

Update on New Plant Pest and Disease Threats in New York

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Spotted Lanternfly Alert!

We are on high alert for spotted lanternfly, an invasive and large (1") planthopper. The adults are now (late July to mid-fall) active and most recognizable. First found in the US near Reading, PA in 2014, it has since spread to surrounding areas, including Rockland, Orange and Tompkins Counties in NY and all NYC Boroughs. There have been recent (August) reports of a few insects seen further east in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, including an established population in Bohemia (Suffolk). These individuals may have hitch-hiked from infested areas. They don't



bite, sting, or damage structures, but do pose a serious threat to vineyards and can be an annoyance around landscape plants when populations are high. The adults resemble moths, with distinctive gray or tan front wings spotted with black. They are most likely seen on their favorite plants like tree-of-heaven, red and silver maples, walnut, grapes, hops ... but they'll feed on dozens of other kinds of plants, too. They're not particularly hard to kill but without effective natural enemies the populations build to high levels. We ask that potential sightings be reported to spottedlanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov or to Cornell Diagnostic Lab staff (see below). *Please include location, contact info and, especially, clear photos if possible.* Sightings can also be submitted to the [NYS Dept. of Agriculture's reporting page](https://www.nys.gov/office-of-the-governor/agriculture). More at <https://tinyurl.com/NYSIPM-SLF> and <http://ccesuffolk.org/agriculture/spotted-lanternfly-the-next-worst-thing>.

Box Tree Moth: New Pest of Boxwoods in NY

The NYS Dept. of Agriculture recently confirmed (<https://tinyurl.com/BTMinNY>) a new pest of boxwood in western NY, the box tree moth. The caterpillar stage defoliates and can kill boxwood. There can be a lot of webbing as well. This insect has been chewing its way through boxwood in Europe with devastating consequences for the plant (so far only boxwood have been attacked) and was found near Toronto, Canada in 2018. Some infested boxwood were shipped to the US from Canada and in early August caterpillars were found on plants near Youngstown (western NY) and some adults (moths) in pheromone traps in July. There are no



reports of these on Long Island or elsewhere in NY but contact Cornell Diagnostic Lab staff or NYS Dept. of Agriculture (plants@agriculture.ny.gov or <https://arcg.is/1Df8Se>) if infestations are suspected; *please include location, contact info and clear photos if possible*. The insect can be controlled with available insecticides, including organic options, but early detection will help reduce damage and impact. Check out early signs of infestation at: <https://tinyurl.com/BTMEarly>.

Kiss Your Ash ‘Goodbye’

Ash trees are being lost around much of NY—including Long Island—to the emerald ash borer, a metallic green beetle. The immature stage feeds in and destroys the cambium (inner bark)



area, eventually killing the tree. First reported in Michigan in 2002, it was found in NY in 2009, Long Island in 2018 and by spring 2021 in all but four (Hamilton, Lewis, Essex, Washington) NY counties. Ash is a valued forest and landscape tree in much of Upstate NY and mainly a roadside and landscape amenity tree on Long Island. Communities are facing high costs for removal of dead and dying trees, which can be hazardous to work around—declining ash can fall apart catastrophically. It is very hard to detect early signs of infestation; when dieback and damage are noticed it's usually too late to save the tree. Infestations can be prevented through trunk injections or bark treatment with certain insecticides but should be done early if infestations are nearby (within 30 miles) and by a professional arborist. Locate one through the NYS Arborists

(<https://nysarborists.com> > For Everyone > Find an Arborist) or Long Island Arboricultural Assn (<https://longislandarboriculturalassociation.org> > Find an Arborist). There is no need to report infestations in counties where EAB is established. Sightings can be reported on iMapInvasives (<https://www.imapinvasives.org>). Also see the NYS DEC page <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>

Beech Leaf Disease Now Widespread

American beech is an important native forest and wildlife tree and European beech is widely grown as a landscape specimen. Both are under attack by a new disease, first seen in the U.S. in 2012, that distorts, stunts and thins foliage, eventually causing dieback and death of the tree. The disease is caused by a microscopic worm (nematode) that lives in beech buds and leaves and causes distinctive galls (dark bands between the leaf veins) or makes leaves leathery and small. Beeches in western, central and southeastern NY (including Long Island) are affected, as well as in a number of other states. The disease appears to be spreading quickly, although the vector (mode of transport) is unknown. So far no



treatment has been proven effective but we are at the early stages and research is underway to find an effective control. Samples with suspicious symptoms or photos of leaves can be sent to a Cornell diagnostic laboratory (below) or a consulting arborist (see above). See the NY DEC website for a fact sheet on this disease: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120589.html>

Got an insect, plant or gardening question? For Suffolk County residents check Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's website <http://ccesuffolk.org/gardening>. The Home Horticulture Diagnostic Labs are open at Griffing Ave (Riverhead) and Bayard Cutting Arboretum (Oakdale) for samples and inquiries, or email aw242@cornell.edu or sib7@cornell.edu. Residents in other NY counties can check their county's Cornell Cooperative Extension for diagnostic services or contact the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory at Cornell University (<http://idl.entomology.cornell.edu>) for insect issues or the Cornell Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic (<http://plantclinic.cornell.edu>) for plant disease problems. Please include well-focused photos if possible.

Photo Credits: Emerald ash borer adult (top), Dan Gilrein, CCE Suffolk; spotted lanternfly adult Mark Day, Virginia Tech; box tree moth caterpillar Hubert Szafranski; emerald ash borer gallery under bark and beech leaf disease Dan Gilrein, CCE Suffolk.

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