

Press Release

Eddy County Cooperative Extension Service

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dying Pinions

As I drive around both Carlsbad and Artesia I see lots of pinions that look dry, browning or off color. There are a number of things, which may be causing this. The most common is pinion needle scale. If you look on the needles of the pinion trees you will see small little black dots about the size of a number two-pencil lead and these dots are all up and down the needles. The dots do not appear to move but can be scraped off with a fingernail or knife. This is the adult stage of the scale insect. They burrow their legs in to the needle suck juices and lay eggs. The egg mass are often in the crotch of branches and is white cotton look stuff. The best time to control needle scale is to control the eggs. You can scrape the eggs off and deposit them in a plastic bag then to the dumpster. Applying an approved insecticide such as Cygon tm or dimothate can also control the insect. As with all chemicals read and follow the label directions. You will have to make three applications at 7 to 10 days apart in order to get some control. Pinion

needle scale can kill a tree if it attacked for a number of years. The first year it is seldom fatal. However it can cause stress, which may lead to attack by the second most common problem.

The second most common is bark beetles and twig beetles. Tree that are turning red or brown now were likely attacked earlier in the summer and most of the bark beetles have already left the tree. Needles on currently infested trees may be green or fading to a lighter green but does not have the black dots as mentioned above. A reddish pitch tube with a hole through the center and sawdust around the base of the tree are sure signs that a tree is infested. As with all bore type insect preventive actions will reduce the threat of bark beetle buildups. Landscape conifers can be given extra water even in the wintertime. Mulch will reduce soil compaction and water losses. Fertilizers should be applied in the spring of the year. The trunk and branches can be treated with a approved insecticide once a month to prevent reinfestation. For more information Contact your Local County Extension office. Eddy County Extension Service, New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and educator. All programs are available to everyone regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. New Mexico State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Eddy County Government Cooperating.

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We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.

-- Will Rogers