



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hunterdon Commissioner Joins New Jersey State Agriculture Secretary Calling For Residents To Help With Spotted Lantern Fly Elimination

Hunterdon County Commissioner Matt Holt joins the New Jersey State Agriculture Secretary in encouraging residents to battle the spotted lantern fly (SLF), which has spread throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and is expected to start hatching again in the early spring and will continue to affect economically important plants during the summer months.

Commissioner Holt stated, "The Ag Secretary, Douglas Fisher, is asking residents to eliminate SLF egg masses before they start hatching at the end of the month, through early May, stopping them before they begin feeding on local vegetation, destroying all they eat. The Hunterdon Board of Commissioners fully support that effort."

According to the Department of Agriculture, the SLF is not a native to this country and accidentally arrived here seven years ago. Since then, it has spread from Pennsylvania to Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, New York, Connecticut, Ohio and has been officially spotted in nine counties in New Jersey.

Hunterdon County's Vector Division, in the Department of Health, has been actively spreading information and awareness to county residents affected by the SLF.

Tadhg Rainey, Vector Control Division Head said, "This invasive insect has had an extensive population increase over the past few years and with county officials, our Division has been exploring opportunities to help residents combat the insects, preferably, killing eggs before they hatch, but certainly methods to kill adult Spotted Lanternflies are also a part of the equation."

The Department of Agriculture website states that the egg masses hold between 30 – 50 eggs and are visible as a lichen or gray moldy patch on a tree and while spotted lantern flies are not a threat to humans or animals, they devastate local plants and have been known to decrease grape harvests by up to 90%.

"We experienced an overwhelming number of calls and inquiries about the SLF last year, here at the county, and it is anticipated that the insects will be back in increasing numbers this year.



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One of the issues in getting rid of them is that their egg masses are often ten feet, or higher, on trees which makes it hard for residents to find and get rid of. We are currently working with county officials to offer solutions to residents and hope that by working with the community and the State's Department of Agriculture, we can significantly reduce the number of insects in the area," Mr. Rainey concluded.

To report a sighting, <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/pests-diseases/spotted-lanternfly/#reporting-tool> or for tips on how to scrap a nest off of local trees, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUOCAPqAkeE>.

Residents can call the county's Vector Division with questions or comments, weekdays, 8 – 4:30 pm, at 908-788-1351.