



BLACK FOREST NEWS

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Rethinking hazard trees



The downslope tempest this weekend along the mountains from Trinidad to Buena Vista left a lot of homeowners wishing they had removed hazard trees. These photos are from the Westcliffe area along the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains where winds reached Class 2 hurricane force of 125 mph about 1 a.m. Many trees (BIG TREES) snapped off or toppled. Other years, winds of 90 mph had been experienced, but this year the ground was wet from several recent snowstorms of a foot or more in the past few weeks, and large trees of all species just blew down. The photo on the left shows an old homestead cabin with a large limby ponderosa located south of the house, and a cleared area to fall into when struck by west or SW downslope mountain wave winds. The nearby home on the right, was clipped as another large ponderosa blew over, with the top corner of the home struck by the large, old tree. Winds were out of the west, and southwest in this storm. Had winds been more from the northwest this big tree might have fallen squarely on the house. Nearly all the large spruces and firs toppled like dominoes in the valleys and many trees of all sizes broke off between 5' and 30 feet up. *Photos by JVA. More photos on the back page.*

More Westcliffe Tempest photos



Two fir trees snapped off about 12 feet up and landed on the roof and porch area of this cabin - luckily the cabin walls did not collapse and fortunately the branches broke off and did not pierce the roof. *Photo by JVA*



Winds in the Colorado Springs area gusted to 80-90 mph, not as strong as for the mountains to the west, but still significant.

In the Black Forest area the strongest winds, often associated with winter storms, come from the north and northwest. If the trees are heavy with snow and ice, and the soil is wet, trees have been blow down here also, Blowdowns are more frequent in the mountains, but often many years apart and in scattered areas. Check your property for trees that are hazardous to your buildings, vehicles or power lines!



"Uh Oh - the truck got a nose job." *Photo by JVA*