

# The Pine Engraver Bark Beetle (*Ips pini*) in Northern Wisconsin

*NOTE: The information and control suggestions in this factsheet are written for forest managers and property owners in Northern Wisconsin. People elsewhere should consult their local Extension agent about tree disease and insect problems.*

## Biology

- The pine engraver almost never attacks healthy pines during periods of near normal precipitation.
- It infests (1) recently cut pine material down to about 2 inches in diameter and (2) stressed pines.
- These bark beetles cannot live in pines with loose bark, so removal of pines that have been dead for awhile is unnecessary in terms of bark beetle population reduction.
- It breeds and spreads during the warm months (approximately mid-April to September).

## Control Tactics

### *Local Population Reduction\**

- *May 1 – July 15:* If pines die suddenly (e.g. the *entire* crown turns orange and individual needles turn *completely* reddish-orange) or are severely wind damaged, remove them as quickly as possible. All tree trunks and branches down to 2 inches in diameter should be utilized or destroyed by chipping or burning within 3 weeks of cutting. All stumps should be cut as low to the ground as possible.

### *Prevention*

- Perform timber harvests, firewood cutting, or general cutting of pine between September 1 and March 1. If cutting during this period, destroying/removing the cut material is not necessary. If harvests are done April 1 to September 1, remove the logs promptly, no more than 3 weeks after being cut. If drought conditions are present, slash larger than 2 inches in diameter should be removed or destroyed when cutting March 1 – September 1.
- Remove stressed, living pines (e.g. pines that have excessively thin crowns, pines with 50% or more of their crowns discolored, etc.) between September 1 and March 1.
- *When monthly precipitation dips to 1 inch or more below average:* Slowly water (e.g. with a soaker hose) established ornamental pines, once every 1 - 2 weeks for several hours at or slightly beyond their driplines. One general rule is to water 10 gallons per inch of trunk diameter. Another is to water an established tree, 1 – 3 inches per week, depending on soil texture.



Figure 1: Red Pines dying suddenly from bark beetles. Armillaria root disease and Annosum root rot can cause similar symptoms.



Figure 2: Many bark beetle emergence holes indicate tree death due to bark beetle attack.



Figure 3: Bark beetle feeding galleries on the surface of the wood, also found on the inside of the bark

\* Employing local population controls may or may not reduce local bark beetle populations significantly. These bark beetles cannot be locally eradicated from a forested area with conifers. In developed areas, neighbors must work together to achieve any significant control.



FACT SHEET SOURCE: Wisconsin DNR Forest Health Team, <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestHealth/>  
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