

TIPS TO HELP CONTROL PINE BARK BEETLES

Many owners are seeing red-topped or dead piñon on their lots. This summary explains how to recognize piñon beetle activity and what actions help to protect remaining trees.

IMPORTANT TIMING MATTERS

Beetles fly twice a year— in late spring and in late summer. Cutting a recently killed tree during these periods releases fresh piñon scent that attracts beetles and can trigger new attacks. To help prevent the accidental spread of beetles, the recommended cutting windows are:

- **January to April:** Safest time to cut any dead or dying tree.
- **May to August:** Only cut long-dead, fully cured trees.
- **September to December:** Safe again for most trees.

WHAT OWNERS SHOULD DO DURING THE SAFE MONTHS

Removing recently killed trees during the safe months helps reduce beetle pressure across the subdivision and protects remaining piñon. Long-dead trees can be cut anytime.

1. Identify and Assess Damage

❖ Look for signs

- **Needles** - reddish/brown needles means the tree was recently killed and may still contain beetles - gray trees with no needles are long-dead and usually safe
- **Outer Bark** - tight outer bark that doesn't flake off can mean the inner bark is still moist and may contain larvae - bark falling off in sheets means the tree is fully cured.
- **Inner Bark** - moist, reddish inner bark with winding galleries means active beetles - dry, pale inner bark with empty galleries means the beetles are gone.
- **Trunk**— boring dust (frass) at the base, small exit holes in bark, small sap blobs (pitch tubes) indicate active or recent infestation - a clean trunk with no frass is usually safe.

❖ Confirm beetle species (e.g. piñon pine beetle) for the right management approach.

❖ Mark infested and dead trees for removal.

2. Prioritize Removal

- ❖ Remove trees with active beetle activity first to prevent spread.
- ❖ Target recently infested trees before beetles emerge (often late spring to early summer)

3. Safe Felling and Handling

- Use proper PPE and safe felling techniques.
- Cut and split recently killed trees.
- Avoid leaving slash or logs with bark intact on-site during beetle flight season.
- Avoid creating fresh stumps or wounds during beetle flight season, as they attract new infestations.

4. Disposal or Treatment of Infested Wood

- **Debark** logs to destroy beetle habitat.
- **Chip** or **Burn** infested material where permitted.
- **Solarize** by covering logs with clear plastic in direct sun to kill larvae.
- **Expose** inner bark to sun and air to kill larvae.
- **Stack** wood in full sun with good airflow.
- **Avoid** moving recently killed wood off-property.

5. Salvage Usable Timber

- Mill logs quickly before blue-stain fungus or decay sets in.
- Use for lumber, firewood, or specialty wood projects.