

Mountain Pine Beetles

The good news is that the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) epidemic has subsided (2011) and preventative spraying is no longer advised by the Colorado Forest Service. However, it is recommended that a proactive practice of thinning and trimming low limbs be ongoing to provide fire mitigation. Our forest is a prime environment for wildfire and all preventive measures should be followed. See:

Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones publication # 6.302

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natures/06302.html>

for more guidance.

[<< Top of Page](#)

Source: Colorado State University, TREES & SHRUBS, Mountain pine beetle no. 5.528

With our wonderful stands of Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*), our forest is subject to attack by the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB). The MPB is the most important insect pest in our forest. The MPB can kill large numbers of trees during an outbreak.

MPB attack trees that are not growing vigorously because of old age, crowding, poor growing conditions, drought, fire or mechanical damage (often incurred during construction by excavation equipment). Thinning susceptible stands with emphasis on leaving well-spaced, healthy trees is perhaps the best long term protection from MPB.

In the short term, spraying 'at risk' trees with preventive insecticide sprays can protect green, unattacked trees. One drawback to spraying is the cost. Current pricing for spraying is estimated to be anywhere between \$8.00 - \$12.00 per tree (depending upon the number of trees to be treated). Spraying must be done by the first of July to protect against beetle flight in early July.

Once a tree is attacked by MPB, there is no practical means to save the tree. Prevention is the only solution to MPB. MPB has a limited range of flight and generally flies to the nearest 'at risk' tree. (Beetles attack mature trees that are larger than about five inches in diameter). Therefore, if there are no infected trees nearby, the chances of an outbreak are reduced and spraying is not indicated until such an outbreak occurs nearby.

There are pockets of MPB infestations throughout all of the forest in our region. These infestations are naturally occurring (and even desirable to thin the forests). But, when these small infestations invade our landscape, they become undesirable and we feel compelled to take action (as we should). Large infestations are a major concern, because they leave large areas with ugly, dead timber stands.

These infestations must be monitored to see what direction they are headed. We have been following the movement of the MPB and our subdivision is now well into the early maximum infestation phase.

[<< Top of Page](#)

Edited 4/14/2007

SPRAYING FOR MPB

The good news is that the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) epidemic has subsided (2011) and preventative spraying is no longer advised by the Colorado Forest Service. Spraying for MPB is the only known method to protect our Lodgepole pine trees. If spraying is not performed, the trees are at risk for infestation by the beetles. Any tree infested by the beetles is doomed to die within about 10 months. This is indicated by the red needles that appear in the spring. These trees are unsightly and become a fire hazard and more important, are a host for a new brood of beetles for the next flight season which starts in July of each year.

Infested trees need to be removed and disposed of properly before the next flight season in order to reduce the beetle population and reduce the infestation of additional trees. Proper disposal may be in several acceptable forms: (a) Burn the bark off the tree. This is not a very practical means in our subdivision. (b) Strip the bark from the tree. This method leaves the tree stem to deal with later. It of course can be used for fire wood if you have a means to burn it. (c) Chip the stem and slash. This is perhaps the most practical method of disposal. The chips can either be hauled off or chipped on site and left on the forest floor (but not too deep). (d) Have the stem hauled off to a safe location away from forested areas.

The area under the bark is where the beetle lives and feeds. Anything that can be done to destroy this layer under the bark will effectively kill the beetles and their eggs. When this layer is exposed and dries out, the food source is destroyed and the beetles die.

It becomes apparent that removing a tree is expensive. Not only does it cost considerable money, but after it is all over, the tree is gone and it will take about 40 years for another to replace it. So spraying is the most effective long term solution. Spraying is also expensive, but the tree is saved from the beetles. Spraying has proven to be very effective in protecting our trees. We have witnessed a nearly 100% success rate when the trees are properly sprayed.

Spraying can be contracted to a professional sprayer or owners can safely do the job themselves at considerable savings.

Mountain Pine Beetle and Wildfire web sites for additional information:

Mountain Pine Beetle publication # 5.528

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/Insect/05528.html>

Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones publication # 6.302

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/natures/06302.html>

Edited 2/23/06

MPB TREE SPRAYERS, SURVEYORS AND TREE CUTTERS JUNE 2006

The following list of contractors is not a complete listing of contractors in the valley. The list was compiled from various sources. The list is in alphabetical order. The Assoc. is using Rod's Tree Service and Trees.R.Us for tree removal and Preventive Tree Spraying as the sprayer. In selecting a contractor, ask a lot of questions and be sure you are contracting for the type of service you want-- this to avoid surprises later.

MPB SURVEYORS:

1. Alpine Sun Beetle Blasters
970-726-5816
970-531-5107
2. Katie Larson
970-485-3235
970-485-0250
3. Willow Creek Logging
887-2473

Many tree cutters also do MPB surveying.

MPB SPRAYERS:

1. A CLEAR SOLUTION
Eric Reil
303-238-8852
2. Alpine Sun Beetle Blasters
970-726-5816
970-531-5107
3. American Tree
970-627-9720
303-456-6898
4. Blue River Enterprises
970-627-1971
5. Fort Collins Tree Care
970-484-3084
6. Grand County Pest Control
970-725-3400
970-531-2329

7. Giving Tree Care, Inc.
970-567-2623
970-566-4532
8. J1 Services
970-726-5575
9. Preventive Tree Spraying
970-468-1254
10. Thomas R Tolkacz
CEO, Swingle Lawn, Tree and Landscape Care
Main: 303-337-6200
Direct: 303-306-3146
Fax Direct: 303-306-3129
Cell: 303-870-2065
11. THC Enterprises
howardkliewer@qwest.net
970-627-3359
12. Timberline Spraying and Services
866-687-6811
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TREE CUTTERS:

1. Colorado Timber Co.
970-653-1073
2. D & D Tree Services
970-531-0271
3. Defensible Spaces of Grand County
970-8872218
4. Forest Land Services
Jeff Green
970-725-362 cell 970-531-3469
Dick Himes
970-887-2162 cell 970-531-0382
5. Fort Collins Tree Care
970-484-3084
6. Goldrun Forestry
970-887-3544
970-531-9380
7. Hahn's Peak Enterprises
970-887-3720
8. Jean-Luc Schwab
dba JL Enterprises
Home 970-726-0766 or Cell 970-531-2171
9. Jimmy Lahrman
Golden Eagle
PO Box 249
Winter Park
531-4231
10. Rod's Tree Service
970-726-5815
11. Sinclair Enterprises
970-887-9132
303-435-6300
12. Steve Pecha
970-627-8217
970-531-0624

13. Thomas R Tolkacz
CEO, Swingle Lawn, Tree and Landscape Care
Main: 303-337-6200
Direct: 303-306-3146
Fax Direct: 303-306-3129
Cell: 303-870-2065
14. Wildfire Mitigation & Restoration, LLC
Grand Lake
www.grandcountytrees.com
970-627-8228
970-531-9415
15. Willow Creek Logging
www.willowcreeklogging.com
970-887-2473
970-531-1781

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