

MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE – WHAT CAN YOU DO?



The mountain pine beetle is a small, black beetle about the size of a grain of rice. For several years mountain pine beetles have been expanding east into Alberta from British Columbia. Recently, there have been reports that Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) has expanded its range. 35 locations have been confirmed within the County of Wetaskiwin boundaries.

What type of trees may be attacked?

Mountain pine beetles attack and kill all pine trees, usually mature ones aged 80 to 120 years old. All species of pine are vulnerable and they do not attack aspen, spruce or fir trees.

When do beetles attack trees and how long do they stay in trees?

Beetles fly in search of new trees in July and August. Once a beetle has found a suitable tree, it will live in that tree for the remainder of its life and lay eggs. The new generation of beetles will not emerge from the tree for at least one year.

If my tree is attacked, will it die?

Trees successfully attacked by mountain pine beetles usually die within one year, however if the beetle has made an attempt to enter the tree but is “pitched out” without completing reproduction it may survive.

How can I tell if my trees have been attacked?

Look for creamy resin resembling honey (called pitch tubes), and sawdust at the base of the tree and in the bark’s crevices.

What do I do if my tree is infested?

Scout out the pine trees on your property, wrap survey tape around each tree that has been attacked. It is recommended that a tree with more than 40 pitch tubes be removed. In the winter months trees can be sold and transported to saw mills and debarked on their site. Other options are to hire an arborist with a chipper to come on to your property and leave the material on site. You can also burn the mass attacked trees.

How Can The County of Wetaskiwin Help? Our staff will provide identification of the mountain pine beetle so control measures can be put in place. In the Spring of 2019 the County

of Wetaskiwin sold pheromone pouches at cost price to producers in an attempt to combat the infestation of pine beetles. The pouches contain a synthetically produced substance called verbenone which repels arriving beetles in flight acting as an anti – aggregation tool. These pouches should be attached to the north side of pine trees between June 15 and July 1. It is most effective at low to medium population pressure. Early detection and control by residents play an important role in managing Alberta’s MPB infestation and preventing further spread. This pest is not registered under the Provincial Agricultural Pest Act.

If you suspect a Mountain Pine Beetle infestation on your property please contact **Heather Dickau**, Horticulturist, at hdickau@county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca or call **780-352-3321**