

Nebraska—land of the plains and the howling wind, and apparently lack of spring. You just never can tell what we will have with the weather in Nebraska, which makes it a handy conversation piece since it's ever changing.

Complaining about the weather is in the Nebraska constitution, believe me, look it up. There is just something about a Nebraskan and the weather. Okay, so maybe I stretch the truth a bit but it certainly should be a right.

Many of you have been busily putting in plants or preparing the planting area so now what. If we look at history, May would certainly—in most years—be a safe planting month. The chances of a killing frost decreases the further we get into May.

We have had some cold temperatures lately but it's not likely to have killed any new plants, there might be a few brown tips but they should survive.

If you are looking for something to do, perhaps the lawn could use a hand. After going through a long drawn out winter it's no surprise we have a little brown in the lawn. These dead leaf blades are common for cool season lawns. Removing them will help the new leaf blades take over and will help keep the thatch layer down.

A power rake or lawn de-thatcher will remove this dead growth, looks better already with it gone and new leaf blades will grow into the vacated area.

Lawns also will start to experience some of the normal spring leaf spot type diseases. If you seem to have a bit of the fungus every year, perhaps there is a better way to improve your lawn besides the standard copper containing fungicide.

A lawn that is over 10 years old will accumulate its share of baggage and if that baggage includes the susceptibility of disease here's another choice. Let the disease have its way with your lawn. No, I mean it. Let the disease take what it will.

After you have power raked your lawn, the next thing to do is interseed an improved variety—one that has good resistance to the fungal problem. By introducing a grass that is resistant to the disease you can put away the fungicide.

As the summer progresses the disease will take the older weaker turf and your new variety will slowly take over. This doesn't happen overnight and I will admit your lawn will not be perfect. But next year your lawn will be in better shape to handle the predation of these turf diseases.

Another problem in the turf area, specifically pasture, are Orthoptera commonly known as grasshoppers.

The grasshopper family is a large one with 29 North American species. This long-legged vulture of grass has been found in large numbers in recent years and 2010 is shaping up to be problem year.

The University of Nebraska Extension will be hosting a grasshopper control meeting the afternoon of May 26 in Arthur. Anyone who has an interest in control methods, biology and those interested in forming control blocks are very welcome to attend.

Give your local extension office a call for more details and to reserve your place at this informational meeting.

I also would like to use this column to point out some of the seasonal problems which may be coming our way. If you would like to contribute, please e-mail me at danderson3@unl.edu.

A Facebook page is being planned to keep everyone informed of growing conditions, potential pest problems and new developments in crop production.

Conditions for winter wheat are moving to the okay column from the good column as we have unseasonably cool, cloudy conditions. Everyone keep your fingers crossed for a bit more sun.