

Bloomfield Messenger



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Priceless 12 pages

GREEN LIFE

THIS BEAUTY IS A BEAST - D.E.E.P. ADVISES: KILL IT WHEN YOU SEE IT!

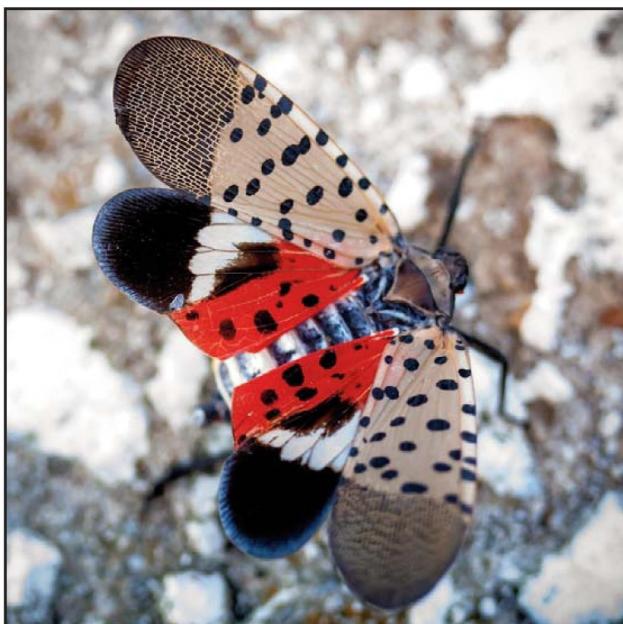


By Paula Jones

Chair, Bloomfield Conservation Energy & Environment Committee

Last Friday this pretty insect stopped at Back East Brewery during Customer Appreciation Day. Unfortunately looks are deceiving. Although it's a very attractive bug, the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) "is a new plant pest to the United States and poses a threat to Connecticut's environment, residential areas, and agricultural interests, particularly forests, orchards, vineyards, and nurseries" (Source: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP))

Despite its name, the SLF is not a fly but a large (one to one-a-half inch long) plant hopper native to China, India, and Vietnam. It likely arrived in North America hitching a ride on imported goods. The insect can walk, jump, or (as an adult) fly short distances. The SLF feeds by sucking sap from the stems and leaves of host plants which can weaken and damage the plant by reducing photosynthesis. Its preferred host is the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) an invasive plant that



Photos: Top left, and second row by Paula Jones



is native to China. The Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy (TRLC) found SLF on Tree of Heaven trees at one



of its Bloomfield properties. TRLC has reported the sighting and is taking steps to remove these invasive trees which are attracting the SLF.

The SLF's ultimate impact on Connecticut's trees isn't yet known, but almost half of Connecticut's forest tree species and many fruit trees are considered potentially susceptible. Additionally, in large numbers these insects make a mess - their feeding produces a sticky,

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST MOSQUITO BITES

As summer fades into fall, we can look forward to crisp fall days without mosquitos! Until the first hard frost, however, remember some simple steps you can take to protect yourself against mosquito bites:

- Minimize activities outdoors at dawn or dusk when mosquitoes are most active;
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants;
- Use insect repellent (look for the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthol-diol, or 2-undecanone);
- Repair holes in screens, dump containers with standing water.



For more information:
www.cdc.gov/mosquitoes

sugary residue called "honeydew" which creates another set of issues.

What to do if you find SLF? The DEEP advises the following:

(1) Take a photo of it and report the sighting; a link to more information and a simple online form can be found here:



or visit
<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/forest/forest-protection/spotted-lanternfly#What1>

(2) Kill it. After I photographed this SLF, it flew the short distance to the neighboring table. I had some explaining to do after my husband walked over to that table and not-so-discreetly smashed it. Happily, everyone was a good sport about it.

So be aware that if you see this beauty you can help the environment by photographing it, killing it immediately to slow down its spread, and then reporting your sighting.