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Tree Health Information Alert

Pine Engraver Beetles Detected in Tucson CC Estates



Six-spined engraver beetles, *Ips calligraphus*, were recently detected killing scattered Aleppo and Eudarica pines in Tucson CC Estates. This is the first time these native bark beetles have been found in non-native pines in the Sonoran Desert.

They normally occur at higher elevations infesting mainly ponderosa pines, stressed by drought, felled by the wind or cut for firewood. Infested green ponderosa pine firewood brought down to the community from sites on the Catalina Mountains, may be the reason why they are now found in the neighborhood. Once pine firewood dries out and is no longer suitable for the beetles, they exit and fly to other susceptible wood or pine trees.

It is very important that homeowners check all their pines for symptoms of the bark beetle now. Fading pine needles and red sawdust scattered on the trunk are diagnostic. Removal of a small piece of bark on the infested part of the trunk will reveal the presence of the beetles, and their characteristic engravings. They prefer to infest the thicker barked and deeply fissured main trunk but may enter larger branches further up the tree.



The bark beetle is the largest member in this genus found in Arizona, and is about a quarter of an inch in length. It is the only species with six spines on the back edge of each wing cover. They have the ability to produce multiple generations and infest several trees. They may also be breeding year round at this lower elevation.



Magnified image and identification courtesy of the Arizona Department of Agriculture

Infested trees should be removed as soon as possible, and the wood properly disposed of at a landfill. The bark beetles will not infest all of the pines in Tucson CC Estates, but will likely target pines stressed by drought and trees damaged by new home construction.

Unless there are local water restrictions, consider slow, deep, and infrequent watering of your pines around your home starting now. With a properly installed and maintained drip system, or with a soaker hose placed around the dripline of the tree. Continue watering until the “monsoon” rains are well established.

Also refer to the following UofA Cooperative Extension brochure, for proper watering techniques: <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/water/az1298.pdf>.

This tree health information alert only addresses basic information about these beetles in a brand new environment. For additional information about this complex subject check out the following links:

Forest Pest Insects in North America: A Photographic guide

<http://forestpests.org/vd/42.html>

Management Guide for Six-spined Ips

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5187551.pdf

Six-Spined Engraver Beetle

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev2_043451.pdf

Construction and Tree Protection

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/forestry/pdf/ag/ag685.pdf>

Protecting Trees During Construction

<http://csfs.colostate.edu/pdfs/construction.pdf>

For further assistance with this insect, contact:

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