

## Are the Trees Healthy?

Crowns and roots - we only see half the story

Rule of thumb for ponderosa pine and Douglas fir: if the crowns of trees are touching each other, they are competing with each for nutrients and water.

How to know what trees to keep and what trees to remove

Trees with pointed tops, and fuller crowns tend to be the dominant trees (keep)  
Trees with flat tops are the "runts" (remove) or the oldest trees that are not growing much in height anymore (keep or remove).

"Open-grown" trees may have round tops.

Leave both trees "joined at the hip" or remove both trees, don't take just one half.

Leave trees with large stick nests, or squirrel nests made from needles.

Leave "character" trees, trees with dead top for raptors to perch in; trees with bird holes.

Promote diversity of native species and age of trees when possible. Small diameter trees are not necessarily younger trees. Look at the top. Is it pointed? Does it have a full crown? If not, it is probably an older, suppressed tree.

### Dwarf Mistletoe Management

Dwarf mistletoe is a parasitic plant that is interior and exterior to the host tree. Dwarf mistletoe is species specific. The mistletoe found on ponderosa pine will not infect a Douglas fir, rarely a lodgepole pine, and occasionally a limber pine. There are male and female plants.

Dwarf mistletoe deforms branches and shortens the life of a tree. The younger the tree, the shorter the life span.

Suggested management: protect young trees from infection. Remove the worse trees. Prune out dwarf mistletoe in lightly infected trees. (Don't stub off branches, remove a branch at a branch or trunk junction).

### Bark Beetles

Mountain pine beetle: prefers large ponderosa pine that are somewhat stressed. Pitch tubes or wood peckers knocking off tree bark are good indicators of an attack.

Ips beetle: no size preference, can only successfully attack unhealthy trees, ie. tree recently struck by lightning, heavily infected with dwarf mistletoe, or roots damaged from road work or new construction. May or may not have pitch tubes, will see fine sawdust in bark crevices and at base of tree.

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

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