



Branching Out

A Forest Stewardship e-newsletter

Winter 2007

Brought to you by:



Welcome

Fire Ready provides wildfire protection and forestry services. Our mission is connecting property owners and communities to their landscapes through services that enhance their forest's aesthetics, health and safety.

We would like to say THANK YOU to all of our customers, and our many valuable contacts in the industry. We could not be where we are today without your loyalty, your expertise and your business.

You will find more information on these topics on our website. Visit www.fireready.com and click on Resources to find an expanded version of this Winter 2007 e-newsletter.

Storm Damaged Trees

How to Prevent Loss

Thousands of trees are lost every year to wind, lightning, ice, and snow. Damaged trees with snapped branches, hanging branches, uproot, or leans can cause unsafe environments and unpredictable behavior. Ice buildup and snowstorms can cause heavy loading in trees. There are six main categories of storm damage to trees: blow-over, trunk failure, twisted crown, root failure, branch failure and lightning.

Trees are able to withstand most storms and are usually only damaged during extreme storms. Healthy trees are better able to weather storms and recover from damage. Preventative care—such as appropriate pruning—can reduce storm-damaged losses.

Some ways to minimize loss:

- When planting trees, consult a professional for appropriate staking methods.
- Practice proper pruning techniques to reduce structural problems
- Healthy trees can better withstand storms and will recover better if they are damaged.
- Over-fertilization or over-watering can increase the size of the tree's crown and decrease the root size which may make the tree more susceptible to damage.
- Prune symmetrically—crowns and branches. Maintain the main trunk.
- Treat pest problems.

For more information on your specific tree or any urban tree care needs, contact your local Fire Ready office.

Forest Pest Outbreaks

What's Wrong with my Tree?

Evergreens lose some needles every year. Generally speaking:

- ⇒ If the interior needles are fading, this is normal leaf fall.
- ⇒ If the whole tree is fading, the cause is probably bark beetles, root disease, or a lack of moisture.
- ⇒ If the exterior needles are fading, the cause may be tip moth or twig beetle.

There are more than twenty species of forest pests in Colorado, affecting nearly all types of evergreen trees.



Preventative actions should concentrate in areas surrounding beetle-killed trees.

- 1) Consult professional foresters to identify trees and forest-pests.
- 2) Determine an appropriate method of action for your trees.
- 3) Work with neighbors to reduce beetle populations landscape-wide.
- 4) Remove infested trees before the beetles fly.
- 5) Properly dispose of all parts of the infested trees (research suggested methods).
- 6) Preventative tree-spraying for beetle control can be effective in trees not yet infested.
- 7) Thin trees to improve overall health and vigor of the forest.
- 8) If appropriate for forest health, develop a re-planting plan for trees lost.

A community-wide approach of prevention and beetle population reduction may work in areas of high-value forests. For information on pests in your specific area, contact your local Fire Ready office or the Colorado State Forest Service.

Fire-Resistive Plants

Planning a Landscape

A great way to curb the February-blues is to develop a plan for a more fire-resistive landscape. Research plant-options for your particular area—what grows well? How much water/care will this plant need? Does this plant have fire-resistive properties? Design your landscape with the most-fire-resistive plants closest to your home and treasured trees. Consider how plants will behave during a wildfire—will this shrub under this tree transport a fire upward? Visit your local nursery or Colorado State Forest Service office for more information. Helpful online resources:

Colorado State Forest Service—<http://csfs.colostate.edu/>
Publication no. 6.303—Fire Resistant Landscaping
Publication no. 6.304—Forest Home Fire Safety
Publication no. 6.306—Grass Seed Mixes to Reduce Wildfire Hazards

Fire Ready has worked with Beauty Beyond Belief to develop a wildflower seed mixture using plants with fire-resistive properties. To request complimentary seed packets for you and your neighbors, please send an email to info@fireready.com

Wildfire Belongs

A Natural Component of our Landscape

Fire plays a natural role in any forest or grassland ecosystem and cannot be eliminated from the landscape. Like storms, avalanches, or floods, fire is a powerful agent of change. Fire reduces impacts from insects and disease, maintains open meadows, and keeps burnable vegetation to a minimum. Historically, Colorado forests burned regularly. Slow burning ground fires periodically cleaned the forest of brush, leaving larger trees and open areas. A century ago, many ponderosa pine forests contained 25 to 60 stems per acre. In many areas, these same forests today are supporting well over 275 stems per acre. The overabundance of vegetation and stands of same-age trees are results of fire suppression and past logging practices.

Western droughts are common. In past conditions, trees could survive drought. However, in dense forests where too many trees are competing for limited nutrients and sunlight, the weaker trees can no longer withstand the lack of water and are more susceptible to catastrophic wildfires and insect infestations. The number of homes and communities within forested areas has skyrocketed. Today's wildfires burn hotter, are dangerous to fight, and are destructive to personal property and the natural landscape. Predictions of a prolonged drought cycle, coupled with dense forests, increase the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire.



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Fire behavior is the way that fire ignites and spreads. Fire behavior depends on the type and density of vegetation, the topography of the land, and the weather – primarily wind, humidity, and temperature. Of these factors, vegetation is the only one that can be managed. You should annually prepare for wildfire season. The risk of damage to your home and property can be greatly reduced by creating defensible space – a circle of protection around a forested home where forest fuels have been modified.

The two most important factors in home survival are defensible space and an emergency water supply. There are additional precautions you can take today to protect your family:

- Identify escape routes, determine meeting places and emergency contacts.

- Store hand-tools and garden hoses for use in case of fire.

- Evaluate the driveway and home for emergency access and identification.

- Talk to your neighbors about reducing wildfire risk.

Fire will remain a part of the natural landscape. The actions we take on our private property will determine the intensity of these fires and the proximity to our homes. For more information, contact your local Fire Ready office.

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Fire Ready is electronically offering this e-newsletter four times a year, to provide complimentary forest stewardship information to our valuable clients and contacts. To subscribe, please send an email to info@fireready.com. To unsubscribe, please send an email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line to info@fireready.com.

For more information, contact:

Fire Ready: www.fireready.com

Firewise: www.firewise.org

Colorado State Forest Service: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

Your local fire department

Your local Fire Council