

# ORNAMENTALS

• H O T L I N E •

## INSECTS

May 3, 2019

Brian Kunkel  
Ornamental IPM Specialist

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY is an invasive insect originally found in China, India or Vietnam, and was introduced into Pennsylvania in 2014. This insect is a member of Hemiptera and has piercing/sucking mouthparts. They feed on a variety of hosts including: tree-of-heaven, grapes, apples, stone fruits, walnuts, willows, maples and others.

Adult spotted lanternflies are an inch long and about 1/2 inches wide. The front wings are grey with black spots and the hind wings are red with black spots. Their abdomen is yellow with black bands. Immature insects are smaller, black with white spots, and as they age red patches develop. They feed on sap from host trees, frequently causing weeping wounds on their hosts. Excreted honeydew and sap from wounds leave a greyish or blackish sticky trail on the plant, and is attractive to ants and stinging insects such as wasps. Greyish brown egg masses may be laid on host tree trunks and higher branches or limbs. They are also laid on nearby structures, stones and benches. Heavy populations may cause branch dieback, wilting, or plant death. Eggs are hatching in Pennsylvania, and they should have started hatching here.

This insect is a very good hitch-hiker; consequently, examine vehicles, people, paving stones, and other items from neighboring states if they are near infestations. Delaware Department of Agriculture has quarantined some zip codes in New Castle county and are continuing their monitoring program for spotted lanternfly. They have steps to follow if you believe you have found it:

- Take a picture with GPS function turned on your smartphone or camera
- Upload photograph to Facebook or Instagram using #HitchHikerBug

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## DISEASES

Nancy Gregory  
Plant Diagnostician

AZALEA LEAF GALL occurs on young leaves or flowers, and shows up as a light colored lumpy mass, often following wet weather. The gall is a plant response to infection by a fungus, *Exobasidium*, in which plant cells multiply and become large and distorted. Swollen plant outgrowths start out light green or pink. As the disease progresses, spores of *Exobasidium* are produced on the surface of the galls, leaving a white powdery appearance. Old galls shrivel, harden, and the fungus survives in that tissue, or in bud scales or under bark. Rhododendron, camellia, and blueberry may also be affected, although there are some resistant cultivars of

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## What's Hot!

Watch for boxwood psyllida or boxwood leafminers. Leafminers are most likely pupae but if they emerge will appear as orangish colored flies on the boxwoods. The boxwood psyllid causes foliage on terminal ends of branches to cup.

Lacebug eggs are hatching on various hosts.

Foliage of bulbs that have flowered should be allowed to remain, but can be trimmed slightly or bunched if it looks unsightly. Another good solution is to plant bulbs mixed into warm season grasses that are just starting to emerge and will cover undesirable foliage.

We trained Master Gardeners and Extension staff as National Plant Diagnostic Network First Detectors, through NPDN until 2013, when training went online. If you are interested in this nationwide network of volunteers who identify and report exotic pests and pathogens, go to the website at <https://www.firstdetector.org/> or contact Nancy Gregory.



Young SLF nymph. Photo credit: Lawrence Barringer, PA Dept of Ag, bugwood-org

For more information

on pests & practices covered in this newsletter, call your County Extension Office

Helpful numbers to know:



Garden Line	831-8862
(for home gardeners only)	
New Castle County Extension	831-2506
Kent County Extension	730-4000
Sussex County Extension	856-7303

View more pictures at <http://extension.udel.edu/ornamentals/>

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## Diseases (Continued)

both azalea and rhododendron. Control is best accomplished by pruning out the galls before the white spores are produced.

**AZALEA PETAL BLIGHT** (*Ovulinia* petal blight) affects azalea and rhododendron flowers, which decay into a slimy mass in humid conditions. Azalea petal blight can shorten the bloom time of azalea when wet weather occurs during flowering. Early infections can be seen as small water soaked spots on petals before a quick collapse of the flowers. The fungus produces many spores that spread rapidly to nearby flowers. Black fungal sclerotia about the size of rice grains form on the affected petals, and survive in soil and on debris to overwinter. It's too late for control this year, but preventative fungicide applications can be applied when flower buds break if the disease has been a problem in the past. Space plants well, and prune to provide good air circulation.

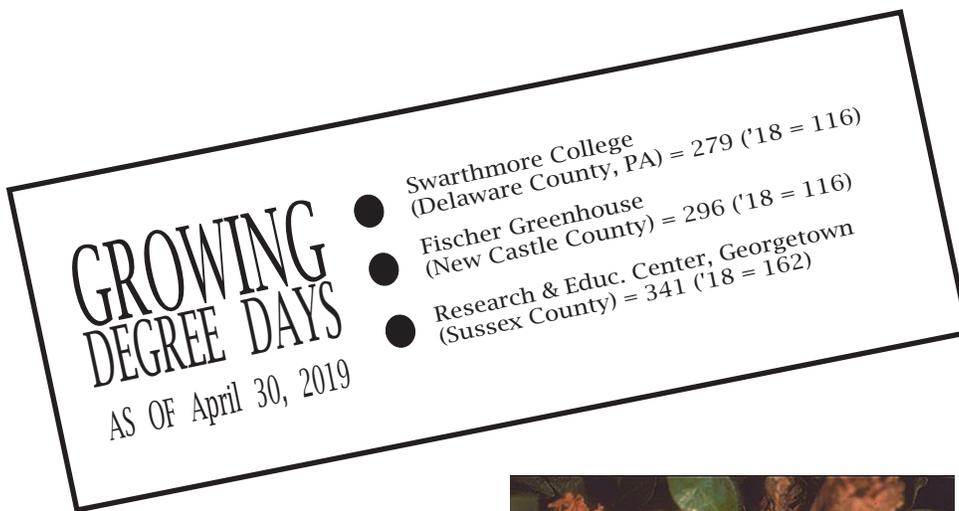
## Insects (Continued)

- If no GPS or access to social media; then, email [HitchHikerBug@state.de.us](mailto:HitchHikerBug@state.de.us) with your name, contact information, and address where photo was taken
- Collect a specimen in a vial or plastic zip-lock bag
- Turn specimen into DE Department of Agriculture CAPS program

If a photo or specimen cannot be acquired call (302) 698-4586 or email [HitchHikerBug@state.de.us](mailto:HitchHikerBug@state.de.us) with information detailing location and contact information.

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Editor: Susan Barton  
Extension Horticulturist



*Ovulinia* petal blight on azalea. Photo credit: E. Dutky



*Exobasidium* leaf blight on camellia. Photo credit: N. Gregory



SLF egg mass. Photo credit: Lawrence Barringer, PA Dept of Ag, bugwood-org