



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM ANNOUNCES THAT IT WILL TREAT TARGETED SECTIONS OF LINCOLN, SMITHFIELD, NORTH PROVIDENCE, PROVIDENCE, AND PAWTUCKET THAT HAVE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY INFESTATIONS

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is announcing that it will continue treating pockets of spotted lanternfly (SLF) infestations that have been found in Lincoln (including [Lincoln Woods State Park](#)), Smithfield, North Providence, Providence and Pawtucket, with insecticide, weather permitting, starting on Wednesday, July 31. Spraying for SLFs in Rhode Island [started in 2022](#), and DEM and its partners will continue targeted treatments of trees and bushes infested with SLF with EPA-approved pesticides Bifenthrin and Dinotefuran to limit the spread of this destructive pest. State-licensed and insured applicators are trained to apply these products safely while protecting the environment and non-target species. The targeted treatments are not large-scale operations, and the project crew typically consists of one-to-two contracted pesticide applicators targeting several of the most infested areas. DEM staff contact local businesses and property owners before spraying takes place. Spraying will be targeted in transportation areas, highly impacted areas, areas of movement, parks, and areas that are closer to agricultural areas.



Spotted lanternfly nymphs and adults on a tree in Providence.

First detected in Pennsylvania in 2014, the SLF has established populations in 14 states, including Rhode Island. SLFs have been detected Smithfield, North Providence, Lincoln, Cumberland, Pawtucket, Providence, Johnston, Cranston and Warwick. DEM, [USDA](#)

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[Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (APHIS), [URI's Biocontrol Lab](#), and other partners continue to move aggressively to detect and treat scattered SLF populations and egg masses to protect Rhode Island's farms and forests with the goal of controlling SLF spread and not having to resort to large-scale pesticide treatments. DEM is also partnering with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to gain safe access to highways for further inspection and treatment as these are high risk methods of SLF movement. DEM is also working with RIDOT to develop educational training materials for highway and maintenance staff on reporting SLF population observations throughout their active season. The goal of this outreach is to provide tools and resources for those most likely to encounter SLF and in turn bolster the effectiveness of the state's response.

SLFs are commonly attracted to the invasive [Tree of Heaven \(*Ailanthus altissima*\)](#) but also threaten many fruit crops such as apples, apricots, cherries, grapes, hops, nectarines, peaches, and plums as well as native maple, oak, pine, poplar, sycamore, walnut, and willow trees. Rhode Island is at high risk of this invasive pest that can cause significant damage to agricultural crops and trees and affects the quality of life and enjoyment of the outdoors.

This time of year, SLF are transitioning from the nymph stage to the adult stage of their lifecycle. Adult SLF emergence has recently begun in RI, which is their most recognizable life stage. If Rhode Islanders think they've encountered an SLF in a new area, they should [send reports of suspected sightings to DEM](#) and compare their observation with life cycle photos before squashing it. The public can help prevent widescale infestation by learning more about SLF, including the appearance of its life stages, by visiting [DEM's SLF webpage](#). DEM's reporting system has recently been inundated with reports from established infested areas and field surveyors have not been able to respond to each report. DEM asks that the public aid in the effort stomp out the infestation by squishing any SLFs observed their yards or in public areas. For more resources on what residents can do in their yard, visit URI's Biocontrol Lab's [SLF webpage](#). These insects do not bite or pose any health risks to humans, pets or wildlife.

For many Rhode Islanders, the summer season is a time for outdoor recreation and a time of travel, but the SLF is an excellent hitchhiker that is spread through human movement. Their inconspicuous egg masses can be laid on outdoor recreational equipment including cars, boats and their trailers, campers, grills, and firewood. Eggs laid on portable surfaces in the fall can hatch this spring many miles away, so it is important for Rhode Islanders to inspect their gear and vehicles before traveling, even within the state. SLF adults lay masses of 30 or more eggs on surfaces ranging from tree trunks to patio furniture, so the public should check trees and surfaces like rocks, metal, outdoor furniture, and fencing for the masses, which are typically 1.5 inches long, greyish brown in color, and resemble clay. They can be found on surfaces anywhere from an inch above the ground to 7-8 feet high or above which are typically out of reach. After finding an SLF egg mass, Rhode Islanders [should scrape the entire egg mass](#), using a credit card, paint scraper, or other flat, sturdy tool, into a bottle with isopropyl alcohol to destroy the eggs.

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