

Local invasive species- the Spotted Lanternfly



[The Spotted Lanternfly - Deer Lake Borough](#)

The Spotted Lanternfly is a planthopper that originates from Vietnam and China. It is an insect that has invasively spread to Japan, South Korea, and the United States. In their natural habitat, they prefer to stay on Ailanthus trees (also commonly known as tree of heaven) but in the habitats they have invaded they infest crops. Spotted Lanternflies pose serious concern for the ecosystem for this reason. The initial introduction of the Spotted Lanternflies is believed to have been through their eggs being transported from Asia to Pennsylvania.

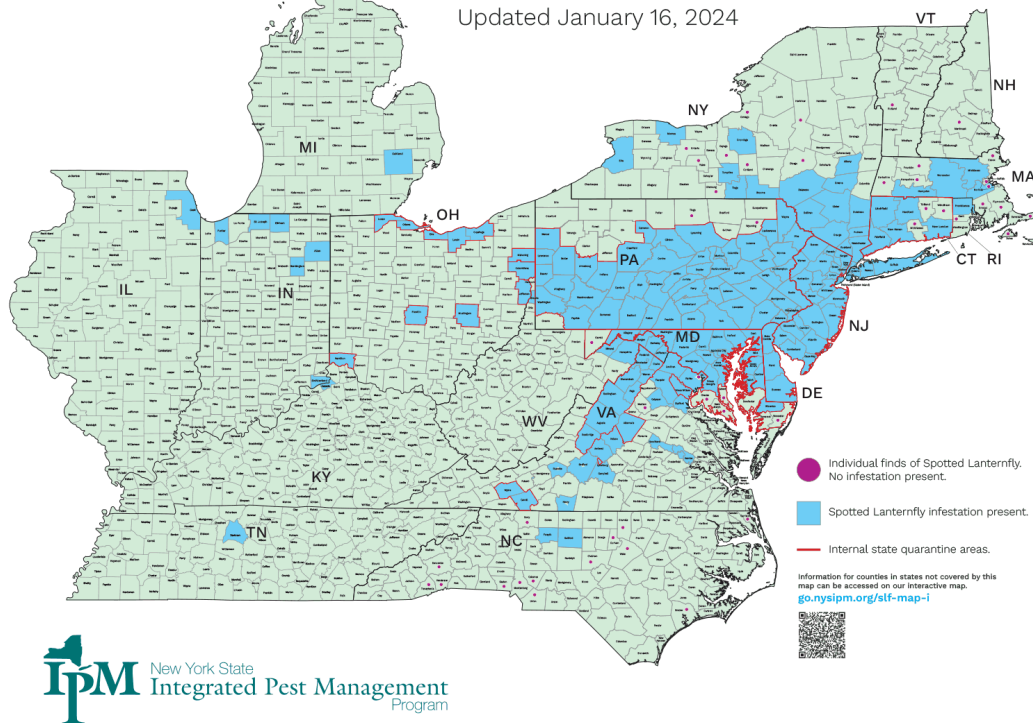
I live in Pennsylvania which is one of the areas in which Spotted Lanternflies are the most prominent in the US, the concentration of the invasive species leading researchers to believe that the Spotted Lanternflies started spreading to the rest of the US from Pennsylvania. Spotted Lanternflies have been a problem for a long time. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Game Commission first confirmed the presence of Spotted Lanternflies in September 2014.

Based on what kinds of crops the invasive species used as hosts, the biggest threats were to the grape, fruit tree and logging industries in Pennsylvania. The biggest risk of spread throughout the state was seen in the transportation of materials that contained egg masses laid on smooth bark, stone, and other flat surfaces. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture banned the transportation of items that could harbor egg masses later in 2014.

These attempts to lessen the spread of the invasive species have proven largely ineffective. By 2021, the Spotted Lanternfly had been found in 34 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. As of January 2024, that number has grown even higher, and as shown by the map below, they have now been spotted in nearly every county in Pennsylvania.

Spotted Lanternfly Reported Distribution in the Eastern U.S.

Updated January 16, 2024



[Spotted Lanternfly Map - Stop SLF](#)

In 2019, Pennsylvania State University estimated statewide costs of the spotted lanternfly to be \$99.1 million in agricultural losses, and \$236.3 million to the forestry industry, every single year. The spread of the invasive species projected an annual loss of \$554 million should the Spotted Lanternflies spread throughout the whole state of Pennsylvania. So clearly, the impact on the local fauna and economy is huge. Agriculture is one of Pennsylvania's biggest industries and the invasive species has an even bigger impact on this vital industry today than ever before.

So, what can you do to help? Be proactive! There are websites to report sightings of Spotted Lanternflies, which is especially helpful if you see them in an area not marked in blue on the map above. Tracking the spread of the Spotted Lanternfly has been crucial for research. You can report a sighting here: [Report a Sighting - The Spotted Lanternfly Project \(lanternflies.org\)](#)

It is also a good idea to check your belongings before traveling. They like to lay their eggs on flat surfaces, so check your vehicle, your outdoor gear or any outdoor equipment you may be traveling with and destroy any eggs you find. It is recommended to destroy them by putting them in a bag of hand sanitizer. It is most important to check for eggs during the fall time as this is prime laying season for Spotted Lanternflies.

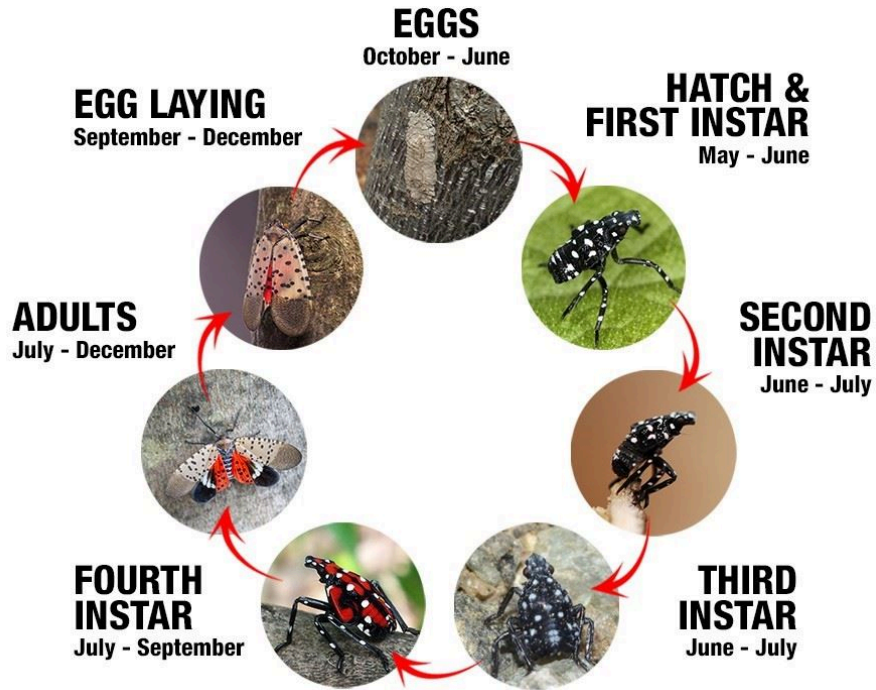


[File:Spotted Lanternflies Red Maple 2019-10-17.jpg - Wikipedia](#)

If you see Spotted Lanternflies in nature, no matter the phase, destroying them by hand or with the use of pesticides does help reduce the population. It may feel cruel, but you are doing your local ecosystem a favor by eradicating any Lanternflies you see.

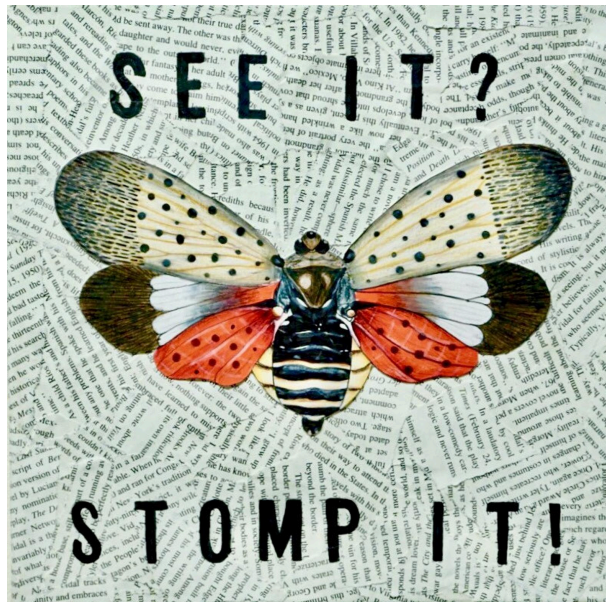
They do not always congregate in large groups as seen pictured, but where there is one there are usually more nearby. Look around and do your part for the environment! If you are not sure it is a Lanternfly, take a picture and send it in to your local Agriculture department or game commission. Anything helps!

It is also helpful to know the stages of growth for the Spotted Lanternfly in order to accurately identify it and therefore keep your local ecosystem safe from these invasive species quickly spreading through the us. The chart below shows the growth cycle from egg to adulthood for the Spotted Lanternfly. It also shows the time of year the insect should be in its respective growth stage.



[Spotted Lanternfly Information | Middletown, NJ \(middletownnj.org\)](http://middletownnj.org)

So, in conclusion, the Spotted Lanternfly spread is concerning due to its massive effects on the local ecosystem and economy, as well as the still growing rate of spread throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Efforts have been made to stop this spread, even quarantine areas still being in place, but their eggs can be hard to spot. Do your local crops a favor and do your best to help control the population of Spotted Lanternflies when you see them.



[Spotted Lanternfly Art Print – The Spotted Lanternfly Shop](http://TheSpottedLanternflyShop.com)

Sources: [Spotted Lanternfly – Profile and Resources | Invasive Species Centre](#)
[Spotted lanternfly - Wikipedia](#)
[Spotted Lanternfly \(pa.gov\)](#)
[Spotted Lanternfly Facts.pdf \(pa.gov\)](#)
[Spotted Lanternfly \(psu.edu\)](#)