

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE

still active in Wyoming's forests



By Les Koch

As in years past, the most significant forest health concern in Wyoming remains the spread of mountain pine beetle (mpb).

An additional 314,000 acres of tree mortality were detected across Wyoming during 2012 bringing the total number of infested acres to roughly 3.3 million since the mid-1990s.

Additional acres of mpb mortality have been observed every year; however, the level of intensity, such as acres affected and number of trees attacked, has continually waned compared to the preceding year. This trend is occurring because the number of host trees available and suitable for attack is steadily decreasing every year.

Throughout the mpb epidemic, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and limber pine forest-cover types are gradually showing fewer acres affected each year due to the smaller-sized trees left behind from previous bark beetle attacks. Mountain pine beetle prefer to attack larger trees. This same dynamic holds true for spruce forest-cover types affected by spruce beetle and Douglas fir forest-cover types affected by the Douglas fir beetle.



What does this mean as far as treating community trees in private landscapes, town parks, and greenways? Do homeowners and land managers need to spray their pine trees?

The last few years, I have suggested people spray their trees with products containing the active ingredients carbaryl or permethrin. Since mpb is still active in many forests and can be transported in firewood, I still believe that applying preventive sprays is a good option. Trees in Wyoming need to be sprayed no later than early June whether homeowners decide to do it themselves or hire a commercial applicator. Please read and follow all pesticide label instructions and wear the protective equipment required as listed on the label.

Please call the Wyoming State Forestry Division at 307-777-5495 for more information.

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