

Yard and Garden – 06-13-09 – Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant

One doesn't have to look far these days to see advertising promoting "going green." After all, being kind to our planet is certainly good for everyone and definitely a good reason for going green. Even Kermit the Frog says, "It's good to be green." Ask any kid about the green super hero called the Incredible Hulk, or ask those of you more my age about the masked crime fighter, the Green Hornet. Green is good ----- or is it?

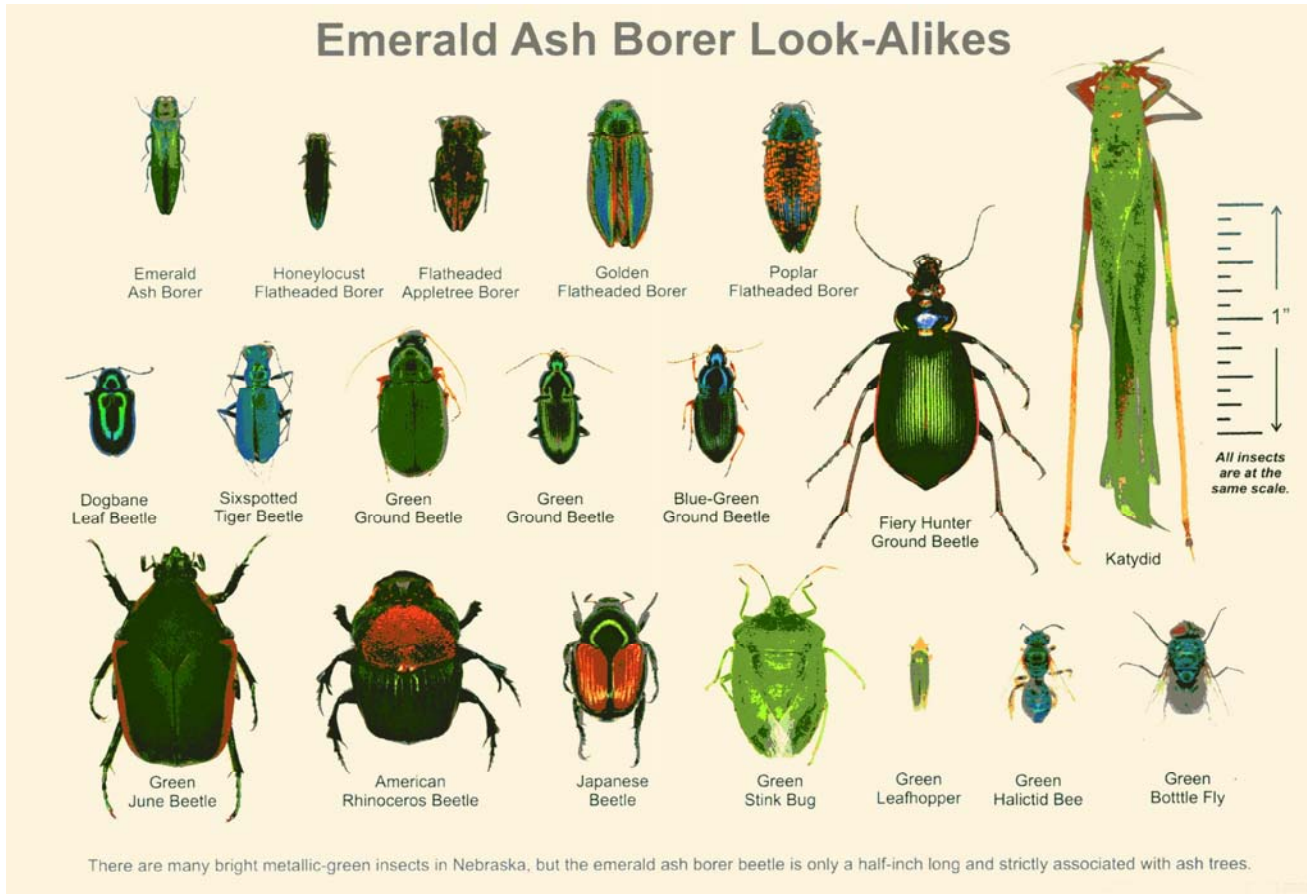
For the past year the media has been hyping the potential arrival of a threatening green menace. The good news is at present this green evil-doer is not in Nebraska. Unfortunately, however, with all this hype some people are beginning to panic. I say, "Relax." There is reason for concern, but certainly no reason for panic. If and when this ominous green monster arrives in Nebraska, I can assure you the United States Department of Agriculture, the Nebraska Forest Service, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, the University of Nebraska and yours truly will loudly declare its arrival and promote what one can do to protect oneself from the green danger.

By now, one should surmise I'm referring to the notorious emerald green insect, better known as the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This metallic green beetle arrived first in Michigan in 2002, probably in the wood of shipping crates. Experts estimate the borers have killed 40 million ash trees in southeastern Michigan and millions more in the eight other states where they have been found. Adult beetles nibble on ash leaves and cause no major damage, but the larvae feed on the inner bark of trees and disrupt water and nutrient flow, killing the trees.

The invasive insect that attacks and kills all North American ash species was found last year in southeast Missouri and recently near La Crosse, Wisconsin, about 300 miles from Nebraska. Green ash trees are native to Nebraska; white, black and autumn purple ashes are popular landscape trees. Nebraska has an estimated 37 million ash trees in towns and cities, as well as in forests and conservation plantings. Sadly, our ash trees will all be at risk if and when EAB arrives. Nebraska is one of 18 states participating in a campaign to stop the beetle's path of destruction. Many agencies and universities are working together to educate citizens about identification of EAB and options for protecting valuable shade trees.

I certainly do not intend to add to people's panic by writing about this green menace, but recently I received a publication from UNL's Department of Entomology designed to help eliminate confusion and calm people's fears. EAB is a brilliant, metallic, emerald-green insect, and interestingly, many other brilliant green insects already live in Nebraska. For your very own copy of *Emerald Ash Borer Look-Alikes*, either stop by the extension office or log onto UNL's website at www.entomology.unl.edu/eab where you can download a PDF image of the same. While there, browse the wealth of other information regarding EAB.

If one suspects he or she has found an emerald ash borer, I suggest first to check out the look-alikes chart or contact my office to verify or disqualify the find. If I conclude the specimen to be EAB, then a protocol will be initiated involving USDA, Nebraska State Forest Service, the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture so that EAB infestations will be promptly verified, located, and managed.



In the meantime, continue being kind to the planet and practicing green gardening. After all, green is good. Kermit the frog, the Incredible Hulk and the Green Hornet are proof of that.