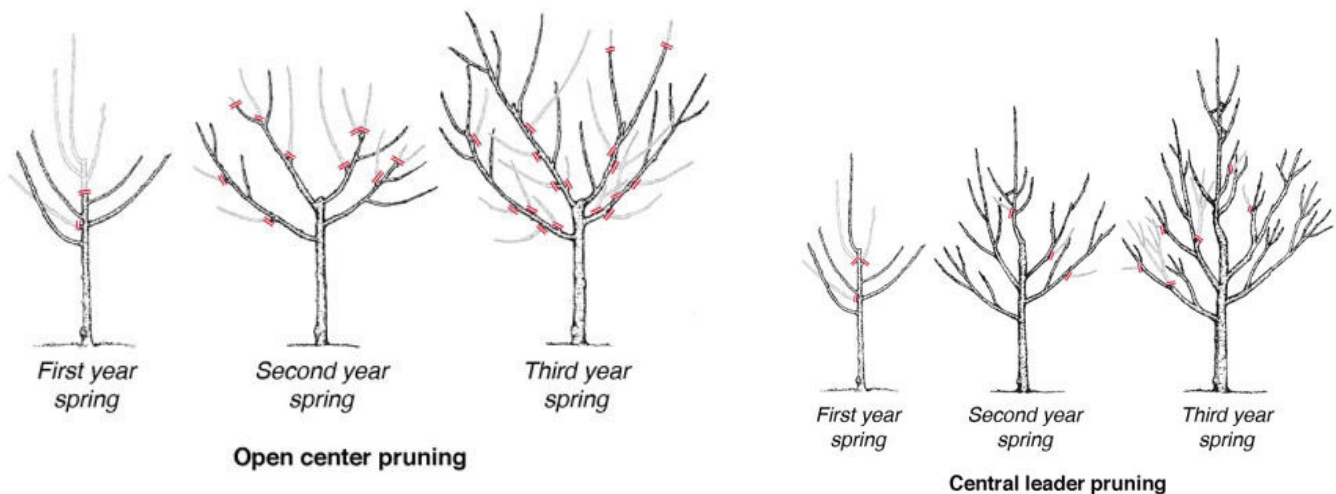


OSU Extension - Auglaize County Weekly Horticulture Newsletter – 2-7-20

Time to prune fruit trees



Despite the colder weather that is forecasted it is that time of the year to begin pruning fruit trees. Pruning trees at this time of the year is easiest because branches can be seen more readily without the presence of leaves and to reduce the spread of disease. Pruning now is used for shaping the tree, removing dead and diseased branches, and removing other undesirable branches. Pruning can be accomplished at any time of the year however. Pruning during the growing season should be focused on removing diseased branches with the exception of fire blight. It is best to remove branches having fire blight during the dormant season while the bacteria is dormant.

Start by preparing your tools. Obtain a sharp sturdy hand pruner, lopping shear, and pruning saw. Clean cuts will reduce stress and diseases.

Know the fruit species and the size (spur, dwarf, semi-dwarf, standard) of the tree before beginning to prune. Peaches and nectarines produce fruit on last year's growth so only remove 50% of new growth from these trees. Apples, pears, and plums produce fruit on old fruit spurs so most new growth can be removed. The smaller the tree the less pruning needs to be done. For semi-dwarf and standard peach, cherry, and nectarine trees establish an open center or vase-shaped design. Apple and pear trees can also be pruned this way, but

the central leader method is usually used. The open center design removes the leader keeping out large branches in the center and allows four to six scaffold (main branch) branches. The center leader design, usually used for pears and apples, involves keeping trees shaped somewhat like a Christmas tree with lateral branches arranged in separate layers or “tiers”, separated by open areas of canopy and branches in lower tiers wider than the upper ones.

Before making a cut visualize the results of the action as the branch can't be put back onto the tree. Suggested pruning cuts include suckers at the base of the tree, diseased branches, especially those infested with fire blight, broken branches, rubbing or criss-crossed branches (branches that rub each other will have a thinner bark and allow disease to enter the branches more easily), downward-growing branches, straight up branches, shaded interior branches, narrow crotches (those branches having less than a 45° angle), competing leaders, and whorls (multiple branches near a single node). Make all cuts at a slight angle to allow water to run off the cut surface.

New growth occurs right where a cut is made. The more buds removed the more vigorous the new shoots. Sun exposed wood remains fruitful and produces the largest fruit. Shaded branches eventually stop fruiting and will never produce again without drastic topping and renewal of the entire tree. Do most of the pruning in the top of the tree so that the lower branches are exposed to sunlight.

[In addition to the pruning instructions above it may be wise to view some videos to get a visual image of pruning. One such video is from the University of Alabama Extension: https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=how+to+prune+fruit+trees+.ext&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-004](https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=how+to+prune+fruit+trees+.ext&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-004)

Viewing additional videos may be helpful, but view those videos produced by Extension.

Remove ALL cut branches from the tree and the ground and burn them to prevent the spread of diseases. Burn them as far from the fruit trees as possible.

Local Observations

Good morning! I pray you are well.

We received trace precipitation last Friday, Saturday and this Monday and frozen precipitation of about 0.5” on Wednesday and Thursday. Rainfall on Tuesday the 4th ranged from 0.21” near Valley and Idle Roads to

0.65" near Bloody Bridge. Rainfall for the week was Tuesday's rainfall. The average rainfall for the week was 0.42", just 0.02" more than last week.

The average high temperature now is 35 degrees F. Temperatures were above normal for five days with temperatures 24 degrees F above normal for 2 days! The average high temperature for the week was 45 degrees F, 10 degrees above normal!

I looked at my bee hive on Sunday and found that the bees were still alive! I fed them fondant and a pollen patty. It is that time of the year to start feeding pollen patties and maintaining fondant.

VegNet

Spotted Lanternfly Slowly Approaching Ohio

February 5²⁰²⁰

The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) is a newly discovered invasive pest from Asia. It is primarily a pest of trees like apples, cherries, black walnut, poplar, maple, tree of heaven and vines such as grapes and hops but it's not reported to attack most vegetable crops. This pest was first detected in Berks County, PA in 2014, and has since spread to NJ, DE and VA; it has also been observed in MD, NY, CT and NC. In January 2020, new detections were found in western PA bordering Ohio and in eastern West Virginia (**Figure 1**).

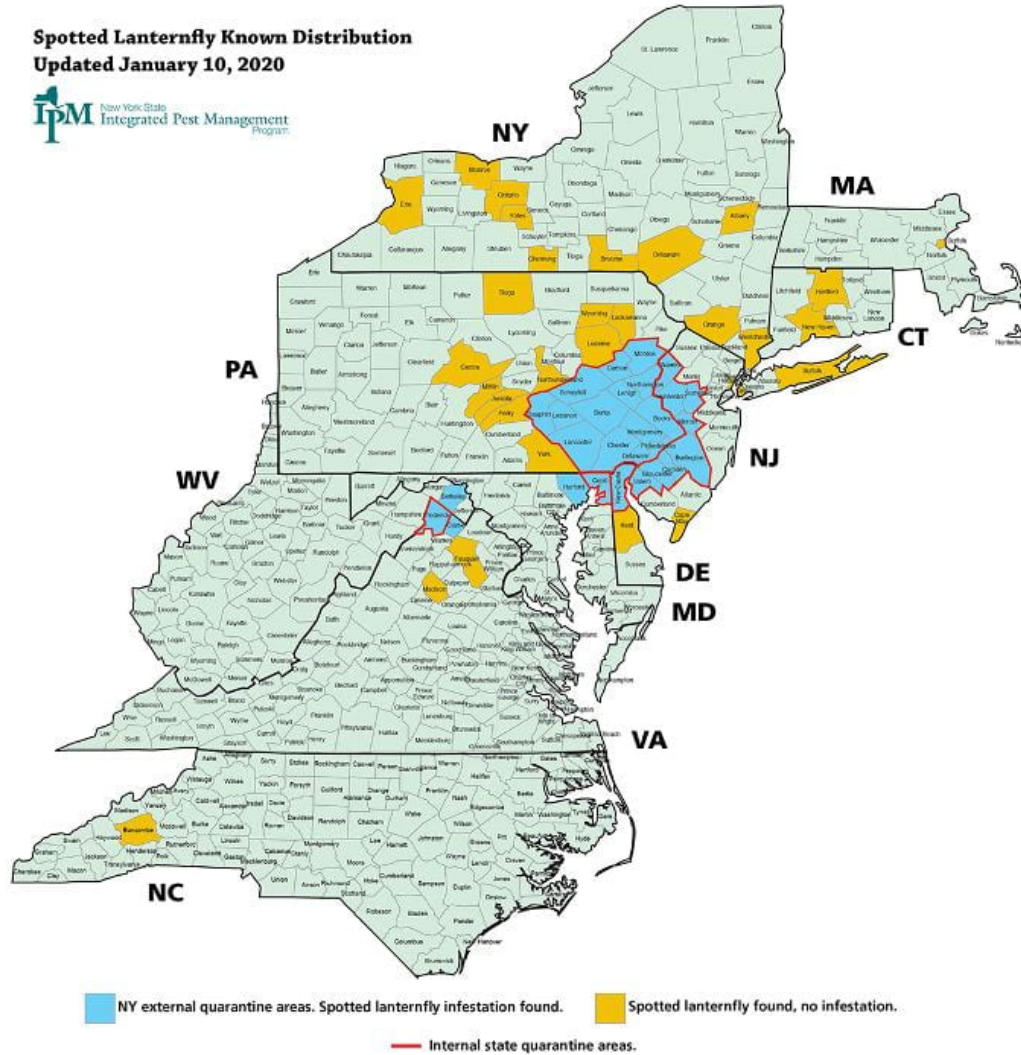


Figure 1. Current known distribution of Spotted Lanternfly.

Damage is caused by inserting large sucking mouthparts into the trunk of the tree or vine and then siphoning out large amounts of sap. Excess sap from either the trunk injury or the planthopper can drip down the trunk

and turn dark if infected with sooty mold. No diseases are known to be spread by this insect at this time, but excessive feeding weakens the tree and causes increased mortality during winter.

This pest is a planthopper and as an adult has red and purple wings and nearly one inch long (**Figure 2**). The immatures resemble stink bugs, being black with white spots when young, and red with black and white spots when older. The overwintering stage is the egg which is laid in masses of 15-30. At this time of the year, the eggs look like elongated brown seeds which can be attached to just about any surface including wood, stone and metal.

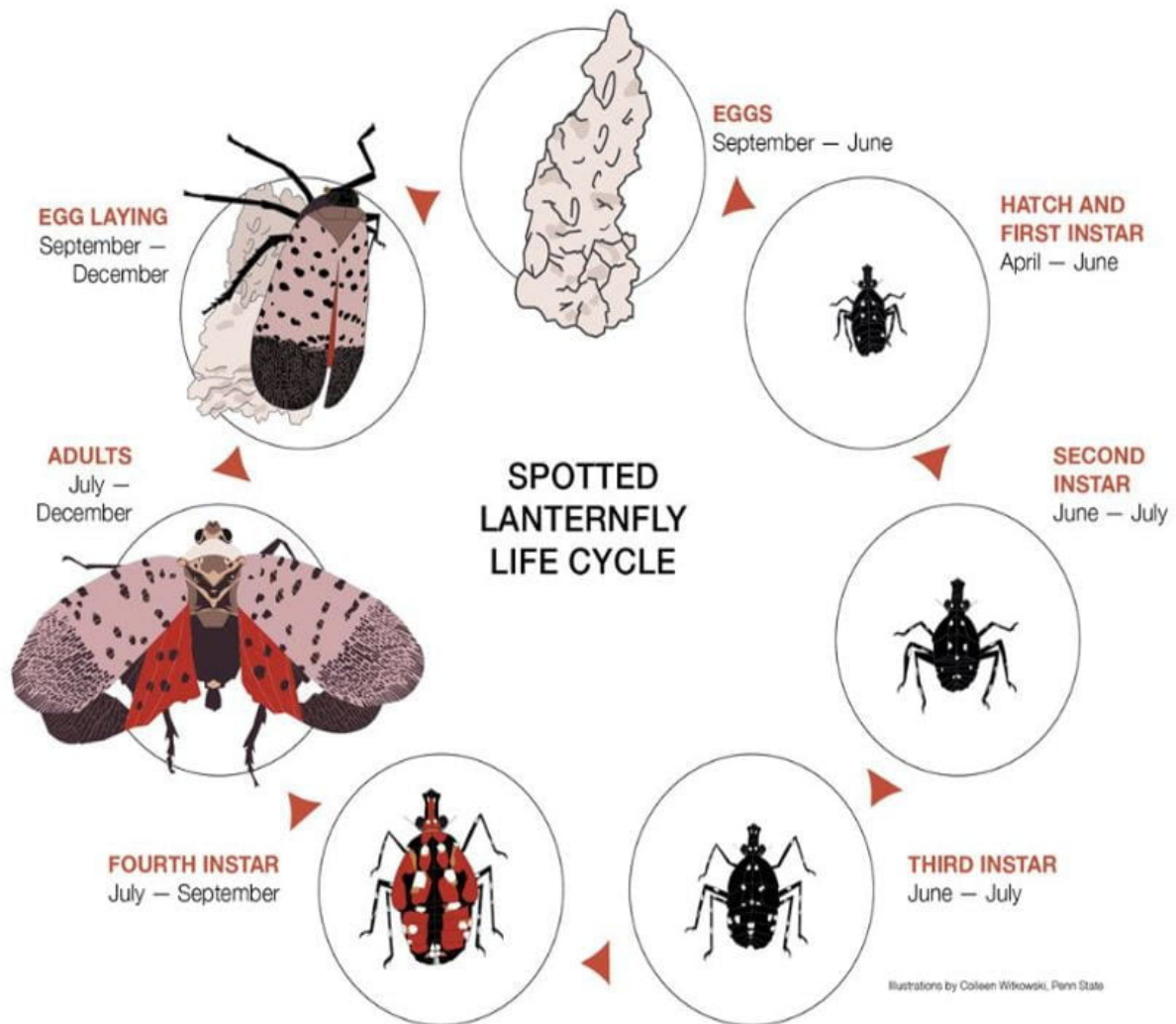


Figure 2. Life cycle of Spotted Lanternfly.

While we have **NOT** seen this pest in Ohio yet, it is within 15 miles of our eastern border and could very likely hitchhike its way into Ohio on a car, truck, trailer, train or boat. If you have tree of heaven on your property, which is one of its favorite hosts, or a vineyard nearby, check the trunks or vines for eggs now or check for nymphs and adults later in the season. If any questionable insects are seen, mark the location, take pictures, and contact your local Ohio State University Extension office or the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Plant Health at 614-728-6400. Do not collect or transport any suspected SLF eggs, nymphs or adults.

For more information and pictures, see USDA's Pest Alert on this pest: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/plant_health/alert-spotted-lanternfly.pdf

This article was prepared by Jim Jasinski, Dept. of Extension and Celeste Welty, Dept. of Entomology

BYGL

No news this week.

Other Articles

Montana Moss Juniper Looks and Feels Soft

February 4, 2020 | [Meghan Shinn](#)

Source: <https://www.hortmag.com/plants/plants-we-love/montana-moss-juniper-looks-and-feels-soft>



Virtues: Montana Moss juniper contributes evergreen color and unique texture to the garden. It is a rugged low shrub that resists deer, needs little water and performs well as a ground cover or edging even near surfaces that reflect heat. The foliage is soft to the touch.

Common name: Montana Moss juniper

Botanical name: *Juniperus chinensis* Montana Moss ('SMNJCHM')

Exposure: Full sun



Foliage: Needles in a slightly bluish green cover this low evergreen shrub. Very thin and highly textural, they call to mind moss, lichens or seaweed when viewed up close.

Habit: This is a low spreading shrub that can reach two to four feet tall and spread three to six feet wide.

Origin: *Juniperus chinensis* is native to Asia, where it grows as a tall, narrow tree. Montana Moss is a low-growing selection introduced to the gardening market by Proven Winners ColorChoice Shrubs in 2020.

How to grow it: Site Montana Moss juniper in full sun and freely draining soil. It prefers dry conditions and should not need supplemental watering after it is established. This is a heat-tolerant selection that can be used near pavement that reflects heat and sun. USDA Zones 4–9.

"Modern tomatoes are very different from their wild ancestors"

Source: <https://www.hortidaily.com/article/9186708/modern-tomatoes-are-very-different-from-their-wild-ancestors/>

The tomato's path from wild plant to household staple is much more complex than researchers have long thought. For many years, scientists believed that humans domesticated the tomato in two major phases. First, native people in South America cultivated blueberry-sized wild tomatoes about 7,000 years ago to breed a plant with a cherry-sized fruit. Later, people in Mesoamerica bred this intermediate group further to form the large cultivated tomatoes that we eat today.

But in a recent study, researchers show that the cherry-sized tomato likely originated in Ecuador around 80,000 years ago. No human groups were domesticating plants that long ago, so this implies that it started as a wild species, although people in Peru and Ecuador probably cultivated it later.

They also found that two subgroups from this intermediate group spread northward to Central America and Mexico, possibly as weedy companions to other crops. As this happened, their fruit traits changed radically. They came to look more like wild plants, with smaller fruits than their South American counterparts and higher levels of citric acid and beta carotene.

The researchers were surprised to find that modern cultivated tomatoes seem most closely related to this wild-like tomato group, which is still found in Mexico, although farmers don't deliberately cultivate it.

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