

Montgomery Township Environmental Advisory Committee

Spotted Lantern Fly Traps

May 5, 2021

There is lively competition going on between DIY'er on who can come up with the simplest, cheapest and most effective Spotted Lanternfly trap. Construction of most require readily available materials, simple tools and none involve pesticides. Below is a sampling of some good designs.

I could not find the original video, but young Rachel Bergey from Harleysville, PA deserves to be high on this list since her simple but visionary trap (aluminum foil and screening) generated huge interest and many imitations. Here is a [News Post](#) about her.

PennState Extension describes the [Spotted Lanternfly Circle Trap](#) with step by step [Circle Trap Construction Instruction PDF](#). While there, navigate over to the [PS Extension Spotted Lanternfly information portal](#) loaded with information and where you can also sign up for news on SLF's.

The **Schuylkill Nature Preserve** offers their version of the circle trap: [Building a wildlife-safe Spotted Lanternfly trap](#). It is a clear step by step overview. I have built four such traps. Fun, but not as easy as I thought it would be. Requires: wood, screening, two plastic bottles, glue, wire, rope, a few screws, a zip lock bag, twist ties and of course, duct tape.

Almost all circle type traps exploit the SLF's unwavering instinct to climb up trees, following the brighter lights to higher branches. With a circle trap the only "brighter lights" is a bag that snares the bugs where they eventually die, or can be removed and disposed.

The standard trap is limited to trees under about 18 inches in diameter unless doubled up or combined with other trap devices. Another challenge is how to secure a suitable gap between the outer screen and the tree itself. If the gap collapses the SLF's will just walk over your trap. YOU can get "trapped" stapling, wire bending, cotton balling, cursing and tweaking your trap to get the perfect gap and tree coverage.

The **SLF Task force, Arden Club Gardeners Gild** definitely wins the team naming challenge and their [hoop trap](#) (demonstrated on a 12 foot diameter sycamore tree) is a winner in the large tree division. An interesting, super simple design. They skip having any screen flush against the tree, making adjusting the trap to an optimal gap somewhat easier.

Fighting against the bad rap adhesives have gotten, are trap designs that promise not to snare birds and other non-targets. Amanda Goldsmith from **Lancaster County Conservation District**, has filmed many designs. I think she has a winner with this [Cotton and adhesive and a pair of scissors version](#). Similar video (again by Arden Gild) [Inward facing Sticky Tape trap](#). One more from Amanda as she was getting started in this field: [simple screening over adhesive](#).

One last intriguing example [Spotted Lanternfly Trap - My Best Yet](#)

Final bit of guidance from this EAC to homeowners is any trap, even no trap is better than spraying with insecticides. We know that Spotted Lanternflies taste bad as evidenced by their bright red wings, but we also know there is a growing list of predators who don't mind the flavor, including praying mantis, spiders, hornets and many birds. We want to encourage these predators, not discourage them with insecticide laden SLF's.

SLF's can weaken but only rarely kill a tree. They are a nuisance to homeowners, but for grape, fruit tree and blueberry growers they can be devastating. These agriculturalists will need to spray, possibly repeatedly, to save crop, vine or tree. If homeowners also increase their use of insecticides, the downstream impact on the Delaware river and its growing but still vulnerable [shad run](#) could be significant. Read more at [Deciding If and When to Treat for Spotted Lanternfly on Ornamentals](#)

Happy Trapping!

Don Hamp for Montgomery Township Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)