

Mountain pine beetles (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) are native insects found throughout western North America. In healthy forests, they target weakened or dying trees, helping to renew the ecosystem. However, when forests are stressed by drought or overcrowding, beetle populations can surge, attacking even healthy trees and causing widespread damage.

Recent outbreaks have reshaped Colorado's forests, including Douglas County. Beetle-killed trees increase wildfire risk, threaten infrastructure and impact recreation areas. Proactive management is essential to protect our forests and communities.



## Learn the Signs of Infestation

- White/pink/brown popcorn-like clumps of sap on the trunk called pitch tubes
- Fine, sawdust-like material (boring dust) in bark crevices or at the base
- Evidence of woodpecker activity such as stripped bark or bark chips
- Signs of beetles under the bark (eggs, larvae, pupae, adults)
- Tiny exit holes on the bark
- Needles across the tree turning yellow, then red (often months after attack)

## Treatment & Prevention

### **REMOVAL** *Oct. - May*

Remove infested trees and dispose of wood at approved sites.

### **SOLAR** *Oct. - April*

Stack cut logs in full sun and cover with clear plastic.

### **TRAP TREES** *Oct. - May*

Remove and destroy infested trees while all the beetles are still inside.

### **PREVENTATIVE SPRAYS** *April - May*

Apply insecticide to high-value trees near homes or recreation sites.



## Seasonal Guide to Pine Beetle Management



Learn more at  
[DouglasCO.gov/PineBeetle](https://DouglasCO.gov/PineBeetle)



## Beetle Activity

## Actions to Take

## Actions to Avoid

### SPRING

April - June

Larvae mature, pupate and turn into adults.

- Remove infested trees.
- Transport infested wood to the Douglas County Biochar site for proper disposal.
- Work with a professional tree company for preventative measures (pheromones, insecticide).
- Continue alternative treatments: solar, chipping and debarking.

Doing nothing; spring is your last chance to act and prevent further infestations.

### SUMMER

July - September

- Adult beetles emerge, fly and attack new trees.
- Females bore into trees, release pheromones and lay eggs under the bark.

- Cut last year's pre-identified red/dead trees to reduce fire hazard.
- Identify new trees changing color (green → yellow → red).
- Mark newly infested trees; look for beetles flying near trees and pitch tubes or frass (insect waste).

- Do not transport currently infested wood (green trees with beetles).
- Avoid cutting infested trees unless you can treat them onsite immediately.

### FALL

October - November

- Adult beetles stop flying and begin dying.
- Eggs hatch; larvae develop and feed under the bark, killing the tree.

- Continue cutting last year's red/dead trees.
- Identify and mark newly infested trees.
- Plan and prepare for winter treatments; consult a professional tree company.

- Doing nothing; fall is the time to identify, plan and prepare for treatment.
- Hoping the tree will survive; once attacked, the tree is already dying.

### WINTER

December - March

- Larvae continue feeding; all adult beetles are dead.
- No new infestations occur.

- Implement your treatment plan.
- Cut and stage newly infested trees.
- Transport infested wood for proper disposal.
- Consider alternative treatments: solar, chipping and debarking.

- Doing nothing; winter is the best time to act.
- Hoping cold weather will kill beetles; cold rarely eradicates them, especially in lower elevations.