

IDNR targets invasive species

Eyes on outbreak in Huntington as spotted lanternfly makes its way west

By Amy Lavalley
Post-Tribune
and Paul Eisenberg
Daily Southtown

The lower half of a tree in Huntington, Indiana, has taken on a grayish-red hue. Encrusted with the moth-sized spotted lanternfly, the black dotted insects also cling to leaves, sometimes releasing what feels like the occasional drop of rain but is in fact honeydew, or bug excrement.

The ground below and a few concrete blocks around the unwelcome traveler's new home are covered in sooty mold, the substance that takes over as the honeydew, which also attracts bees and wasps because of its sugar content, decays.

While the invasive tree of heaven is the spotted lanternfly's favorite food source, the insect also feasts on grapes, fruit trees and black walnut trees, posing a threat to recreation and economic interests in its path. That is why Illinois and Indiana naturalists and entomologists are watching places like these 30 to 35 acres where they seem to be contained in Huntington, roughly three hours from the Chicago area, anticipating the arrival of the invasive species that has had the East Coast buzzing.

"I suspect it will be here before long, and there's not a whole lot that can be done about it," said Chris Dietrich, an entomologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey. "It's inevitable. My neighbor has a (tree of heaven) and when I walk my dog by it I look up and expect to see some one of these days."

An East Asian insect first found in Pennsylvania around eight years ago, the spotted lanternfly is making its way west, via railroad cars, semi trailers and other vehicles, hitching a ride or leaving behind egg sacs that take the journey instead.

Citizen scientists reported the spotted lanternfly around July 21 in Huntington, said Vincent Burkle, nursery inspector and compliance officer with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. One person made a Facebook post about the strange insect that was shared with the DNR, and another person called the state agency after finding the bug in their office.

"We went straight there that day and were able to see it," Burkle said.

The unassuming intersection of State and LaFontaine streets in Huntington, about 25 miles southwest of Fort Wayne, is now a battleground for those committed to stopping — or at least slowing — the insect, which also has been found in Michigan near Detroit and in southern Indiana along the Ohio River.

"The spotted lanternfly is a large, sucking insect that sips the sap of trees. It's a plant feeder. It doesn't



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Indiana Department of Natural Resources compliance officer Vince Burkle checks the leaves of a tree of heaven for spotted lanternfly infestation in Huntington, Indiana, on Aug. 17. A closeup of the invasive species. A group of adult spotted lanternflies. Burkle points to an old spotted lanternfly egg mass recently discovered on a building in Huntington. Burkle checks his work vehicle for spotted lanternflies before leaving the infested area. **ANDY LAVALLEY/POST-TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

feed on people," said Cliff Sadof, an entomology professor at Purdue University-West Lafayette.

"It's primarily a threat to fruit growers, and it kills grapes, so wine producers would be concerned about it. It also feeds and reproduces on black walnut trees, and the black walnut is a very valued timber for its veneer, so it's a serious problem for the timber industry."

Kim Kalosky, a resource specialist with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, worries that the arrival of this invasive species will impact quality of life in other ways, too.

"It's going to be a major burden to outdoor recreation," she said, emphasizing the impact on native walnut and oak trees. "Our natural areas host so many millions of visitors. We have hundreds of miles of trails, hundreds of picnic areas, and if we have the type of infestation that's happening out east in some counties, people are not going to want to be outside."

"If you are under a tree where these insects are occurring, you're going to get that rain of honeydew on you. And during a picnic, what else likes sugary things? Stinging insects. So now, wasps and yellow-jackets and other unwanted picnic guests will be attracted to the raining honeydew.... Our natural areas may be able to rebound from spotted lanternfly, but people aren't



going to want to use the natural areas if they are infested."

Sadof joined Burkle during one of his surveys of the insect in Huntington and added the bright side, if one can be found while discussing a nonnative insect, is that the fly's host is the tree of heaven. He describes it as a "tough city tree" that is a weedy species often found along rail lines and in parking lots.

"They're nasty trees so if (the spotted lanternfly) only fed on trees of heaven, this would actually be a great insect to get that plant under control," but the insect feeds on more than 100 kinds of plants,

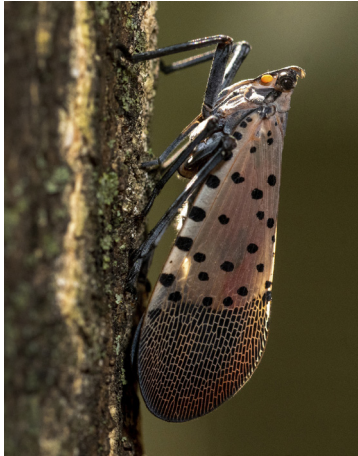
Sadof said.

Because the spotted lanternfly's egg sacs look like a flat clump of mud or dirt, they may go undetected as they're transported on trains, trucks, campers or even outdoor furniture being moved from, say, Pennsylvania to Indiana.

Videos of the spotted lanternfly in Pennsylvania, Burkle said, show swarms of the bugs and the sound of them crunching under people's feet on sidewalks.

"We're hoping to get ahead of it and prevent something like that," he said.

Turn to Invasion, Page 3



Trooper struck by driver

Post-Tribune

An Indiana State Police trooper was struck by an alleged impaired driver Sunday morning in Hobart.

Around 3:40 a.m., Trooper Ryan Parent was conducting a traffic stop on Ridge Road west of County Line Road in Hobart, a news release stated.

According to the Indiana State Police, Parent was seated in his patrol car with emergency lights activated when his fully marked Dodge Charger police car was



An Indiana State Police trooper was struck by an alleged impaired driver Sunday morning in Hobart. **INDIANA STATE POLICE**

Turn to Trooper, Page 2

7 development districts along South Shore rail line get state approval

By Tim Zorn
For Post-Tribune

New development districts around seven South Shore Line stations have received the state of Indiana's official blessing, the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority announced Thursday.

Each new district covers about 320 acres, or half a square mile.

They are around the existing East Chicago and Portage/Ogden Dunes stations and around a new Gateway station in north Hammond, new stations in Munster and at the Dyer/Munster

border, a new 11th Street station in Michigan City and a new Miller station in Gary.

The Gateway, Munster and Munster/Dyer stations are part of the railroad's West Line Corridor project.

The others are in the Double Track project between Gary and Michigan City.

The State Budget Committee's approval means the RDA can begin collecting the property tax and county income tax revenue from new developments in those districts and use it to pay

Turn to Development, Page 2

Invasion

from Page 1

There are insecticides that work against the spotted lanternfly, Sadof said, but spraying doesn't completely eradicate them, since they'll come back. There are beneficial insects that keep the fly in check and are the bug's natural enemy, but releasing them requires an environmental-impact statement.

"We don't want to bring in beneficial insects willy-nilly because we don't want to introduce unintended consequences," he said.

A fungus is being tried out east, Burkle said, but it also attacks other insects.

"They're looking at that as a biotreatment but I think that's still in its infancy," he said.

Once investigators get a better understanding of how widespread the spotted lanternfly is in Huntington, Burkle said, they will start using a systemic insecticide that's sprayed on the trunk of trees of heaven to at least get the bug population under control.

"That trunk sucks it in or it goes into the bark and goes into the vascular system of that tree," he said adding the insecticide won't harm the trees and is applied with a backpack sprayer.

For now, the DNR is taking an educational approach to teach people about the spotted lanternfly. Officials also are working with the extension office in Huntington County on getting yard signs.

Once the survey is complete, "then we'll start knocking on doors to get permission to treat some trees," Burkle said.

While the spotted lanternfly could pose a threat to grape vines, Ryan Phelps, of the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Alliance, said they are not focused on the insect yet. It is one in a long list of dangers the state's winemakers have to keep an eye out for.

"Grapes have so many different diseases and insect issues, this is just another one in line," said Phelps, vintner at Walker's Bluff winery in Carterville, Illinois. Pierce's disease, in



Indiana Department of Natural Resources compliance officer Vince Burkle talks in front of a tree of heaven infested with the spotted lanternfly in Huntington. **ANDY LAVALLEY/POST-TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

particular, which is spread by another leafhopper known as a sharpshooter, and is causing vineyard problems in states to the south and west, is near the front of that line, as is indiscriminate use of broadleaf herbicide that can drift from corn and soybean fields to kill nearby grape vines.

Vintners tend to be hands on with their vines, he said, examining the plants daily, and any infestation should be noticed quickly.

"It could be a pretty bad insect," Phelps said, "but it will have to get in line behind powdery mildew, downy mildew, Pierce's disease, deer and turkey."

Kalosky, with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Illinois, is hoping for some of that vintner vigilance from people who use the preserves, as well as those who live nearby.

"If we can identify it soon enough, we can stop it from spreading," she said.



Burkle holds an adult spotted lanternfly. The invasive species was recently discovered in northeast Indiana.

"They're vibrant, large bugs, and potentially easier to control than emerald ash borer because they're easier to spot, both adults and egg masses."

Early detection, rapid response, she said, is the way to prevent the bug from making an impact on Cook County's preserves, citing action that prevented an

infestation of Asian long-horn beetles after one was spotted in Chicago's Ravenswood neighborhood.

"I'm using 'rapid' in air quotes," she said, "because it still took 10 years to fully eradicate that pest from that small area. But that's an example of a pest that's on the radar. People are aware of it and acted quickly to

remove it. It's an invasive pest success story.

Will Kuiper, 24, orchard manager at Kuipers Family Farm in Maple Park, said traps are used to monitor insects on the Kane County farm. So far, the spotted lanternfly hasn't been reported in Illinois.

"We can't control the migration of an insect, but we have a pretty extensive scouting program which involves going out, and we have traps for certain insects although they don't make traps for every single one that we have to worry about in an orchard," he said.

Kalosky said people who see a spotted lanternfly should take a photo and record its exact location, and then kill the bug and email the photo to lanternfly@illinois.edu.

Indiana officials agree that anyone who finds a spotted lanternfly should kill it and report it at 866-NO EXOTIC (866-663-9684) or

send an email with a photo of the insect if possible to DEPP@dnr.IN.gov.

Kalosky urged people to keep an eye out for tree of heaven trees in their neighborhood, and then monitor them, like Dietrich does, especially at dusk when the bugs are most active.

"Something like that could help us out a lot," she said.

That kind of involvement and attention could end up being a good thing not just for lanternfly prevention but for the health of neighborhood trees in general, said Tricia Bethke, forest pest outreach coordinator for the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, who also works with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on pest monitoring.

"Anything that impacts our residents' ability to recreate is a concern," she said, "but we have a great citizen science monitoring program."

When a threat such as the spotted lanternfly appears on the horizon, it can get people interested in the trees and plants they see every day.

"It's a way to engage people," Bethke said. "When people look at trees and monitor their trees, it improves the long-term survivability of the tree."

Back in Huntington, Burkle said it's not possible to check every 100-car train or semi trailer for the spotted lanternfly, though officials are working with rail and trucking companies to educate them about the pest.

Before he headed back to his office in Fort Wayne, Burkle inspected his DNR-issued car for the spotted lanternfly, checking the wheel wells, mountings for the side view mirrors and the top of the vehicle to make sure he didn't inadvertently contribute to the bug's spread.

"You do the best you can," he said.

alavalley@chicagotribune.com
peisenberg@tribpub.com

Aurora Beacon-News freelance reporter David Sharos contributed.



Okolocha Medical Corporation

Provides The Following Services:

- Complete Family Health Care Service
- School and Employment Physicals & Immunizations
- Pain Management & Urgent Care
- Occupational Medicine
- No Appointment Needed
- New Patients Welcome
- Most Private Insurances Accepted
- Prenatal Care

BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL!!
SPORTS PHYSICALS AND
SCHOOL PHYSICALS
ONLY \$35

MEDICARE & MEDICAID ACCEPTED

SE HABLA ESPAÑOL

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Okolocha Medical Weight
& Pain Clinic
701 W. Columbus Dr. • E. Chicago, IN
219-398-0700

Office Hours: 9a.m.-5p.m. Wed., Thurs., & Fri.



GARY CITY
URGENT and
IMMEDIATE
CARE
NOW OPEN!

OPEN 7 DAYS
8 AM TO 8 PM
1701 Broadway
Gary, Indiana

Services Provided

- On site Radiology
- Echocardiogram
- Removal/ Laceration Repair
- Splinting
- Casting
- IV Therapy
- EKG
- Spirometry
- Common Cold
- Rapid Strep Screen
- Rapid Flu Screen
- Flu Vaccine
- Tetanus Vaccine
- Sports Physicals
- School Physicals
- Employment Physical
- Workers' Compensation

Services Provided

- Allergy Testing
- Blood Glucose & A1C Testing
- Drug Screens
- Full Panel STD Screening
- Lab and Blood Work
- Pregnancy Testing
- Weight Management
- Asthma Control
- Stitches
- X-Rays
- B-12 Injections
- On Site Medications
- Bladder Infections
- Bronchitis
- Colds
- Constipation
- Coughs
- Ear Infections

WHEN TO VISIT:

- Injury Care
- Illness Care
- Family Care



OTHER SERVICE:

- Sleep Studies
- Echocardiogram
- Doppler Service



BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIALS!!
SPORTS PHYSICALS AND SCHOOL PHYSICALS
ONLY!!
\$35

1701 BROADWAY
GARY, INDIANA

WE ACCEPT MOST INSURANCE

- Aetna
- Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Cigna
- Humana
- Medicaid
- Medicare
- Motor Vehicle Accident Claims
- Tricare
- United Healthcare
- Workers Comp Claims