

## Environmental Report –January, 2013 – March, 2013

In the spring, summer and fall of 2012, we experienced heat, drying winds and very little moisture. These factors stress the trees and vegetation. Add Mountain Pine beetle and ips beetle, along with other insects and disease, and the result is that we have lost many trees and other types of vegetation. Some of our Ponderosa pines lost their second year needles along with the customary third year needles, leaving many trees with “poodle” branches. This is caused by drought. This loss of older needles is more noticeable in the Ponderosa, although other types of evergreens lost some of the older needles, leaving many almost bare branches.

What should we expect for 2013? 2013 was predicted to be cold and dry and so far it is. But the new growth of trees is determined by the weather of the previous spring and summer. Therefore, we can probably expect less new growth on our evergreens and deciduous trees in 2013 than in some years when we had adequate moisture. Signs of drought: needles look dehydrated; deciduous trees and shrubs develop leaf scorch or lose new leaves; flowers don't develop beyond the bud stage. During drought, the newer needles on fir trees might change color to a reddish tint in late summer. Spruce might look kind of purplish on the newer needles. Lodgepole pine cones might not develop fully and Ponderosa needles turn straw colored at the tips or all the new growth turns yellow. It is possible that the older needles will again drop off the evergreens if there is not enough moisture during the first months of 2013. Drought is difficult to manage, but there are some things that we can do. Eliminate all unnecessary or unwanted shrubs and weedy growth. These use precious moisture. Keep your most valuable trees as healthy as you can during summers and consider supplemental watering. In winter, supplemental watering should be done when air temperature is 40 degrees or higher and there is no snow cover and the water can penetrate into the soil. If you shovel snow from decks, walkways and patios, consider placing the snow around your shrubs and trees as supplemental water. It melts slowly and naturally. Be sure that no snow melting chemicals have been used and that the snow is kept about 6" away from the trunks of the plants to avoid vole damage. Fact sheet; fall and winter watering -7.211 For info concerning drought, input drought management in the search area.

The best time to remove or prune trees is in the first few months of the year. The trees that have been killed by mountain pine beetle or ips beetle must be removed to prevent the larvae from maturing and flying to new trees during the summer of this year. Obviously to avoid the possibility of starting a wildfire, do the work while there is snow on the ground and use your chain saw carefully. The easiest and, sometimes best, option is to call an arborist. This would also be a good time to remove limbs that are infested with dwarf mistletoe. The dwarf mistletoe is a parasite and uses moisture and nutrients that the tree needs. This parasite can spread to other trees. Limbs can be taken to The Retreat slash pile. The boles (trunks) of the trees can be cut into shorter pieces and taken to the Loveland Recycle Center for a fairly minimal charge, depending on the size of the load. Neighbors can work together to make the whole job easier. Fact sheets: MPB – 5.528, IPS – 5.558 and dwarf mistletoe 2.925

Look your property over carefully and decide which trees are most important to you. Make sure those trees appear to be healthy. Spraying for beetles is the only scientifically proven way to stop mountain pine and ips beetles. If you are going to use a professional to spray for beetles in the spring, get your name on a list as soon as possible as they get very busy. Remember that Ips beetle fly sooner than mountain pine beetle.

While you are evaluating your property try to remove any invasive weeds that are just waiting for a few warmer weeks to start growing very rapidly. Cheat grass, mullein, Myrtle spurge and musk thistle are some that start early and are already showing above ground. These are noxious weeds that invade areas rapidly.

For Fact Sheets from CSU Extension: type [www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/html) , select yard and garden and enter fact sheet # or key words in search area

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The weather of the previous spring and summer sets up the growth for the following year.