

An Arborist takes
care of a tree for life.



OUT ON A LIMB

FALL 2020, VOLUME 40, ISSUE 3



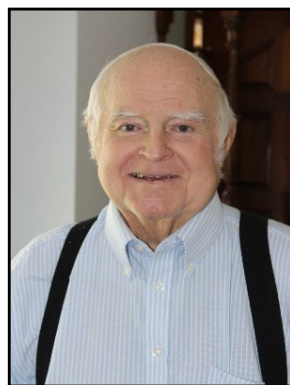
So what tree produces blooms in April? Story on page 7.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

By: Jim Keepers, Navy & Air Force Certified
Arborist Veteran

Veterans' Day is not just another legal holiday to get off from work. This special day was intended to thank veterans for their dedicated and loyal service to our country. A lot of people confuse this special day with Memorial Day. The difference between the two is we are celebrating those individuals who are still living on Veterans Day and on Memorial Day we honor those who have gone to their eternal rest. Your association is fortunate to have some very special and unique veterans who have served their country and have given great service to the Nebraska Arborist Association (NAA).

The goal of this front page NAA newsletter article is not to give you the history on how this special Remembrance Day developed over time but to enlighten you on our NAA Arborist Veterans. Let's take a look at two of our very Senior Certified Nebraska Arborist Veterans who have given their valuable time, talents and support to your association.



Jack Nebelsick (USN - left) & John Housley, Sr. (NE NG - right)

great grandchildren. Those numbers might have increased since I last interviewed Jack. For a more complete history of Jack's life and his WW II experiences, check out the NAA's "Out on a Limb," Third Quarter 2013, Arborist Spotlight.

Jack had a very dangerous career in the Navy during WW II compared to his arborist career. He survived WW II but could have died when he fell out of tree. Jack Nebelsick is presently 96 years young.

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A QUARTERLY UPDATE OF THE NEBRASKA ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION

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SUBMIT ARTICLES:

If you have anything you'd like to submit for inclusion in the Quarterly Update, please contact Jim Keepers at jlkeepers45@gmail.com or (402) 332-0715 or (402) 618-8837.

Submission deadlines for the final NAA 2020 quarterly newsletter:

4th Quarter - November 1, 2020

*Photo contributions throughout
courtesy of Jim Keepers.*

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: Jeff Grewe, NAA President



It's been a season of change and uncertainty with a heavy dose of strong opinion and high emotion: mask mandates, canceled concerts and conventions, high unemployment and economic uncertainty, Joe Biden or Donald Trump, dogs and cats living together... MASS HYSTERIA! You get the idea.

If you have not heard already, the 2021 NAA Winter Conference has been canceled - another unfortunate casualty of the coronavirus. The hurdles involved with travel regarding speakers and sponsors lead to our decision to cancel the event.

In better news, Arborist school is being held as scheduled and we expect it to be well-attended. Rest assured, the proper precautions have been taken to allow for adequate social distancing and a safe learning environment.

In a most unexpected turn of events, this summer has been a blockbuster for tree care companies. Many companies I've spoken to have posted record numbers for June, July, and August. Demand has been impossible to keep up with, for most. Here's my hypothesis: 1. People are stuck at home looking at their trees...all day everyday. 2. People have canceled their vacations, summer camps, dining out, concerts, sporting events, etc. All of that money has instead been reallocated to home improvement, particularly the outdoor spaces where they are spending a lot of their time to keep cabin fever at bay.

As an industry, I think we should make hay while we can. Take advantage of this economic windfall and prepare for potentially lean times ahead. With the election looming and the unknown coronavirus winter we may have, there are uncertain times around the corner. That said, I believe that our industry will benefit from the new "work from home" norm for some time to come. Who would have thought six months ago that we'd be saying this now: It's a good time to be in tree care.

All the best, Jeff Grewe, President, Nebraska Arborist Association

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Continued from page 1...

He and Bonnie still go to church on Sunday and he does treat her out to dinner once in a while.

John Housley Sr., is the other Nebraska Arborist I am featuring in my salute to Veterans. John served in the Nebraska National Guard. In 1977, he joined with other Nebraska Arborists to form the Nebraska Arborists Association. He is also one of the 29 NAA Charter Members. He received the NAA's Arborist of the Year Award in 2003 and the NAA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013. John received this award at the same time as Orville Hatcher, Dave Mooter and Clayton Black. John is the last remaining member of this unique group of men who laid down the foundation for our association.



John has always been a sponsor of the Silent Auction held during the NAA's winter conference. John enjoys attending winter and summer conferences, and staying up to date on tree related issues. He did miss one year when he had a heart attack and nearly died. Because of our required NAA First Aid training requirements, his grandson Michael saved John's life by performing CPR in the field. John only has one problem and that is he loves to talk. If you are going into his store to buy something, give yourself some extra time and make sure you take one of his sodas he always offers.

He is married to the lovely Carmen who takes care of the business paperwork. John Housley is presently 81 years young and still working in the Arborist trade. John is my go to Arborist when I have a disease or insect problem. He knows what is happening in our local area with our trees. A more complete detail of John's life, can be found in the NAA's "Out on a Limb," Third Quarter 2010, Arborist Spotlight.

Veterans Day is a special day when we give special thanks to our living Arborist Veterans who served our county honorably during war or peacetime. Following the tradition of honor, I want to take the time to thank the following Senior Nebraska Arborists/Veterans for their service to our country and the Nebraska Arborists Association, William (Bill) Hudson (USAF), Galen Olsberg (USA) and Phil Pierce (USAF), and myself Jim Keepers (USN & USAF). I am honored to be included in this group of unique individuals. It makes me proud to say "Thank You for Your Service".

In closing, I want to leave you with a verse from a Lee Greenwood song: "I'm proud to be an American where at least I know I'm free." We are free because of the military sacrifice of our Nebraska Senior Arborist Veterans.

UPCOMING EVENT

Plant Health & Tree Biology Class

November 12-13, 2020

7:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Carol Joy Holling Center

27416 Ranch Road

Ashland, NE

NAA MEMBERSHIP & CERTIFICATION RENEWS

COVID-19 has struck a major blow to the Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA), forcing your association to cancel the 2020 Summer Field Day and the 2021 NE GREAT PLAINS Conference.

Take the time to renew your NAA membership and Arborist Certification. Also, talk to your friends and colleagues in the Arborist trade and let them know the benefits of being a member of the NAA.

You will receive your NAA renewal notices this next quarter and return it before the end of December. Please take the time to complete the renewal paperwork and make sure you are up to date on your CEUs.

The NAA needs you as part of the association team.



A-Plus Tree Service and Ashland Tree Service working as a team to remove a large tree in Gretna.

ARBORIST SPOTLIGHT

By: Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator

Now that I have retained this article's writership back, I first must say I had nothing to do with the last Arborist Spotlight article in the NAA's 2nd quarter newsletter. Still, I must thank Kathi Schildt, NAA Executive Director, for her very kind words about me.

Now for the question at hand. Who will be featured in this quarter's spotlight? In the past, I have mostly concentrated on the individuals accomplishing the pruning and removal aspects of our career field. This time, I want to go back to the tree seedling and feature someone who puts his time and talent in planting trees suitable for our harsh Nebraska Climate.

The individual in question could be classified as the backbone of our career field. Without his efforts to produce the best trees possible, we wouldn't have trees grown from seed able to survive our harsh Nebraska environment.

The individual featured is Brian Byers, Operations Manager, and owner, along with his wife Heather Byers, of the Great Plains Nursery just outside Weston, Nebraska. I was able to feature Heather Byers in a previous Arborist Spotlight article in NAA's summer issue of 2018. Please take the time to go back and read about Heather's story. You will see how Brian and Heather have meshed their lives together.

Brian unloading trees for the Gretna Tree Giveaway



Hazel, Heather, Finley, Brian, Bristol, Griffin & Gracie



I must take this opportunity to thank Brian's mother and father, Jane and Bob; his twin sister Alison Sweitzer; Heather, his wife; and Samantha (Sam) Steward, a previous employee at Great Plains Nursery and NAA board member. I did get some great dirt on Brian, but I will only give you the highlights. Brian has no idea he is being spotlighted.

Brian was born on October 10, 1983, in the great City of Omaha, Nebraska. He has a brother one year younger and a twin sister Alison [Ali] (Byers) Sweitzer, born just 7 minutes before Brian. I bet their household was an exciting place with twins and a younger brother.

Brian was raised in Elkhorn, Nebraska, and graduated from Elkhorn High School. His parents still live in the local Waterloo area. Because of his love of Husker nation, he decided to attend the University of Nebraska - Lincoln for two years. His love of building things changed his educational track, and he transferred to Southeast Community College and graduated with a degree in Construction Management. I am very impressed with individuals who can build things with their hands. I have a hard time driving a nail straight. His construction skills have always been a great asset in the growth of their nursery.

I wanted to find out how Brian was growing up, so I went to the source, his mother, Jane. Jane said Brian was always very sweet and kind. He had many friends and did well throughout his school career. Brian had a strong work ethic and always volunteered to help when needed. Often he was the peace-keeper between his siblings, but everyone knew not to push Brian too far. Although he tolerated far more than most, once he reached his pressure point, there could be an explosion!



Baby photo, 1984, twin Alison & Brian
Senior photo of Alison & Brian

the family farm. He wanted to be a pro baseball player but changed his mind when his talents for repairing things became known and he received payment for his work. When he started college, his major was unknown, but he saw the handwriting on the wall and switched colleges and majors to construction. His talents were in his hands.

Alison, his twin sister, told me one characteristic she admired about Brian was his drive to be the best at all things. She said he was always determined to "one-up" her. She stated the following. "Who knew safety patrol, spelling tests, and math classes could be so competitive?" Brian pushed his sister to be better and he works very hard to do that with his children.



Brian talking to Tom Wiens, 2020 NE GREAT PLAINS Conference



**Wedding photo of Heather & Brian,
Oct. 28, 2006**

Brian didn't graduate from UNL, but he gained the opportunity to meet Heather when they were freshmen and they were married four years later on October 28, 2006. They will be celebrating their 14th anniversary this year.

With Brian's degree in construction, his year long experience working in nursery management, and Heathers' UNL Venture Plan Competition Experience, they started Great Plains Nursery in 2008. I guess building their first greenhouse together in the fall of 2007 proved they could work together as a married couple. Brian's in-laws did help them get started. You see the trust Heather's parents had in Brian.

They first started growing trees in smooth containers, a very traditional nursery method but were not happy with the results. They soon turned to the RootMaker process of growing mostly native trees from seeds. It is a unique system they call the "Great Plains System." I will cover this system in a different article in this issue of the newsletter.

Brian's main job at the nursery is keeping the processes running smoothly. He is in charge of all planting projects like windbreaks and CRP projects. He also does most of the tree deliveries. Brian is the key spokesperson at their nursery exhibits at Nebraska and Iowa Arborist and Horticulture conferences. Not to be outdone, he takes care of all the odd and end jobs around the nursery and home. As stated before, he has a great talent in his hands.

When the Nebraska Arborists Association and the Nebraska Nursery and Landscaping Association had our 2018 Nebraska Eastern Summer Field Day, Brian and Heather offered their nursery as the location for this event. Heather had just had a baby a week before the event, and Brian was running the business; it goes to show that teamwork is key to Brian and Heather business' success.

This year Brian and Heather have started to home school their children, and Brian will be the math instructor. I know he will do a super job because he is so devoted to his children. Speaking of devotion, Brian grows vegetable seeds every year in one of their greenhouses for their Catholic Church St. John Nepomuceno's plant sale in Weston. This year due to COVID-19, their plant sale was canceled. Hopefully, they will be able to have the sale in the spring of 2021. It is worth the trip to Weston for the event.

I have had the opportunity to visit Great Plains Nursery on several occasions, and on one visit, I had the pleasure of meeting Sam Steward. A college student then and now an NAA board member. Sam told me Brian and Heather make a great team. She stated Brian has an inventive mind. It was fun to see it in action during her time at their nursery. She was very impressed when Brian took an old Kelly Ryan Feeder Wagon and redesigned it to fit their potting needs. Thus he created a mobile nursery potting machine. Brian did a great job with the machine and took "work smarter, not harder" to a whole new level.



Kelly Ryan Feeder Wagon

Next, I interviewed Heather. She said, "Brian loves his work and is devoted to his children and enjoys doing anything outdoors." He recently found the time to work with his children to build a treehouse. Brian loves to be involved in sports any way he is able. He loves coaching the girls' softball teams (3 teams this year). Heather also told me he is a devoted volunteer fireman and EMT. Brian has a solid Catholic faith. He is an active volunteer in his Weston parish community. Last but not least, he is a big sports nut and life-long Husker fan. Heather does tell me the Huskers football team did make him grumpy on most Saturday's last year.

Speaking of family, Brian is the proud father of five children – Finley, Bristol, Gracyn (Gracie), Griffin, and Hazel. Rounding out the family are two Golden Retrievers – Huck and Moses. The children also play a part in the nursery. They go along with Brian when he makes deliveries and I have seen them help unload the trees from the truck. Gracie this year was the tree model for the Gretna "Free Tree Event."



**Baseball Coach Brian & oldest
daughter Finley**

I am not a gifted writer, but I try my best because I want our NAA association members to see some great individuals in our association. I am very proud of individuals like Brian and the other members I have written about in the past. Please take the time this winter when you cannot get out of the house to read about these unique individuals. You can find past copies of the NAA newsletter on the NAA web site – www.nearborist.org.

It has been fun letting you into Brian Byers life. As I stated at the beginning of this article, Brian is a loving husband, devoted family man, and an individual you can count on if you need any help. In closing, I want to leave you with the following quote from his wife Heather, who knows Brian very well. "He is a fun-loving, devoted guy, and an amazingly hard worker dedicated to his family and enjoying life!"

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A SPECIAL OR UNIQUE TREE

By: *Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator*

This quarter's special or unique tree is one for the gullible homeowner who will believe anything about a tree characterizes when it is given superstar status in the Sunday newspaper. These ads promise the tree will grow 22 feet in a single year and provide instant shade. It does grow incredibly fast but it has brittle wood and is a very dirty tree causing a mess on the landscape. P.T. Barnum claimed "There's a sucker born every minute," and I must agree with him concerning the merits of this tree. I am very surprised it can grow in Eastern Nebraska. The tree in question is the Empress Tree, *Paulownia tomentosa*.

There are two Empress Trees growing along McKenna Ave. just south of the Gretna's Down Town on the east side of tree in the hell strip. I also understand Graham Herbst, Nebraska Forest Service, Eastern Community Forester has one growing in his backyard.



Empress Leaf



Empress Trunk bark

When I first drove by these two trees I thought they must be Catalpa trees because of the large leaves but I never stopped to take a look. For some unknown reason, I did stop one day and for the life of me I couldn't identify the two trees. After hearing Graham talk about his tree in his backyard, I then was able to ID the Gretna trees.

I did talk to the homeowner who planted the Gretna trees ten (10) years ago and she told me she bought them because of their beautiful blue bloom early in the spring. After doing some research, I discovered the tree produces 2-inch long foxglove-like flowers in early April before the leaves are produced. The tree has a rounded form when mature and can grow to a height of 60 feet with a width of 40 feet. It can produce 8 to 10 feet of growth during a good growing season. Yes the leaves are catalpa look alike but are much larger up to 16 inches across when the tree is mature. The leaves have no fall color and turn black with the first Nebraska frost.



Empress Leaf Seed Pods



Two Empress Trees off of McKenna Avenue, Gretna, NE



Round, fuzzy flower buds form in late summer and are displayed at the ends of branches through the winter.

The round, fuzzy flower buds form in late summer and are displayed at the ends of branches as a 10-inch tall panicle through the winter. The round capsule is formed from each flower. They last through the following winter. The capsules split open in the spring and release seeds that are tiny winged shaped. This last fact caused me some concern. A mature Empress tree can produce over 20 million seeds each year.

Another interesting fact about this tree, the American Paulownia Association is promoting the tree as a path to riches by recommending growing timber logs from this tree to ship to Japan. The association claims the Japanese have a great demand for the tree's lumber. The use of this lumber is mostly confined to Japan.

In the southeastern states, this tree is regarded as an invasive species. Its place in the ecosystem is as a pioneer species so it favors highly disturbed sites such as strip mines and roadsides but occasionally it will find its way to the woody margins of rivers and streams. The tree requires full sun so it doesn't compete with trees like oaks, hickories and other large trees. It doesn't spread into an established forests.

The tree is rated to a minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit so it should grow in our zone 5. With our unseasonal weather, the tree can often dieback to the ground but the tree will sucker at the trunk and regrow quickly.

So the decision is up to you if the Empress Tree should be planted in our landscapes. I am going to buy one or two and see if I can grow it in my back acreage. I will let you know the results.

I want to leave you with the following quote. "This is an interesting tree from many aspects but is usually best admired in another person's yard or in the city park, not your own."



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NEBRASKA TREE CITY AWARDS FOR 2019

By: *Jim Keepers, Gretna's Chairperson Gretna Tree Board*

I know it might seem a little odd to be recognizing the Nebraska City USA National Arbor Day Foundation awards for 2019, but I felt it was about time. Because of COVID-19 and the cancellation of both the east and west Nebraska Forestry Service award recognition ceremonies, our Nebraska award winners have not been recognized for their community forestry accomplishments.

Before continuing, I must thank Graham Herbst, Eastern Community Forester Specialist and Chrissy Land, Western Community Forester Specialist of the Nebraska Forest Service for their coordination of the Nebraska City entries for these awards. Both of these individuals go through a mountain of entries and then make the final decision if the award packages should be sent to the National Arbor Day Foundation as award winners.



Gretna Community Fall 2019 community tree planting.

There are two possible awards. The first is the Tree City USA Award. This award is given in recognition of outstanding work in developing and managing a public program that emphasizes the importance of trees. City Tree Boards are the life blood of this program and I am proud to say a number of our Nebraska Arborists Association members are board members. There are over 472 cities in the state

of Nebraska and only 86 cities were awarded the 2019 Tree City USA Award. Omaha is the largest award-winning city with a population of 443,885 and Julian is the smallest award-winning city with a population of 61. There is not enough room in this article to list all the winners but as you drive around the state, look for the Tree City USA sign as you enter the city. It will tell you if they were or have been an award winner for 2019.



TREES FOR HIGH PH SOILS

- Bur Oak
- Chinkapin Oak
- Honeylocust
- Coffeetree
- Elm
- Hackberry
- Linden
- Walnut
- Boxelder
- Black Locust
- Buckeye
- Cottonwood
- Tree Lilac
- Cedar
- Juniper

Submitted By: by Justin Everton, NFS/NSA Green Infrastructure Coordinator, September 4, 2020

The second award given out by the National Arbor Day Foundation is the Tree City USA Growth Award. This award is given to cities who have won the Tree City USA Award for that year and whose community forestry programs went above and beyond during the year. There are certain tree related categories a city tree board must complete to be considered for this award. The different categories are given a point system rating and the city must accumulate at least 10 points.

Out of the 86 Tree City USA Award winners only 6 Nebraska Cities won the Growth Award. The following are the award winners: Bellevue, Gretna, Hershey, Norfolk, Ogallala and South Sioux City. It takes a lot of effort on the part of the volunteers on a city's Tree Board to win the Tree City Growth Award.

Before I forget, I want to say the National Arbor Day Foundation also awards Tree Campus Awards (College or University) and Tree Line Awards (Utilities)

Congratulations to all the Nebraska cities and their Tree Board for winning the National Arbor Day Foundation 2019 awards and I look forward to seeing the 2020 award winners and I hope the Nebraska Forest Service can have an award ceremony.

So Nebraska Arborists Association members, if you have the time please consider joining your local City Tree Board or become an advisor to the board.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

“GO CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DREAMS! LIVE THE LIFE YOU IMAGINED”

- Henry David Thoreau

WHAT IS EROPHYES TILLIAE?

BY: *Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified NE Arborist*

A few weeks ago, I was called by a local Gretna resident to take a look at their Linden tree. The leaves had these funny red growths sticking out of the upper surface of the leaves. I had never seen this before so I took some photos and contacted Certified ISA Arborist Brian Mutchie and asked him what was causing the problem. Brian as usual responded to my request the next day. He told me the growths were Lime Nail or Bugle Galls, *Erophyes tiliae*, formed by mites. He told me the galls will have no major effect on the health of the trees. He also told me there was no present way of controlling or preventing the problem in the long run.



These growthlike fingers did cause a lot of concern for my local Gretna residents. When I arrived to look at the tree a small crowd of expert tree detection neighbors had formed. I took a leaf sample back home and then I contacted Brian.

I did some follow-up research after talking to Brian and discovered the following information about the mites and the galls. The gall develops during a chemically induced mite process in early spring and summer. The galls are erect, oblique or curved distortion rising up from the tree leaf. They are like very little fingers about .20 inches long and predominantly red in color but could be yellow-green and occur mostly in the tree's lower leaves.

In the spring, the mites move into the foliage since they have overwintered in the tree's bark crevices or around the tree's buds. The chemical the mites release while sucking from the tree sap from the leaf's lower epidermis has a colorful effect causing the hollow extension to come out of the leaves. It becomes the mite's new home.

Just before the start of autumn, the lead mite tells the rest of the mites to stop feeding and growing inside the galls and it is time to depart their protected gall home and look for better protection elsewhere on the Linden tree. I have no idea how the lead mite knows the tree will start shedding its leaves and if they don't leave the galls, the leaves will fall to the ground and they will be left on the ground to die. The cycle is then repeated in the spring. This mite is similar to other mites but only takes up home in the Linden trees or related lime tree leaves.

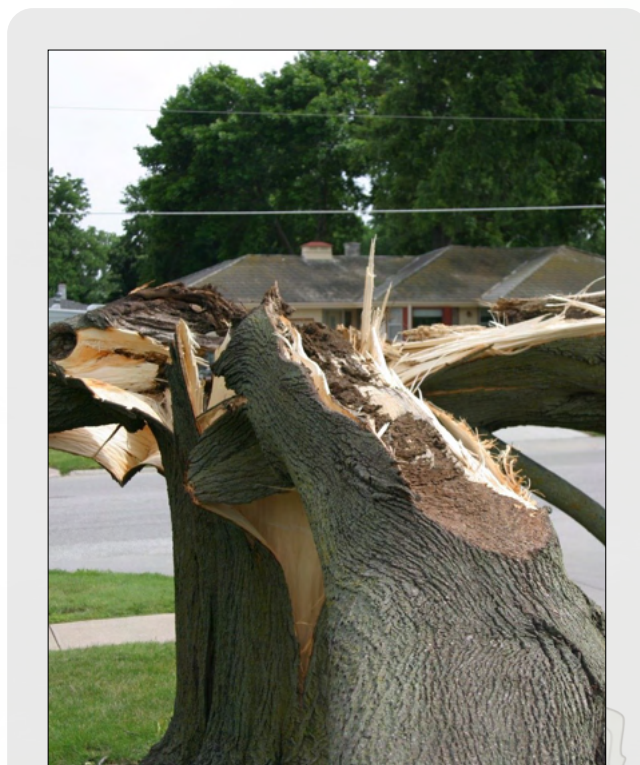
Thanks Brian for helping me out and I did learn something new. So you can teach a mature Arborist something new and interesting.

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What caused this magnificent tree to split?

WHAT IS THE “GREAT PLAINS SYSTEM?”

By: Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator



I will try to explain Brian’s “Great Plains System” when it comes to growing trees from seeds. In simple terms it is a process for growing trees from locally collected seeds planted and grown in specific pots and bags that will produce a healthy root system.

Brian will tell anyone a tree is only as good as its roots; their growing system focuses on the development of strong and healthy roots and then to the development of a strong well branched tree. When people go to a nursery to buy a tree, they never think of the root system and only concentrate on what they see of the tree above the ground.

There are three different stages in this system. The First Stage deals with tree seed selection. All the seeds are collected by Brian, Heather and their children. Yes the children are a part of this first stage. There is no guarantee the seeds they collect will be true to produce strong and genetic diversity seedlings. They do their best and they do store their collected seeds

under specific climate conditions. The Second Stage deals with the growing containers. The seeds are planted in trays in the green house and as soon as they are big enough to transplant they are moved to RootMaker container to enhance lateral root branching and root tip development. The Third Stage is critical because it depends on the proper shifting window. The trees are then bump up to larger RootMaker containers and then RootMaker bags. The RootMaker growing containers eliminates circling and defective roots like you find in standard containers. There are different types of bags but I won’t go into that discussion.

Brian states the following: “Only the best seedlings make it through each stage of production”.

So why is Brian using RootMaker growing products? After 40 years of research, the following has been proven, RootMaker containers and bags create a fibrous, well-balance roots system and root tip development for trees grown from seed.

I have tried hard to explain the tree growing system used at Great Plains Nursery in very simple terms and I know I might not be clear on certain points. If you are interested in this growing system, please take a trip to Great Plains Nursery and I know Brian will be able to explain their growing system in great detail. Brian’s “Great Plains System” is one of the reasons I selected Brian Byers to be featured in Arborist Spotlight in

this issue. Please call ahead before you head out to the nursery.

The Nebraska Arborist Association needs more individuals like Brian to join our association. Our association is only as strong and healthy as our membership.



Brian collecting seeds with daughters.



Tree roots from growing in RootMaker Bag



Brian planting seeds in the greenhouse

NAA BOARD NOTIFICATION TO MEMBERS

Because of COVID-19, elections for the Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA) board this year will not occur. All present NAA board members will retain present board positions for another year. The reason for this action is there won’t be a 2021 NE GREAT PLAINS Conference so there won’t be an NAA conference board meeting. This is similar action taken by other association boards managed by our association management team. In addition, there won’t be any NAA awards.



2019 NE GREAT PLAINS Conference

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THE DEER ARE COMING

By: *Jim Keepers, NAA Newsletter Coordinator*

Deer are beautiful animals but not in my young tree grove. They are a tree's worst nightmare when it comes to protecting their tree bark. Trees don't have the capability to run away and hide from a deer. A tree must stand its ground and take the deer's damaging blows and then try very hard to close off the damage before decay starts to infect the tree. Remember a tree doesn't heal its damaged bark like humans but it just seals off the damaged area to keep out decay. So it is the responsibility of the tree planter to protect the tree's bark and especially young trees from deer damage during the fall and early winter. Now is the time for you to protect your trees!



White tree protector



Tree damage from rubbing



Male Deer's 'Calling Card'

As a male deer rubs its antlers on a tree's trunk, it strips away the tree's cambium layer. It is the layer of the tree between the inner bark and the outer wood. This area in the tree enables nutrients and water to move up and down the tree trunk. When the cambium layer is stripped off all sides of the tree, the damage has set the tree up for death. We say a tree has been 'Gilded' when the bark has been scraped away all the way around the tree trunk. The tree will try to restore the damage tree bark but this area is a very inviting area for other insects and diseases like decay to enter the tree.

So why does a male deer rub against a tree with its antlers? It is marking the tree with its scent. By doing this, the buck is putting out a marker on the tree and any female deer in the general area will know he is available if she is interested. The scent marking also tells other passing bucks to keep away from this area.

What can the tree planter do to protect a tree's trunk especially young trees? A tree protector can be placed around the trunk of the tree. You can create your own guard by using black drainage tile. I don't recommend using this product because it is very hard to work with and can cause damage to the tree trunk during placement and removal on the trunk. I recommend using professionally made 'Tree Bark Protectors'. There are two primary tree protectors on the market. The white protector with holes cut in them or the black open plastic mesh. I prefer the black open mesh protectors because moisture and mildew won't build up inside



Black open plastic mesh protector

them like the white protectors. Also, these black protectors won't be an inviting home for insects or animals like the white type. The black protectors are more attractive, they do blend in more in the landscape and are more flexible and easy to install. The black protectors can be left on the tree trunk all year long but the white ones should be removed in spring and reinstalled in the fall and that is a pain to do if you have a lot of young trees. The reason for the removal of the white protectors is because they can build up heat in the summer and the air flow is restricted. Both types of protectors come in different lengths and diameters and can be cut easily.

So it is up to the tree planter to protect newly planted trees from deer and other rodents. Remember a young tree is just like a young child. They need to be protected.

FUN FACTS ABOUT TREES:

Nebraska was only 3% forested at the time of settlement in the 1800s. However, climate shifts and human activities have been pushing trees in and out of the state for eons. The state is at a unique crossroads being at the western limit of the eastern hardwood forest and the eastern limit of the Rocky Mountain pinelands. Several tree species meet the limit of their natural range in Nebraska including limber pine, Rocky Mountain maple, Rocky Mountain juniper, White oak, Black oak, Blackjack oak, Shagbark hickory and Pawpaw to name a few. Nebraska is also home to relic boreal species brought here with the last ice age over 10,000 years ago.

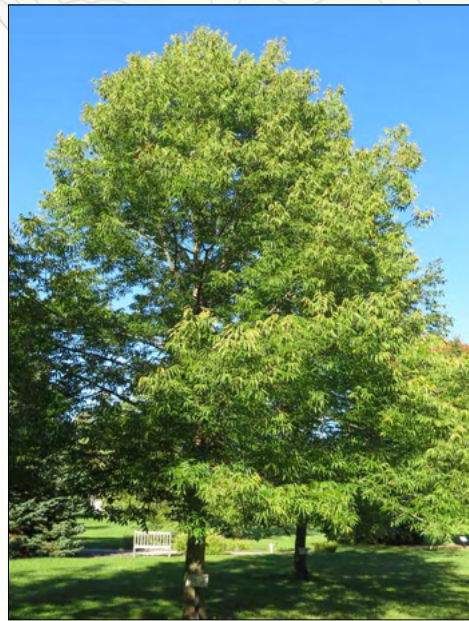
Thanks Justin for education lesson.

Poster by *Justin Evertson, NFS/NSA Green Infrastructure Coordinator, September 4, 2020*

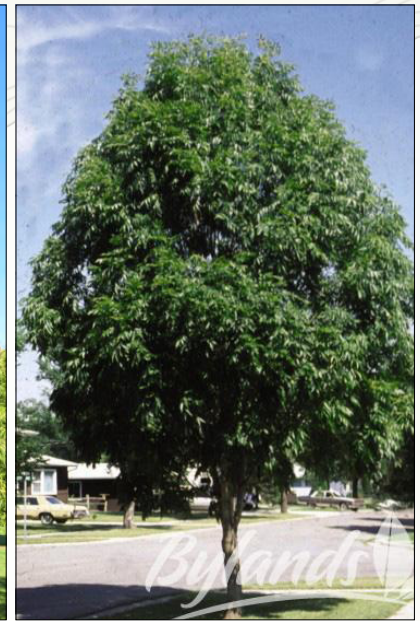
EAB RESISTANCE AND SURVIVOR TREES

Reported by Justin Evertson, NSA, Green Infrastructure Coordinator

Although most ash trees are considered highly susceptible to EAB attack, two species stand out with some potential resistance. Blue Ash (*Fraxinus quadrangulata*) is reported to be moderately resistant to EAB with about 30-40% mortality reported in its native range. The species is also adaptable to higher pH soils, which Nebraska has plenty of. There are also mixed reports that Manchurian Ash, especially the cultivar 'Mancana', may be resistant to EAB. Manchurian ash and EAB co-evolved on the Asian continent so it would make sense that the species could develop at least some genetic resistance to the borer.



Blue Ash Tree



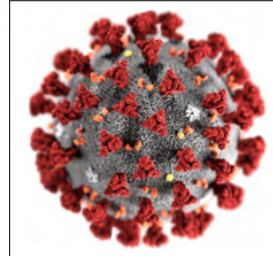
Manchurian Ash Tree

BEATING COVID-19

From the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Web Page

These past eight (8) months we have been faced with a deadly pandemic the Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19 virus. The following is a list of ways exposure to the forest and trees will help ease the stress.

- Increases ability to focus, even in children with ADHD
- Accelerates recovery from surgery or illness
- Reduces stress
- Improves mood
- Boosts the immune system
- Lowers blood pressure
- Increases energy level
- Improves sleep



So what insect has caused this Oak leave to lose all its green?

So spend some time around trees because exposure to the forests boosts your immune system and helps you focus so you can solve those pressing problems.

DEATHS BY A THOUSAND CUTS

By: Dr. John Ball, "South Dakota Forest Pest Update", July 29, 2020, Vol. 18, No. 25

There are a lot of tree killers out there but one of the most common walks on two legs – you guessed it people. One way we kill trees, young and old, is with a grass whip (weed whacker). It may not seem that the rapidly rotating plastic strings or blades can harm a tree but it's the repeated practice that is the problem. As the string or blades nick and cut the bark, eventually the underlying wood is exposed. This means the tree is open to infection (bark is a tree's skin) and it also girdles the tree, severing the flow of food produced by the leaves to the roots. A young tree has thin bark and it might take only a year or two to kill it. A mature tree can take years but eventually it will fail as well. However, since it takes years most people miss the real cause of the decline and instead search for a bug.



LOOKING FOR VETERANS

I am on the hunt for all Nebraska Arborists Association (NAA) members who are military veterans. My Veterans Day cover page article salutes our Senior Arborist Veterans. Now I would like to compile a list of all NAA members who are also military veterans.

If you are a veteran, please email Jim Keepers at jlkeepers45@gmail.com your name, branch of service and length of service. I sometimes get tired of hearing people say the following: "Thank you for your service." because I know they are just saying it because it is the thing to say and they really don't mean the words. I want to express my deepest thanks to you for your service to our country and also for being a member of the NAA. So please let me know if you are a 'Veteran.'

TWO HOT TREE PROBLEMS FOR 2020

By: Jim Keepers, Maturing Certified NE Arborist

I know this has been a very trying summer with COVID-19 changing our lives but our trees have also been fighting two major pest problems Mimosa Webworm and Kermie Scale.

I am not going to go into great detail about this two pests but I wanted to give you a little information about them both. This article won't be filled with technical jargon and put you to sleep. Also, I don't know why they both are causing such problems this year. We can always blame it on Mother Nature!

Mimosa Webworm loves to infest our Honeylocust trees. A caterpillar forms a very tightly compressed web on the tree leaves and they in turn brown. It is an occasional pest and because of this, our customers become very concerned when they see this on their tree. Their first reaction is the tree is dying and what can be sprayed on the tree now!

Insecticides and even using a propane torch can be used to control this pest but I don't recommend the torch. If you are looking for a low toxicity chemical, dormant oil can be used but there are other chemicals on the market that will work. In the spring, you can prune off the dead branches and make sure to clean up dead leaves on the ground to kill off the over winter pupation population.

Also remind your historical customer their Honeylocust will survive and make sure they don't use a propane torch on the tree. They could burn the tree down and cause additional house fires.

Now let's take a look at another increasing pest this year, the Kermie Scale. I still remember the day standing by a Pin Oak tree and my Arborist friend said it had Kermie Scale. I then stated the following: "I don't see any frogs in this tree". With a straight face he said: "I didn't say Kermit Scale I said Kermie Scale!" So that is how I got acquainted with this tree damaging pest.

Let's take a look at this aggressive sap sucking pest. There are over 30 different Kermie Scale species so it makes it very hard to ID the one affecting the tree. Because of the different species, it is hard to figure out the hatching time of the scale. The scale must be treated during this time period or the crawling stage normally in the autumn. At any other time, it is a waste of time because the liquid won't penetrate the scale's tough, waxy covering. I believe chemical inject can be used to fight this scale but I recommend you do your research reference injection. Oak trees normally infected with scale also have additional stress problems like Chlorosis or drought.

One of the most tell tale symbols of Kermie Scale on the Pin Oak tree are the dead branches on the end of the tree branch. If possible, prune off the dead branches and clean all the dead branches and leaves under the tree. I know pruning the branches on a mature Pin Oak is a task almost impossible. I would then recommend the best method is ground sanitation around the base of the tree. Also remember to water young Pin Oak trees and fertilize when needed. I have talked to homeowners who have spent money watering their mature Pin Oak trees. I am not sure this is a good solution when you are paying for city water.

There are a number of high quality insecticides on the market you can use to treat for Kermis Scale. I am not going to make any chemical recommendations but I suggest you contact your local County Extension and ask them for a chemical recommendation and then you contact your local chemical company distributor.

Our poor Pin Oaks have been faced with Chlorosis problems for a number of years because of our high pH soils; now they must withstand the attack of Kermie Scale. I just talked to a homeowner in Skyline Ranches, Elkhorn, Nebraska and he told me he is so tired of trying to keep his Pin Oaks alive this summer. So Kermie Scale, Chlorosis and other diseases along with drought are just taking a toll on our homeowners and they don't know if it is worth the time, trouble and expense to fight the battle and save their beloved Pin Oaks.

As a trained Certified Nebraska Arborist, it is your duty and responsibility to work with your customers and non-customers to identify tree insect, disease and Mother Nature problems and make the proper tree treatment recommendations.

My goal with this article is not an in-depth look into Mimosa Webworm or Kermie Scale but I wanted to give you a general description of both pests. Now when you are out in the field, you can accomplish a better identification of a trees problems. You first must be able to ID the tree before you ID the problem.

So let's get out there and make sure our trees get the best treatment possible. Good luck and always remember the following: "An Arborist takes care of a Tree for Life".



Kermie scale on Pin oak



Mimosa webworm on Honeylocust

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