



Press Release

July 3, 2024

Spotted Lanternfly Nymphs Now Turning Red

Susan Emhardt-Servidio- Senior Horticulturist, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County

The white spotted black nymphs of the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) are molting into red nymphs before their final molt into the flying adults. These invasive plant hopper insects suck the sap of the plants they feed on, stressing the plants which can cause them to become more prone to drought and winter damage. The nymphs are quick and hop forward. If you are trying to smash them or squish them, you should try to get them as they jump toward you, not from behind. Residents have been asking us through social media and phone calls what to do about the SLF. The sticky bands with a wildlife protector and circle traps used on trees are not suited for herbaceous plants and shrubs.

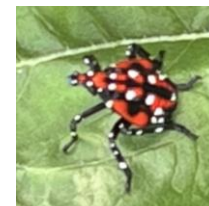


Photo: Jean Alemi

If you are unable to capture and/or physically kill the SLF nymphs, there are some insecticides that may help. Effective contact insecticides for SLF control contain the one of following active ingredients: insecticidal soap, natural pyrethrins, neem oil, zeta-cypermethrin, synthetic pyrethroids (bifenthrin, deltamethrin), malathion, or carbaryl. Contact insecticides need to be applied when insects are present as they usually do not have long residual activity. When using an insecticide, read and follow all label instructions. Do not apply insecticides on the flowers, use more than suggested, or use when temperatures are above 85F°. Many insecticides are toxic to bees, fish and other wildlife. Also, using insecticides will not keep SLF from coming on to your property as the season progresses.

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff and volunteers do not recommend home remedies such as vinegar and water as there are no instructions for making or using the mix. There is always the conundrum of protecting the environment and wildlife and getting rid of invasive plant-feeding insects. Each person needs to decide what is best for their individual situation. A whole blanket spraying of your landscape is not a practical solution.

While we may not be rid of the SLF soon, our local fauna is catching on to help us control these invaders. Some of the observed top predators of the SLF are chickens, cardinals, catbirds, blue jays, tufted titmouse, praying mantis, yellow jackets, orb-weaver spiders, wheel bugs, and ants. Research is ongoing for use of biological controls like parasitic wasps and native fungi that are environmentally friendly to help control SLF populations.

For more information about the Spotted Lanternfly, please check out Rutgers’ Spotted Lanternfly page at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/spotted-lanternfly/>

Questions? Visit our office at 1623 Whitesville Rd in Toms River. Contact us at 732-349-1246 or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RCEOceanCounty/> and Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rceoceancounty/>



Photo: John Liegl