Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture

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Ricky's Gardening Tips and Tricks and Home Horticulture is an online newsletter designed to provide citizens of Allen County and northeastern Indiana with up-to-date information about Horticulture and home issues, written in a lighthearted style! To subscribe, send an email to kemeryr7@frontier.com.

A To-Do List for Fall Gardening and Landscape Activities

Here are several to-do tasks in the fall garden for those task-oriented people who cannot ever take a rest from the chores of everyday life. You know who you are. You arrange washcloths by color in the linen closet. Your spices are arranged alphabetically — your phone calendar is arranged for every waking moment. Your death was pre-arranged before your birth. You get the drift.

Fertilize the lawn in September with a well-balanced fertilizer.

Fertilizer the lawn again in late October or early November with a fertilizer higher in the first number on the bag. 18-10-10 is a good example.

Spot-treat any broadleaved weeds with a general ready-made weed treatment.

Collect leaves in large bags — not to be placed curbside — but to be used to fill raised beds or place on the vegetable garden.

Use leaves in early spring as a mulch and fertilizer in landscape and flowerbeds. Mow some leaves back into the lawn. Core-aerate the lawn if you haven't done so in a few years.

Wait until early November to cut back perennials to about 6 inches above ground level. Some gardeners concerned about cover for wildlife can wait until March to cut back perennials — but don't procrastinate.

If you find any bagworms – use scissors to remove and then place in a plastic bag in the trash.

Bring in any houseplants from outdoors before temperatures dip below 45 degrees.
Dig up Cannas and Dahlia bulbs just after the first frost– leave outdoors for a few days to cure – then place in a box filled with damp sawdust or vermiculite in an unheated garage until next May.

After all this — enjoy the fall color — take a hike in the woods — gaze at the moon ... and enjoy---

Spotted Lanternfly - All Hope is Lost! Batten Down the Hatches!

First of all, I would encourage readers to save this issue in a special place for next year when the lanternfly will most-likely cause problems in northern Indiana.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources have discovered spotted lanternfly in Huntington County in northern Indiana. This comes a year after the pest was first reported in Indiana in Switzerland County, an Ohio River county in the state's far southeastern corner. Maybe the lanternflies used private jets to fly to northern Indiana. Cliff Sadof, professor of entomology and Purdue Extension fellow, said this migration poses a significant agricultural risk to wine grape growers and honeybee and walnut tree producers. Infestations of the insect, which boasts spotted, bright red wings, have been reported in 13 states, mostly on the East Coast – until now. **Ricky's Notes**: I would point out that this pest will also be a huge problem for citizens – (aka the little people) - not just commercial enterprises.

Spotted lanternfly does not bite, sting, or cause any structural damage to your home – so count your blessings and pray all your plants are not maimed and killed. Pay no attention to the screams of pain as lanternfly ravage your trees, shrubs, perennials, and vegetables.

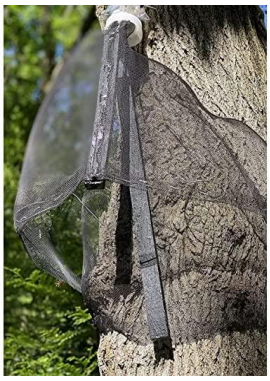
About Spotted Lanternfly Juvenile spotted lanternflies, called nymphs, suck sap from stems and branches which can suck the life out of many plants. Adults continue this feeding activity. This feeding also leaves behind a sticky, sugary residue called honeydew that attracts other insects and promotes the growth of sooty mold, which can further damage the plant. Adults prefer to feed and breed on the invasive tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) but also feed on a wide range of crops and plants, including grapes, apples, hops, walnuts and hardwood trees. Spotted lanternfly is a hitchhiking pest. It lays eggs on almost any surface, including vehicles, trailers, outdoor equipment, and patio furniture, and can be spread long distances when people move infested material.

Extension folks caution strongly against using home remedies to control spotted lanternfly. Home remedies often lack specific mix or use rates or identify how often to use it. Handling some of these home remedies can be harmful to humans. For example, pepper spray can be very potent if it gets on your skin or in your eyes. Milkweed has been suggested to deter or kill spotted lanternfly, but no data has supported this claim. Other notions suggest that lavender oil repels spotted lanternfly while spearmint oil attracts them. Both products are expensive to apply and illegal to use in this manner. (see next paragraph loaded with acronyms).

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) are two major laws that regulate pesticides. Using pesticide products in ways not listed on their product labels is against the law. For a pesticide to be legally applied under FIFRA, it must either be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency or have an official exemption from the requirements. In particular, it is very important to not use home remedies on food crops or livestock used for food. I always envision FAAHR (Federal Agents Against Home Remedies) teams at the ready to arrest citizens for pesticide violations. In fact the Indiana Office of the State Chemist is in charge of licensing for commercial folks and also in charge of handling violations.

Ricky's notes: I just love acronyms. One approved method of dealing with lanternfly on trees is to **trap** the nymphs as they travel up and down the trunk in their journey for food. An example of a sticky trap and a circle trap are pictured. One can spray the nymphs with an insecticide after trapping them. Recommendations for pesticides that control lanternfly vary widely from Extension sources from different states. It is interesting to me that Extension sources from all across the country are so fired up about the use of home remedies, but then recommend pesticides for lanternfly control that contain systemic active ingredients such as Imidacloprid and bifenthrin which can be quite toxic and harmful to humans, beneficial insects, wildlife, and the environment. – especially if bees are feeding on the flowers of a particular plant.

Sticky traps are available for sale on the Internet. Tanglefoot, an extremely sticky material can be used on tree bark or on material wrapped around the tree and is available at Garden Centers and Internet sources.



Circle Trap - Only about $50.00 on Amazon - $5.00 actual materials cost – rest to a behemoth empire.

The University of Maryland Gets Involved-In a Good Way

Maryland Extension experts recommend that homeowners apply **insecticidal soap** or **neem oil for lantern fly control** according to product label instructions. They are considered organic controls, but one still needs to be careful about applying these products near flowers to protect bees These provide good control if they are applied directly to spotted lanternflies and the surfaces on which they are feeding and walking.. Good for you Maryland Extension. A few pesticides available on Amazon and other Internet sources or local Garden centers for lanternfly control are Monterey Fruit Tree Spray Plus - Contains pyrethrin + neem oil for use on fruits, nuts, vegetables, herbs, spices, roses, and shrubs. Harris Home Pest Control Spotted Lanternfly Killer - Contains deltamethrin for use on the outside surfaces of buildings only. Evidently, spotted lanternfly like to collect on the outside of buildings - just to annoy residents.

Further Notes: States differ on recommendations for spotted lanternfly control. All of them are anti-home remedies. I can see their point as folks sometimes use remedies that are touted on social media that are questionable. I would once again also inform Extension sources that they seem blind to the idea that many gardeners do not trust them anymore as non-biased sources of information – especially regarding recommendations for pesticide use. Honestly, most folks I talk with seem to believe that Extension experts are in bed with the "conventional" pesticide companies. Bravo to Maryland for recommending organic controls.

Columbine

Condensed from an article by free-lance author Maddie Forbes

Columbine or Granny's Bonnet belongs a genus of about 60-70 species of perennial plants. The columbine flower originated in Asia and spread to the rest of the world long ago. Columbines are part of the buttercup family. Carl Linnaeus was a Swedish botanist who created the Latin names for the Columbine flower during the 18th century. The genus name Aquilegia is derived from the Latin word for eagle (Aquila). He picked this name for the genus because the five curled flower petals on this plant looks a little like an eagle's claw. Due to the inverted flower's similarity to five doves grouped, the common

name columbine originates from the Latin for dove. The eastern red columbine of North America grows in woods and on rocky ledges from southern Canada southward. The flowers are red with touches of yellow and are pollinated by hummingbirds. There are many variations since columbine easily hybridizes with other columbines in North America and Europe.

Colorado's state flower is the blue columbine, which grows wild in the Rocky Mountains. Schoolchildren banded together to make the lovely wildflower the state flower. The blue petals of this columbine reminded them of the clear blue sky above the Rockies, and the white petals of the snow-capped peaks. Furthermore, the gold pistils and stamens in the columbine's center reminded them of the gold found in the highlands. As a result, columbines are also considered to be a symbol of good fortune and prosperity. The significance of the columbine flower is also linked to taking risks. The columbine is a flower that believes in "nothing ventured, nothing gained." The columbine is the most symbolic of the Fool card in the tarot. Indeed, some historians believe the columbine's link with folly stems from its form, which resembles a court jester's hat.

Propagating from collected seeds is the easiest way to grow columbine as it can be difficult to transplant. After the flowers have faded and dried up, harvest the ripened seed pods left inside and break them open to collect the shiny black seeds. Store them in the refrigerator over winter. They need three to four weeks of cold before germinating, which ensures they will be ready to sow in early to mid-spring. Press the seed into the soil, but do not cover it as the seed needs light to germinate. One can also allow the plant to self-seed after it blooms and it will produce many volunteer seedlings the following year,

Columbines prefer medium moisture, well-drained soil in part shade to sunny conditions. These plants are perfect for rock gardens and woodland gardens. Their attractive foliage makes them suitable as edging plants, and they are also frequently used in cottage gardens.

Leaf miner can be an issue, along with powdery mildew, but most of the time it is just better to allow columbine to naturalize in an area and let it be.

Tree-of-Heaven

Spotted Lanternfly has discovered a variety of native North American tree species on which to feed, but researchers have discovered that invasive tree-of-heaven is the insect's favorite host as a place to lay their eggs. This makes sense because both the insect and the tree are native to China.

The name tree-of-heaven most likely has to do with how large the tree can grow - reaching heights of 80 feet and up to 6 feet in diameter. It may have also been called tree-of-heaven because the tree was and is still used medicinally by the Chinese for all sorts of ailments and also for silk production, wood for burning, erosion stabilization – just to name a few benefits of the tree in its native range.
The tree was introduced to Great Britain long ago because it was believed that extracts from the tree cured malaria (They don't). Tree-of-Heaven was then introduced to America in 1784, and became a popular

ornamental tree commonly found in nurseries by the 1840s. It was extensively planted in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. areas. Tree-of-heaven was also brought to California by Chinese immigrants during the Gold Rush. By the early 1900s the tree began losing popularity due to its "weedy" nature, prolific root sprouting, and foul odor. Tree-of-heaven has since spread across the U.S. and become a common invasive plant. The tree is mostly a problem in waste areas in cities where the tree was allowed to spread because no one cared if the tree was present in the first place.
The tree is a very high pollen producer and a moderate source of allergy in some people. In addition, a few cases of skin irritation or dermatitis have been reported from contact with plant parts (leaves, branches, seeds, and bark) and products. Symptoms often vary and depend on several factors, including the sensitivity of the individual, the extent of contact, and the condition of the plant or plant product. There are rare reports of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) from exposure to sap through broken skin, blisters, or cuts. People who have extensive contact with the tree should wear protective clothing and gloves and be careful to avoid contact with the sap. Tree-of-heaven also produces chemicals that suppress the growth of nearby plants, another factor that makes it a problematic invasive species. Female trees are prolific seeders with the potential to produce more than 300,000 seeds annually. The single-seeded samaras are wind dispersed.

With the discovery of spotted lanternfly , now there is an increased movement to eradicate tree-of-heaven from America. I would postulate that this effort will be impossible – because other efforts to eradicate species of insects or non-native trees, shrubs and perennials have failed miserably. I have seen a few specimens of Tree-of-Heaven in central to south central areas of Fort Wayne. Since the tree is non-native and invasive, and now draws spotted lanternfly, it should be removed anyway.

How to Identify Tree-of-Heaven.

Since the tree is diecious, it is easier to spot the female trees in mid-to-late summer when the female trees flower and produce seeds in massive quantities. I would surely eradicate female trees to help prevent the trees from spreading.
Seeds: Seeds on female trees are a 1-to-2-inch-long twisted samara, or winged seed. There is one seed per samara. The samaras are found in clusters, which often hang on the tree through winter.

Leaves: One leaf can range in length from 1 to 4 feet with anywhere from 10 to 40 leaflets. The leaflets are lance-shaped with smooth or "entire" margins. Other trees, with compound leaves that look like tree- of- heaven have leaf margins with teeth (Walnut and Sumac trees are good examples). At the base of each leaflet are one to two protruding bumps called glandular teeth. When crushed, the leaves and all plant parts give off a strong, offensive odor.

Established trees continually spread by sending up root suckers that may emerge as far as 50 feet from the parent tree. A cut or injured tree-of-heaven may send up dozens of stump and root sprouts. Sprouts as young as two years are capable of producing seed. Tree-of-heaven is intolerant of shade and cannot compete under a closed forest canopy but will quickly colonize disturbed areas, taking advantage of forests defoliated by insects or impacted by wind and other

disturbances. Due to its extensive root system and resprouting ability, tree-of-heaven is difficult to control. Unfortunately, systemic applications of glyphosate or triclyplor are recommended. These pesticides can applied to the leaves of young trees or applied to cuts spaced evenly around the stem. Leaving uncut living tissue between the cuts allows the herbicide to move to the roots. Make the applications in mid- to late summer. Well-established tree-of-heaven stands are only eliminated through repeated efforts and monitoring. Persistence is the key to success. Tell that to the spotted lanternfly.

Town Cuts Down Trees in Town Square to Deter Homeless

The scintillating and strikingly beautiful town square in Lakewood, New Jersey.

The New Jersey town of Lakewood, New Jersey cut down all the shade trees in the town square in a controversial move designed to prevent homeless people from spending time there. Lakewood Mayor Ray Coles said the decision was made after a recommendation from the Police Department Quality of Life Unit, which the township said was triggered by numerous complaints from residents and township employees about homeless people defecating and urinating in the area. "They (homeless people) were harassing people, defecating between the cars and residents were complaining," Coles said.

It's extremely extreme to cut down the trees. That's not the answer," said Steven Brigham, a minister and head of Lakewood Outreach Ministry, who has been working on behalf of homeless people for over 20 years. Brigham, who also founded Destiny's Bridge, a charity that provides shelter, sustenance, and medical care to people in need, said that the Town Square trees were cut down on Aug. 8 and, two days later, the trees at a nearby parking lot were also gone. Meanwhile, the township expects to revitalize Town Square to make it more inviting for families. **Ricky's Comments:**. Maybe the town will plant trees to make the square more inviting. revised article written by Juan Carlos Castillo, Asbury Park Press

A Gruesome Dead Fly Saga Adapted from the University of Wisconsin

Have you ever noticed a dead fly – or clusters of dead flies - hanging from a flower stalk, a tall grass stem, or even glued to the window in your house, maybe with a puffy, white-striped abdomen or a white halo encircling the body ? The flies were most likely killed by a fungus called *Entomophthora muscae*. The word *Entomophthora* means "insect destroyer." Most species of the fungus are very host specific, infecting only a certain species of insect or a group of closely related insects. The fungus is transmitted by airborne spores and only affects adult flies. When a spore settles on an appropriate fly's body, it germinates and penetrates through the fly's exoskeleton. The fungal hyphae grow throughout the body of the fly, growing enough to distend the abdomen by the time the fly dies. As the body is distended, the light colored membranes between the darker hard segments are exposed, giving the fly a characteristically striped appearance. Under the right conditions, the fungus produces numerous spore-bearing structures, each with a single spore, that grow out of cracks in the exoskeleton, giving the fly a

fluffy white appearance. When these spores (conidia) are released, they shower out – often leaving a halo of spore structures.

Once inside a fly, fungal hyphae grow into the fly's brain, causing a distinct change in behavior, often called "summit disease." Instead of acting normally, the fly crawls upwards as high as possible, going to the tip of the branch, flower, stem or leaf it is on. This behavioral alteration is also accompanied by formation of specialized fungal structures or glue-like materials secreted by the hyphae for attachment. The fly securely attaches itself by its extended proboscis to the surface it is on, where it may remain for days or even weeks. Before it dies, it spreads out its legs, stretches opens its wings above the thorax, and angles the abdomen away from the surface. The elevated location and distinct posture improve the chances that any fungal spores that are produced will leave the cadaver and infect new hosts.
This fungus can also be transmitted in another strange way. Male house flies are attracted to dead female flies infected with the fungus and can pick up spores when attempting to mate with the corpse. **Ricky's Notes:** (There are no words…) About 90% of such encounters result in infection. Before they die, infected males can mechanically transmit spores to female flies during mating, and mating between infected males and healthy females results in fewer viable eggs. Outbreaks of this bizarre fly disease occur most often in spring and fall in temperate regions, when cool and humid conditions predominate.

You will often see dead flies attached to windows, window frames, or other places flies aggregate indoors at this time. Outdoors, fly cadavers can often be seen on taller garden plants such as goldenrod, thistles, and phlox, on fences, or other structures. In autumn, some infected individuals do not produce conidia when they die but develop overwintering fungal structures instead. These flies drop to the ground, where thick-walled resting spores are produced. These resting spores survive the winter in the soil and the next spring produce conidia that can infect flies. **Ricky's Notes:** Hopefully, this disease will never cross over to humans. If it does there will be dead or dying people engulfed in web-like fungal fruiting bodies clustered at the tops of trees and telephone poles in the aftermath of cool springs or fall.

Fall Webworm

By late July, large unsightly loosely constructed, silken nests may begin to appear on branches of roadside or woodland hardwoods and shrubs. The nests are produced by hairy caterpillars known as the fall webworm. The feeding of these insects may occasionally strip small or large trees of their leaves. By August and September, the webs may become very large and may even join together and detract greatly from the attractiveness of some trees and shrubs on streets and lawns. In fact, this insect creates a problem on ornamentals as well as some roadside trees and shrubs. It is not considered a threat to hardwood forests, nor is it a threat to the health of

infested trees as it occurs too late in the season after trees have already stored up much of their food reserves. This insect attacks Apple, cherry, ash, willow, oak, birch, elm, and other deciduous species.

This species acts similarly to the eastern tent caterpillar which appears in the spring in our area, but the fall webworm constructs its nest over the end of the branch rather than at tree crotches. The large conspicuous webs contain caterpillars, dead partially eaten leaves, and fecal droppings.

According to Penn State University, the larvae are gregarious and feed together until the last molt, after which they may feed independently.

Ricky's Note: I like the fact that the caterpillars are gregarious and fun-loving. In early fall, the caterpillars overwinter as a pupa in the soil. The winter is spent as a pupa and the following summer the adult snow-white moth emerges, usually around late June and early July in this area.

Shortly after emerging, the adult moths lay their eggs, usually on the underside of leaves. Hatching occurs within 2 weeks. Mature yellowish caterpillars about one inch long have many tufts of long hair and black and brown markings. In small trees, the tents may be removed by hand, or cut out and destroyed. A forked stick or a stick with a nail in it may be inserted into larger webs and by twisting it the loose webs may be twisted off from the trees. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) an organic microbial product, is also registered for use against this pest. Burning the nest with a flamethrower or soaking the nest with gasoline and then lighting it is not recommended as it may be harmful to the tree – your house, or neighboring homes and landscapes.

There is no need to spray insecticides to kill this pest. This native insect has more than 50 natural predators and 36 parasites that help control it. Best of all, fall webworms do not eat the buds of next year's leaves. They are feeding on leaves that are nearing the end of their photosynthesis careers and only have a bit more to give. Next year, the leaves will appear on the currently affected branches with no sign of last year's damage.

Hummingbird Moths

Recently I observed a blur of motion near my zinnias in my backyard garden. Oh, a hummingbird I thought. Turns out upon closer observation, I was being visited by a hummingbird moth. Hummingbird moths are much rarer visitors to gardens.

The North American hummingbird moth moves so fast and looks, sounds, and acts so much like a hummingbird that it can be hard to tell the two apart. The hummingbird moth's resemblance to a hummingbird helps keep it safe from predators that feed off bugs but if you observe closely, you will see differences as well as similarities. Hummingbird moths are a bit smaller and plumper than hummingbirds, and the moth has six legs and an antenna, while a hummingbird has two legs and a beak. I must confess I never knew that the tomato or tobacco hornworm caterpillar that you see munching on your tomato plants will eventually develop into a hawk moth or sphinx moth - each a type of hummingbird moth. The moths featured in the 1991 film, *The Silence of the Lambs* were death's head hawk moths, also a type of hummingbird moth.

The hummingbird moth can be found not only in North America, but in Europe, Africa, and Asia. They have a wide range in the US from Texas and Florida to Maine and Alaska. After mating, the female moth lays eggs on plant leaves such as honeysuckle, cherries, hawthorns, and viburnums. The hatched caterpillar feeds on its host bush or vine.

Hoggles – Demented Cat Logic

To my caregiver: I would like you to cut down all the trees in your neighborhood as I, Hoggles, require constant sun in my favorite sunning windows to bask and warm myself during the day. Be like a genie and do as I command…..

Book Progress – My book on sustainable gardens and landscapes is coming along. My daughter Jessica has helped to have the book edited and we have the book cover completed. I am torn between releasing the book later this year or early next year. If you have a vested opinion on this, text or email me with your opinion. Many parts of the book are based on articles written for this newsletter or newspaper articles, but I have also included new material that I thought necessary to further discuss sustainability.

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