

Kent County added to Delaware's spotted lanternfly quarantine

DOVER, Del. (October 29, 2020) – Effective October 30, the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) will add Kent County in its entirety to the current spotted lanternfly quarantine of New Castle County. The expansion is due to established populations of spotted lanternfly found in Smyrna, Dover, and Harrington this past week. At this point in the season, a population includes multiple adults or gravid female spotted lanternfly.

The spotted lanternfly is a destructive invasive  planthopper that attacks many hosts, including trees, shrubs, orchards, grapes, and hops. The insect is detrimental to Delaware's agricultural industry, forests, and residential areas. Due to quarantines in other states, interstate commerce will be impacted if the pest is transported out of the Delaware quarantine area.

Quarantine means that residents, businesses, or municipalities cannot move any material or object that could harbor the pest without taking precautions to prevent the spread. Adults can fly, hop, or drop onto a vehicle – meaning that this pest can be easily transported to new areas where it can create another infestation. In September through November, the female spotted lanternfly will lay several egg masses of 30 to 50 eggs wherever it chooses, especially on flat surfaces.

There is extreme concern about the timing of the finds in Kent County. A female spotted lanternfly will lay upward of 200 eggs before she dies due to cold weather. These eggs will overwinter and hatch out in the spring, creating a larger established population in 2021.

“While we understand the frustration residents have with infestations, we must focus on containing the spread of spotted lanternfly to protect Delaware and regional agriculture. Our staff will accomplish this by focusing treatments on priority properties that are pathways for the movement of spotted lanternfly such as highways, railways, public transportation, and distribution centers,” said **DDA Plant Industries Administrator Jessica Inhof**. “Residents can do their part by removing tree of heaven, treating for nymphs and adults from May to November, and scraping and destroying egg masses from December to May. We are asking every Delaware resident to take part in the effort to stop the spread.”

DDA continues to partner with USDA on conducting surveys and property assessments. While USDA has overseen the treatment of properties identified with the tree of heaven, DDA is unsure if the federal funding for this will be available in the future. To date, 44,423 trees have been treated with insecticides or herbicides to reduce Delaware’s spotted lanternfly population.

The tree of heaven is an important food source for the spotted lanternfly, and eliminating this invasive helps decrease the spotted lanternfly population. The tree of heaven is found in industrial parks, along highways and railways, and in unmanaged areas or vacant lots. Municipalities and businesses should prioritize destroying the female tree of heaven while leaving some male specimens as trap trees.

If identified, homeowners should remove the tree of heaven from their property. This insect will feed and lay egg masses on other species of trees and ornamentals. Currently, homeowners can use any direct contact insecticide labeled for planthoppers or leafhoppers to kill adult spotted lanternfly. We have a listing of insecticides licensed for use in Delaware on our Homeowner Spotted Lanternfly and Treatment Fact Sheet online at <https://de.gov/hitchhikerbug>. They can also hire a commercially licensed turf and ornamental pesticide applicator

to treat their properties for these insects. Residents can help by scraping off egg masses into a bag containing rubbing alcohol or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and crushing them to destroy the eggs.

Residents are encouraged to report sightings of spotted lanternfly outside of New Castle County. Citizen reports help DDA inspectors determine how these insects are moving and which transportation pathways they are utilizing. These reports also allow DDA to notify agricultural operations that have plants vulnerable to this insect. Residents can make a report by emailing HitchHikerBug@delaware.gov and including the location of the find in the subject line. Inspectors may visit the site or area to determine if a new spotted lanternfly population is present.

Any person conducting business for a commercial business, a municipality, or a government agency that requires movement of any regulated item within or from the quarantine area must have a permit, available through the DDA spotted lanternfly website. To obtain a permit, a designated individual from an organization must receive training and pass an online test to demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of the pest and quarantine requirements. This individual is then required to train other employees to inspect vehicles and products and remove any spotted lanternfly life stages. The permit demonstrates that the individual understands how to identify the pest and ensure the items transported are not carrying the insect.

The general public is encouraged to download and print the Delaware Resident Spotted Lanternfly Compliance Checklist, indicating that you inspected and know that no living life stage of the spotted lanternfly is present, on regulated articles before moving them. The checklist is available online at <https://de.gov/hitchhikerbug>. DDA recommends keeping the checklist in each vehicle's glove box and noting the date when specific items on the list are inspected before transport.

Examples of regulated articles include:

- Any living life stage of the spotted lanternfly
- Landscaping, remodeling, or construction materials
- Firewood of any species
- Packing materials (e.g., wood crates, boxes)
- All plants and plant parts, including all live and dead trees, perennial and annual plants, and mulch
- Outdoor household articles like RVs, lawnmowers, chairs, grills, tarps, tile, stone, deck boards, and other vehicles not stored indoors.

For more detailed information regarding the quarantine, permitting, treatment, or to report a spotted lanternfly, visit the Delaware Department of Agriculture's dedicated spotted lanternfly webpage <https://de.gov/hitchhikerbug>.

In February 2019, DDA initially quarantined zip codes in New Castle County where an established population of reproducing spotted lanternfly was found. The quarantine was expanded in September 2019 to include all areas of New Castle County north of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and finally included the entire county in July 2020.

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