



## **Invasive Species: Operation Spotted Lanternfly along the New York State Thruway – I287**

**BY PAUL COLANTONIO**

The Spotted Lanternfly is a sap-sucking invasive species from Asia that can cause significant damage to parks and wooded areas. As nymphs, they are wingless with black and red spots. As adults, they can be mistaken for a colorful red, black, and grey moth, but do not have antennae.

The Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation acquired a fleet of high-powered commercial vacuums to suck up large congregations of Spotted Lanternflies found in our parks.

Cross Westchester Maintenance / NYSTA has been working together with Westchester County to aid in eliminating these destructive Lanternflies that have taken over.

Westchester County is collecting the data from NYSTA/ Cross Westchester to help track exact locations of Spotted Lanternflies. Information is shared with the County by scanning a QR code that is placed on the vacuums. Data that is being compiled includes the municipality, exact location, number of canisters used and life-stage of the Spotted Lanternfly.

The pests, originally from China, have now spread to 14 states in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

Some in Congress want the Department of Agriculture to prioritize research into stopping the spread, fearing the lanternflies will eventually devastate vineyards on the West Coast.

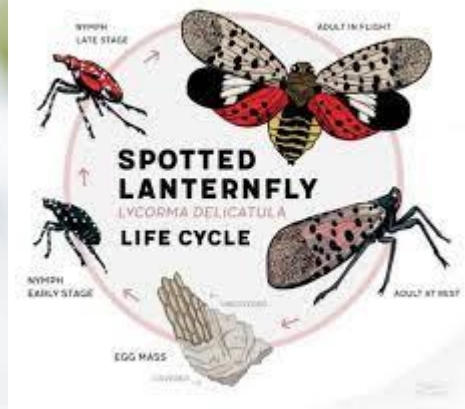


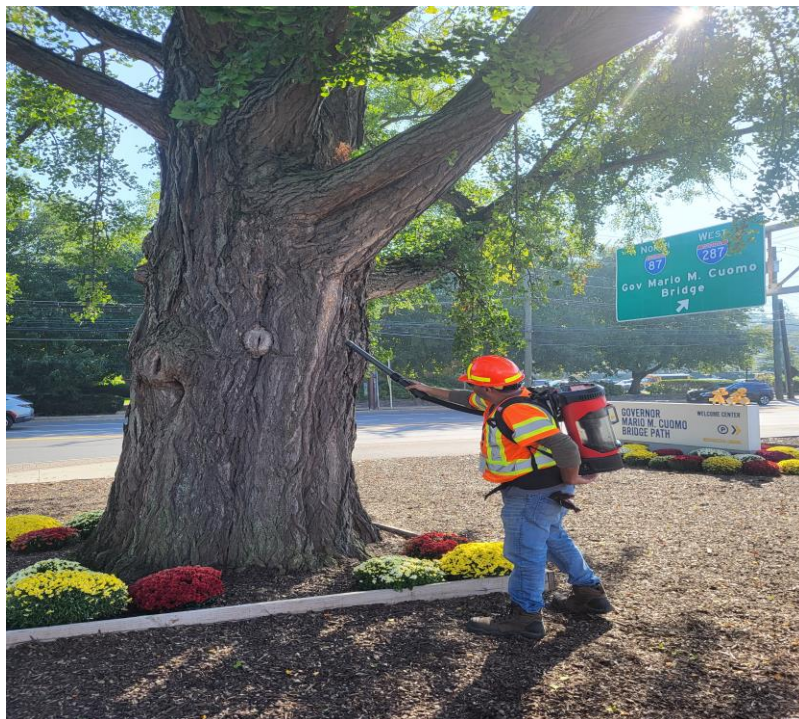
With the assistance of Jessica Schuler, a Horticulturist with the Westchester county Dept. of Parks, TMW's Raymond Rosas and Eard Vidal have stepped up to aid in this difficult task of spotting and collecting Lanternflies as well as logging data.

Adult stage lanternflies do not survive over the winter, but eggs that are currently being laid will survive the cold and harsh elements due to a protective coating. Even though we may not be able to get every lanternfly, we are making an impact on the ecosystem. Each bug collected means up to 100 eggs that are not established.

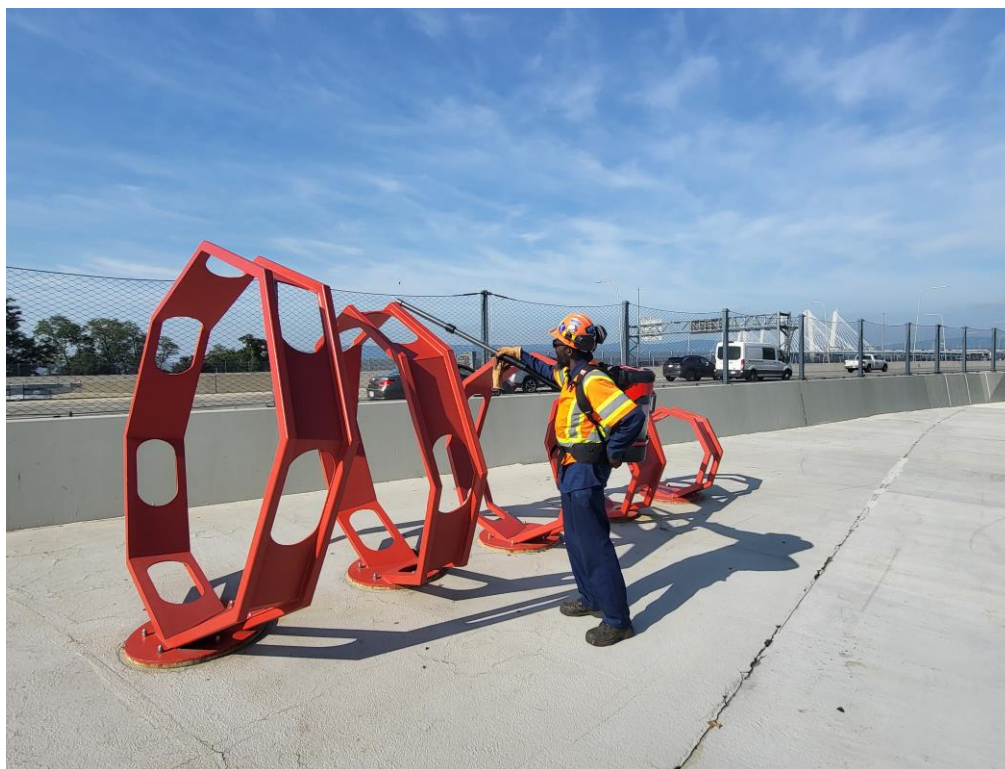
With a tool that brings inevitable comparisons to the movie "Ghostbusters." Raymond and Eard are combatting these critters from along the sides of the Thruway system to aiding municipal property off the system.





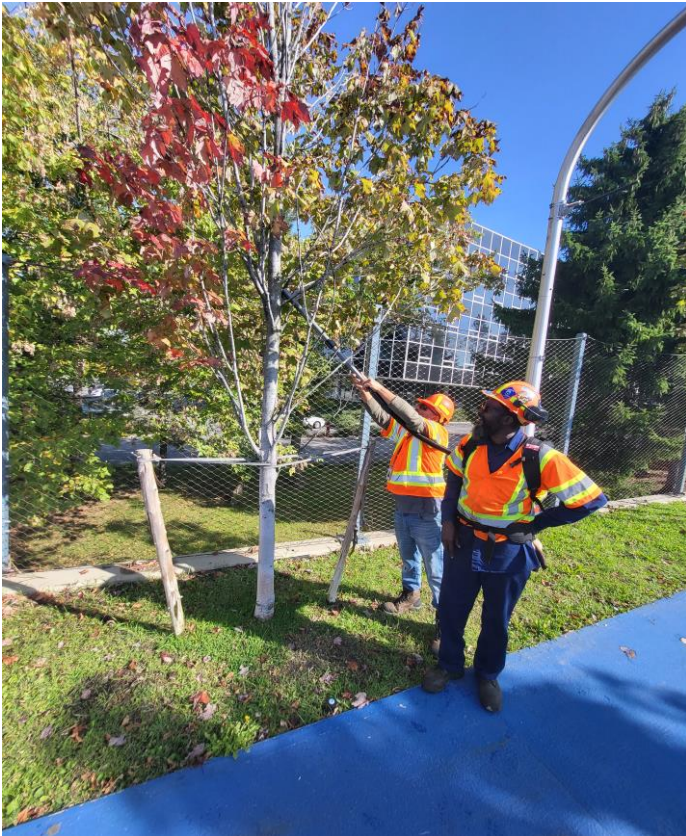
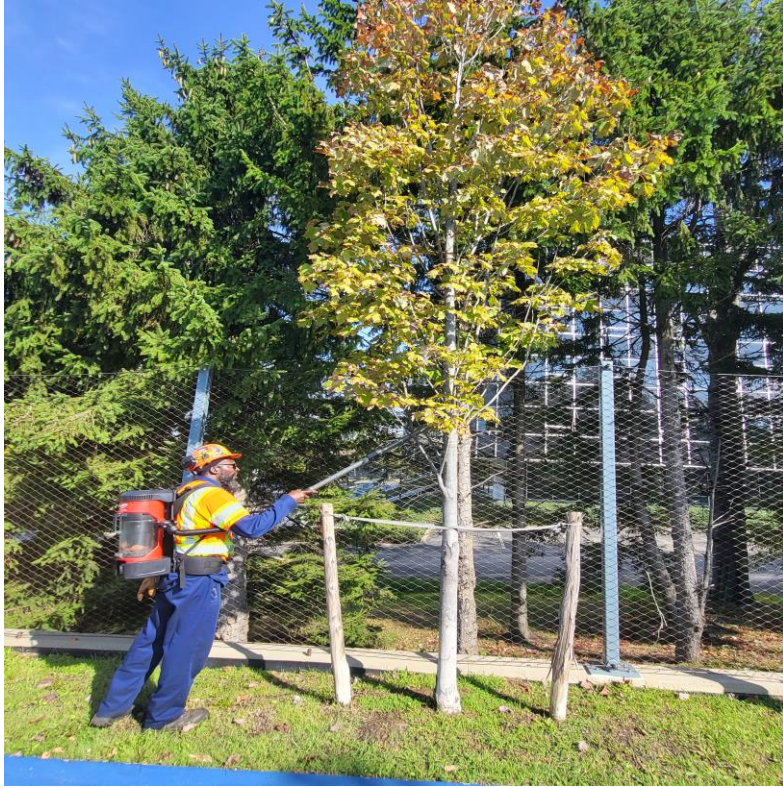


Raymond Rosas collecting Lanternflies on majestic oak tree at the GMCB Bridge.



Eard Vidal on the GMCB SUP path. Lanternflies lay eggs on hard surfaces.







Saving nature and assisting our neighboring communities.



Teamwork in progress: Raymond spots the hidden pests while Eard vacuums them up.

