



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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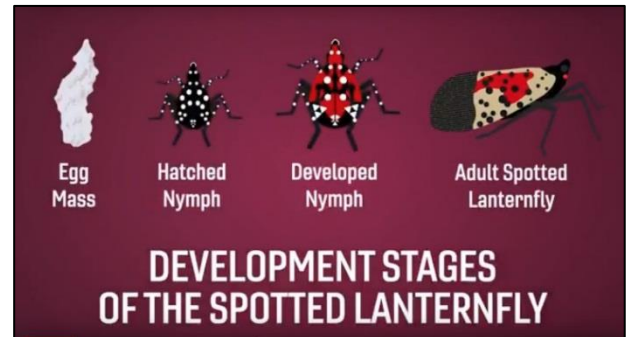
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Help Fight the Spotted Lanternfly: Check Your Christmas Tree for Egg Masses

If you purchased a Christmas tree that was not grown in Loudoun County, officials ask that you examine the tree to look for egg masses of the spotted lanternfly; an invasive insect that can affect agricultural and ornamental plants.

Adult spotted lanternflies die at the onset of winter; however, their egg masses can survive below-zero temperatures. Egg masses typically include 30 to 50 jellybean-shaped eggs in neat rows covered by a waxy substance that looks like mud. The egg masses can accumulate on tree trunks and other surfaces from the fall to early spring when they hatch.



“We would like anyone who finds spotted lanternfly egg masses to take a photo and send the photo to us through our online form at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly. Then, destroy the eggs by scrapping the eggs into a baggy with alcohol,” said Beth Sastre, a horticulturist with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County.

Sastre advises residents to be aware that there could also be beneficial insects, such as praying mantises, that may lay eggs on trees and the eggs look similar to the spotted lanternfly. She advises that mantis eggs should be taken outside so that they can hatch in the warm weather and eat unwanted insects.

Sastre recommends that residents who are considering buying a Christmas tree purchase a tree from one of the many local Christmas tree growers in Loudoun because the spotted lanternfly has not been detected in Loudoun. The insect has been discovered in nearby Frederick and Clarke Counties in Virginia, as well as West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware and New York.

Loudoun County is offering free training and information sessions to help increase awareness of the threat of the spotted lanternfly. The educational sessions offered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County are designed to equip homeowners associations, farmers and other individuals and organizations in the county with the information they need to help prevent the spread of the invasive insect. More information about the training sessions and about the spotted lanternfly may be found at loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly.

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