



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Spotted Lanternfly Potential Threat to Ohio

By Barb Snyder, OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

Hardin County – In the summer of 2014, a Pennsylvania game officer spotted unusual insects congregated in a Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). They had distinctive spots and red hind wings. Within a month, this invasive planthopper was identified as the Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). It is native to India, China, Vietnam and has also been found in Korea and Japan. A quarantine was issued to contain the insect's movement. The situation changed rapidly by the summer of 2017 when an entomologist found a massive hatch. He realized that this insect had the potential to breed and increase its population size that could overwhelm properties and entire communities almost overnight. In February 2018, the U.S. Department of Agriculture committed \$17.5 million in emergency funding to stop the spread of the insect in southeastern Pennsylvania. New funding allowed the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to expand surveillance and control programs to stop the spread.

The Spotted Lanternfly has a preference for the Tree of Heaven. Even though this tree grows in 44 states, the insect will still feed on more than 70 other plant species, including grapes, hops, apples, dogwood, maples, walnut, oak, and pines. The Spotted Lanternfly damages trees by producing weeping wounds which attracts wasps, bees, hornets, and ants. The insect pierces the bark to access the tree phloem layer and sap in order to feed. The greater harm comes as a result of the honeydew the insect secretes. The sweet, sticky fluid promotes the growth of sooty mold, which is extremely damaging. Egg masses have the most potential for long distance travel. The female lays her eggs on surfaces in lumber yards, trees, cars in parking lots, along highways and railroad tracks. Imagine a train with coal cars parked next to a Tree of Heaven where a gravid female drops down and deposits her eggs. They are driven to the next county or across country.

Spotted Lanternfly egg masses are laid in the fall and on smooth bark or stone and other vertical surfaces. The eggs have a grey mud-like covering that take on a dry, cracked appearance over time. Old egg masses, roughly an inch long, appear in columns as rows of 30-50 brownish seed-like deposits. In mid-May, the first of four immature stages begin emerging from the eggs. The immature nymph stages are black with white spots and wingless. As they grow, they develop red patches in addition to the white spots. They jump or crawl up any non-woody or woody plant to feed. Adults appear by the middle of July. The adult is 1 inch long and ½ inch wide. The forewing is red with black spots and the wing tips are black outlined with grey. The hind wings have patches of red and

black with a white band. The legs and head are black. The abdomen is yellow in 4-7 columns, about an inch long. The adult is a poor flyer but is a strong jumper.

The brilliant colors of the red, black and white on the Spotted Lanternfly are warning signals to predators that they may be toxic due to poisons. Even a sudden flash of the hindwings startles predators and drives them away. Preliminary tests of insecticides with the following active ingredients - dinotefuran, imidacloprid, carbaryl, and bifenthrin seem to be effective. Neem oil and insecticidal soap provide some control, some insects took several days to die as results vary. In November of 2017 a single female was found in New Castle County, Delaware. During that same month, a dead adult was also in Delaware County, New York. The spotted lanternfly was recently detected in Frederick County, Virginia on January 10, 2018. It has been reported that egg masses and a dead adult were found. Since it poses a very serious threat, people are being urged to look for and report any finds in both states where the pest is known to be, and where it has not yet been detected. If you suspect that you have found the spotted lanternfly in Ohio, please contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture at (614) 728-6270.