

FOREST HEALTH - BEETLEBUSTERS ADVISORY

By Jim Adams



Our Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic has abated, but the Douglas-fir Tussock Moth is coming. The picture above shows dead Doug-fir forest half a mile west of Pine Brook Hills (healthy Ponderosa Pine and Doug-fir are in the foreground). Vigilance and removal of Mountain Pine Beetle brood trees did limit damage to our Ponderosa forest. Now we can defend our Doug-firs.

Tussock Moth larvae kill trees by eating their needles during warm months. Eggs are laid during late summer, they overwinter and hatch in late May. The female does not fly, she lays a frothy mass of eggs on her cocoon. Tiny hatched larvae go to the top of a tree to eat tender new needles and they eat lower needles as they grow. Look for these cocoons now.



The caterpillar is pretty, but its hairs are irritating and are built into the cocoon - so do not touch either. Small larvae disperse in the breeze by sailing on threads.

If you see cocoons or balding Doug-fir tops please report their location to foresthealth@pinebrookhills.org. For more information about how to deal with this new threat please visit www.pinebrookhills.org > Services > Forest Health - BeetleBusters.