

Dan Hoffman:

Hello and welcome to part two of the Rouss Review, the City Works portion of our show. I'm still Dan and Amy's still here.

Amy Simmons:

I'm still here.

Dan Hoffman:

And now we're about to bring in Joan or Joanne?

Amy Simmons:

Joanne.

Dan Hoffman:

Joanne Royaltey.

Amy Simmons:

I wonder if she has a crown.

Dan Hoffman:

Not spelled properly. Well, I guess it's properly for her. So with E-Y instead of just a Y. So, we'll ask her about that. She's going to talk to us about the spotted lanternfly. I'd also like her to explain really what the co-op does. The co-op extension. They seem to do a little bit of everything. So let's find out right now. Let's bring her on in. Hello and welcome, Joanne Royaltey. For those of you who have not met Joanne before, it's Royaltey, spelled E-Y. Not royalty like it's spelled in the dictionary.

Joanne Royaltey:

It's for kings and queens, but you don't have to bow.

Dan Hoffman:

And you are the queen of killing spotted lanternflies.

Joanne Royaltey:

I am the spotted lanternfly lady, yes. And we're so happy to talk about it today.

Dan Hoffman:

And a little behind the scenes for everybody. So we just recorded this almost in its entirety, and the thing didn't record.

Joanne Royaltey:

And it was so fun.

Amy Simmons:

It was so much fun.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah, you guys missed it. It's just for us. It's going to be something that we all just keep the memory of.

Joanne Royaltey:

Oh, we're bonded forever. Through the spotted lanternflies.

Dan Hoffman:

The spotted lanternfly and that great conversation.

Amy Simmons:

And we got to talk about Dan squashing them all in one little...

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, I'm very good at smooshing them. We'll still get into a little bit of that. But hey, now I can make sure that...

Amy Simmons:

You stay on track.

Dan Hoffman:

We stay on track and all the swearing and cursing that Amy did, we don't have to edit it out like we normally do. So we're good to go. There you go.

Amy Simmons:

Yeah.

Dan Hoffman:

All right. We're talking about the spotted lanternfly today. But first, I think it's important, you work for... Your business card says Virginia Tech. You're at the Frederick County offices. Give me a quick snapshot of what does the Co-op Extension actually do.

Joanne Royaltey:

Let me give you a little background, because I had no clue either. As we talked about earlier, I'm a kid from Brooklyn. Grew up, no plants, never even had a house plant in my house. Moved down here in '77.

Dan Hoffman:

Does a tree grow in Brooklyn?

Joanne Royaltey:

A tree does grow, but it got transplanted to Winchester.

Amy Simmons:

With no spotted lanternflies.

Joanne Royaltey:

That's right. But they are having spotted lanternflies in New York. That's a whole other conversation.

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, really?

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes. And so I was up there two weeks ago getting bagels and pizza and advising on spotted lanternfly to my friends in Brooklyn and Staten Island. So it follows me all over the country.

Dan Hoffman:

Spotted lanternflies actually go out to Staten Island?

Joanne Royaltey:

They do.

Dan Hoffman:

I thought that that would be a place even they don't go.

Joanne Royaltey:

And you know the interesting thing about Staten Island, I stayed with my friend there. He has a little plot of land in the back and it's full of plants. And his next door neighbor has two chickens and a rabbit. Who knew that you could have chickens and rabbits right in your backyard in Staten Island?

Dan Hoffman:

In Staten Island.

Amy Simmons:

You can do it down here.

Dan Hoffman:

So before we get into the spotted lanternfly, there are nice parts of Staten Island?

Joanne Royaltey:

There are.

Dan Hoffman:

Really?

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes, with fig trees and squash growing and neighbors who have chickens who lay eggs and give them to you. I cannot believe it myself. Now, however, the streets in Staten Island, I will say, I found a challenge driving on with my big van, because there's so many cars there. I felt like I needed to lose weight just to get through the streets.

Dan Hoffman:

We digress. Okay, spotted lanternfly.

Joanne Royaltey:

Well, let's just talk about Virginia Co-op. So I came to this area, discovered the beauty, still working, did lots of stuff in healthcare and education and retired. And when I retired, because I'm pretty much a high energy person, as you've seen... I did the grandkids for a while. I did some planting in my backyard. I did international travel pre-COVID and was bored out of my mind. So became a master gardener. And that was something that opened up this whole new green world for me.

Dan Hoffman:

Is there a test you take?

Joanne Royaltey:

There is. You have to do 50 hours of training and 50 hours of volunteer. And I'll put in a plug, there's a new class coming up in January. So we'll have all the information, we'll share it with you folks if they want to do what I did, which was so much fun. Yeah, just contact us. But anyway, as I became a master gardener, I got introduced to Cooperative Extension. And being from New York, the only thing I knew about Extension was, oh, don't they do stuff at fairs, aren't they with livestock sales?

Joanne Royaltey:

So I had no clue that it's this great resource heaven for education. I mean, not only did they do the master gardeners, but they've got diabetes management programs, they've got water quality programs, they've got financial workshops. How to identify your bugs. Just so many things that help Virginians live better, healthier lives. And it's all free. So I was like, "Whoa."

Dan Hoffman:

So it's not just prize pigs and giant pumpkins.

Joanne Royaltey:

Not, no. I mean, that's a part of it. And it's an important part. 4-H is such a vital part of Extension. Educating our...

Dan Hoffman:

4-H is a part of the Extension?

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes.

Dan Hoffman:

I thought it was its own thing.

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes, and educating those kids about the connection to the land, the connection to their environment, to their community. They do all kinds of cool things, not only pigs and pumpkins. They do STEM and STEAM activities. They do leadership training. I just learned recently that we've got just a fabulous horse and gun club through 4-H. I mean, nationally recognized. So, a lot of cool resources, all of them free. You'll have all the contact info people need to connect with us.

Dan Hoffman:

Okay, all right.

Joanne Royaltey:

So VCE...

Dan Hoffman:

And they do...

Joanne Royaltey:

Education.

Dan Hoffman:

They educate kids and they promote mass genocide against these spotted lanternflies.

Joanne Royaltey:

That is my job. I became a master gardener and then they said, "Joanne, we have this opening for someone who feels murderous intent and growing up in Brooklyn in a mafia family." It was not hard for me to make that transition.

Dan Hoffman:

There you go.

Amy Simmons:

It's meant to be.

Joanne Royaltey:

Here we are, it's meant to be.

Dan Hoffman:

Now you're the program associate in charge of genocide in invasive species.

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes, and horticulture.

Dan Hoffman:

And horticulture.

Joanne Royaltey:

Consumer horticulture. So we help folks with their gardening questions. You want to know what this bug is, you want to know why your tomato has yellow spots on it. That's what we're here for. And I will put in a plug, every Wednesday, come see us. We've got master gardeners in our office from 10 to 12. We have tea and conversation. We love to talk with the community and help them.

Dan Hoffman:

So let's talk about the life cycle of these guys, because right now it's October. We're seeing the full grown, moth-like spotted lanternflies. But we also see them, when I first start noticing them at least, they're the tiny little black nymphs. And it's hard to tell, is it a spider? Is it a tick? What is this thing? But before that, they're this weird smudge on trees. Talk about their life cycle.

Joanne Royaltey:

So, it usually happens around April that we will start seeing those little ones, the little ones. And if you're older or wear glasses, you may not even notice them. I mean, that's just the way it is. And they're kind of pesky and quick. But if you see them, good to smooch them. And then as they enjoy this wonderful selection of plants in the region, they grow bigger. And you'll see them morph into their later stages. They get fatter, they have red and white dots, and then they have wings as adults. And that's what most folks are seeing right now. Some people think they're beautiful. I think they're kind of cool looking, but that doesn't stop me from killing them.

Amy Simmons:

Gross.

Dan Hoffman:

They're pretty creepy. The early stages, especially once they start getting a little red in them, it's like, yeah, you look a little too exotic for my taste.

Joanne Royaltey:

Well, and most things that we like to eat them don't seem to feel the same way, yeah.

Dan Hoffman:

No, nothing eats them. So, what about them is so harmful? I mean, they eat crops. I know they're on my trees.

Joanne Royaltey:

They are a threat to agriculture here. Virginia, this region is home to so many amazing agricultural products. So for folks who have vineyards or apple orchards or huge stance of trees, those are important to control there. For us as residents who were annoyed by those pesky critters, yeah, we should be

killing them, but we don't need to be spraying and contaminating our whole region just because they're there annoying us. We're going to have to learn to live with them, because the bad news is, I don't have a magic bullet I can share with you that's going to eliminate them totally from this region. They're here to stay. Research is ongoing, we're still learning, we're still doing, but it's going to take all of us to work together and kill them.

Dan Hoffman:

When's the best time? So right now we're in prime stomping season. They're big, they're smooshable.

Joanne Royaltey:

They're easy to spot.

Dan Hoffman:

Easy to spot. And they cluster together, so if you're good, you can get a few of them in one good smoosh.

Joanne Royaltey:

That's right.

Dan Hoffman:

But when is the best, in terms of just my kill ratio, what is the best time to actually wipe them out?

Joanne Royaltey:

Now is a very good time, but anytime you see them is best, because what I like to tell folks is, it does matter. It makes a difference. Every one that you kill, you may be preventing an egg mass from being laid. So, is it going to solve the problem totally? No. But we're not about eliminating right now. We're about managing them so that we can go on and live our lives and they're just a minor annoyance. So that's the thing, we've got to keep at it. It's great now, because you can see them. They're big. I would like to see if there's anybody out there that does the spotted lanternfly dance, because now is a good time to be doing that, so.

Dan Hoffman:

Just don't run into traffic.

Joanne Royaltey:

Don't run into traffic. If you want to play that chicken dance music, that's okay. Although chickens, we're not saying that they like them too much, they kind of spit them out.

Dan Hoffman:

Chickens do your job. Squirrels don't really eat them. Because when we had cicadas, I think squirrels and birds did a number on them too. At least enough that they stayed off of my cherry tree.

Amy Simmons:

Well, Jordan kind of explained it. These are not from around here, so when other animals see them, they're taught to eat certain things as the babies. And so when they see this foreign thing and they're like, I'm not eating that.

Joanne Royaltey:

Hence, invasive. But I will say there are reports that some folks, their pets eat them. Their dogs eat them. And if they eat too much, they'll probably get sick.

Dan Hoffman:

Sick, yeah. Don't feed your dog...

Joanne Royaltey:

Don't feed your dogs. We do know that the praying mantis enjoys eating them. So if you have praying mantis anywhere, please worship that.

Dan Hoffman:

How does somebody raise a praying mantis? Can you get praying mantis farms or starter kits or something?

Joanne Royaltey:

You can order some of those.

Dan Hoffman:

Really?

Joanne Royaltey:

Off the internet.

Dan Hoffman:

That's a thing?

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes, but what I would say to you is go onto YouTube. There's a really rewarding video between a praying mantis and the spotted lanternfly. I'm not going to say who wins that battle, but I found it very enjoyable.

Dan Hoffman:

If you found it enjoyable, that's a pretty big hint. Who wins the fight?

Amy Simmons:

Murder[er] Joanne.

Dan Hoffman:

Yeah. So, any other final thoughts on how to kill them? Where to kill them?

Amy Simmons:

Get those eggs.

Dan Hoffman:

And how to get the eggs?

Joanne Royaltey:

So, now is a good time. They're laying eggs. We know that everybody can't do everything. So it's just a matter of each of us doing what they can. Every little bit matters. A lot of the eggs that are going to be laid are up in the tree canopy. So we're not encouraging people to climb up 30 feet in the air with their Sherlock Holmes goggles and trying to... No, it's what you can see and destroy. And I will tell you, people think, oh, well they're just going to lay them on my tree. No, they lay them in the most amazing places. On your mailbox, on that rusty sign down the street.

Dan Hoffman:

Interesting. So the egg masses, as horrible as that sounds, the egg masses, they don't have to be laid on some type of biological?

Joanne Royaltey:

Nope.

Dan Hoffman:

They can be done on...

Amy Simmons:

Your car.

Joanne Royaltey:

They can be done on your sun hat.

Dan Hoffman:

Really?

Joanne Royaltey:

I have seen them done on soccer balls. So kids, if you're out there with a soccer ball, you better check that. Make sure there's not one out there.

Dan Hoffman:

Okay, so they could be anywhere.

Joanne Royaltey:

And easy to destroy. You can scrape them off with a credit card, a knife, a screwdriver, your fingernail. But the important thing is when you're working to destroy them, that you literally crush those eggs. Because if you were to just brush it off from the surface, the tree or your mailbox and it lands on the ground, well, they're going to be very happy living there.

Dan Hoffman:

They're going to grow under your fingernails.

Joanne Royaltey:

No, please.

Amy Simmons:

Wash your hands.

Joanne Royaltey:

Now I'm going to have nightmares about that tonight.

Dan Hoffman:

Wash your hair, people.

Joanne Royaltey:

And also, Halloween's coming up. So hopefully there'll be some people out there who want to be a spotted lanternfly.

Amy Simmons:

That could be dangerous.

Dan Hoffman:

Actually, that was on Saturday Night Live this past week. They did a whole spotted lanternfly bit where a guy dressed up as a spotted lanternfly.

Joanne Royaltey:

So there was that saying way back when in the dinosaur ages about, "Please Mr. Bill, don't kill me."

Dan Hoffman:

Oh, Mr. Bill.

Joanne Royaltey:

Mr. Bill, don't pull my arm off.

Dan Hoffman:

That's a reference that I don't know. If anybody, I don't remember Mr. Bill, but for all of you middle age and up folks, yes, Mr. Bill.

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes, so just think of the spotted lanternfly as the new age Mr. Bill.

Dan Hoffman:

Exactly.

Joanne Royaltey:

You got to kill it. You got to do it as often as you can. Be as murderous as you can.

Dan Hoffman:

And if it makes you feel better to hear them screaming out when you do it, then go see a counselor. Or just know that they're bugs and they're bad bugs.

Joanne Royaltey:

So, the other thing I want to address really quickly is, if you look at our information, and obviously you're going to share it on your website.

Dan Hoffman:

Of course.

Joanne Royaltey:

There are some chemicals, there are some insecticidal soaps you can use. But folks need to keep in mind, temporary solutions. Now I'm not talking about the vineyards and the orchards. I'm talking about just you and I as residents. Temporary solutions. Those are still chemicals that can damage the environment. And most importantly, pollinators. I mean those good bugs that are helping us survive as a human race. So don't be out there spraying indiscriminately, because it's mean.

Dan Hoffman:

You might kill some praying mantis.

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes. And please, whatever you do, I know that the internet is a wonderful thing. I know that your Aunt Sally and Uncle Joe have great wisdom. Do not listen to any home remedy solutions. I have heard the gamut from, "Joanne, I've mixed up Dawn dish detergent and bleach and I'm spraying it all over my plants." Not a good thing. Just because you use a chemical in your house to clean stuff doesn't mean it's going to be good outside, so please don't do that.

Dan Hoffman:

So the internet's not always accurate is what you're saying.

Joanne Royaltey:

Well, I'm just saying, at Virginia Tech, at Virginia Cooperative Extension...

Dan Hoffman:

Go to reliable sources.

Joanne Royaltey:

Research based.

Dan Hoffman:

Stuff.

Joanne Royaltey:

Stuff. That's it.

Dan Hoffman:

And you can get that at the website... vt.edu? Oh no, frederick.ext.vt.edu.

Joanne Royaltey:

Yes. And that's our office. But there are offices all over the state. So if you are within our listening area, you probably want to reach out to one of us locally. But they're all over the state. Folks should just understand about the quarantine, since we're in Winchester, Frederick, Warren, Clark, Paige and Shenandoah, that's all quarantine for us in the local region. So don't call me. You don't have to let me know. I feel your pain.

Dan Hoffman:

Even though her phone number is five, four...<laugh>

Joanne Royaltey:

I know that you're dealing with it. I'm dealing with it too. We don't need to know that you found 30 on the corner of Kent and Cameron, but if you want helpful information...

Dan Hoffman:

Go to the website.

Joanne Royaltey:

Call us. I'm happy to talk to you about how best to manage it, but we don't need to know.

Dan Hoffman:

Call them, not the City. Because we don't spray. I think over the summer we get it on a weekly basis. Oh, I need you to come out and spray my trees. The city does not do any spraying. We don't do pest management for private property. That is not what the City's role is. But the Co-op Extension will help you out.

Joanne Royaltey:

We will help you with information and resources. But we, like you, it's our staff in that office. We don't have people who can go out and spray.

Dan Hoffman:

The state doesn't spray anymore, do they?

Joanne Royaltey:

When it was first discovered here, we were all about, we need to know every single one that you find. And people were really good about reporting it, but we don't need to know about the millions that are here. When it was first discovered, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services was trying to contain it around the perimeter. And they did do some spraying and they did do cutting down some trees. But we don't have access to those resources. We just don't. So now it's, how are we going to solve it? We're going to solve it together.

Dan Hoffman:

Community effort.

Joanne Royaltey:

Community effort.

Dan Hoffman:

There we go.

Joanne Royaltey:

Spotted lanternfly marches. Spotted lanternfly dances, whatever.

Dan Hoffman:

Whatever it takes.

Amy Simmons:

Dan has his dance down.

Dan Hoffman:

Yes. All right. We are at time. Thank you so much, Joanne, for coming in.

Joanne Royaltey:

Anytime.

Dan Hoffman:

And if you're out there and you see a spotted lanternfly, smooch it.

Joanne Royaltey:

Murder.

Dan Hoffman:

Murder, murder.

Amy Simmons:
From the mafia.

Dan Hoffman:
Thanks, Joanne. So there goes royalty. I wonder if, how often, I wonder if she gets tired of it.

Amy Simmons:
I bet she gets a lot of jokes. <laugh>

Dan Hoffman:
So tired of it. She even seemed a little tired when I made the joke. But maybe it's because we had to record it a second time.

Amy Simmons:
Probably.

Dan Hoffman:
Probably.

Amy Simmons:
My fault. <laugh>

Dan Hoffman:
That's fine. So, yeah.

Amy Simmons:
But you know how she mentioned putting that information on our website? I didn't want to interrupt the flow, but we already have kind of like a story or its own little webpage for spotted lanternfly information.

Dan Hoffman:
Oh, there you go.

Amy Simmons:
And we got a lot of it from the Virginia Cooperative Extension. So it's under our GIS section. It's not the easiest place to find it. Probably should fix that. But there is a big banner for open data and it's all there.

Dan Hoffman:
Awesome. Winchesterva.gov, people. Check it out. Smoosh a spotted lanternfly.

Amy Simmons:
As many as you can find.

This Rouss Review transcript was exported on Oct 11, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Dan Hoffman:

And save the world. All right. Thank you very much for listening to the City Works portion of the Rouss Review. Tune in next time when we'll talk to... Amy?

Amy Simmons:

We don't know yet.

Dan Hoffman:

We don't know yet. Per usual. So, yeah. I'm sure it's going to be somebody good. So, until then, see you in City Hall.