



Identification and Life Cycle of Spotted Lanternfly in Virginia

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Introduction

Spotted lanternfly (SLF; Figs. 1 & 2) was first found in Virginia in 2018. SLF is an invasive species strongly associated with tree-of-heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, but it has the potential to be a serious agricultural and nuisance pest in Virginia. Awareness of the SLF life cycle is key to recognizing and managing this pest.



Figure 1. Adult spotted lanternfly (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).



Figure 2. Adult spotted lanternfly (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).

Identification

Young SLF nymphs are wingless, black, and have white spots on the body and legs (Fig. 3). They measure up to 10 mm (0.4") long. Mature nymphs develop red patches over the body while retaining

the white spots and are also wingless (Figs. 4 & 5). They measure up to 16 mm (0.6") long.



Figure 3. Young spotted lanternfly nymph (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).



Figure 4. Mature spotted lanternfly nymphs (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).

SLF egg masses measure approximately 25-38 mm (1-1.5") long and 13-19 mm (0.5-0.75") wide. They are usually covered with a grey, waxy coating. Newly laid egg masses are somewhat shiny, but the coating will turn grayish-brown and may crack and fall off with age (Fig. 6). Under the coating are 30-50 brownish seed-like eggs laid end-to-end in 4-7 columns or rows.



Figure 5. Mature spotted lanternfly nymph (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).



Figure 6. Spotted lanternfly egg masses (Eric Day, Virginia Tech).

Life Cycle

SLF overwinters as eggs laid in egg mass. The eggs hatch in mid-April to early May (Fig. 7). Nymphs are present into August, but adults can be found by late July. Adults begin laying eggs in September and continue until they are killed by cold weather (Fig. 7). The life stages can overlap and, depending on the time of year, multiple stages can be found at the same time.

What if you find SLF?

Contact your local Cooperative Extension office to report your find of SLF and learn about SLF management. Find your local Cooperative Extension office at <https://ext.vt.edu/offices.html>

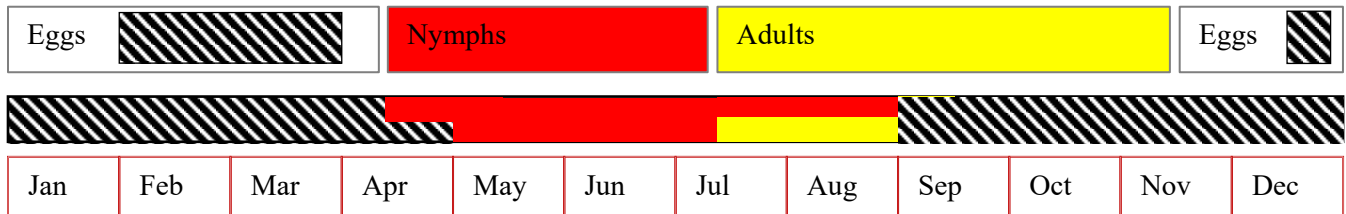


Figure 7. Spotted lanternfly life stages and the time of the year they are found.

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