



Loudoun County, Virginia

www.loudoun.gov

NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications
1 Harrison Street SE, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000
703-777-0113 • Fax 703-771-5841

For Immediate Release
August 3, 2022

Media Contact: Glen Barbour, Public Affairs and Communications Officer
703-771-5086, Glen.Barbour@loudoun.gov

Spotted Lanternfly Found in Loudoun; Residents Encouraged to Help Slow the Spread of the Invasive Insect

Loudoun County officials say the invasive species of insect known as the spotted lanternfly has been found in Loudoun County, signaling a new stage in efforts to slow the spread of the pest that can damage agricultural crops and more than 100 other plants and trees.

Over the past few years, the invasive insect has been detected in Pennsylvania and in parts of Virginia, including Winchester, Charlottesville and Prince William County. Virginia officials who have been tracking the spotted lanternfly for more than four years anticipated the pest would spread into other communities, including Loudoun.

How to Help Slow the Spread

Slowing the spread of the insect in Loudoun will require the efforts of everyone in the community. Anyone who sees spotted lanternflies in Loudoun is encouraged to take the following actions to help slow their spread in the county:

1. Educate yourself about the spotted lanternfly so that you know how to recognize the insect throughout its life cycle.
2. Inspect your surroundings; look for spotted lanternfly egg masses and insects by checking tree trunks, wheel wells, under and around vehicles, lawn furniture, fences, storage sheds, rocks, metal surfaces (especially if they are rusty) and other smooth surfaces.
3. Kill live insects on sight and squash/scrape off their egg masses.
4. Take a photo of the bugs and/or egg masses and report the finding through an online form that is posted on the county's website at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly.
Reporting findings of the spotted lanternfly will help track the spread of the invasive insect in Loudoun.

"Increased public awareness and vigilance is a critical tool in slowing the spread of this damaging insect," said Beth Sastre, a horticulturist with the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE Loudoun). "Because the spotted lanternfly's appearance changes dramatically throughout its life cycle, we encourage residents to take the time to learn how to recognize the different stages and to take steps to remove the insect from their property."

About the Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly is a native insect of Asia and prefers feeding on a plant called Tree of Heaven. The insect will also feed on more than 100 other plants, including grapes, peaches, apples, maples, walnuts and hops. It is a particular threat to vineyards. In addition, although the spotted lanternfly is not harmful to humans and pets, it is a serious nuisance pest to property owners when

present in high numbers. As they feed, the insect secretes a substance called honeydew that can build up under plants and promote growth of black, sooty mold—another sign that the spotted lanternfly may be present on your property.

The spotted lanternfly has the potential to spread to un-infested areas through natural means or through artificial means, such as inadvertently being transported on cars and goods, such as firewood, from areas where the insect is known to be present to new areas throughout the country. This is why Loudoun residents are encouraged to inspect their vehicles for “hitchhikers” before returning from [known infested areas](#).

The life cycle of the spotted lanternfly begins in mid-spring when they hatch from egg clusters that were laid by the prior generation during the previous fall. The immature spotted lanternflies are active in the spring. They are small, no more than a quarter inch in length, and they are black or red with white spots. Adult spotted lanternflies appear in the summer and fall and are about an inch long. Images of the spotted lanternfly’s life cycles can be found at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly.

How to Prevent and Manage Spotted Lanternfly on Your Property

Property owners and residents are responsible for destroying spotted lanternflies that are found on their own property. There are steps that property owners can take to eliminate the pest and to help slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly to other areas in the county, including:

- Removing the Tree of Heaven, which is a favorite host of the insect.
- Keeping trees and shrubs in good health because healthy plants better resist and recover from the impacts of the spotted lanternfly.
- Checking trees and plants for the presence of live spotted lanternfly, and inspecting for insects and their egg sacs under and around vehicles and their wheel wells, lawn furniture, storage sheds, rocks, metal and other smooth surfaces.
- Some commercially available insecticides are effective against the spotted lanternfly. If you consider using an insecticide, there are important safety measures you should take. Before using any insecticide, always read the label and follow the instructions. Learn more about pesticide use at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly.

Training

VCE Loudoun offers talks and training designed to equip homeowners associations, farmers and other individuals and organizations in the county with the information they need to help control the population of the invasive insect, including how to identify the spotted lanternfly in different life stages and how to identify and remove the Tree of Heaven from their property. To request a training session, contact VCE Loudoun by email at loudounMG@vt.edu or by phone at 703-777-0373.

Infested Areas in Virginia

Several counties in Virginia—Albemarle, Augusta, Carroll, Clarke, Frederick, Page, Prince William, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah and Warren—have been placed under a quarantine by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) due to the infestation of spotted lanternflies in those counties. Loudoun County is not currently included in this

quarantine. Because the spotted lanternfly is a very effective hitchhiker on vehicles and goods such as firewood, businesses operating and shipping in the areas of the quarantine are under certain restrictions to help prevent the insect and its eggs from spreading. Learn more about the quarantine in some parts of Virginia on the [VDACS website](#).

For More Information

Everything Loudon County residents need to know about the spotted lanternfly is posted on or linked from the county's website. County officials encourage Loudoun residents to learn more about this invasive species and to help slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly in the county, as well as to help minimize its impact on our community. For more information, visit loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly.

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY IN VA HELP SLOW THE SPREAD!

Squash it! Take a Picture! Report it at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly



EGGS
(December-May)
Size: About 1.5" long



BLACK AND WHITE NYMPH
(May-August)
Size: 4mm up to 3/8" long



RED, BLACK AND WHITE NYMPH
(July-August)
Size: 7/8" long or 12mm



ADULT
(July-December)
Size: About 1" long

###