

By Doug Anderson

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You know, the first of June has certainly felt an awful lot like summer—you know the sticky hot sensation. It just goes to show you how we have to adapt to a very different weather pattern than they have on the coasts.

Being next to a big body of water moderates the temperatures; they don't get as hot and they don't get as cold. As you get further away from big bodies of water (Lake Mac doesn't count) you have bigger temperature swings.

Now it's hard on people but we have the luxury of going inside or going outside or turning on the heat or the air conditioning. Those who live outside—like plants—don't have that option.

Annual plants are not as affected by this wild weather ride as perennials. Most annuals start growing in the spring when rainfall is at its best and the temperatures aren't as high. They germinate, they grow and they seed in very quick succession, and they survive.

Perennials, on the other hand, are stuck: stuck outside when it's 20° below and stuck outside when it's 103°.

Perennial plants in Nebraska must be prepared for anything and everything and it makes them unique.

Native Nebraska plants are very adept at being adaptable. They can take those swings in weather and keep on growing. Now, they may not like it but they do survive.

Have you ever been to one of those nice, manicured landscapes, you know the ones that are perfect? Not a brown leaf in the place. Notice that there are very few in Nebraska—not sure I could name one, but I'm sure someplace someone has one.

The long drawn out point I'm trying to make is the Nebraska climate clashes with perfect.

We are a hardy bunch and we had to be to survive, so are our plants. They survive hardly ever perfect, yes, there are some perfect plants in our area but not all in one landscape.

We have our bumps and brown spots, and it's okay, we aren't going to be perfect and native plants survive.

So our trees are looking rather rugged this year with the early winter and the late winter and that nice stretch in between. Many of our trees were late in budding out, some still haven't.

On the trees that haven't, wait a tic before you get out the chainsaw. There might be some life in that brown branch.

Bending the twigs is a good test, if they give and don't break there is still life in the branch. If they snap right off and are white and brown inside, chances are not looking good.

If you have the time I would suggest waiting till the end of June to make an evaluation. If it's still leafless, time to think about the fireplace.

The lawn is starting to look better than it did in April, it's beginning to grow with vigor and put

out new leaf blades.

The old ones are dying back and being replaced by the younger ones.

We have seen some leaf spot and rust in the lawns. The nice cool, wet conditions have made it pretty easy for the disease to get a toehold and grow.

I rarely think fungicides are warranted, most need to be put on before as a preventative, and once we see the problem its too late.

Another way to combat disease is to let it have its way, identify what you're dealing with and in August interseed a variety that is resistant to that disease. It does take some patience and turning a blind eye to the lawn for a couple months but in the long run you are way ahead.

For more information call your extension office, we are here to help.