



NEWS RELEASE

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BLOWN DOWN TREES PROMPT CONCERNS ABOUT IPS BEETLES AND SAFETY

WOODLAND PARK, Colo. – March 29, 2019 – During the recent blizzard, hurricane force winds blew down hundreds of trees on the Palmer Divide area causing concern among residents and Foresters about ips (engraver) beetles and public safety.

Mike Till, Forester with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), says, “Ips, or engraver beetles, are small bark, native bark beetles infest freshly cut or newly fallen trees and branches”, he says. “They become active when the weather warms in mid-April, and the recently fallen trees will be ideal brood sites.”

Ips mature from egg to adult in eight weeks and new adults emerge from the green wood and attack other trees. Till says, unlike the larger mountain pine beetle, ips attack only small trees, less than six inches in diameter, or larger trees that are stressed by injury or disease. Till cautions he does not expect a large epidemic over the next few years.

“After an event like the blowdown, we usually see an increase in ips activity for two to three years,” Till says. “The best thing landowners can do is treat the wood promptly to kill the ips before they mature and attack new trees. Promptly lopping the branches into small pieces, less than 18 inches in length and scattering them will promote drying and kill the immature beetles before the emerge. Chipping the slash will also kill ips beetles.

Landowners may also cut and pile the branches and take them to the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Site when it opens on May 4 this year. Till cautions the time frame is short if homeowners take branches to the slash site. “Landowners need to drop off infested wood at the site within a week of the May 4th opening”, he says. “The schedule calls for the first grinding in early June, and very close to the time when the first adult ips will emerge. Homeowners must get the slash to the site quickly and not put it off until later.”

The Black Forest Slash and Mulch Site is located on the Black Forest School Section on east side of Herring Road, about one quarter mile south of Shoup Road. The days and hours of operation are available on the web at: www.bfslash.com.

Many of the fallen trees hung up in standing trees are a safety concern. Carolyn Brown, a Director of the Slash Site and a Black Forest homeowner is dealing with that at her home, “I had a fifty foot tree leaning over my driveway. Its forked top caught on a nearby tree, and I took it down today.

Dave Root, another Forester with CSFS is concerned for landowners who try to cut the leaning trees. “I drove through Black Forest yesterday, and saw dozens of hung-up trees”, he says. “That started me worrying about the safety of landowners who try to cut the leaners down. Landowners like Carolyn who

are experienced sawyers understand how to cut leaning trees, but I am afraid those who are less experienced do not understand the hazards involved.” Root says the worst hazard is when the leaning tree is cut loose; the butt end may swing in any direction. “The last thing you want is to have the butt end of the tree swing towards you while you are holding a running chainsaw”, he says. “You cannot be certain which way the tree will swing. I also worry about weekend warriors operating a chainsaw without proper safety equipment. No one should operate a saw without protective chaps, and a hard hat with ear protection and a face screen.” For the average homeowner, taking down leaning trees should be left to an experienced sawyer or professional contractor.”

For more information on Ips beetle and slash management, go to csfs.colostate.edu/csfspublications/ click on the tab corresponding publication you would like to read or call (719) 687-2921.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University and provides staffing for the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The CSFS provides technical forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities achieve their forest management goals.

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