

SHOULD WE STOMP OUT SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES?

The infamous spotted lanternflies have arrived in Cincinnati! First detected in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 2014, the insects were likely brought to the U.S. from an overseas shipment. They are identifiable by their bright red, spotted wings. Despite their attractive appearance, these arthropods are not our friends. When they feed, they excrete honeydew, a sugary substance that encourages the growth of black sooty mold, which is harmless to humans but can cause damage to plants. This damage includes oozing sap, leaf curling, and plant death. The USDA says lanternflies hurt the almond, apple, blueberry, cherry, peach, grape, hops, and hardwood populations. It's safe to say they are an invasive species whose population needs to be controlled. But how? The easiest, most convenient way seems a bit gruesome: stomp them out. But is this really the best way to deal with a living creature?



Life Cycle



Egg Masses
September – May



Early Nymph
April – October



Late Nymph
April – October



Adult
July – November

YES, WE SHOULD STOMP OUT THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES

Spotted lanternflies are a pest, and they must be killed regardless of the method. State and local officials have encouraged stomping them out, and it is important to follow their recommendation. We need to ensure the bugs can't reproduce and damage our native plants and crops. Stomping them with your foot is the quickest, simplest way to help out as an environmentally conscious citizen, and it's so easy you can do it on the way to school. It's also a great way to relieve some aggression! We have a responsibility to protect our environment, and the method should not matter. There is no point in killing the lanternflies in a different way because they are actively hurting our environment and damaging the agricultural industry.

NO, SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES SHOULD NOT BE STOMPED ON

Every living creature has the right to a painless death. Just because the spotted lanternfly is not human does not mean it cannot experience pain. Squashing them is a cruel and brutal way to control their population, especially when there are alternative ways to do so, such as using wildlife-safe traps, removing invasive trees they rely on (such as the Tree of Heaven), and supporting their natural predators by planting native shrubs and berries. Individuals can provide the insects with a painless death by using a vacuum to collect as many as possible and then freezing them. These methods will help us reduce the spotted lanternfly population while protecting the local ecosystem. Relieving your aggression is not an excuse for hurting a bug. The lanternflies are not trying to harm us; they are just trying to survive. The presence of spotted lanternflies is a human-made problem, so it is up to us to solve it in a humane way.