

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



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WVDA WARNS CITIZENS; BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SPOTTED LANTERNFLY



Charleston, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is asking citizens to be on the lookout for a potential new invasive species to West Virginia. The spotted lanternfly, a destructive, invasive plant hopper, has been confirmed in New Castle County, DE. The insect was first detected in the United States in 2014 in Pennsylvania.

“Invasive species, like the emerald ash borer, have devastated our forests. Getting out in front of these pests is crucial to protecting one of West Virginia’s most valuable resources,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “We are asking the citizens to keep their eyes open for this potential pest.”

The spotted lanternfly is not known to be present in West Virginia, but it currently infests 13 counties in Pennsylvania and was detected last week in Delaware. The spotted lanternfly is native to China, India and Vietnam. It is known to feed on over 70 plant species and is considered an invasive pest in South Korea where it was introduced in 2006.

“We are cautious at this point, but we need citizens to be aware of this pest. The lanternfly is clearly spreading closer to West Virginia’s border. We just want to be ready,” said WVDA Plant Industries Director Tim Brown.

For information, please visit

http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/PlantIndustry/Entomology/spotted_lanternfly/Pages/default.aspx. If someone spots this pest, please contact WVDA Plant Industries at 304-558-2212 or sparker@wvda.us.

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