



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Loudoun County

Program Title: Spotted Lanternfly Public Information and Outreach

Program Category: Environmental/Communications

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Beth Sastre

Title: Commercial Horticulturist

Department: Loudoun Extension Office/Virginia Cooperative Extension

Telephone: 703.737.8978

Website: <https://loudoun.ext.vt.edu/>

Email: flores69@vt.edu

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Tim Henshaw

Title: County Administrator

Signature: [Signature]

**Program Title:** Spotted Lanternfly Public Information and Outreach

**Program Category:** Environmental/Communications

## **Executive Summary**

Agritourism in Loudoun County is a major economic force: in 2018, it generated \$413.6 million in income, much of that as a direct result of the County's commercial horticulture enterprises. In 2017, Loudoun's apple crop alone was worth \$48 million, while grapes provided \$19 million and peaches another \$9.2 million.

In 2018, the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), an invasive plant hopper native to Asia with no natural enemies here, first established its Virginia presence in neighboring Frederick County. SLF poses a major risk to Loudoun's grape and commercial horticulture; it could devastate the County's grape, tree fruit, and cane fruit enterprises. In addition, it is a major nuisance for non-farm property owners.

Early public awareness is key to limiting the impact of the Spotted Lanternfly. Through a coordinated program -- involving the Loudoun County Department of Extension Services (DES), Office of Mapping and Geographic Information, and the Public Affairs and Communications office -- Loudoun County quickly organized and launched a broad and effective public awareness communications plan in December 2018.

This major public information and outreach campaign involving multiple county government departments, town governments, and state agencies continues to inform local residents and businesses, as well as give them online tools for reporting sightings of the SLF to authorities, helping the county track and address the threat.

## **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

First detected in Pennsylvania in 2014, the SLF presence there has led to 14 quarantined counties. It has also been identified in five other states. The SLF can be detrimental to the economic, social and environmental health of a community. Though not in itself a health threat, the SLF greatly threatens Loudoun's agritourism businesses (which in 2018 generated a total economic impact of \$413.6 million) Loudoun's agricultural economy, and property owners in general. In 2017, Loudoun's apple crop alone

was worth \$48 million, while grapes provided \$19 million and peaches another \$9.2 million.

To minimize the spread of SLF, Loudoun County officials enlisted homeowners, gardeners, horticultural retailers, agricultural producers and others in a campaign to thwart the spread of the spotted lanternfly. The invasive insect feeds on *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven, sometimes referred to as “TOH”) and more than 70 plants, including agricultural crops such as grapes, peaches, plums, cherries and hops.

The spotted lanternfly has not yet been detected in Loudoun, but it has been found in nearby Frederick County. Loudoun officials say the spotted lanternfly could show up in Loudoun by late 2019. Once established, the pest can be devastating.

## **How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

**Innovative:** Working as a whole County team and reaching out to other municipalities and state offices, Loudoun made use of a broad range of expertise, knowledge, and resources. Loudoun’s comprehensive communications plan is reaching key audiences to educate and motivate them to take action on this important issue.

**Collaborative:** This project involved collaboration among more than 10 County departments, as well as support from state agencies, regional organizations, volunteer associations, and towns representatives.

**Model for Other Localities:** Through the Loudoun County Department of Extension Services partnering with key County departments, such as Public Affairs and Communications as well as Mapping and Geographic Information, a more impactful, collaborative, comprehensive public information and outreach campaign was able to be developed. DES would encourage other jurisdictions to reach out to this important partners to draw in key resources and develop a successful campaign.

## **The Program**

In December 2018, DES reached out to the County’s Public Affairs and Communications office to identify the problem and guide the process of communication for employees and residents.

As a result, the Extension Office, Public Affairs and Communications, and Mapping and Geographic Information joined forces and developed a communications program for Loudoun County’s employees and residents to learn about SLF and report sightings.

Each departmental partner brought key resources:

- The Extension Office provided subject matter expertise, relationships with the scientific and agricultural community, as well as outreach and training activities. These included speaking with community groups and to media on the impact and prevention of the SLF threat.
- The PAC office provided communications planning, media relations and graphic design expertise as well as writing, editing and publishing through the County's communications channels.
- The Mapping and Geographic Information team created a GeoForm/Collector App to assist residents such as Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and other trained volunteers in collecting information on the Tree of Heaven (the SLF's habitat) as well as incidence of the SLF: <http://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=fbf7fceb62524c11b2dc653cea16ea25>

## Program Overview

### Objectives and Goals

1. To increase awareness about the threat of the spotted lanternfly among members of the public and County employees.
2. To educate members of the public and County employees about how to identify the spotted lanternfly through the various stages of its lifecycles, and to know the actions steps one should take when identifying the presence of the spotted lanternfly.
3. To promote the availability of free training and information sessions offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County.
4. To provide the public, County employees, and other partners with the resources they need to participate in the broad effort to prevent or minimize the impact of the spotted lanternfly.

### Audiences

- *General Public*
  - Residents and workers who travel to areas where the presence of the spotted lanternfly has been confirmed
  - Master Gardeners
  - Farmers
  - Winery owners/staff
  - HOAs
  - Media
  - Nurseries
  - Construction contractors
  - Landscaping businesses
  - Rock and stone yards
- *Internal*
  - County Employees who work outside
    - Animal Services

- B&D
  - COR
  - DTCI
  - Fire & Rescue
  - General Services
  - Health Department
  - LCSO
  - PRCS
  - P&Z
- County employees who drive to areas where the presence of the spotted lanternfly has been confirmed
- Library staff
- Economic Development staff
- *Community Partners*
  - Non-County Parks
  - Towns
  - Loudoun County Public Schools

## Communications Strategy

### Key Messages

1. Loudoun County officials are enlisting homeowners, gardeners, horticultural retailers, agricultural producers and others in a campaign to thwart the spread of the spotted lanternfly.
  - a) The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), *Lycorma delicatula*, is an invasive planthopper native to China, India, Vietnam.
  - b) The invasive insect feeds on *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven) and more than 70 plants, including agricultural crops such as grapes, peaches, plums, cherries and hops.
  - c) The SLF has not yet been detected in Loudoun; however, it has been found in nearby Winchester/Frederick County. Other places where the spotted lanternfly has been detected in the United States are Pennsylvania, where it was first seen, and Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey and New York.
  - d) It is likely the SLF will show up in Loudoun within 12 months, feeding on fruit trees, hops vines, or a grape vines.
  - e) Once established, the pest is devastating.
2. Know the life cycle of the spotted lanternfly and how to recognize the insect throughout its lifecycle.
  - a) Learn to recognize the SPL. View the images:
    - November – May: Egg mass
    - May – August: Hatched nymph; developed nymph
    - July – November: Adult spotted lanternfly
  - b) Adult spotted lanternflies usually die at the onset of winter
  - c) SLF egg masses can survive below-zero temperatures. Egg masses typically include 30 to 50 jellybean-shaped eggs in neat rows covered by a waxy substance that looks like mud. The egg masses can accumulate on tree trunks and other surfaces from October to early spring, creating the possibility that infested material or items containing egg masses could be moved inadvertently to a new location.
2. Take action to stop the spread of the SLF.

- a) Know the areas where the presence of the SLF has been confirmed. Check your car when you visit those areas. And check items before transporting them from those areas because the spotted lanternfly fly is a hitchhiker and can be spread inadvertently by people, e.g., via cars, wood, Christmas trees, etc.
  - b) If possible, take photos of the insect, capture the insect in a plastic bag, and report it to Virginia Cooperative Extension by phone at 703-777-0373 or online at <https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly>.
  - c) Look for spotted lanternfly egg masses during the winter and into early spring by checking tree trunks, wheel wells, lawn furniture, fences, storage sheds, rocks and other smooth surfaces. Destroy the egg masses by scraping them from tree bark or any other surface and putting them in a container, such as a bag, filled with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer. The egg masses can also be smashed.
3. Learn to identify Tree of Heaven from other look-alike trees.
  - a) Remove female trees from your yard to avoid clone reproduction and to avoid attracting the SLF.
4. Share information about the pest with your family, friends, and others in your network to help raise awareness about the threat and what people can do to help stop the spotted lanternfly.
  - a) Everything you need to know is posted at: <https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly>
5. Loudoun County offers free training and information sessions to help increase awareness of the threat of the spotted lanternfly.
  - a) The educational sessions offered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County are designed to equip homeowners associations, farmers and other individuals and organizations in the county with the information they need to help prevent the spread of the invasive insect. Through the trainings, residents can learn how to:
    - Identify spotted lanternfly in its different life stages;
    - Destroy egg masses that are laid on tree trunks and other surfaces; and
    - Identify Tree of Heaven from other look-alike trees and remove female trees from their yard.
  - b) Inquire about training at <https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly>

## Strategies and Tactics

1. Communications To Date
  - a) Virginia Cooperative Extension Outreach
    - Intradepartmental, local and state planning meeting (April 24, 2019; representatives from Building and Development; PRCS; Mapping/GIS; LCPL; Town of Leesburg; Master Naturalist–Banshee Recs Chapter; NOVPA; VA Department of Forestry; and VDACS–Office of Plants and Pest Services; met to develop the plan of action).
    - 12 public lectures at LCPL, Towns, Schools, and Loudoun Extension Office
    - 4 Briefs, for Schools and Non-Profit organization
    - Posters hung at the three Park and Ride lots and six other locations including Towns and libraries.
    - On May 14, 2019, SLF GeoForm App Training by Mapping/GIS for volunteers
  - b) Webpage
    - The webpage, [www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly](https://www.loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly), was created in December 2018 and includes an overview of the spotted lanternfly threat, steps to take to help prevent the spread of the insect, a link to an online reporting form, local

contact information for training opportunities and more information, and links to many educational resources. The webpage has been updated several times since December.

c) News Releases

- [12-06-18: Residents Encouraged to Help Stop the Spread of the Spotted Lanternfly](#)
- [04-08-19: Loudoun Offers Training to Help Stop the Spread of the Spotted Lanternfly](#)
- The news release distribution list includes local and regional media, members of the Board of Supervisors, Loudoun County Public Schools, and the Chamber of Commerce. News releases are also distributed to subscribers of [Alert Loudoun](#) and published on:
  - [www.loudoun.gov](http://www.loudoun.gov)
  - [Facebook](#)
  - [Twitter](#)

d) Additional Social Media Posts

- **April 2019: Twitter:** Learn how to help stop the spread of the spotted lanternfly. Sign up to attend a free lecture about the invasive insect April 30, 2019, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the offices of the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County. Details here: <http://bit.ly/2US5d1y>
- **April 2019: Facebook:** Learn how to help stop the spread of the spotted lanternfly, an invasive insect that can be devastating to plants and agricultural crops. The Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County is hosting a free lecture about the spotted lanternfly and what you can do to help Tuesday, April 30, 2019, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at 750 Miller Drive, SE in Leesburg. Details here: <http://bit.ly/2US5d1y>
- **NextDoor:** targeted social media postings to neighborhoods and towns in Loudoun County.

2. Additional Communications

- a) May 24, 2019 Leadership Team presentation from Jim Hilleary & Beth Sastre-Flores about the spotted lanternfly and how employees assist
- b) External and internal communications campaign of a 4 step process to educate, inspect and report the spotted lanternfly.
  - 1) Educate yourself
  - 2) Inspect your surroundings
  - 3) Take a picture and/or capture
  - 4) Report
- c) Update the webpage [loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly](http://loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly) with:
  - The 4 step process messaging
  - Pictures and description of the life cycle
  - Map of the tree of heaven created by Mapping
  - New reporting form created by PAC
- d) Create publications with the 4 step process messaging and possible QR code to the report form. Distribute print resources in a coordinated fashion.
  - Flyer
  - Poster
  - Rack card

- Newsletter articles template for BOS, HOAs, etc.
- e) Internal communications using intranet.loudoun.gov: raise general awareness among employees.
  - Home page graphic slide.
  - Newsflash message for all employees and targeted information for employees working in the field.
  - Link to [loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly](http://loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly)
- f) Targeted employee communications: based on feedback from the Leadership Team, implement focused communications activities among the target employee audience regarding the 4-step process described above.

## Roles and Responsibilities

1. Public Affairs and Communications
  - a) Publish news releases.
  - b) Publish information on the County's website and social media platforms.
  - c) Develop collateral materials for specific use by Loudoun County.
  - d) Develop website form for reporting SLF.
  - e) Coordinate media inquiries.
  - f) Disseminate information to the public, community partners, and employees in a coordinated fashion in accordance with this communications plan.
2. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County
  - a) Serve as subject matter experts.
  - b) Advise County leadership.
  - c) Coordinate with state.
  - d) Provide training.
  - e) Disseminate information to the public, community partners, and an employees in a coordinated fashion in accordance with this communications plan.
  - f) Coordinate targeted information and activities with departments and their employees in accordance with this communications plan.
3. Office of Mapping and Geographic Information
  - a) Create GeoForm/Collector App to assist residents such as Master Gardeners, Master Naturalist and other trained volunteers in collecting habitat and incidence of the SLF.
  - b) Train staff and volunteer groups on using the GeoForm.  
<http://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=fbf7fceb62524c11b2dc653cea16ea25>
  - c) Maintain data and coordinate the dissemination of data to interested groups.
  - d) Create predictability model in coordination with Loudoun County Urban Forester to determine the "hot spots" in order to efficiently and accurately collect habitat and SLF data.
4. County Employees
  - a) Educate themselves using the information and resources provided
  - b) Take action in accordance with the guidance in this communications plan and the direction of their department's leadership.

## Results

### Public outreach

The outreach campaign resulted in **22 lectures and presentations by the Extension Service**, reaching a



total of **150 attendees**.

### Sample news coverage

Communications strategies resulted in more than 20 media placements, including:

[Loudoun Times](#)

[WTOP.com: December 2018](#)

[Loudoun Now](#)

[Patch.com/virginia/ashburn/spotted-lanternfly-could-wreak-havoc-loudoun-county-experts](#)

[WDVM News](#)


### Online form for reporting sightings

[loudoun.gov/FormCenter/VA-Cooperative-Extension-28/Spotted-Lanternfly-Report-Form-179](http://loudoun.gov/FormCenter/VA-Cooperative-Extension-28/Spotted-Lanternfly-Report-Form-179)

### Online, geolocated form for Master Gardeners monitoring the Tree of Heaven

[loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=fbf7fceb62524c11b2dc653cea16ea25](http://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=fbf7fceb62524c11b2dc653cea16ea25)

### Sample publications produced and distributed:

Tree of Heaven ID & Look-Alikes*				
Tree of Heaven** <i>Ailanthus altissima</i> (invasive)	Staghorn Sumac <i>Rhus typhina</i>	Winged/Shining Sumac <i>Rhus copalinum</i>	Black Walnut** <i>Juglans nigra</i>	Butternut <i>Juglans cinerea</i>
				
				
				
				

Prepared by Barbara Bailey, and Beth Sastre, VCE-Loudoun. Adapted from <https://www.virginiafruitent.vt.edu/TOH%20ID%20Sheet%20Whole%20Page.pdf>, Rachel Brooks. Photos by John Seiler, Edward Jensen, Alex Niemiera, and John Peterson: <http://idandro.cnr.vt.edu/dendrology/factsheets.cfm> \*\*Tree of Heaven leaves photo: Doug Goldman, hosted by the USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.



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## •WANTED•

### SPOTTED LANTERNFLY (SLF)








**ABOUT THE INSECT:**

- Invasive species, native to China
- Plant hopper & excellent jumper
- Poor flyer
- Attacks grapes, pines, stone fruits, hardwoods & 70 other plants

**WHERE TO LOOK:**

- Trees with smooth bark, especially the invasive Tree of Heaven
- Lawn furniture, camp & recreation equipment, bricks, stones & outdoor vehicles

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

- Educate Yourself:** Learn to identify the life stages & the invasive Tree of Heaven at [loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly](http://loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly).
- Inspect Your Surroundings:** Check your car, lawn furniture, fences, storage sheds, tree trunks & metal surfaces.
- Take pictures or capture in a container the insect and eggs.**
- Report sightings as soon as possible. Use code:** 

**Loudoun County VIRGINIA**

## •SE BUSCA•

### SPOTTED LANTERNFLY (SLF) MOSCA LINTERNA CON MANCHAS








**SOBRE EL INSECTO:**

- Especie invasora, nativa de China.
- El insecto es excelente saltador: salta entre las plantas
- Es torpe como insecto volador
- Ataca uvas, pinos, frutas con hueso, maderas duras y otras 70 plantas.

**DONDE BUSCARLO:**


- Árboles con corteza lisa, especialmente el árbol del cielo, invasor.
- Muebles de jardín, equipos de campamento y recreación, ladrillos, piedras y vehículos para exteriores.

**CÓMO USTED PUEDE AYUDAR:**

- Investigue:** Aprenda a identificar las etapas de su ciclo de vida y el árbol del cielo invasor en [loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly](http://loudoun.gov/spottedlanternfly).
- Inspeccione su entorno:** Revise su automóvil, muebles de jardín, cercas, cobertizos de almacenamiento, troncos de árboles y superficies metálicas.
- Tome fotos y/o capture y coloque el insecto y sus huevos en un recipiente. Durante el invierno, destruya los huevos.**
- Reporte cualquier avistamiento tan pronto como sea posible. Use el código:** 

**Loudoun County VIRGINIA**


## Sample Facebook post with analytics





**Loudoun County Government**  
Published by Nancy McCormick [?] · April 8 ·


...

#Loudoun County is offering free training and information sessions to help stop the spread of the spotted lanternfly. Details here: <http://bit.ly/2VuePMM>


  
**Egg Mass**

  
**Hatched Nymph**

  
**Developed Nymph**

  
**Adult Spotted Lanternfly**

**DEVELOPMENT STAGES  
OF THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY**





**Get More Likes, Comments and Shares**  
Boost this post for \$30 to reach up to 5,500 people.


**2,202**  
People Reached


**104**  
Engagements


**Boost Post**


Kristin C. Sawyer, Cliff Wicker and 2 others

 Like

 Comment

 Share



### Performance for Your Post

**2,202** People Reached

**5** Likes, Comments & Shares

5 Likes	5 On Post	0 On Shares
0 Comments	0 On Post	0 On Shares
0 Shares	0 On Post	0 On Shares

**99** Post Clicks

17 Photo Views	69 Link Clicks	13 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

2 Hide Post

0 Hide All Posts

0 Report as Spam

0 Unlike Page

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts