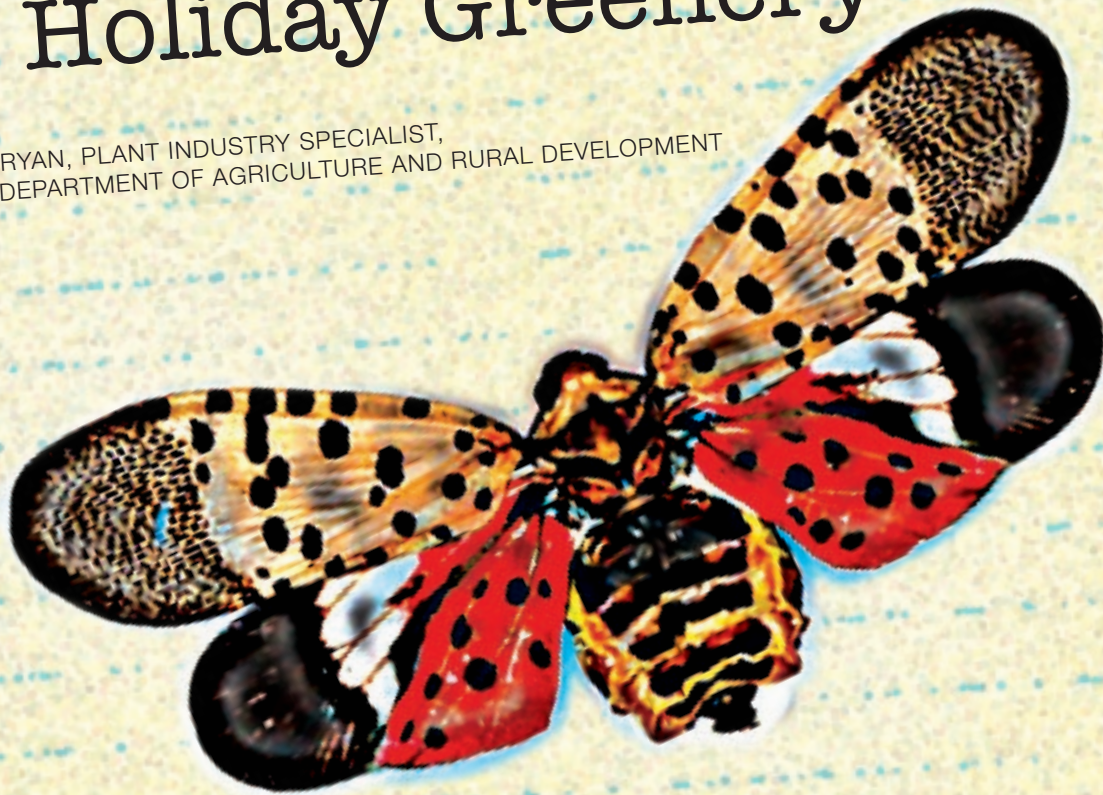


Regulatory Considerations for Holiday Greenery

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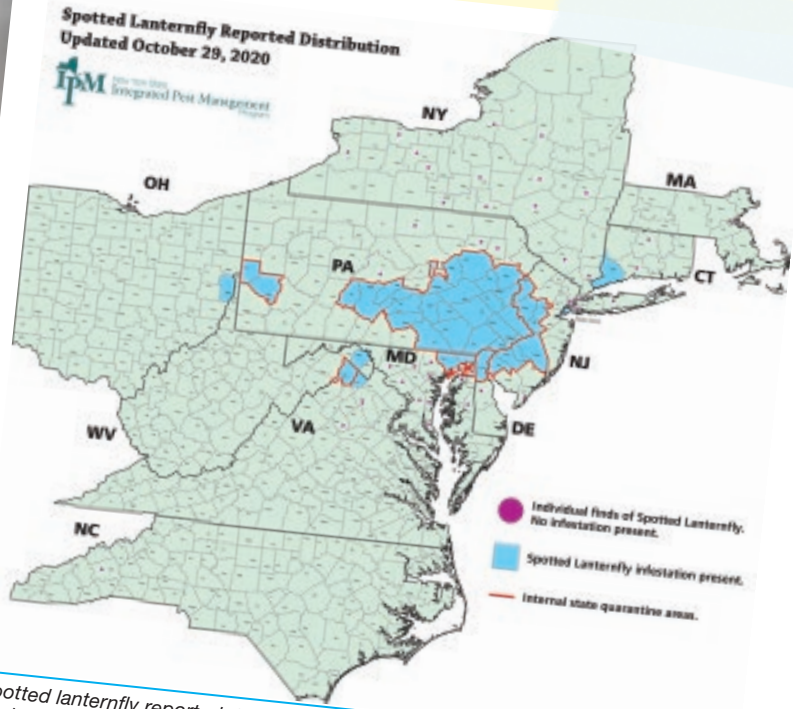
Today's holiday greenery industry is one of vast complexity when you consider all the facets of production, marketing, harvesting, and shipping to the final destinations. One of the industry's challenges is wreaths, boughs, Christmas trees, and grave blankets made from real trees can serve as vectors of insect pests and plant diseases. The industry needs to prepare for the arrival of the next potential invasive pests and deal with those already here. Growers, shippers, wholesalers, and retailers must thoroughly examine incoming and outgoing holiday greenery to make sure it is free of harmful pests and diseases, especially those regulated under state and federal quarantines, to help keep the industry healthy.



Adult spotted lanternfly. Photo credit: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org

Spotted Lanternfly (SLF)

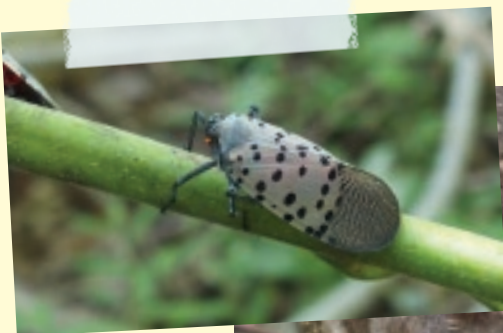
A planthopper native to China, India, and Vietnam, spotted lanternfly (SLF) continues to spread in the eastern United States. First detected in the U.S. in 2014 in Berks County, Pennsylvania, SLF has since spread to nearby counties in Pennsylvania, and to locations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia. The preferred host of SLF is tree of heaven; however, it is known to feed on more than 70 species of plants, including apple, birch, cherry, grape, hops, walnut, and pine. Adults and nymphs damage host plants by feeding on sap from stems, leaves, and the trunks of trees through a piercing/sucking mouthpart (proboscis). SLF overwinters as an egg mass laid on any object of convenience, including vehicles, outdoor furniture, pallets, and, potentially, conifers harvested for holiday greenery. In that respect, SLF has similar egg-laying habits as gypsy moth – it will lay eggs on almost anything. Eggs are laid starting in September and continue through late November or early December, coinciding with the timing of holiday greenery shipping.



Spotted lanternfly reported distribution. Photo credit: Cornell University, New York State Integrated Pest Management Program. <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/>

Gypsy Moth Quarantine

Growers, dealers, and shippers should be aware holiday greenery such as cut Christmas trees, wreaths and boughs and potted Christmas trees are considered regulated articles under the Federal Gypsy Moth Quarantine and must be certified for movement outside of the area regulated. Gypsy moth, like spotted lanternfly, can be transported long distances by an egg mass deposited in a protected location on a tree or vehicle. Spruce, fir and Douglas-fir are especially high risk for transporting gypsy moth egg masses because the gypsy moth can complete its life cycle entirely on those species. If you ship holiday greenery out of the gypsy moth regulated area,



Adult spotted lanternfly. Photo credit Emelie Swackhamer, Penn State University, Bugwood.org



Spotted lanternfly egg mass. Photo credit: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org



Gypsy moth egg masses. Photo credit: Michael Bryan, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development



Elongate hemlock scale on Fraser fir. Photo credit: Amy Kennedy, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development



Spotted lanternfly egg mass. Photo credit: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org



Spotted lanternfly egg mass on underside of pine branch. Photo credit: Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org

make sure you have secured gypsy moth certification through your plant regulatory official. As a last-minute precaution, examine the commodity as it is being loaded or unloaded. Gypsy moth egg masses can be laid near the base of Christmas trees on the underside of branches.

Pine Shoot Beetle Quarantine

The United States Department of Agriculture officially deregulated the quarantine against pine shoot beetle effective November 2, 2020. Pine is no longer required to be certified for this pest under the federal quarantine; however, other quarantines may apply. Pine Christmas trees and potted Christmas trees must still be certified to meet the requirements for gypsy moth if grown in the gypsy moth regulated area and shipped outside of it.

Elongate Hemlock Scale (EHS)

In the past two years, industry and regulators in the Great Lakes Region detected elongate hemlock scale (EHS) in several shipments of wreaths and cut Christmas trees. EHS is an invasive insect pest originally introduced into the United States from Asia. While EHS is usually associated with hemlock, it feeds on other conifers, including spruce and fir. EHS damages trees by feeding on the sap of its host through piercing mouthparts, which extract nutrients from the trees and weakens the tree. EHS has mixed distribution in the Great Lakes Region, so those in the industry need to make sure they do not move it to new areas.

Japanese Beetle

Live, potted Christmas trees are considered nursery stock and all states require a nursery stock inspection certificate to accompany shipments. Nursery stock must also be certified for the quarantines mentioned above when shipping outside a quarantine regulated area. Plus, it may need to be certified for the Japanese Beetle Harmonization Plan requirements and for specific state JB quarantines. These are complex requirements requiring special attention to the details of production, including potting media, pot size and treatments. States with their own unique quarantines include Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Several of those states require advanced notification of nursery stock shipments, including California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. It is recommended growers and shippers consult with local plant regulatory officials early in the year to determine specific Japanese Beetle requirements for destination states.

Other Plant Pest Quarantines

Be aware that individual states may have plant pest quarantines which affect your product. For example, California, Hawaii, and Montana have European pine shoot moth quarantines requiring special considerations and certification. Wreath shippers should also be aware California has a cedar apple rust quarantine prohibiting certain species of juniper, which is sometimes used for wreaths. Michigan has exterior quarantines against balsam woolly adelgid and hemlock woolly adelgid for incoming hemlock, fir, and pine nursery stock. However, cut Christmas trees and similar holiday greenery shipped during the low risk period of October 15 through December 31 are exempt. Michigan's new exterior mountain pine beetle quarantine also exempts pine holiday greenery.

Export to Other Countries

Shipments to other countries usually require the shipment to be accompanied by a phytosanitary export certificate issued by the country of origin. Please note these certificates have a limited period in which they can be used once issued. For

example, Canada specifies that an export certificate must be issued within 14 days prior to the date of arrival in Canada. The commodity must meet the criteria of the destination country; and sometimes it depends on where it is going in the country and where it originated within the country of origin. It is best to consult with your local plant regulatory officials to determine the export requirements and secure an export certificate.

What You Can Do

- Inspect all incoming shipments of holiday greenery.
- Have a separate holding yard so you do not commingle shipments until certain the product is free of unwanted pests.
- Train staff who handle greenery to be watchful for pest and disease issues and offer incentives for reporting infested material.
- Outgoing material should be examined thoroughly to assure you are sending a quality, pest-free product to your customers. If infested material is found, seek the input of an MSU Extension specialist and consult your local plant regulatory staff for input and, if needed, an official inspection report.

- Dispose of infested material properly – infested material should not be composted or put out for collection or placed in the back yard because these disposal methods may allow for the pest to become established. Instead, dispose of infested material by burning or bagging it and putting them in your trash.

For more information regarding inspection and certification of holiday greenery, contact your State Plant Regulatory Official. The National Plant Board maintains a contact list on its web site for all states. Each state also posts a summary of plant health regulations, including requirements for individual quarantines.

Additional Information

- USDA-APHIS Gypsy Moth web site <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/gypsy-moth>
- USDA-APHIS Pests and Diseases web site <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases>
- USDA-APHIS Spotted Lanternfly web site <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/slf/spotted-lanternfly>
- National Plant Board – <https://nationalplantboard.org/>

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