

Spotted Lanternflies Are Back!

Spotted Lanternflies (SLF) are back and indications are that they will be worse than ever this year. According to the latest information from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, SLF have no known natural enemies. Even worse, removing all Tree of Heaven is “*unlikely to consistently reduce SLF numbers*”. Despite this, there are still actions that you can take to minimize the spread of this invasive pest on your property.



Inspect your property for Tree of Heaven

Tree of Heaven (TOH) is the preferred habitat of SLF and is easy to identify at this time of year by its distinct compound leaves – leaves consisting of leaflets. A single leaf may be up to 4 feet long with as many as 40 pointed leaflets. At the base of each leaflet are one or two protruding bumps called glandular teeth. When crushed, leaflets will have an offensive odor described by some as “*rancid peanut butter*”. Do not try to eliminate TOH by pulling it out, cutting it down or mowing it over. This will not destroy its root system and will only exacerbate the problem. **Wait until summer to eradicate TOH!**



Early Nymph

Inspect your property for SLF nymphs

When hatched, a Lanternfly nymph will be black with white spots on its body and legs and approximately 1/8" in length. After molting in July, they turn red and black with white spots. Nymphs have no wings and cannot fly but are strong jumpers and will jump when prodded or frightened. If nymphs are on your property, notify the NJ Department of Agriculture using this website: <https://tinyurl.com/3r9zekba>.



Late Nymph

Try to eradicate SLF nymphs

An environmentally effective method of killing nymphs is to coat them with a spray of **Neem Oil**, a naturally occurring pesticide found in seeds from the neem tree. Note that this oil is also toxic to bees if they are coated. **Be sure to use a focused spray on SLF only when bees are not active.** This product is available on Amazon but you may wish to ask a Pest Control professional to perform this task. As an alternative to spraying, banding trees with sticky tape will trap nymphs as they climb each day. **These traps must be protected with a raised guard of wire or screening to prevent other creatures from getting stuck.** Circle traps (slightly more complicated) are considered more effective.



Eradicate Tree of Heaven in the summer

While eradicating TOH may not fully eliminate SLF, removing it from your property is still beneficial. It is a non-native, extremely invasive plant that will draw swarms of adult SLF to your property by late summer. **Contact a Pest Control professional to do this.** Let them know you have TOH on your property and that it must be treated on July 1 or shortly thereafter. Specify that **triclopyr** (practically non-toxic to bees) should be applied to all TOH, including saplings and suckers, to ensure that the entire root system is eliminated.

Further Information

For detailed information on the Spotted Lanternfly and the Tree of Heaven, along with a full description of a year-long control strategy to prevent the spread of these invasives, click on this website: <https://mullenpj.wixsite.com/lanternfly> or scan the QR code on the right. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Cranbury Environmental Commission at jgolisano@cranbury-nj.com or at 609-664-3130.

