

Garden Talk

Bark Beetle Battle

Bark Beetle infestations can be of great concern to anyone with Ponderosa Pines, Pinion Pines and any other pine tree growing in the landscape. These little beetle bore into the trunk of trees and girdle the live tissues under the bark.

Signs of Bark Beetle Problems

Early signs are needles fading from dark green to a pale green, then to straw followed by rusty red colors. Other outward signs are sap leaking out from holes in the trunk, or fine sawdust showing. The larvae stage of this beetle are the size of a grain of rice and the beetles themselves are about one quarter inch long.



Stressed Trees Attract More Beetles

There are many contributing factors to beetle infestation. When a pine tree is stressed it lets off a turpentine odor that attracts more Bark Beetles. The triggers for tree stress are drought, damaged roots due to construction, or lightning damage.

Keeping Trees Healthy

#1 prevention is deep watering of the tree. It is recommended to water native trees through summer once each month to a depth of 24 inches. Combine this deep water with an annual feeding with Watters "All Purpose Plant Food" 7-4-4 for best results.

Plant Protector – is a liquid beetle killer administered at the base of trees that taints the wood under the bark. After digestion of this poisoned wood the beetle dies, and the tree can heal itself. One treatment last the entire year and should be reapplied annually each spring.

Beneficial sprays can also be administered to the trunk of trees that protect against Bark Beetle boring. Products like Hi-Yield "38 plus" and Watters "Multi Purpose Insect Spray" are good defenses against further damage.

Remove Dead Trees

Trees that have died should be cut down to reduce fire danger and the risk of a tree falling over. The brush should be chipped or hauled off and the lumber cut and split. Thinning trees is a good long term preventative measure.

5 Steps to Protecting Trees

Step 1 - Deep, monthly irrigation through summer.

Step 2 - Feed with Watters "All Purpose Plant Food" 7-4-4.

Step 3 - Application of a systemic "Plant Protector" through the root system for infested trees.

Step 4 - Spray the bark with "38 plus Permethrin" as a way to keep beetles out of healthy trees.



Step 5 - Thinning trees as necessary.