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Invasion of Adult Spotted Lanternflies (part 3) **Susan Emhardt-Servidio** **Horticulturist, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County**

The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) is taking center stage here at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County. As the heat of summer continues, the red and black SLF nymphs are molting into flying adults. We receive numerous calls a day asking about identification, if they infest homes and what can be used to control them.



The SLF do not bite people or animals or infest structures. They are plant hoppers that need plant sap to survive and reproduce. Plant hoppers have piercing/sucking mouthparts. They insert them into branches and leaves to feed. Some of the plants on which adult SLF feed heavily are tree of heaven, black walnut, sycamore, red maple, river birch, and/or willow. Fruit trees and vines such as grapes (wild and cultivated), Virginia creeper and ornamental bittersweet are also favorites.

These invasive insects are beautiful, but are an agricultural pest and a big nuisance to homeowners. Orchards, vineyards and nurseries are continuing to battle these insects to keep them from ruining harvests and destroying crops. For many homeowners, this insect is a nuisance pest and can curtail outdoor activities with their presence in large numbers. For homeowners with large infestations (>500 SLF/plant), Rutgers recommends contacting landscape/arborists professionals for control applications. A list of licensed professionals who can assist with pesticide application and be found at www.njtreeexperts.org. While pesticides may not be ideal in every situation, licensed applicators can target trees/plants with infestations to maximize the control of the insects, but minimize the effect on the environment.

For SLF populations <500 insects per plant, homeowners can use traps and sticky bands with wildlife barriers on tree trunks or flyswatters to kill insects on patios. 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 one of the following active ingredients (starting with lower toxicity): Paraffinic oil or horticultural spray oil, Insecticidal soap, natural pyrethrins, Neem oil, Malathion, Carbaryl, or Bifenthrin. 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.

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 solution. 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/>