

# Help us kill spotted lanternflies, N.J. pleads

Josh Axelrod For The Star-Ledger

Have a penchant for squashing bugs? New Jersey is requesting your service.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture released instructions on Wednesday to slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly, an exotic invasive insect that feeds on 70 different types of plants and trees.

The bug is currently in its full adult stage and will begin laying egg masses in September. If residents notice the grayish putty-like masses, usually attached to trees, they should scrape them off, double bag them and throw them away. Additionally, they can be placed in alcohol, bleach or hand sanitizer.

The NJDA has an instructional video on how to kill the masses as well as a list of treatment options if residents have an infestation on their property.

"We have been working diligently to slow the advance of this bug," NJDA Secretary Douglas Fisher said, according to a press release. "We are targeting areas where severe infestations have been confirmed, and we also encourage residents to destroy the Spotted Lanternfly if possible when they see it. It will take a combined effort to help keep this pest from spreading."

Native to China and South Korea, the spotted lanternfly arrived to the U.S. in 2014 on a shipment to Berks County, Pennsylvania. After spreading rapidly, Penn-

sylvania placed 26 counties under quarantine, meaning that businesses, agencies and organizations traveling through the areas must obtain a permit for moving vehicles and products through the zone.

Currently, Mercer, Hunterdon, Warren, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Somerset counties are under quarantine in New Jersey. All vehicles crossing into the state from Pennsylvania must be inspected, as the bugs are known for hitchhiking on vehicles. Both states want travelers to check any items before they move them out of the quarantine area.

The department is also asking residents outside of the quarantine areas to report sightings by emailing [Slf-plantindustry@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Slf-plantindustry@ag.nj.gov) or calling 609-406-6943.

Though the bug does not pose a threat to humans or animals, it is deadly to plants because it feeds and extracts sap, creates wounds in trees, excretes honeydew which builds up sooty mold and impacts the overall quality of outdoor life.

"NJDA and USDA crews have worked to control the spread of this invasive pest," Joe Zoltowski, NJDA Plant Industry Division Director, said, according to a press release. "Its ability to travel easily on any mode of transportation has allowed it to spread. We are asking residents to do their part by eliminating this bug whenever possible."



The spotted lanternfly has emerged as a serious pest since the federal government confirmed its arrival in this region six years ago. Courtesy photo