



## **HELP STOP A DANGEROUS INVADER – SPOTTED LANTERNFLY SPOTTED IN CONNECTICUT!**

By Marie Woodward, UConn Home & Garden Education Center

There has been an invasion on Connecticut's southwest border and the invader is expected to take over the state in approximately two years. It will threaten agricultural businesses, nurseries and homeowners and could cause billions of dollars in damage while devastating the landscape. Who is this invader? It is commonly called the spotted lanternfly, and every Connecticut resident should be concerned.

The spotted lanternfly, *Delicate Lycormala*, (SLF), is a sap-feeding plant hopper native to China. It is believed to have entered this country as an egg mass stuck to a shipment of stone sent to Berk's County, Pennsylvania in 2012. Since then, Pennsylvania's agriculture, vineyards, forests, nurseries and residential areas have all suffered serious damage from this invasive pest.

Sadly, the SLF started making its way into Connecticut in 2021. The CT Agricultural Experiment Station immediately issued a quarantine order to slow the spread of this pest. While this will not stop the advance of the SLF, it is hoped a sufficiently aggressive effort by all affected will slow it down long enough to find a treatment that will control and, with any luck, eradicate this pest.

But, what is a spotted lanternfly and why is it so important to stop it from invading our state? This beautiful looking plant hopper affects fruit trees, grapes, hops, and ornamental trees. Adults are about 1 inch long and ½ inch wide with colorful wings. The nymphs (immature stage of the SLF) and the adults feed on the sap from trees and vines causing them to weaken. Then, excretions from the SLF, called honey dew, stick to the leaves, which causes black sooty mold to grow, reducing the plant's ability to photosynthesize properly. For agricultural crops, this will reduce yields and weaken trees and plants further, eventually destroying them.

In addition to destroying plants, they can wreak havoc on everything from lawn furniture to sidewalks, to the sides of buildings, to car tires, to anything else outside making it a sticky mess.

Research is actively under way at Penn State in collaboration with Cornell University using various anti-SLF agents; they haven't yet produced sufficiently consistent results to qualify as an SLF control.

What can you do to help? Right now, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station is conducting a "call to action" for the state's citizens. They urge everyone to report any sightings of this invasive pest. Check out CT DEEP's fact sheet at <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Forestry/Forest-Protection/Spotted-Lanternfly#biology> to familiarize yourself on what the egg casings and larval stages look like. Their preferred host is the invasive tree of heaven but they feed on a wide variety of woody plants. If you spot an SLF, kill it right away and report it on CT Agricultural Experiment Station's website, by filling out a brief form along with a photo at: <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/CAPS/CAPS/Spotted-Lanternfly---SLF>

If you have questions about the spotted lanternfly or on other gardening topics, contact the UConn Home & Garden Education at (877) 486-6271 or [www.homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu](http://www.homegarden.cahnr.uconn.edu) or your local Cooperative Extension Center.