

Color Your Trees to Keep Away Thieves

Many property owners are concerned at holiday time about the possible loss of valuable evergreen trees to Christmas tree thieves. Cornell University's "ugly mix" recipe is designed to temporarily render treated trees too ugly to harvest.

Here's the recipe:

Pour 2 gallons of warm water into a large container.

Mix separately 20 ounces of hydrated lime with 8 ounces of Wilt-Pruf antidessicant, until a uniform paste is produced.

Fold the paste slowly into the water.

When the mixture is an even, light milky color, add two bottles of red or other brightly colored food coloring.

Blend until the mixture is a uniform color.

Spray or splatter the material on the trees you wish to protect.

The weather should be mild and dry at the time. Rains will gradually wash the "ugly mix" off. Be aware, however, that tree thieves sometimes cut down "uglified" trees just for spite.

