

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT - APRIL, 2013 – JUNE, 2013

This has been a strange winter, lots of warm days and lots of wind. Even though we have had a couple of decent snow storms, the moisture is still way below normal and is considered to be at drought level. This is very hard on our trees. The shrubby bushes that grow close around the trees use a lot a lot of moisture from the soil that the trees need. The deer chew these shrubs and most of them are not in good condition. This is a good time to eliminate the shrubby growth. It also accomplishes one step in being Firewise by eliminating ladder fuel. We are all hoping for more snow. Just a few more snowstorms and we might even have some wildflowers this spring.

There is still time to check out your trees for insects. The mountain pine beetles could fly a little earlier this year due to the warmth. IPS beetles, which fly several times during the season, usually attack only stressed trees. Due to the drought, many of our trees could be susceptible to IPS. These beetles breed in freshly cut wood and slash piles. Never stack these types of materials near your trees. Haul these piles away or scatter them to keep IPS from breeding.

Aphids are going to be a problem this year. They are soft-bodied sucking insects. There are many different types of aphids. Some are somewhat innocuous and some can really damage plants and trees.

Another problem insect that was noticed in abundance last fall is the Pine Needle Scale. Pine Needle Scales suck sap from the needles of pines, producing discoloration on the needles. Prolonged outbreaks can kill branches and even young trees. The old scales which can be easily dislodged with a fingernail indicate the insect inside is dead. However, the newly, hatching insect could show up again in spring. No treatment is usually necessary unless a young tree is completely covered or the damage goes on for a long time.

PINE NEEDLE SCALE- WHITE SPOTS ON NEEDLES



Generally, we love the birds and feel that they are beneficial. However, Sapsuckers can do damage to young trees. Sapsuckers are medium-sized migratory woodpeckers with basic red, black and white markings. While sapsuckers eat a lot of insects, they also like to drill into the soft bark of certain types of

thin-barked trees and create “sap wells”, which they visit frequently. These holes in the trees can be damaging to young trees as they invite insects and fungi to invade.



Worth Mentioning The 2012 CSFS Forest Health Report has just been released. This report gives information on the current state of our forests. Of interest is the progression of the Mountain Pine Beetle. The activity is now continuing primarily in Larimer County and portions of Boulder County. In Larimer County, the activity is mainly in low to mid-elevation forests, along Highway 287 to near the Wyoming border and also along the South Fork of the Cache La Poudre, North, Middle and Bald mountains, the Buckhorn and lower Big Thompson rivers.

While the High Park Fire in June destroyed many pine trees along with mpb larva, there are still many living infested trees along the borders of the fire. While mpb normally don't fly very far, they do have the ability to travel quite a distance and can be blown by the winds. There is some discussion as to where the bulk of the emerging beetles could go to find suitable trees. Also, Moraine Park had been heavily attacked last year. Now much of that area has also burned. We can only hope that the mpb don't come this way.

The report is interesting to all of those who love our forests. It is somewhat difficult to read on a computer as it is 40 pages long. There will be copies of the report showing up soon in various places. The report is located at <http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/137233-ForestReport-12-www.pdf>

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