



Scrape for the Grape a smashing success: one million Spotted Lanternflies destroyed

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

LEESBURG (4/9/24) Almost 400 Loudoun County residents joined forces Saturday for the community-wide campaign aimed at protecting Loudoun's vineyards and other crops from the invasive Spotted Lanternfly.

Created by Visit Loudoun, in partnership with the Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance (LIRA), Loudoun County Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Loudoun Wineries & Winegrowers Association, the innovative Scrape for the Grape event provided a low-impact opportunity for the community to help protect Loudoun's agritourism industry.

"I can't think of a more impactful awareness event than what Scrape for the Grape accomplished this weekend," President of LIRA Mike Littman said. "It was a great example of east and west Loudoun coming together for the greater good while educating residents on the growing threat of invasives to our economy, health and safety and environment."

Using a credit-card-sized scraper, and projecting through the life cycle of the insect, volunteers were able to eliminate more than one million Spotted Lanternflies.

"I'm not aware of another community coming together to help grape growers manage Spotted Lanternflies like what I saw in Loudoun," said Andrew Harner, Assistant Professor of Viticulture and Extension Specialist with Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension. "The volunteers removed 16,798 egg masses, most likely totaling around 590,000 individual eggs. Coupled with the volunteers' identification of 147 Tree of Heaven trees that'll also be removed, these efforts are a tremendous service to the local wine grape community."

Volunteers were deployed to 14 locations to remove the egg masses including places like Bluemont Vineyard and Ida Lee Park.

"I was amazed at the community outpouring that came to help save our vineyards from Spotted Lanternflies," Bluemont Vineyard Winemaker Scott Spelbring said. "Though it was cloudy and cold, our volunteers were complete rockstars. Seeing the sea of volunteers in red bandanas across the vineyards was heartwarming."

To show appreciation for their efforts, 14 wineries as well as Bear Chase Brewery offered special discounts, complimentary pours and other incentives for volunteers who came in with their branded Scrape for the Grape bandana. Mom's Apple Pie also provided a free cookie to participating children.

“My daughter said it was like an easter egg hunt without the chocolate reward,” said Loudoun resident Heather McGuiness who participated in the weekend event. “But, she got her cookie from Mom's so that counts.”