

Prepare now for emerald ash borer

By Shari Friedel *Grant Tree Board*

At the last Grant Tree Board meeting held Dec. 17, discussion was held on how the public can prepare for the threat of emerald ash borer, an insect that is decimating ash tree populations in several states, and has been diagnosed in states bordering Nebraska.

The National Forest Service claims the pest will rival Dutch elm disease in its impact on community forests. It is almost certain the destructive insect will make an appearance in the state of Nebraska—it's more a question of when, not if.

According to Tree Board President Jon Forney, now is the time to have a plan, and he and the tree board would like to suggest steps that can be taken now.

Diversifying the landscape by planting a variety of trees is one way to avoid total loss near a home or business, if ash are heavily planted in an area.

He gave the example of Perkins County High School, which has several mature ash trees planted in front of the oldest portion of the building. "A loss of those trees would change that particular landscape dramatically," Forney said.

"It may be 11-15 years before total loss of mature trees," he added.

He suggests that homeowners consider planting and establishing disease-resistant, area-appropriate trees now, so they will be well established before borers take their toll.

Steps can be taken for treatment of ash borer in established ash trees, but it is recommended to treat only trees of a certain age and size. Very young trees can be replaced more cost effectively than being treated. And it may not be worth the effort and expense to treat trees that are close to the end of their life span.

Only trees with a trunk diameter of at least 15 inches measured at four-and-a-half feet from ground level should be treated.

More information on ash borer will be provided by the Grant Tree Board in the future.

Additional free information is available from the National Forest Service by contacting Community Forester Rachel Allison, 308-696-6718 or rachel.allison@unl.edu