

## 2021 Winter Symposium Postponed. *Details page 5.*

### President's Message

Greetings WVNLA members.

I hope this note finds you safe and well as you close out the year in a timely fashion. Jobs such as finishing up your final projects, starting to tuck away your plants

for the year or possibly getting your snow plow trucks in shape are all in order.

As 2020 is coming to an end, I can only say, "What a year!" We have had so

many obstacles this year with all that has been going on in our great little state and around the country. A pandemic, elections, essential product scarcity in needed materials and even a super rainy month of August all contributed.

But somehow, as I gather from talking with people in our industry and some of our members, they are having a great year. And to me that is one of the most positive elements to come out of all the madness of 2020. I hope we have started a trend heading into 2021. As many people are still working from home, and may continue to do so for a long time, they are also spending more time in their outdoor spaces and gardens and wanting to make their homes and businesses more appealing and pleasing. I truly believe that this trend will continue to help our industry so much in the

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David Hill II

### Members offer diverse services, expertise, plants and products

What types of businesses make up WVNLA's membership? That's the burning question we sought to answer when we examined the Association's membership profiles recently. Here's what we found out:

WVNLA's membership rolls list 133 members, although more than 40 of those have fallen behind in paying dues and are not considered active. Of the 133 members, 114 are in-state companies, while 19 are out-of-state businesses.

Among our membership, landscape businesses easily outnumber wholesale growers. About 63 percent of WVNLA members are

landscape/lawn care companies. Wholesale nurseries and growers make up about 18 percent, while garden centers, green industry suppliers, and public space maintenance groups comprise most of the remaining memberships. Some companies, of course, offer both retail sales and landscape services. Thirty-five WVNLA members offer

hardscape design and construction. Thirteen companies offer arbor services.

At the 2020 annual meeting, WVNLA members voted to amend the membership descriptions in the bylaws to better reflect a membership composed of landscape and lawn care companies and related industries and suppliers, as well as growers. When the Association was established



*Valley Gardens employees clear fallen leaves off a customer's property in Charleston.*

in 1939, the vast majority of its members were nursery stock growers. In fact, the organization's name, until 2005, was The West Virginia Nurserymen's Association.

While the name was changed to West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association to reflect the changing membership, until this year, the member

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# Cole Nurseries Hops into Hemp Production

Cole Nurseries in Pipestem have been honing their craft for 83 years. So, when a new industry in the state came knocking, Norm Cole and Cole Nurseries answered the door with open arms.

"It's kind of an interesting path we took. I was paid to research medical marijuana for a company. I made a lot of contacts in the hemp industry. I have some friends that have moved into the hemp industry and found out it was really exciting," Cole said.

He said his connections and prior experience



*Norm Cole surveys hemp clone plants in his facility.*

were fundamental in learning how to adapt a new industry into their pre-existing business model. Despite stepping into somewhat unfamiliar soil, Cole Nurseries pulled from their resources and were able to hit the ground running this past summer.

"We started researching it this summer. Back in June, we started doing our own seed. We started developing procedures," Cole says.

As the hemp industry begins to grow in the state with the roll-out of House Bill 2453 in 2017, many farms and agriculture entities have been looking towards the emerging industry as an opportunity to broaden their horizons. During the 2020 growing season, 270 licenses were granted that allowed for 240 acres of possible hemp production across the state. Being in operation since 1937, Cole Nurseries was able to implement the infrastructure and methods they already had in place.

"We had the facility, so I didn't have to buy facilities. We just started researching and started doing some cost analysis and determined that it could be a profitable, viable industry. We've brought some techniques from the nursery industry into the hemp industry," Cole states. "So, some of the trays we use were designed for annuals and perennials

and we're bringing that over to the hemp. It was probably a six-month path to decide to jump in."

Perhaps one of the keys to Cole Nurseries' success is their ambition and willingness to develop a reputable product. While Pipestem is relatively a small town, the reach of the nursery is nationwide.

"Basically, what we do well is we grow young plants. So, we are known for our ability to propagate, to start plants from other plants. We ship plants all over the country. We do Oregon, California, Texas," says Cole. "So, we've been doing this in the nursery industry for a long time. Hemp is just another plant and it's kind of exciting too, to get into a new industry. It's been challenging and we've been working hard the last six months. I think we're ready to release it."

Being able to provide farmers with a sure-fire hemp clone that eliminates the stress of growing hemp from a seed is another motivating factor behind the drive of Cole Nurseries.

"I think a lot of farmers have learned that seedlings are very susceptible to fungus. They're very susceptible to water stress. They're very susceptible to too much fertility, not enough fertility. So, if we can take that entire three to four-week period away from the farmers and sell them a ready-made plant, it's going to make it a lot easier. They can focus on getting the plant in the ground, getting their land ready. They don't have to worry about, you know, watching for males. They don't have to worry about the fertility level and forgetting to water their seedlings," Cole says.

Most importantly, Cole Nurseries wants to provide a durable plant that will ultimately better the hemp industry and community as a whole.

"We'd like to produce a very good plant for the price, give our customers a value-added plant. We'll be able to grow a cutting, to grow a clone, to produce a plant that's very uniform. It's stabilized, and they can take that plant and put it in their fields. They don't have to worry about seedlings," explains Cole. "They don't have to worry about maintaining young plants. So, I just feel like producing a very healthy, vigorous, young plant is going to be a value for the local hemp industry."

Much of the payoff for Cole Nurseries is getting to see the beautification of a landscape project that includes plants from the nursery. However, by stepping into the hemp industry, Norm and his team will find themselves in a different position.

"For me, it's exciting because what I do every day is start something from nothing," Cole said. "So,

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## MEMBER PROFILE

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category descriptions in the by-laws still heavily reflected the nursery industry. For instance, an **Active** member was defined as “any person who is a resident of the state of West Virginia and who grows, sells and/or provides services related to ornamental nursery stock as a registered nursery or nursery dealer, including trees, evergreens, shrubbery, and perennials, and has actively engaged in the retail or wholesale business of these products....”

Now the description of an **Active** member reads this way: “Any person who is a resident of the state of West Virginia and who owns and operates a West Virginia-licensed business to grow and/or sell ornamental nursery stock and/or provide services to the nursery and landscape industry.”

The description of **Associate** member is the same as Active member, except that Associate members are out-of-state companies. Associate members also include superintendents of parks, estates, public gardens, and arboretums; horticulture educators; and officials with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Two additional membership categories were adopted this year with the aim of including students and individual horticulture professionals. High school and college students in horticulture or landscape programs may apply to be **Student** members. Individuals who are professionally engaged in the horticulture industry, or who have retired from nursery or landscape professions, may apply for **Individual Professional** memberships. Individual professional members are eligible to serve as officers and members of the board of directors.

So, what’s in a name and why is this important? WVNLA’s founding members took member description categories seriously. They felt strongly that the categories should reflect the current

membership, and that they should be revised with caution. That is why they put the category descriptions in our bylaws, which cannot be amended or changed without a vote of the membership. The recent changes were considered and proposed by an ad hoc committee, placed before the board for consideration, and only then put to the membership for a vote.

As recent actions of the board and membership demonstrate, WVNLA exists to serve its members. Our mission statement sums it up well:

*“Established in 1939, the West Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association is a professional trade organization dedicated to the promotion and advancement of the nursery and green industries and to the education of its members and the public they serve.”*

As always, contact Executive Director Julie Robinson at 304-553-1234 or wvnlassoc@gmail.com with any ideas about how we can meet your needs.



*The red foliage of a Japanese maple burns brightly in front of the autumnal bronze leaves of an oakleaf hydrangea.*

## HEMP

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when I get to work, I can take a cutting, I can take a twig and I can create a plant and I can create something in the nursery industry that’s going to beautify a yard. In the hemp industry, I’ll be able to produce a plant that can produce CBD and CBG for the benefits of people.”

All in all, Cole and his dedicated team just want

to help. While the state and encompassing agriculture industry is working toward finding their spot in the world of hemp, Cole Nurseries is confident that the long-established business practices and understanding of plant science will not only directly benefit themselves, but will also be positive for West Virginia agriculture collectively.

*This article originally appeared in the West Virginia Department of Agriculture’s “Market Bulletin” and is reprinted with permission.*

# Scientists Search for Birds that Dine on Spotted Lanternfly

By Amy Duke

Do birds find the spotted lanternfly to be a tasty treat or a nauseating nibble? That is one of the questions researchers at Penn State hope to answer, and they are seeking citizen scientists, especially bird watchers, to help in their quest for knowledge.

“Because the spotted lanternfly is a nonnative insect, it doesn’t have natural enemies in the U.S. to keep its numbers in balance,” said Kelli Hoover, professor of entomology in Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences. “Finding predators that live in our environment would be a great biological control option and useful in guiding management practices.”

Hoover and Anne Johnson, a doctoral candidate in entomology, are spearheading a study to examine the potential for native birds and insects to feed on the spotted lanternfly, which is an invasive insect



A juvenile eastern bluebird holds a spotted lanternfly in its beak. Image: Debra Bangasser Waxler.

from Asia that first was found in North America in Pennsylvania in 2014. The pest has since spread to to surrounding states, including Berkely County in West Virginia. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture is monitoring Monongalia County and the state’s panhandles for future sitings.

At risk are agricultural commodities — including grapes, tree fruit, nursery plants, and hardwood trees — as well as natural habitats, parks, and backyards.

Hoover and Johnson explained that in its native environment, the spotted lanternfly is kept in check by several predators, including a parasitic wasp. However, importing new species to the United States as a control measure requires numerous studies on environmental impact and regulatory approval — a process that can take years.

“Unfortunately, we don’t have years,” Johnson said. “But if we can find native species that will

prey on the spotted lanternfly and ways to encourage this behavior, then we can use these species in control programs more effectively. To help with this, more information about the types of birds and their feeding behaviors, such as eating mainly nymphs or avoiding eating the wings on adults, is crucial to know.”

They also want to know if the pest’s preferred diet — *Ailanthus altissima*, known as tree of heaven — influences how it might taste to birds. They theorize that the chemicals in tree of heaven might cause the insect to have a “bitter” flavor, especially in later life stages when the pest is eating profusely.

“Insects have developed ways of protecting themselves, and one involves colorful markings,” Hoover said. “Colors are a warning sign that signals to predators, ‘Stay away, I taste bad.’ This could be the case with the spotted lanternfly, which displays red and black markings as the insect matures.”

The study team, which includes Margaret Brittingham, professor of wildlife resources, and Allison Cornell, assistant professor of biology, at Penn State Altoona, will study spotted lanternfly specimens that have been raised in a quarantined laboratory with tree of heaven as their food source. Researchers will analyze the insects for chemical compounds present during each life stage, while examining tree of heaven sap as the potential source of these chemicals.

This information will be integrated with the outcomes of a field study planned for later this fall, which involves the placement of bird feeders at The Arboretum at Penn State and Millbrook Marsh Nature Center in Centre County, and at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center in Huntingdon County.

Suet containing ground spotted lanternfly adults that have fed on tree of heaven or grapevines will be placed side-by-side in suet feeders attached to trees. Video cameras will record birds that visit the feeders and the suet cake they prefer.

In addition to the controlled studies, the researchers are enlisting the help of citizen scientists, preferably bird watchers, in the spotted lanternfly quarantine zone. Bird watchers, or “birders,” traditionally have been involved in citizen science, including the National Audubon Society’s Christmas Bird Count, the nation’s longest-running community science bird survey, explained Brittingham, an extension wildlife specialist.

“Once again, birders are being called on to contribute data that can help answer important research questions,” she said. “The most pressing of these questions is—are birds eating spotted

Please see *BIRDS* on next page.



# 2021 Winter Symposium Postponed; Pesticide Training and CPH Exam Still On

In a perhaps unsurprising move during these strange times, the WVNLA Board of Directors decided at their October meeting to postpone the 2021 Winter Symposium, scheduled for February 9, to a later date. Concern about limited attendance due to COVID-19 prompted the decision. Keynote speaker Marty Grunder has agreed to reschedule his presentation to a time when in-person events are comfortable and safe for all. The new date will be determined as progress on the coronavirus and gathering conditions improve.

The Pesticide Applicators Recertification education session and Certified Professional Horticulturist exam both remain on our schedule for

February 10 at Embassy Suites in Charleston. The WVNLA board decided to offer the biannual recertification course because so many members depend on it to meet the state's pesticide applicator continuing education requirements. However, space will be limited due to social distancing requirements, and masks will be required in the common areas of the hotel.

Registration will open in January. WVNLA members will receive early notification. To register for the Certified Professional Horticulturist exam, visit [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org), call 304-553-1234, or email [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com).

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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coming years and be a benefit for us all.

Another aspect of the end of 2020 is that this will be my last letter as your president. This winter, I complete my two-year term and will move to the position of past president on the board. I want to thank you for allowing me this honor and say that I have truly cherished my time. I think we have started some real ground work for promoting WVNLA as a viable source for career opportunities in the green industry throughout our state.

And we are working on some new concepts of

education opportunities and trying to create an excitement and energy for our industry. Our work will continue on for all of you, our members. As I've said before, we exist for you and we want to hear any ideas, helpful tips, resources, etc., that can help us best serve our mission. Feel free to reach out to me or any board member. We welcome this.

Now, onward to 2021. May you all stay safe and well. I wish everyone the very best of holidays. And welcome to Steve Saunders of Saunders Lawn Care in Huntington, our incoming president.

As always, take care and see you out there.

—David Hill II, WVNLA president, owns *Three Trees Design and Landscaping in South Charleston*.

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## BIRDS

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lanternfly, and if they are, what role can they play in reducing small infestations before they become outbreaks?"

The citizen scientists will post reports, videos, and photos of birds they see feeding on spotted lanternflies, where and when they saw them, and whether tree of heaven is located nearby. They also are encouraged to provide information about the birds' behavior, such as swiping their beaks or shaking their heads after eating a spotted lanternfly.

"Birds are essential in helping to keep plant-eating insect populations under control," Brittingham said. "We are eager to learn more about their potential in helping with the spotted lanternfly problem."

More information about becoming a citizen scientist can be obtained by emailing [birdsbitingbadbugs@gmail.com](mailto:birdsbitingbadbugs@gmail.com). A Facebook page, "Birds Biting Bad Bugs," has been created as well.

A second phase of the research will investigate the potential for native insects to suppress spotted lanternfly populations. Hoover said there have been many reports of insects, including praying mantises and assassin bugs, feeding on spotted lanternflies. A McIntire-Stennis grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture is supporting this study.

To learn more about the spotted lanternfly, the state-imposed quarantine, management techniques, and how to report a sighting, visit the Penn State Extension website at [extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly](http://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly).

*Reprinted with permission from Penn State University's College of Agricultural Science.*

# The Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show Invites Your Participation in 2021 MANTS.com Business Hub

While pandemic-related circumstances have prevented the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) from hosting an in-person show in Baltimore this January, it will not stop them from continuing the 50-year tradition of driving commerce in the green industry.

Show organizers knew that they would not let 2021 pass without finding a new way to connect exhibitors and buyers despite not meeting face-to-face. This decision is especially important to WVNLA members as the success of MANTS directly impacts funding for our member programs through an annual distribution to the founding and sponsoring organizations of MANTS – the state nursery and landscape associations of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

“Doing nothing for our attendees and buying companies is just not in our DNA,” said Vanessa Finney, executive vice president of MANTS. “We remain committed to offering you a place where business happens and invite you to join us January 6-8 for continued commerce and connection via our new MANTS.com Business Hub.”

The online platform provides flexibility and multiple opportunities for those with products, services and equipment to sell to connect with those actively looking to restock inventory and prepare for the year ahead. Through the MANTS.com Business Hub, exhibitors can feature all the same products as they would during a typical show via photos and videos, highlight show discounts and specials, share

company news, and conduct product demonstrations and sales presentations. Unlike a traditional show, exhibitors have greater staffing flexibility as they can offer set appointment times and invite attendees to join in prescheduled drop-in hours, live presentations, and video demonstrations. Neither “manning” a booth nor a constant online presence are required.

Registered attendees can use the Business Hub to search and shop, learn about new products and technology, connect with current and future vendors, and place orders. The hub’s intelligent matching technology will ensure easy connections between participants based on an extensive list of interests by category.

While access to the Business Hub will be available pre-show, the real opportunity to connect with current and future colleagues and vendors occurs January 6-8 when exhibitors are encouraged to offer virtual one-on-one conversations, group sales presentations, product demonstrations, and hosted drop-in hours.

Green industry companies and businesses interested in exhibiting or attending may register online at [www.MANTS.com](http://www.MANTS.com). Registration is \$10 for attendees and provides access to the Business Hub, January 6-8, 2021, leading up to the show, and for 90 days post-show.

**We strongly encourage all WVNLA members to participate, either as exhibitors or attendees.** Visit [MANTS.com](http://MANTS.com) for show details.

In a Year of  
Change, One  
Important  
Thing  
Remains  
the Same



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# Eastern Spruce Gall Adelgid Causes Tree and Economic Loss

By Adam Champ

Eastern spruce gall adelgids are small, soft-bodied insects that are closely related to aphids. They have a complex life cycle and biology. The insects disfigure Norway, white, and red spruce by causing pineapple-shaped galls. The galls will eventually girdle and kill the ends of twigs. The presence of a small number of galls in your field, nursery, or landscape may not be a reason to become upset, but populations can explode fast. Eastern spruce gall adelgids can reproduce sexually and asexually by cloning themselves, a process called parthenogenesis. Heavy infestations degrade trees, hurt the aesthetics of trees, and cause economic losses.

Eastern spruce gall adelgids overwinter as immature female nymphs called *stem mothers*. These nymphs tuck into bark and bud crevices. In early spring, they begin to feed, mature into adults, and lay eggs on or near buds. The eggs hatch at the same time that buds open, and the young nymphs insert their piercing mouth parts to suck plant juices. The insects produce chemicals in their saliva that have a hormonal effect on the tree, causing each developing needle to swell at the base. The cumulative effect of each needle swelling forms an enclosure, or gall, around the insect. The insect is now protected from pesticides and predators, and has all the food and resources it needs. By cutting open the gall lengthwise, you will see the small insects in hollow voids at the base of each enlarged needle, covered in white, waxy filaments.

Initially, the galls are attractive, green, and hard to spot. But beginning around mid-July, they begin to brown. Slits appear in between the enlarged needle tissues. These are escape hatches for the insects, which have now developed into adults. Maturation of galls continues until late summer. As the galls dry up and turn brown, they girdle the twig, causing the growth beyond the gall to die. Upon leaving the gall, adelgids feed on the tree, although not in a way that is consequential. They then progress through several more generations before autumn and the overwintering stage of the stem mothers.

A very similar species, the Cooley spruce gall adelgid, attacks blue spruce and Douglas fir, but they only cause galls to form on blue spruce. On Douglas fir, the insects feed on the underside of the needle, causing the needle to yellow and bend into a boomerang shape.

Although they have different host species, biology and control for the Cooley spruce gall adelgid is similar to that of the Eastern spruce gall



In its early stage (above), a gall appears green and attractive. Later, the galls turn brown and cause injury.



adelgid. Galls caused by Cooley spruce gall adelgids are larger, more oval, and usually located at the tip of the twig, while galls of Eastern spruce gall adelgids are more rounded and usually located at the base of a lateral shoot. The difference in the location of the galls is due to the insect species' preferred feeding location on the developing bud.

Control is achieved with the application of a labeled insecticide at bud break. It is very important to make the application by bud break. Once galls form, treatment is not effective. For severe infestations, an early autumn treatment to control the overwintering stem mothers will be helpful, in addition to the bud break treatment.

I recommend using an insecticide that has good residual activity, since incorrect timing is often the leading reason for poor control. Insecticides with active ingredients in the pyrethroid class have long-lasting residual activity. Onyx Pro, which contains the active ingredient bifenthrin, is an example of a pyrethroid that is labeled for use on Christmas trees and nursery stock. Always read the entire pesticide label before application and follow all directions and precautions.

Adam Champ is a Plant Regulatory Officer II for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

# WVNLA NEWS

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## WVNLA Dates to Note

- Jan. 6-8 MANTS, virtual, [www.mants.com](http://www.mants.com)  
Feb. 9 WVNLA Board Meeting, Charleston, 4 p.m.  
Feb. 10 Pesticide Applicators Recertification Training,  
Charleston [www.wvnla.org](http://www.wvnla.org)  
Feb. 10 Certified Professional Horticulturist exam, 4 p.m.  
Charleston [www.wvnla.org](http://www.wvnla.org)

## Welcome New Member

### **Bailey's Gardens & Landscaping, Inc.**

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*Landscape architect, design and construction, landscape and lawn  
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