significant threat to many crops. It is native to Southeast Asia and was first discovered in Berks County in 2014 and has since spread to neighboring counties and states. This new pest gets its name from spots that decorate its back and wings and is quite attractive when its wings are spread which show vivid red, black and white areas.

So, what is all the fuss about another little bug? Make no mistake, this insect wreaks havoc wherever it goes! The SLF feeds on woody plants, sucking the sap out and leaving behind a sticky, sugary liquid that encourages the growth of black sooty mold on any surface it covers. While this mold is harmless to people, it damages plants and crops.

While the SLF is feeding, it damages the trees or plants, resulting in oozing sap running down the tree trunk, causing wilting, leaf curling and even plant or tree death. It destroys the fruit from the plant through direct damage and by covering it with sooty mold. Grapevines, fruit trees, hardwood trees and hops are a few examples that have been ruined by this pest. Authorities estimate that \$18 billion worth of agricultural commodities are at risk of destruction from the spotted lanternfly.

The SLF is most commonly found on the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus Altissima*), but over 70 varieties of woody plants or trees can be damaged by the insect at any stage of development. It has been known to also feed on many common shade trees, such as Red Maples, Sugar Maples, Chestnut Oaks and American Sycamores as well as a variety of fruit trees and plants.

Aside from the damage to trees and agricultural crops, the SLF tends to congregate in hoards that cover everything in sight, making it unpleasant to be outdoors, especially when adults take to the skies in swarms.

The SLF is highly mobile; there's no way to keep it off your property. It's just a matter of time before you find one or many! There are two ways to control the spread of the SLF – preventive treatments (such as removing and destroying egg masses) and directly targeting the nymphs and adults with a variety of insecticides.

You can manually remove egg masses by scraping them off surfaces and destroying them (such as immersing them in rubbing alcohol, bleach or hand sanitizer – just leaving them on the ground will not kill them). You can also place them in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of them.

You can place a sticky band around the trunk of the tree to trap them as they climb. Bands should be placed in early spring to catch newly emerging nymphs.

If you find the insect or egg masses, you should report the sightings to badbug@pa.gov or extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly. You can also call 1-888-4BAD-FLY (1-888-422-3359)

To prevent the spread of the SLF, the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA) issued a quarantine for counties where the presence of this pest has been confirmed. Businesses and Organizations conducting business in a quarantine zone must have permits from the PDA to move vehicles, equipment and goods within and out of the zone. To date Lebanon County is in the quarantine area.

To obtain a permit you must complete the free two-hour training and pass an exam. A permit provides evidence that you have completed training on how to follow the rules of the quarantine order, and you agree to do all you can to ensure you are not carrying or transporting the SLF. You will receive a tag for your vehicle to show that you have the SLF Permit from the PDA. If you have questions about obtaining a SLF Permit, please contact SLFPermit@PA.gov.

(Information obtained from Penn State Extension and PA Department of Agriculture)