

# Plant pest specialists on the lookout for the spotted lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly sounds like it might be a cute bug to have around, but it's not.

Plant pest specialists are asking for the public's help in looking for this invasive pest that has the potential to seriously impact plants and trees of grapes, apples, peaches and many other commodities as well as native forest species.

"This pest has not been found in North Carolina, but it was detected in Pennsylvania in 2014 and is a threat to other states on the East Coast," said Whitney Swink, an entomologist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Plant Industry Division. "We are actively engaged with other state departments of agriculture as well as USDA in monitoring this pest, but could use the extra eyes of the public in looking for it."

The spotted lanternfly in all life stages: a) unhatched egg mass, b) hatched egg mass, c) late stage spotted lanternfly nymph, e) adult spotted lanternfly at rest and d) adults gathering on tree.

Spotted lanternfly has a wide host range, feeding on more than 65 plant species including oak, maple, willow, peach, apple and grape. As the insect matures, the host range narrows to a few species that include tree of heaven and grapes.

These insects have the ability to multiply rapidly, with adult females being able to lay 60 to 500 eggs. The egg masses have the appearance of dried mud and may be laid on virtually any surface, making spotted lanternfly a high risk for being accidentally transported out of quarantined areas and into non-infested areas, especially over great distances.

Young spotted lanternfly feed on stems and leaves, while adults feed on woody plant parts such as branches and trunks. Large amounts of sap are digested by the insects and excreted as honeydew, which can lead to the growth of the sooty mold fungus causing wilting and dying of under-story plants. Additionally, large gatherings of these insects can cause weeping wounds on trunks, which can lead to wilting and death of the affected plants.

Swink said anyone who thinks they may have seen any life stage of this pest is asked to contact NCD&CS immediately at (800) 206-9333 or email at [newpest@ncagr.gov](mailto:newpest@ncagr.gov).

For more information and updates about this pest, go to [www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/plant/entomology/documents/SpottedLanternflyPestWatch.pdf](http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/plant/entomology/documents/SpottedLanternflyPestWatch.pdf)