Spotted Lanternfly in Rockland County

Spotted lanternfly — *Lycorma delicatula* — is an invasive plant hopper native to China, India and Vietnam. It is thought to have been introduced to Pennsylvania in 2012 via a shipment of landscape stone. This fall two infestations of the spotted lanternfly have been reported in Orangeburg and Sloatsburg. Although individual insects have been observed in many counties around the State, these infestations are the first to be reported in Rockland.

Why should we be concerned? The spotted lanternfly is a threat to trees and agricultural crops including grapes, hops, apples, stone fruits and blueberries. This planthopper is able to feed using specialized mouth parts that piece the plant’s leaves, stems and trunks and suck the sap. This weakens the plant, causing it to ooze and weep.

How to Help? Residents can serve as citizen scientists and look for and report any sightings. This time of year, be on the lookout for SLF egg masses.

If you believe you have found a SLF egg mass, take a photo and note the location. Then report it to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets by filling out their [online reporting form](#). Together, we can slow the spread of SLF and catch new infestations early.

To learn more about this detrimental pest [Spotted Lanternfly | New York State Integrated Pest Management](#)
Responding to the Spotted Lanternfly

When Rockland calls, CCE Responds. Two infestations of a new-to-Rockland invasive pest, the Spotted Lanternfly, have been sighted in the area. CCE Rockland County is here so we can share our world-class knowledge and expertise with the community. We stay in the know on a wide variety of topics including environmental matters such as these. The Journal News (aka LoHud) reached out to our very own Horticulture Educator, Kristen Ossmann, for insight into this destructive new invader. You can read the article on LoHud.com.

The environmental organizations in the area need regular people such as yourself to be vigilant citizen scientists and help spot the Spotted Lanternfly. Now that the leaves are down and vegetation has died back, it’ll be much easier to see the egg masses. (It makes for a great family-friendly scavenger hunt that introduces kids to STEM and the environment and it gets the whole family outdoors!)

CCE’s Water Quality Interactive Map is Expanding

Explore CCE’s Stormwater and Water Quality Interactive Map to see Trout Streams, impaired waters, stream flow directions, Biomonitoring studies in Rockland and where Harmful Algae Blooms have occurred, and more! Click on the ‘Layers’ tab to explore the different data within the map.

The Interactive Map, along with multiple others, is found on our webpage at RocklandCCE.org/WQSE#InteractiveMaps
2020 Annual Meeting
CCE Responds to the Spotted Lanternfly

Wednesday, December 9
6 - 7 PM via Zoom
Register online at RocklandCCE.org/AM2020

Join us via Zoom for our 2020 Annual Meeting! Hear about our year full of programs and initiatives.

Schedule:
• 6:00 pm Business meeting and election of Board Members
• 6:30 pm Summary of 2020 by CCE Rockland Educators
• 6:45 pm Presentation on the Invasive Spotted Lanternfly

All are welcome, please register to gain access to the event.
By this time of year the fall color is behind us and most of the leaves have fallen from our trees and shrubs. The days are considerably shorter and the yard is beginning to look drab. Most gardeners contemplate their yards over the winter to seek changes and additions. One way to brighten up the yard during such a down period is the use of evergreens and shrubs that produce berries. Evergreens are a nice addition to the garden by providing color and often anchors the yard with some structure during the winter months. In addition, they are a source of freshly cut greens for winter floral arranging, often brightening up a room during the dark days of winter, when we often cannot go outside.

Hopefully, the bulk of chores in the garden are completed, but if not, now is a good time to put down a final layer of mulch and eliminate one chore for the spring. If newly planted perennials are susceptible to spring frost heave, a few evergreen boughs can be placed over the plant to help protect it. In most cases it is not the winter temperatures that are damaging, it is the winter wind and the spring time frost heaving that is critical. This is especially true with new fall transplants. Now is a good time to evaluate the woody specimens in the garden and decide what and when these plants need pruning. After the holidays is a good time to begin pruning most woody plants.

December is also a good time to go out to the garden shed and evaluate the gardening equipment. Smaller tools can be taken inside and cleaned; giving them a fresh layer of oil to protect them. Rubbing the tools with a steel wool pad with an application of light oil, like linseed oil, will remove all but the most established rust. After a final cleaning, rub additional oil onto the tool to prevent further rusting. I used to take my pruners apart every winter and clean/oil all the individual components. It is also a good time to sharpen the pruners, loppers, and any other tool that has a sharp edge. Some equipment that is painted may acquire chips or scratches after a few years of use. It is a benefit to use the off season to prepare and paint those areas to prevent further rust deterioration.

Now is the time to make plans for the spring season and decide what plants to grow both ornamentally and in the vegetable garden. The 2021 Select List of Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners in New York State was just released in Nov. and comprised of a list of varieties well adapted for New York State community, school, and home gardens. It is available on the internet.

Hopefully, all of the fall chores and winter preparation has been completed, allowing the time to cozy up next to the fireplace with a good book and consult the garden catalogues for next season. In closing, I would like to wish all of the Horticultural Lab clients, master gardeners, and supporters of Cornell Cooperative Extension a happy and safe holiday season.

For further information, feel free to contact the Horticultural Lab by calling 845-429-7085 option 3. You can also email the lab by contacting mw767@cornell.edu
When the leaves start dropping and the first “mini-frosts” hit, we gardeners are faced with tough choices of which tropical and tender annuals to toss (in the compost of course!) and which to save and attempt to overwinter.

Usually I’m pretty brutal with these hothouse flowers, figuring “it’s the circle of life” and “it was nice while it lasted”, but this year it’s hard to be cavalier about life and death- even just regarding plants!

Back in March when Covid-19 became a harsh reality, I started my gardening season with an avocado pit, propped by 3 toothpicks in a jelly jar of water on my kitchen sill. It seemed a hopeful act (as gardening always is.) I have propagated pits before just as a lark, but this time I researched their growing needs and followed the advice (from California Avocados) to the letter; “when stem reaches 6” cut back to 3” (hard to bring one’s self to do when it means cutting off big beautiful deep green leaves!), “when roots are thick and stem sprouts leaves again plant it in rich humus soil in a 10.5” diameter pot.”

The timing was perfect as I was able to put the pot outside in a sunny location in early June when all danger of frost was clearly behind us.

California Avocados tells us “the odds that your tree will bear fruit are very small”. My intention was not to become a Hudson Valley avocado farmer, but being that this plant was so cooperative with my efforts I felt I owed it a good winter home and the chance to live and enjoy at least one more summer.

My neighbor works in a county office building in the former Summit Hill complex. He and his co-workers are lucky enough to have a big bank of South facing windows in a spacious hallway. I know he brings his cactus and aloe plants there every Winter and they return each Spring the plant equivalent of “tanned and rested” like snowbirds coming back from Florida, so I implored him to “save the avocado!” Thankfully he agreed. Hopefully in spring, when the avocado comes back to my yard- we’ll all be coming back to some semblance of normalcy!

This past growing season I grew quite a few other non-winter hardy plants but unfortunately, I am not blessed with a bank of South facing windows (or a basement or a garage) so I have to compromise, make do and be experimental with solutions.

Here is a list of the plants I’m working with and a few options for overwintering:

**Gardenia**: I have a large very healthy Gardenia- that I LOVE, so it is getting the prime real estate in my sunny office window (plus a grow light and a tray of pebbles filled with water to keep the humidity reasonably high). Gardenias like night temps around 60 and daytime temps between 70-75.
**Passionflower:** There are many varieties of passionflower vines, some are winter hardy into zone 5 (allegedly!) and can be kept in the ground in our area, but these seem to be difficult to locate. I grew 2 beautiful “Amethyst” passionflowers this summer and they have been blooming on and off since June. I just brought 1 in and am keeping it in a North-facing bay window that gets morning and afternoon sunlight. It’s blooming right now! I gave the other one to my neighbor to bring to his sunny office locale. We’ll see which one does better! They will require regular watering, occasional fertilizing and turning towards the light.

If you chose to let the plant go dormant- it’s just a matter of placing pot in a cool, dry, dark place, letting leaves fall off and watering lightly about once a month.

**Mandevilla:** Another easy plant to overwinter and will NOT survive outdoors in our area is mandevilla. It is a tropical vine, so bringing indoors before even a light frost is necessary. They will do best in a very sunny spot, but they will also handle a Northern exposure room as long as they have some natural light. I have grown them inside before, but not had much luck getting blooms until putting them back outside in the late Spring.

If you wish to let your mandevilla go into dormancy you can cut it back to 10” high and set in a cool (but light) room (55-60 F) and water very sparingly (let soil become very dry between waterings). Any remaining leaves will turn yellow and all off. When you see signs of growth in Spring move to a warmer sunnier location and begin fertilizing and regular watering.

**Geranium:** I grow geraniums every year and always have several large pots of them. I have occasionally tried overwintering them in their pots, but haven’t had the best of luck (probably because I don’t have a great sunny window) they usually get leggy and don’t appear happy. Another friend of mine with a sunny window asked my advice on saving his geraniums for next year. I did some research and told him to cut them back about 50%, keep them in sun, but relatively cool. Do NOT overwater. Keep turning the plants toward the sun and pinch back shoots once or twice during growing season. Fertilize lightly in late April before planting outside in May.
This past Summer I found some interesting very deep red geraniums so I decided to try to keep them. I thought about making cuttings (which is another good method of preserving your plants if you have the room for it) but I decided to experiment with letting the plants go dormant. I’m using the following method: un-pot the plants, shake off the soil and place the plants in brown paper bags or hang upside-down in a cool, dark location. The temperature should be around 45-50. (This is great for you lucky folks with garages and basements, but I’m trying 2 in an unheated shed and 4 in a heated shed.). Periodically in the Winter the roots need to be soaked in water for a couple of hours- then replaced in the bags or re-hung in the dark room. Check all stems to make sure they are sturdy and not rotted or shriveled. In late March plant all healthy plants in potting soil, water and cut off all dead stems. Set pots in a sunny spot and in several weeks you should have actively growing geraniums that are ready to go outside! (fingers crossed!!-)

**MGVs receive 2020 Neighborhood Beautification Award**

A couple of years ago, Marcia and Dave Fernandez decided to renovate their Pearl River home to allow them to “age in place.” They expanded their first floor to include a full bathroom. During construction, the heavy equipment used tore up their front yard. This became the impetus to redesign their yard. Marcia had long been a gardener but it wasn’t until both Dave and she completed the Master Gardener Volunteer training that they felt ready to tackle this project. They attribute many of the ideas they incorporated in their gardens from their Master Gardener training. They specifically mentioned presentations made by Donna DeSousa, Vivienne Dieckmann and Chris Shankar.

The new design involved addressing the slope in front where grass never really took hold. The two of them ripped up a lot of lawn, replacing it with a terraced rock garden designed using rocks Dave had collected. On either side of the curved path, they planted over 60 varieties of perennials, some natives and some personal favorites. They selected plants to increase bird, bee and insect pollinators and those that are deer and rabbit-resistant. They are still hopeful hummingbirds will find the agastache.

Neighbors definitely took notice and this year the Town of Orangetown presented them with the 2020 Neighborhood Beautification Award.
4-H Virtually Explores Real-World Veterinary Careers

This November, 48 high school students continued to explore veterinary science topics through the Virtual Rockland County 4-H Veterinary Science Career Exploration Program.

On November 2, Dr. Ian and Janet Wetherly from the Haverstraw Animal Hospital performed a health examination on their Bernese mountain dog, Bella. During the demonstration, Dr. Wetherly showed how to approach and muzzle a dog, and how to administer medicine and wrap a wound. He also shared his experiences as a veterinary student and veterinarian, and discussed several of the students’ animals.

On November 9, the students learned about cat care and handling from Dr. Maureen Saunders of the Cat Care Clinic of the Nyacks. In this session, the youth observed a kitten health exam and learned about fetal development, ear mites, and health concerns.

Dr. Linda Atkins and Dr. Patricia Collins from the Valley Cottage Animal Hospital led the session on November 16, where they shared information about anatomy and physiology. Dr. Atkins presented radiographs and bone specimens of wild and domestic animals, and explained bone issues and treatment options. Dr. Collins described the structure of the heart, along with blood circulation and common heart diseases. She also shared her experiences with integrative medicine, highlighting specific procedures and her overall approach to animal care.

On November 23, Dr. Kenneth Byman of the North Rockland Animal Hospital shared case studies in veterinary medicine, focusing on a variety of animals including dogs, cats, parrots, and lizards. Throughout the session, Dr. Byman reinforced the need to research animal care requirements before obtaining pets, and to reserve judgment when working with pet owners.

In the next couple of sessions, the participants will learn about the educational requirements of veterinarians, along with animal disease control and traceability. If you would like more information about the Rockland County 4-H Veterinary Science Career Exploration Program, please visit our website at RocklandCCE.org/VetSci or contact Kristin Ruggiero at klf37@cornell.edu.
Leading Teens to Be Leaders

After a rigorous application process, twenty-nine sophomore students throughout Rockland County came together for the annual Teen Leadership Rockland (TLR) Program, sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension and Leadership Rockland, Inc. The program began virtually on November 10th with a brief orientation and activities focused on leadership development. Led by Laura Brown and Jacqueline Sellin from CANDLE, the Introduction to Leadership session incorporated brain teasers and discussions to help youth consider their leadership styles and how they can better collaborate with others.

For the second session, Mike Santos, Andrew Cantone, and Christopher Jagielski of Orange and Rockland led activities focused on Media Literacy. Using resources from Common Sense Education, the facilitators encouraged the students to reflect on their ‘curated selves’ and analyze the benefits and drawbacks of representing different parts of their real selves online. With their experiences in ethics and communication, the facilitators also emphasized the importance of using social media carefully since it can affect future school, job, and social prospects.

Moving forward, students will continue to learn about and develop skills in public speaking, environmental stewardship, government, cultural inclusivity, community service, and more. Through hands-on and active sessions, educators from various organizations within Rockland County will share information with the youth, and will support them as they strive to improve themselves and their community. If you would like more information about the Teen Leadership Rockland Program, please visit our website at RocklandCCE.org/TLR or contact Kristin Ruggiero by e-mail at klf37@cornell.edu or by phone at (845) 429-7085 x 103.

Sample Brain Teasers:

a. R|E|A|D|I|N|G

b. 

- Got Heroes Heroes
- Got Heroes Heroes
- Got Heroes Heroes
- Got Heroes Heroes

Answers on bottom of page 10.
Young Explorers Encounter Nature on Hike

The Young Explorers Nature Hikes continued through November with hikes on November 8th and 22nd. On the first hike, volunteer Jeff Solomon and his dog, Rufus, led youth to the First Reservoir in Harriman State Park. On the trail, the participants identified various living things including witch hazel, bracket fungus, mountain laurel, and mosses, and they differentiated deciduous from evergreen trees. The also viewed the healing capabilities of trees, and learned how to read trail signs. On the second hike, the youth explored the Orak Mansion Ruins and climbed the Jackie Jones Fire Tower, where they could see Lake Welch, the Hudson River, and the New York City skyline. Along the way, the participants identified invasive plants including burning bush and wineberry, and learned about invasive insects including the Emerald Ash Borer and the Spotted Lanternfly. The youth also discussed the negative effects of carving names into trees, and analyzed the causes and decomposition of fallen trees.

The Young Explorers Nature Hikes will resume this spring, so if you would like more information about future hikes, please contact Kristin Ruggiero at klf37@cornell.edu.

Upcoming Events

**Fertilizer Law Certificate Class**

Wednesday **January 9th**, 9 to 11 AM  
Online via Zoom  
This course qualifies participants to obtain a landscaping license through Rockland County. Certificates of Completion required by the County are distributed at the conclusion of the class. Fee: $50.00  
Register Online: RocklandCCE.org/FertLaw

**Senior Citizen’s Day at the Lab**

Every Wednesday in November  
CCE’s Horticulture Diagnostic Lab  
Contact the Horticulture Diagnostic Laboratory on any Wednesday in September and mention this ad to pay just $5 for your first diagnostic service ($10 per sample for each additional sample).