

One More Thing to Worry About: Pine Bark Beetles.

The issue of Pine Bark Beetles was discussed at the last BSLA Annual Meeting. A concerned BSLA member did further research on the topic and forwarded the following information.

Pine trees can die for many reasons, but a tree killed by Pine Bark Beetles can be identified by its rust-orange needles appearing at the crown and working their way down the tree as the tree dies. Typically, an infested tree will die in a single season.

The DNR has several articles on its website describing the beetle and its life cycle and providing advice to property owners. Everyone with pine trees on their property should read these articles. Start with:

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/barkbeetles/index.html

and

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/treecare/forest_health/barkbeetles/barkbeetlebroch.pdf.

Here are a few highlights:

1. Pine Bark Beetles infest live pine trees that are stressed, perhaps by drought, overcrowding or storm damage. Healthy trees can ward them off.
2. A pine tree that appears to be dying should be felled and removed from your property as soon as possible. Do not retain for firewood. Trees that you know to have died in previous years, even if killed by beetles, are no longer a threat because the beetles will have moved on to living trees.
3. Pine Bark Beetles also infest the branches and trunks of live trees falling to the ground during summer months. Therefore, elective trimming, thinning and felling of live trees that are not diseased should be

avoided between between March 1 and October 31. If you must cut during those months, you should remove from your property all live branches and trunks immediately after they are cut. Also, you should remove from your property any live pine trees and branches downed by storms.

Pine trees benefit from our stewardship. So long as the Pine Bark Beetles are with us, letting nature take its course can put your and all of the pine trees around Big Sand at risk. In addition to the above recommendations, watering trees where possible during dry spells may help lessen the risk of Pine Bark Beetle damage. Please be watchful and hopefully we can prevent a widespread infestation and loss of one of our precious resources.