We've been expecting it. With the recent whirlwind media hype, it is absolutely confirmed that the long awaited insect pest, called Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), is in now in Omaha, Nebraska. All I can say is, "Don't panic! It's not time to kiss your ash goodbye — anyway, not yet!"

Not native to the United States, EAB hitched a ride here somewhere from Asia— perhaps within the last two decades. For ten or more years, this alien insect pest has made its trek across the United States starting in Michigan and now arriving in Nebraska. Along its journey, millions of ash trees have died from this pest, and perhaps millions more will die due to its invasion. With no natural predators, this insect pest is a potential killer for trees belonging to the genus *Fraxinus* — more commonly called ash trees. Twelve species of the genus *Fraxinus* are in potential danger from this emerald green marauder. They include green ash, white ash, black ash, blue ash, California ash, Carolina ash, European ash, Manna ash, pumpkin ash, Greg's ash, narrow leaf ash, and velvet ash.

Interestingly, however, there already exists three different species of ash tree boring insects throughout Central Nebraska, including the community of Kearney. The three are red-headed ash borer, banded ash borer and lilac ash borer. Over the past fourteen years, since I have been involved with Buffalo County Extension, I've witnessed numerous ash trees in the Kearney area destroyed by one of these three. Unfortunately, we can now expect a new menace to arrive on the scene. Hopefully, this emerald green pest won't arrive in Central Nebraska for some time. It's anyone's guess as to when. I honestly don't foresee it sticking its ugly nose into our area for a year or two more. It all depends on its movement westward.

In the meantime, what should a Central Nebraska homeowner do to protect his or her ash trees? For now, the answer to that question is — Do Nothing! The Nebraska Forestry department recommends that until an actual EAB beetle has been officially detected within a fifteen-mile distance of one's ash trees, there is no need to do anything. This brings me to a different kind of threat.

With such hype hitting the air waves about EAB's arrival in Nebraska, a sense of fear has been created in the minds of many who have ash trees. With such fear

and vulnerability, some homeowners just might fall victim to a different kind of peril. If approached by an individual or a company promising they can save ash trees from EAB's absolute death and destruction, I say, "Don't give into fear. When the EAB is detected in Central Nebraska, then one can consider treatment."

Instead one might consider treating for any of the other three native ash tree borers. Begin by examining the trunk and lower branches of ash trees for insect exit holes. The exit holes created by these three insect pests are approximately ¼ inch in diameter. Their shape is that of a complete circle; whereas, the exit holes made by the EAB appear more like that of the capital letter D.

Attached are photos of our three native ash tree borers. If spotted, treatment might be warranted. Currently treating for EAB in Central Nebraska would be nothing more than a waste of money. Don't panic —your ash is safe from EAB —for now!