USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Pest Alert

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine

Spotted Lanternfly *(Lycorma delicatula)*

The spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest, primarily known to feed on tree of heaven *(Ailanthus altissima)* but has many other host plants, including grape, hop, apple, stone fruit, maple, poplar, walnut, and willow. The insect changes hosts as it goes through its developmental stages. Nymphs feed on a wide range of plant species, while adults prefer to feed and lay eggs on tree of heaven *(A. altissima)*. Spotted lanternflies are invasive and can spread rapidly when introduced to new areas. While the insect can walk, jump, or fly short distances, its long-distance spread is facilitated by people who move infested material or items containing egg masses. If allowed to spread in the United States, this pest could damage the country's grape, orchard, and logging industries.

Distribution

The spotted lanternfly is present in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. In 2014, the insect was first detected in the United States in Pennsylvania. Since then, spotted lanternfly infestations have been detected in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia.

Damage

Both nymphs and adults of spotted lanternfly cause damage when they feed, sucking sap from stems and branches. This can reduce photosynthesis, weaken the plant, and eventually contribute to the plant's death. In addition, feeding can cause the plant to ooze or weep, resulting in a fermented odor, and the insects themselves excrete large amounts of fluid (honeydew). These fluids promote mold growth and attract other insects.

Adult spotted lanternfly

Description

Adult spotted lanternflies are about 1 inch long and one-half inch wide, and they have large and visually striking wings. Their forewings are light brown with black spots at the front and a speckled band at the rear. Their hind wings are scarlet with black spots at the front and white and black bars at the rear. Their abdomen is yellow with black bars. Nymphs in their early stages of development appear black with white spots and turn to a red phase before becoming adults. Egg masses are yellowish-brown in color, and most are covered with a gray, waxy coating prior to hatching.

Life Cycle

The spotted lanternfly lays its eggs on smooth host plant surfaces and on non-host material, such as bricks, stones, and dead plants. Eggs hatch in the spring and early summer, and nymphs begin feeding on a wide range of host plants by sucking sap from young stems and branches. Adults appear in late July and tend to focus their feeding on tree of heaven *(A. altissima)* and grapevine *(Vitis vinifera)*. As the adults feed, they excrete sticky, sugar-rich fluid (honeydew). The fluid can build up on plants and on the ground underneath infested plants, causing sooty mold to form.

Where To Look

Spotted lanternfly adults and nymphs frequently gather in large numbers on host plants. They are easiest to spot at dusk or at night as they migrate up and down the trunk of the plant. During the day, they tend to cluster near the base of the plant if there is adequate cover or in the canopy, making them more difficult to see. Egg masses can be found on smooth surfaces on the trunks of host plants and on other smooth surfaces, including brick, stone, and dead plants.

Report Your Findings

If you find an insect that you suspect is the spotted lanternfly, please contact your local Extension office or State Plant Regulatory Official to have the specimen identified properly.

To locate an Extension specialist near you, go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website at **nifa.usda.gov/Extension.** A directory of State Plant Regulatory Officials is available on the National Plant Board website at **www.nationalplantboard.org/membership.**

Spotted lanternfly nymphs are black with white spots in early stages of development and turn red before becoming adults.

Covered and uncovered egg masses

Cluster of adults on the trunk of a tree at night

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