**Segment for Week of 23 August 2021**

**Spotted Lanternfly**

This is Julie Callahan bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Today we will discuss the dreaded and highly invasive, spotted lanternfly.

The spotted lanternfly is a very serious pest of grapes, peaches, hops, and a variety of other crops, and was first detected in Frederick County, Virginia, on Jan. 10, 2018. The spotted lanternfly has also been reported on a range of ornamentals around the home and in the landscape; in high numbers, the insect can become a nuisance pest to homeowners. Since it was first identified in 2018, the invasive species has spread to other parts of Virginia and poses a serious threat to Virginia agriculture as well as home gardens. It is important to look for it and report any finds.

The spotted lanternfly can be described as going through three life stages with a single generation per year overwintering as an egg. Eggs masses are laid in the fall and can be found on many different smooth surfaces but generally on trees with smooth bark. Eggs begin to hatch in late April and continue through May. Once eggs have hatched, SLF goes through four nymphal stages. First, second, and third instar nymphs get progressively larger and are black with white spots on the body and legs. The fourth nymph stage begin to emerge in late June and can be identified by their distinct red color with black and white. Adult SLF emerge sometime in July and are about one inch long and a half inch wide. Adults begin to lay eggs in September and persist through November until they can no longer survive winter temperatures.

When SLF are immature, nymphs tend to feed on smaller, new growth sections of trees and vines. Young trees with heavy infestations show symptoms of flagging, wilting and branch death. As adults, SLF will feed on any part of the tree and can cause black weeping wounds along the trunk. The SLF has been reported to feed on as many as 70 different host species. These include: red maple, silver maple, sugar maple, locust, black walnut, English Walnut, ash, elm, oak, sycamore, southern magnolia, cherry, apple, peach and grape vines.

Please kill all the spotted lanternfly you see and report to the local Extension office. We can expect the insect to continue to spread, but every insect killed is one less that can reproduce. You can safely kill by smashing, knocking into water, or using a registered pesticide according to the label directions.

For more information on spotted lanternfly, call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361