

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
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WVDA OPENS INVASIVE PEST HOTLINE

Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) opened an email hotline for the early detection of invasive pests. West Virginia citizens can send a picture of a suspected pest, a brief description of visible damage to buildings or plants and their location (nearest town) to bugbusters@wvda.us. Landowners will be notified if the tip raises concerns, and a site visit may be scheduled.

“Our plant industries division wants to be proactive in protecting our forests. We do not have the resources or the manpower to patrol every square mile in West Virginia,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “We need help protecting one of West Virginia’s most valuable resources.”

Two destructive insects, the Asian longhorned beetle and the spotted lanternfly, have been on the invasive pest watch list for some time in West Virginia. The Asian longhorned beetle was first discovered in Brooklyn, NY in 1996. It has since been detected in several locations including Clermont County, OH in 2011. The spotted lanternfly was first discovered in Berks County, PA in 2014, but it also was detected in Delaware this past November. Both insects are native to Asia.

“The WVDA encourages landowners to send good quality pictures that clearly show any defining features. This will help our staff accurately identify potential invasive pests,” said WVDA Plant Industries Director Tim Brown.

For questions about the new hotline or invasive pests in general, contact Susan Parker at 304-558-2212 or sparker@wvda.us.

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