



Scrape for the Grape: Campaign debuts to combat Spotted Lanternfly threat

Contact: Jennifer Sigal
Visit Loudoun Director of Communications
sigal@visitloudoun.org; 703-669-2002

Leesburg (3/12/24): Multiple Loudoun County organizations have partnered to launch Scrape for the Grape: Keep Loudoun's Vineyards Spotted-less- a community-wide campaign aimed at protecting Loudoun's vineyards and other crops from the invasive Spotted Lanternfly.

Visit Loudoun, in collaboration with the Loudoun Invasive Remove Alliance (LIRA), Loudoun County, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Loudoun Wineries & Winegrowers Association is inviting residents to join a low-impact Day of Action on April 6 to find and scrape Spotted Lanternfly egg masses. Credit card-sized scrapers and bandanas will be supplied and all volunteers will be taught to identify not only the egg masses but also the Tree of Heaven, the invasive tree that draws the Spotted Lanternfly to the area, for later removal.

"This is the 40th anniversary of the Loudoun wine industry and our vineyards are not only a source of economic vitality but also a cherished aspect of Loudoun's identity," Visit Loudoun President & CEO Beth Erickson said. "By joining forces, residents can play a pivotal role in safeguarding our agricultural legacy."

The Spotted Lanternfly poses a significant threat to Loudoun's rural economy, particularly grapevines, fruit trees and ornamental trees. Loudoun—DC's Wine Country®— leads the state with more than 850 acres under vine producing 2,300 tons of grapes annually. The destination is a celebrated wine region with more than 50 wineries producing 25-plus varieties of grapes.

"So few residents understand the negative economic, health, safety and environmental risks that invasives pose to Loudoun County," said Mike Littman, leader of LIRA, which is an alliance of 36 Loudoun HOAs representing nearly 200,000 residents with the purpose of reversing the proliferation of invasive plants in the county. "Scrape for the Grape is a powerful awareness campaign that brings eastern and western Loudoun together to help our wineries and orchards against this threat."

During the event, which runs from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., volunteers will be deployed to locations identified by Virginia Cooperative Extension to scrape the egg masses, each of which can include 30-50 eggs.

Destroying the masses reduces the number of individual adults that will have the ability to reproduce and damage grapevines and fruit trees.

“Another key action is to identify the Tree of Heaven, first favorite key host, followed by grapes. Spotted Lanternfly feeding from Tree of Heaven’s sap makes it unpalatable to predators, so no natural enemies will feed on it,” said Beth Sastre, commercial horticulturist with Virginia Cooperative Extension Loudoun.

As an appreciation, a variety of Loudoun wineries will be offering special discounts to anyone who brings in their bandana or scraping card. For more information and to register visit: [Loudouninvasives.com](https://loudouninvasives.com).