

Courier
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Joan Spalding

Don't Panic Just Spray

Panic would be a good place to start, quoted Mike Goldblatt of Lam Tree Service, if you haven't yet sprayed for the pine beetle. Evidence of break out is progressing exponentially and they are seeing 2 to 3 times as many beetle infested trees as last year. To date this year they have cut down 2000 infested trees in the Evergreen, Conifer area. Last year it was a few hundred.

Homeowners are taking an active role in the preventive treatment for the beetle. This year alone, Lam trees service has sprayed more than 20,000 trees in the area. However, they will stop scheduling preventive spraying after July 17th. Homeowners who wait until the first of August are flirting with the beetle flying to other trees on their property. Trees need to be under plastic before the beginning of August.

New pest laws address the penalties that can be levied against people who elect not to take down infested trees. Neighbors can report violations and the Jeffco Pest inspector will come out and mark the trees. If the county has to take them down, fines will be levied against the homeowner.

Goldblatt says the small amount it costs to spray; less than 15 dollars per tree, is a wise investment compared with the average of 2 to 3 hundred dollars his company charges for removing a tree. He recommends that property owners look at the trees they want to preserve and get those sprayed immediately.

In a recent article in the Rocky Mountain News, Golden district forester, Alan Gallamore cited the number of trees killed in the Front Range in 1997, based on aerial surveys to be 11,600 ponderosas and lodge poles. He said, if left untreated the number will triple. Last summer though, the aerial survey indicated the number had only doubled which meant that people are taking care of their trees.

The infestation broke out three years ago in the areas along the Front Range from El Paso to Larimer counties. Goldblatt believes the beetle problem will peak in 2002 and then will begin to subside. The key, he reiterates, is to preventive spray now and get the infested trees down and under plastic. Each tree left untreated will infest seven new trees next year.

Joan Spalding is an educational consultant and certified arborist. For Questions call 303526-0335. This column is written as a service of the Evergreen Rotary Club.