

Solar Treatment for Mountain Pine Beetle



Solar treatment may be appropriate in some areas of Colorado to reduce beetle populations in infested trees. This treatment may be carried out with a small number of logs in high-value areas. There are two options of solar treatment: with plastic sheeting, and without plastic. Below is a brief description on set-up and difficulties when using solar treatment. **Contact your local forester for more details on solar treatment.**

Side view of log set-up



With plastic cover

Without plastic cover

Plastic	6-mill clear plastic	No
Logs	Clearly identify infested trees with larva Cut trees to 4 ft. logs Make groups of 5-7 logs, 1-layer (see diagram above)	
Start date	Early spring (mid-April, early May)	
Duration	At least 8 weeks	
Location	Southern exposure Open, sunny area with several hours of direct sunlight	
Temperature	Logs need to reach temperatures of 110°F or more	
Prep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water logs previous to covering • Seal edges with dirt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotate logs • Every 3 weeks rotate 1/3 of a turn
Checking	Check for mortality under the bark after 8 weeks Peel some bark off to see larva, pupa or adult, if dead then method is working If alive then should try destroying the brood by debarking, chipping or burning	
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic disposal • Ants may nest inside plastic • Logs may not reach 110°F • Insects can chew through plastic • Plastic may rip, repair with duct tape • In lodgepole forests it may be difficult to find open areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotation • Logs may not reach 110°F • In lodgepole forests it may be difficult to find open areas