

# Pest Alert: *Lycorma delicatula*



**Figure 1** Four egg masses seen on tree. © Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org



**Figure 2** Early instar nymphs (red and black) alongside adults with spotted wing covers. © Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org



**Figure 3** Bright red underside of wings of adults. © Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org



**Figure 4** Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) growing. Photo by Dani Lindley-Klassen

- In 2014, the first finding of *Lycorma delicatula* (spotted lanternfly) in the US was confirmed in the state of Pennsylvania. Originally from China, this bug has had a significant impact on the vineyard industry in South Korea and the United States over the past few years.
- Spotted lanternfly prefers *Ailanthus altissima* (tree of heaven) as a host but can live on almost any tree. There are four instars (stages) before *Lycorma delicatula* turns into its adult form. The first three instars are black and white colouring and the fourth is red, black and white. **Adults have a pinky-grey wing cover with black spots.** All stages feed on plants and trees and produce a sugary honeydew which, when it falls, can cause sooty mould growth.
- Tree of heaven is planted as an amenity tree but is also an invasive weed in the UK, originally brought over from China but has now spread and is commonly seen growing in scrubland (e.g. along railway tracks) in the South of England. Tree of heaven is on the [prohibited](#) list of invasive plants (listed in 2019) and is prohibited from growing on, transporting or selling. It can be distinguished by its smell (like rancid peanut butter) and smooth leaf margins.
- Spotted lanternfly is very good at hitchhiking by laying eggs on any object. The **egg masses are a dull grey/brown colour** and look like a smudge of mud as seen in figure 1. The eggs can be laid on plants or any object, are believed to have been originally introduced to North America on stone slabs and they have been spread in the US by vehicles among other things.

**If you suspect the presence of the pest, please inform the relevant authority (see over for details).**



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Department of  
Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs  
[www.daeera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daeera-ni.gov.uk)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

**For England and Wales, contact your local APHA Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, or the PHSI headquarters, in York:**

Tel: 0300 1000 313 (please select option 3 when calling)

Email: [planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth.info@apha.gov.uk)

Web: <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/uk-plant-health-risk-register/>

**For Scotland, contact the Scottish Government's Horticulture and Marketing Unit or RPID officer:**

Agricultural crops contact the local RPID officer: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/AOcontacts/contacts>

For non-agricultural crops, email: [hort.marketing@gov.scot](mailto:hort.marketing@gov.scot)

**For Northern Ireland, contact DAERA Plant Health Inspection Branch:**

Tel: 0300 200 7847

Email: [planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planthealth@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Web: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/plant-and-tree-health)

**For finds in the wider environment:**

In GB, please use Tree Alert: <https://treealert.forestresearch.gov.uk/>

For NI, please use TreeCheck: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/about-treecheck>