

Extension agent offers tips for taking care of hail-damaged trees

Written by Wauneta Breeze
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By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

When ping-pong sized hail pounded Chase County June 19, a lot of leaves littered the streets and road. Crews spent several days sweeping up the resulting mush.

Then it was time to take a good look into those trees, as well as at gardens.

There's a lot of damage.

Robert Tigner, UNL Extension Agent for Chase County, said he hasn't received a lot of calls concerning hail damage to vegetation. He doesn't know how severe damage to trees and gardens was.

However, he does have some advice. If there is any hail damage to trees, "Prune it right away because you want to control the wound. Make it (the prune) as small as possible. Allow the tree to heal a pruning wound."

Tigner said a wound shouldn't be covered or painted, as that tends to trap bacteria and fungi, thereby weakening the tree.

There's no real way to "jump start" another vegetable garden, Tigner said. But, another one can be planted.

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“Choose appropriate day-length vegetables. Look for the maturity date of plants and consider our early frost dates in October.”

If the hail storm had occurred in May, Tigner noted, gardeners may have had a chance to use transplants, or to start plants in a cold frame to generate the heat units.

“You’ll end up with lower yields,” no matter what gardeners do now, he observed.

Tigner said he has been receiving calls regarding pine diseases in trees in Chase County.

“The trees are more likely to succumb to disease and rust because of the very high humidities,” he explained. In addition, “Rain and hail tends to spread spores around to other plants by splashing.”

Standard commercial products can treat bacteria, and fungus treatment products can treat fungi, Tigner said. There is no treatment for viral diseases. The Extension Office, located at 135 W. 5th Street, has available brochures concerning both treating diseases and pruning storm damaged trees.