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# Arizona State Forestry Division

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## FOREST HEALTH INFORMATION ALERT

April 2010

### STORM DAMAGE IN THE PRESCOTT AREA

According to the Arizona State Forestry Division, widespread storm damage to ponderosa and pinyon pines and other tree species, caused by the El Niño storms this winter and spring, can be seen throughout the Prescott area. An additional reason for the branch and trunk breakage and uprooted trees, is overstocking of ponderosa pines. This has led to the development of small branches and trunk diameters and poorly developed root systems.

Affected pines should be properly treated as soon as possible to prevent an increase in bark beetle populations and to reduce branch and trunk decay. Also proper thinning and



pruning of remaining pines is recommended for fire prevention reasons. Bent trees, saplings and seedlings should also be thinned to provide more growing space.

To prevent bark beetles from building up in storm-damaged pines and infesting your remaining trees, green pine wood should be treated to eliminate favorable beetle habitat. Any technique that destroys or removes susceptible material--piling and burning (where safe and legal), hauling to an approved brush disposal site, chipping, complete removal of the bark, or if small amounts are utilized for firewood, should be covered with clear, heavy



polyethylene plastic. The plastic should completely enclose the firewood, the edges of the plastic should be buried and the pile placed in the open from four to six weeks. Temperatures will build up under the plastic and discourage beetles from infesting the wood. “Do not stack untreated green pine wood between trees”.

With the warming temperatures, bark beetles will emerge from their overwintering sites and infest green pine wood. Piles of red sawdust on top or underneath pine material are a sure sign of bark beetle infestation.



Major activity by bark beetles in the Prescott area is not anticipated due to their low population levels, and all the moisture we’ve received this winter—these treatments are mainly precautionary. However, bark beetles have the capability to build up quickly in large numbers in localized areas, and infesting remaining trees. This is especially critical in the community and the wildland-urban interface, where trees have a higher value.

**CAUTION:** Many of the treatments recommended in this alert can be hazardous and should only be attempted by a trained individual. Contact your local qualified and insured arborist or tree-care service for assistance. And contact your local Fire Department for more information about fire prevention treatments.

Also refer to the publications issued by the Cooperative Extension at:  
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1394.pdf> and  
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1449.pdf>.

For information about fire prevention treatments: [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) . And for further information about storm damage or other forest health concerns in the Prescott area, contact: Bob Celaya, Forest Health Specialist, Office of the State Forester at (602) 771-1415 or our Prescott Field Office at (928) 778-9567.