**Female Narrator:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Lawn & Garden podcast with University of Wyoming Extension specialist, Jeff Edwards, and co-host, Jerry Erschabeck, originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington. Join Jeff, Jerry, and their special guests as they talk all things gardening in Wyoming. Lawn & Garden podcast helps you improve your home garden or a small acreage.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good morning, everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KGOS/KERM Lawn & Garden program. It's our December edition. Who would have think we were here in December talking about lawn and garden stuff. How are you today, Jerry?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I'm doing really well, and you know what? We can garden almost any time of the year, whether it's indoor garden or just thinking about next year's garden.

**Jeff Edwards:** Exactly. Planning ahead. Our guest today is Amy Seiler. Welcome, Amy. Glad to have you here.

**Amy Seiler:** Hey. Hello everybody, I'm so happy to be here today.

**Jeff Edwards:** Our co-host today, Tom John McCreery is also joining us.

**Tom John McCreary:** Hi.

**Jeff Edwards:** So you may hear from him. Good morning, Tom John.

**Tom John McCreary:** How are you?

**Jeff Edwards:** Doing well today. We will take a few minutes and listen to our sponsors and we'll be back right after this.

**Female Narrator:** [MUSIC] You are listening to the Lawn & Garden podcast presented by the University of Wyoming Extension, extending the land-grant mission across the state of Wyoming with a wide variety of educational programs and services. Visit us at wyoextension.org. [MUSIC]

**Jeff Edwards:** Good morning again, everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KGOS, KERM Lawn and Garden program, along with Tom John McCreery and our guest today, Amy Seiler. Knowing that I think we're going to spend some time talking about trees and tree issues, and all the good stuff we spend talking about when Amy is our guest, and we appreciate having you here today, Amy. Thanks for coming.

**Amy Seiler:** Thank you. I'm always enjoying this. This is a highlight of the day for me for sure. Oh gosh, what kind of tree things shall we talk about? I've been walking around. I'm doing a lot of walking right now just because the weather is so beautiful, and so I was really starting to see some of these tree issues that are already showing up because of the very odd weather that we've had in September and October, and I thought maybe we could touch on that a little bit.

**Jeff Edwards:** That would be fantastic. When you're walking around, give us an idea of what trees you're seeing and maybe some of the weird stuff that is showing up.

**Amy Seiler:** When I'm walking around, obviously, the conifers are really catching my attention, obviously. Because that's what has foliage or needles on it right now. It's so interesting to see when it heats up again, you can see the damage that was done because of the freeze, maybe because of the September freeze, but most likely to [00:03:00] that October freeze that got also cold. The trees were damaged and so they're not able to pull up that water so the needles are starting to brown already. You'll see particularly the top portions of the tree are what are really starting to brown, and you'll see some needle mortality. I still see nice big white buds, so I'm feeling pretty good about growth for next year, but I think these trees, as the season goes on, and we have these hot and cold spells, we're going to start to see more of that browning on the trees indicating to us what trees and where they froze from those weather events.

**Jeff Edwards:** Is it a terminal issue, do you think, or is it something like just the top might be dead? Will they grow out of it? Will they recover? Are they going to look like crap for five or six years? [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** I think it depends on where the trees were in their process of transitioning to more dormancy. Now evergreens, they can transpire all season long because they keep their needles. The great thing is they're able to pull up water as well because they can transpire. But what happened was they still have a switchover of chemicals so that water doesn't freeze in the needle. That freeze in October happened so early that that process had not really gotten to take place and saw significant damage for the ability of the trees to pull up the moisture. What I'm thinking is there's probably existing needle damage immortality, but again, I'm seeing big, swollen white buds on the terminal growth. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that we'll just have some needle drop but we'll still have growth. But on some trees that may not even be the case, the tops may die out of them. You might have to try and re-establish a new leader. I don't know exactly what will happen because that was so early in the season and it was such a low temperature, I'm nervous about it.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] Well, that's a real bummer. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** It's a bummer, isn't it?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Amy Seiler:** I'm starting to see the damage on the conifers. Now, the deciduous trees, I walked around and I see a lot that never dropped their leaves. They never had that opportunity to abscise, which is shut off the connection between the leaf and the twig, and so they never got to go through that process. That's why all those leaves are still hanging on. We'll see some of the new growth I bent back and it's brittle, and so that is frozen and dead. Maybe further back in the tree, it seems that some of the trees are a little more flexible. Hopefully, will this have some tip die-back, but I would say some of the trees that we have planted that were maybe [00:06:00] on the bubble of hardiness, we maybe have lost some of those, unfortunately.

**Jeff Edwards:** Another bummer.

**Amy Seiler:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** You're just bringing us all sorts of good news today, aren't you?

**Amy Seiler:** Yeah, Merry Christmas everybody. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreary:** I've noticed that as well that the lindens never drop their leaves and there are other, a green ash, some of those just have not. I don't know what will happen to them. The apical meristem, I've noticed that on conifers, and that's a bummer for sure.

**Amy Seiler:** What I like to do is because, it doesn't seem like it today, but I don't like to give hope. So on those conifers, I go and I check those buds, and if those buds aren't brittle and that color is a nice creamy white color on the tips, particularly over the pines, and they're flexible, I feel like the tree will probably push through. It'll probably drop last year's needles because they froze, but if there's still a good viable bud, that's encouraging. Now what that does mean though, is that that tree is going to have less foliage to photosynthesize, and that will be a major stressor on the tree. So we'll want to make sure that we give those trees adequate water, make sure that they're mulched well, and just be watching out for some pest issues because they will show up when trees are stressed.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Amy what do you recommend? You mentioned the watering. On a nice day like this, do you just put a garden hose out and just let it start running?

**Amy Seiler:** You know what? I think there are several different things that you can do. You could certainly take a sprinkler, and I always call it like an ally sprinkler, I don't know what it's called. But has two little holes and this has a nice flow and you can cover a lot of the drip system. Just move the hoes like three or four times and you can get a lot of watering accomplished. I would probably set it and let it run for 30 minutes in each area because it has been so ridiculously dry that we've got to get some moisture in the soil. Because what we really want to happen whenever it starts to get cold and stay cold, we want that ground to freeze and we want plenty of moisture in the soil so that it can freeze and stay frozen. If it's really dry, that freeze and thaw, it just so quickly happens and dries out. If it stays frozen, if there's plenty of water in there, it'll stay frozen longer and that's much better for the tree.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I know that it's so dry. We babysit a couple of dogs over the weekend and let him out in the backyard, and they'd run around and chase each other and they're just drifts of dust coming up. They would leave a trail of dust. [LAUGHTER] So it is really, [00:09:00] really dry.

**Amy Seiler:** It's miserably dry. We went hiking down at Buffalo Creek, which is east of the Wildcat Hills in Gary. I mean it is a dust bowl out there, and they actually had done a controlled burn out there. A lot of times you'll do a controlled burn and then things will green up a little bit. It's just looking pretty rusty.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's not looking good. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** It's not pretty right now.

**Jeff Edwards:** We've had a string of nice weather in-between the weird weather events, which has allowed us to get out and do some yard work. Diane and I have been picking up leaves in our yard, and the piece of equipment that I have, Diane and I refer to it as the snuff philosophical, it hooks up to our lawnmower. The lawnmower picks things up and mulches them, and then this thing sucks it into a big bail in the back. It basically has atomized the dirt and the little pieces, so it's not really collecting in the back. It's kind of blow it around. It is a dirty nasty job to do. [LAUGHTER] I'm done I had finished yesterday.

**Amy Seiler:** So you're vacuuming your yard?

**Jeff Edwards:** Pretty much, yeah. I get to put all of that good stuff that I collect that doesn't mow away into a really nice mulch pile, and I get the last mowing off of my yard and prepare everything for the snow that we are going to get whenever that is. It cleans everything up really nice. It just takes seven years for my mulch to turn into compost. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** The compost is so dry.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

**Tom John McCreary:** On the ground where you live, what is the egg guy out there for? It's got to be tremendous the amount because the sand is so fine that you get a turn of problems with that.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, our soil is 92 percent sand. So if I'm using a vacuum, I'm sucking up dirt too.

**Tom John McCreary:** Right. Exactly. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** So Amy here's the season. Let's shift gears and try to have a little lighter attitude about things. For those of us who have [LAUGHTER] chosen to use a live Christmas tree this year, which Diane and I did. We figured out that it's been about 14 years since we've actually had a live Christmas tree. I'm amazed at how much water it's taking up. I'm putting in a half a gallon every day in this tree, and the type of tree that we found, it's called a Nordmann fir.

**Amy Seiler:** The Nordmann fir?

**Jeff Edwards:** Nordmann Fir, yeah, I was unfamiliar with it. The leaves are flat and if you look at it, to me it looks like rosemary. They're kind of greenish, silvery color. It doesn't look scraggly like rosemary. It's really a decently looking tree but it's [00:12:00] very different. Had never seen anything like that before and boy is it thirsty. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Are the needles soft?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I like that.

**Jeff Edwards:** They're flat. Yeah.

**Amy Seiler:** That's the great thing about a Fir Christmas Tree is that typically the needles will always be soft and if you get them fresh, obviously, Jeff, yours was very fresh when they continue to take up water like that it means that those little chambers have not been completely destroyed that pull up water. That's a good thing because it's safer in your house and you can enjoy that much longer. We've brought Christmas trees where we've put them in the water and they've hardly taken up a drop, and you're taking it down the day after Christmas because you're like, please don't let my house catch on fire. [LAUGHTER] But our tree this year, I think that Christmas tree cutters and the shippers, they did a great job. Our tree too we got a Fraser fir and it has taken up an insane amount of water and I love it and our house still smells really good like a Christmas tree. We're Christmas tree nerds at our house. We get two live trees and then we have one artificial tree. So we get the Fraser fir, and then we get a little Charlie Brown Tree, a Douglas fir, and I really like those trees. When we're talking about tree varieties, there is a couple of good websites that people can go to if they're just trying to figure out what kind of tree they might want to look into because some people might be really focused on fragrance. Grand fir will provide great fragrance. You crush that needle and it's just this citrusy, wonderful fragrance and it really does make your house smell very good. There are others that people, they want the needles to stay on and stay fresh for long periods of time. I jotted down a couple of sites that people might want to check out. The first one is, this sounds funny, Pick Your Own Christmas Tree.org, and it has this wonderful part about the different types of Christmas trees and it has all these different qualities like needle holding without water, firmness of branches because a lot of us buy Christmas trees so that they can hold all of our really cool ornaments and if you have a real flimsy one, you're going to be disappointed and frustrated and things are always be falling on the floor and breaking. You can pick it. They rate them for fragrance, needle softness, and of course, cost. That's an organization that puts this information out. That would be a good one to go to. The other one that I would encourage people to go to you just to learn a little bit more about maybe maintaining their trees and just a little bit more about the industry in general is the American Christmas Tree Association. That's a non-profit group and I love their mission. It's to help families create memories and build traditions choosing the perfect Christmas tree, and [00:15:00] I think that's great. I was talking to Jerry about this yesterday. What are some of our greatest Christmas memories and Jerry and I are both talking about how we would go out and pick our live Christmas tree when we were young, and I think that's such a cool memory. It's true that we want to be looking for ways to build these memories and traditions, and I think a live Christmas tree is part of that Christmas tradition.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Twenty years ago we used to go out to our Christmas tree farm over here and we'd pick out our Christmas tree. We noticed that on different seasons we'd have a lot of allergies and our noses would stuff up as we brought the tree in. I've got the bright idea to take that tree, take it to the car wash and wash the crap out of it. [LAUGHTER] The water would roll out just mucky brown. There is [OVERLAPPING] a lot [NOISE] of dirt on a Christmas tree. So if you might have some allergy, people in your house, you might consider it. You just leave it in the garage and let it drip dry and I think it added more moisture to the tree.

**Jeff Edwards:** How many needles did you wash off of it?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Not very many. Honestly, [LAUGHTER] God, not very many. He didn't hose it really hard but car wash has little force behind it.

**Jeff Edwards:** You didn't use the high-pressure portion of the washer, did you?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** No, but I did use the soap. I washed it off, I [LAUGHTER] rinsed it up. I put a little wax on it, but people would go, what are you doing? I would say," I'm washing my Christmas tree." "Why would you do that?" [OVERLAPPING] It's like some of those traditions, and we talk about it 25 years later.

**Tom John McCreary:** Jerry the other thing is the Christmas tree has got a white fungus on them and my family all of them except me is allergic to that fungus, and that would be a great idea to wash your tree before you take it in the house. You can see it on the follicles using the base, and that's a super good idea to wash it.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Little soap and water doesn't hurt anything. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** I don't know what kind of people I'm talking to today. Somebody vacuums their yard and another one washes their Christmas tree. [LAUGHTER] I don't belong to this group. I just stick it up in my house.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Didn't you say Amy you always left a mitten at the Christmas tree farm.

**Amy Seiler:** Oh my gosh. My mother, she wanted the absolute perfect Christmas tree and we too went and purchased our Christmas trees at that Trajan Christmas tree farm. We'd all have little hats and gloves on and my mom would find a tree that she'd really like, but wasn't sure if it was the perfect one until she'd say, "Okay, leave your scarf here," and then we'd have to leave our hat here and we'd leave the glove there, and when we left the Christmas tree farm we were [00:18:00] missing many things because you could never go back and remember where the hat or glove was. [LAUGHTER] Great, great memories. As a kid, you hate every minute of it, but as an adult, you're like, okay, that was really cool. I remember getting sandbars and stickers in my socks and my shoes, and as awful as that sounds, I would go back and do it again and again now in this phase of my life. We take our kids to the Kiwanis Christmas tree a lot and it's like I've asked them to pull out their toenails because they are, "Do we have to go buy a Christmas tree? " They'll remember it and Love it someday. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Again, do we have to do this again? [LAUGHTER] Didn't we just do this last year?

**Amy Seiler:** Oh men. It's incredible, but they're going to say before it and they will make their kids go out and do that. I'm certain of it someday.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. I was probably one of those kids that didn't appreciate the things that my parents made me do, but I do appreciate them now. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** Great family memories.

**Tom John McCreary:** We used to go up in the medicine ball range and you could buy a permit for five bucks or something, get these little scraggly trees. [OVERLAPPING] I mean the wind had been blowing. One side group, we are all going to see once side anyway.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well those fit perfectly in a corner, Tom, John, you just show it right up into a corner. It's perfect tree. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** I love that and my husband, they grew up in Colorado and that's what exactly what they would do. They would hike out into the forest, go get their Christmas tree. A matter of fact, my brother and sister-in-law went up to the pine ridge. You can get a permit and cut a tree up in the pine region. That's what they did last weekend and it was a great family adventure for them. I think that again goes back to that American Christmas Tree Association's mission is, building those family traditions and memories. I just absolutely love it.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, I think that it's great. Jerry do you have a live tree?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** No. Again, the allergy portion of it we decided to have a small tree. But still the cats can play with it and the cats can pull it over. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Wait a minute. Amy on that rating scale, is there a cat safe tree? [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** No, I'm very disappointed they haven't thought of that. But Jerry you need to write that organization and get that up there.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I think so. I think we'll probably have to start putting out guy wires. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** I got to tell you it's been so long since we've had a Christmas tree that I built my own base for it. I don't think a cat can pull mine over. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Once I get up to the top and start swaying, things tip over pretty fair.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, I'm pretty sure it would [inaudible] . [OVERLAPPING]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. We'll bring our cats over [LAUGHTER] and we'll put yours to the test. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. [LAUGHTER] [00:21:00] Tom, do you have a live tree this year?

**Tom John McCreery:** Oh, no, we haven't had one for many years just because of the allergy.

**Jeff Edwards:** Sure.

**Tom John McCreery:** That's how I discovered the white fungus. I don't know what it's called, Amy, but it just, you get a tree with that on it and I'm sure it's not a good thing for your allergies.

**Amy Seiler:** I'm not sure of what it would be either. There's so much moisture where those trees are coming from, Michigan or Oregon, they're bound to have some issues. I'm not sure. It might even be a symbiotic relationship with the tree and the fungus, I'm not sure, but I fully understand, for those that do suffer from allergies, having live Christmas tree would be miserable.

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, when I was a fireman for 10 years and every year, people wouldn't keep their Christmas trees around and we'd have Christmas tree fires, and they burn when they're dry like [OVERLAPPING].

**Jeff Edwards:** They ignite. It's like burning a tumbleweed.

**Amy Seiler:** Right, it is. I think that I think you've just led to a really good point. We used to have incandescent bulbs on our tree that would get really warm and always made me really nervous, and we've switched to an LED light and it's taken a while for us to find one that we've thought would be bright enough. But I love that LED because it stays cool and I think it reduces the risk significantly. I'm not in the fire protection industry so maybe there are instances where LEDs have ignited a tree, but I feel much better about my LED lights on my tree then those incandescent bulbs.

**Tom John McCreery:** You should.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, if those cats get in there and chew on the wires, you're in trouble. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Now, even with an artificial tree, which we're talking about allergies. So the dust that accumulates on a Christmas tree, it depends on how you put it up. If you're the guy that wires his ornaments on, well, the soap and water might have to be a little more, be a little less. But you can even soap and water an artificial tree and make it a little cleaner, kit that dust off of it. But then, some sort of like game bag, if you buy a wild game bag, you can keep your tree a lot cleaner. For those that do wire there ornaments onto the tree, all they have to do is take the bag down and plug it in and there you have a tree.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm thinking a fertilizer super sack could work really well.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Sure.

**Jeff Edwards:** I think you could cut the top out of that or the bottom and just drape it over the top, and you got a large enough sack to take care of that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, [LAUGHTER] and have an instant tree. All you just do is put a skirt around the bottom and there you are.

**Jeff Edwards:** Just drop a super sack to the bottom and there's the skirt.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** That's the skirt, sure.

**Jeff Edwards:** Hey, I think it's time to take a break and let's do our sponsors and we'll be back in a moment. [00:24:00] All right, welcome back, everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. We've been talking with Amy Seiler about trees and Christmas and good stuff and bad stuff [LAUGHTER] about this time of the year. But I wanted to turn the floor over to our co-host today, Tom John McCreery. He had some things that he wanted to talk about. So Tom John, let's turn the floor over to you.

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, the first thing I'd like to mention, Jeff, is that I got my Ag News magazine from the University of Wyoming.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, sir.

**Tom John McCreery:** You had an article on there that was wonderful about storing and disposing of chemicals and many other subjects. So if you get a chance, check that out. It's always good to see a friend in a University Wyoming Ag News. The other thing that I have is I've got the home gardeners problem solver and it is the best referenced material I've seen. It gives you problems of plants, trees as well, Amy. Analysis and solutions for all kinds of plants and diseases and problems with your, with your trees and garden. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Does it talk about the white fungus on Christmas trees?

**Tom John McCreery:** I was lucky and I couldn't find one. [LAUGHTER] It has all kinds of [inaudible] scale shale on aspens and other trees as well.

**Jeff Edwards:** [OVERLAPPING] Tom John, where did you find that book?

**Tom John McCreery:** Well, Janine go it for me, my wife. Janine got it for me at the library. There's another called house plants, and I learned a lot about over watering and being real careful with your house plants.

**Jeff Edwards:** So if you got it from the library, you have to give it back, right?

**Tom John McCreery:** No, no, we bought them. They had a book sale. [OVERLAPPING] So anybody that would like to borrow that, get a hold of me, I'll be glad to share.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. What year was it published?

**Tom John McCreery:** Golly. Let me go ahead and talk about something else. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Here's a curve ball, deal with that. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** I'm going to add on to just a little bit about that book and some of the treatments, when you're identifying things that are going on with your trees and shrubs and plants in your landscape. There's chemicals that will treat the inspects or the pest. But I think one of the things that we need to make sure that we are always very aware of is a lot of those disease in insects are a result of trees or plants being under stress. So I think the really important thing that we all need to take away from this is you need to have good cultural practices and that will reduce the pressure generally, not all the time, of those insects and diseases. What that means [00:27:00] is for a tree, making sure that it's watered adequately, not too much, not too little, making sure that the soil is not compacted around it, making sure that you're mulching a nice big mulch circle around your tree so that there's minimal competition between the turf and the tree, making sure that you're planting the right tree or shrub in the right place that it wants to grow because of soil conditions, soil pH, those types of things. Those are the things that we really need to focus on in the beginning, and then the book that is referenced, those are really handy for identifying the pests. But I think the key is to, just like in our own bodies, make sure that we're healthy first. It's never a bad thing to have a prescription on antibiotic or whatever that help us make us feel or get us better. But being healthy in the first place is going to be a lot more impactful. So just wanted to throw that in there.

**Jeff Edwards:** Amy, I agree with that wholeheartedly. When we're talking about things in our garden and growing crops to eat, if they're healthy, they're less likely to have pest problems. It's the same thing with trees and shrubs. We have to watch out and take care of those things. To list a few stressors, water is probably number one. Wind contributes to lack of water, and then if we continue down the scale, deer. [LAUGHTER] [OVERLAPPING] Yeah, hail is also a stressor. We had honey locusts in our front yard that got hailed probably 12 years ago. Now, I've had to remove two of them and I'm feeling really bad because the third one I think is probably not going to make it into next year, so I've been cutting them out and replacing them with other trees. But moles, voles, gophers, all those types of things can cause stress and harm to tree bases and bark and roots. If you get the opportunity, one of the perpetual things on my list in my yard is gopher patrol. [NOISE] If the weather's nice, walk outside, look around, if something doesn't quite look great, if you've got the voles in and around your leaf litter, under around your plants, chewing up your yard, try to take care of those things. I mentioned that because in my leaf cleaning operation I found an area where the voles were living underneath the leaves and make it a mess, so it's just one of those things which got to be out, be observant and then take care of it and try to mediate it before it gets really bad.

**Amy Seiler:** I appreciate you touching on the voles and gophers and moles. With all pests, our plants can handle a little bit of pressure, they're adapted to handle a little bit and they can respond and recover. [00:30:00] It's like what you said, you have to make sure that you don't get to this threshold where the plants can't handle it and so that's why being engaged in your landscape 12 months out of the year is really important. We can't just be keen and spending time out there maintaining it from April through September. It's a year-round process if we want to be successful at it.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [OVERLAPPING] One of the best advice you've given me Amy was to water my ash trees because we had the emerald ash borer coming closer and closer to all of us and I said, how do we protect our trees from it? You said, "Well, how often are you watering it?" I said, "Yeah." [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** When it rains.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** When it rains [LAUGHTER] and my gosh, it hasn't rained. So we've been putting those trees on a watering schedule and they look really good. The better the health of the parent host in this, all those Rs, hosts for those critters to jump in on. The healthier it is, the harder it is for them to gain a foothold.

**Amy Seiler:** Okay. Jerry, that is very true on the majority of pests. When you have an invasive pest like emerald ash borer, that tree could be the healthiest, best-maintained tree and unfortunately, that tree is not adapted, it doesn't have any processes within it to ward off that pest. I hope I didn't mislead you a while back, but even your best intentions probably are not going to help your ash trees evade the emerald ash borer. Now, the natural ash borer that exists in our landscapes, your practices that you're doing most certainly will reduce their effect on the trees. But with emerald ash borer, unfortunately, there is really nothing besides a chemical treatment, unfortunately, that we'll be able to ward off that pest doing mortal damage to your [OVERLAPPING] mortal. But what word am I looking for? Definite deaf, imminent deaths to your tree. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Imminent death. Jerry, make them look good until the emerald ash borer gets sick. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** My wife was after me to get rid of some of the clothing that I've had, that doesn't fit anymore, especially my slacks and they were really nice and she says, why are you keeping those? I said because if I ever get sick I'll lose a lot of weight, I'll be a good looking sick person. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** My pants will feet again.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Then the pants will feet way again. So Amy, should I start buying some of this chemical because I have the ash tree or wait until I see some damage? [OVERLAPPING] Is there proper lacking treatment.

**Amy Seiler:** Okay. No. The products [00:33:00] that are used to treat emerald ash borer are a pretty intense products and we would prefer that those not be utilized in the landscape until absolutely necessary. I'm sure that Wyoming has a similar recommendation, but the Nebraska Forest Service recommends no treatments to trees for emerald ash borer until it has been discovered within 15 miles of your location. It's a waste of money to be proactively treating those, you could be treating for 15 years and that insect may not even be close by and it's fairly expansive [OVERLAPPING] to treat as well. Again, it is a chemical that is not incredibly selective to just kill emerald ash borer, it kills, it's imidacloprid. It can affect honey bees, a lot of really beneficial insects, so we really don't want to use it and so we absolutely have to. We use that product in other ways in our landscape. We just don't want so much of it out there.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, good information.

**Jeff Edwards:** Jerry, you know what Plan B is, don't you?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Plant now something else.

**Jeff Edwards:** Not an ash tree. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Not an ash tree. [LAUGHTER] Plant something else right now.

**Jeff Edwards:** If you have a mature ash in your landscape, I think what everybody needs to do is go out and consider it not being there anymore and figure out what you would plant in its place now prior to its imminent [NOISE] death, as Amy said. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Amy Seiler:** Sorry to be so negative everybody.

**Jeff Edwards:** You're such a doubter. Bah humbug! [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** Let me bring up a happier topic and I love your lead into this, Jeff. How perfectly planned was that? I think you're exactly right. I think we need to plan for the future and expect that that ash tree is probably not going to be there down the road. I sat on this great webinar the other day through the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. It was their curators' annual meeting and we adjusted efforts in with the Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, talking about different tree species to try. I got a new list of trees that I'm not going to say that it's our new tree to plant but as we're trying to diversify tree species, these might be some things that we might want to try out here. They talked about the Chinese chestnut. Now, they are having great success with the growing out in Eastern Nebraska. I can grow Fort McNair Chestnut at my house and in our park systems we have some and so this Chestnut might be a smaller, maybe 30-foot tree that you could try in your landscape. It's got a really cool compound leaf that looks like a palmy, like a [00:36:00] hand. It's really cool. It has a nice flower on it. It's resistant to chestnut blight because it's from China and so that disease does not affect it. They talked again about trying ginkgo. I think we've talked about ginkgo before, but I don't think that we need to go out and plant 50 ginkgoes, but I think we should be trying that a little bit more. We have a couple of ginkgoes in our park system. I think they're not thriving, but it's because they're not malt, they odd amounts of water, so I think in the whole landscape that might be a good one. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Is it somewhat neglected? Is that what you're saying?

**Amy Seiler:** Yeah, it's not loved and it is still alive after 30 years. It's one of those that just treated like garbage and it's still going to be there for you. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Ginkgoes, I don't think have any natural or current pests, diseases [OVERLAPPING] insect, nothing.

**Jeff Edwards:** They don't. Why is that Jeff? Do you know?

**Amy Seiler:** I have no idea. [OVERLAPPING]

**Amy Seiler:** Because it's only three in that genus?

**Jeff Edwards:** That's why? [OVERLAPPING]

**Amy Seiler:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** In the event of the apocalypse, only cockroaches and ginkgo trees will be left behind. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** That may be the case because they've been here for thousands and thousands of years, so yes [OVERLAPPING].

**Jerry Erschabeck:** They don't taste good to insects.

**Jeff Edwards:** Do the chestnut trees that you mentioned, do they produce a nut?

**Amy Seiler:** [OVERLAPPING] Yes, they do. It's a smaller nut from my understanding, but it would be edible and I don't think it's as delicious obviously as typical, is it an English chestnut? Or is that English walnut? I don't remember, but yes, they do produce a nut. It's just not as big as [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Are you're referring to the chestnuts roasted by an open fire type thing? [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** Yes, I am. They are not as big as those, but yes. [OVERLAPPING] Have you had chestnuts roasted on an open fire?

**Jeff Edwards:** No, I have not.

**Amy Seiler:** Okay. Side note. This is really cool. We have normally in moral, they have a little stroll around Christmas where people stroll up and down main streets, and a family friend for many years has roasted chestnuts over an open fire and then served them at the stroll. Last year in January, we had an event at our brand new plaza, which everybody should come out and check out. We roasted chestnuts over an open fire and then dip it in some butter and sprinkle a little bit of cinnamon and sugar over the top of it.

**Jeff Edwards:** That's got to be bad for you. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** No, man. Frankly, I'll be honest with you. I don't think I'd sit around and eat those all day long. It's a unique experience, but I don't think it's something that I would crave as something to have every week.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Something that you don't go back for seconds on. Is that what you're saying? [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** Everybody's got to try it once. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Okay. [00:39:00] Good to know. So I rudely interrupted your list. What's next?

**Amy Seiler:** The Japanese Emperor Oak is another one that they have had some success with. In Eastern Nebraska, I've seen it growing as far West as Gothenburg, Nebraska, which has similar soils to what you would have. It's fairly sandy. Besides the wind, I think that the conditions, the temperatures, everything would be fairly similar. It has a really, really big leaf on it. I think one of the reasons maybe we haven't seen it out here is because it's just not in nursery production much. But they're trying to get it out more through the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. People can always go online and check out that site. They can order plants. It's a non-profit group. Their goal is just to get a lot of different species out so that they can increase tree diversity. Then the final one, and I've seen this one growing as far west as North Platte, Nebraska, it's bitternut hickory. That one, they have a couple of really beautiful bitternuts in North flattening really lovely. I think we just needed try some of these things. I think we've talked about this once before on the program, but we have some pecans that are actually growing out here and producing pecans and that's a pretty tough tree. So those are a few things, Jerry, if you just want to play around a little bit, those might be some fun trees to get started in your yard. You don't have to start. You can start little seed beads so you're not breaking the bank. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Then I remember one time that you said some sort of Kentucky coffeetree.

**Amy Seiler:** Yes. There's just your straight Kentucky coffeetree which is beautiful tree outstanding for my disk. It's so tough. I really like that. It does produce a pod. It looks like a small banana. If you don't like the way the pod looks, there's a new variety, it's called Espresso Kentucky coffeetree, and that's a male form of it, a male selection and it does not produce a pod. Jerry, that would be very cool in your yard.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** As a possible replacement for your ash tree. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Would you plant that underneath the trees? I mean, because my two ash trees are pull on another 12-foot apart, but their leaves are touching on the top. Would you try to put that into underneath them or just out of the way so they could get some sunshine?

**Amy Seiler:** Okay. You've just asked a great question and honestly, Jerry, depends on the species of tree that you are wanting to plant. There's some species of trees that absolutely [00:42:00] have to be in the open sunlight in order for them to grow and thrive. There are some that would rather grow in the shade or the canopy of other trees until they grow larger. So you need to know what stage these trees grow in the forest. That's what I've learned and not everybody can go out and do that research. For example, that Chestnut would probably prefer to be growing in the understory of your ash trees. That would probably be okay if you were to try an oak and oak would be very unsuccessful in the shade of the ash trees. That would want to grow more in open sunlight. They just seem to do better in that environment. I always like to go back to my low forestry books and it shows if these trees are an early pioneer species, I know that they want to grow up in sunlight. If they're a late succession tree in a forest ecosystem, I know that I can shadow plant those amongst other trees and they will be successful. That's why it's always so good to talk to your local nurseries and get some additional information from them because they have a little bit more background in it that they could help you out in that. In regards to Kentucky coffeetree, those grow on open savannas. So that tree probably would not do well in the understory of your ash trees. You would want to probably put that on the south or the west side of an ash and it would probably do much better for you.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Thank you so much.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good stuff.

**Tom John McCreery:** I have a question about fertilization. I use Jobe tree food, spikes. I got one for fruit trees for my apricots and then I've got them for conifers. Are they a good product to drill in the ground? I don't know. What's a good time frame to fertilize?

**Amy Seiler:** Okay. You're asking good questions. In regards to that, is that a good product? I'm not going to comment on specific brands and products. But what I do want to talk about is just fertilizing in general. We typically fertilize our yards with a decent fertilizer that has nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and then some minor elements. That, generally, is enough nitrogen for your trees. We don't really want to put large amounts of nitrogen for trees to grow. Every time we have big flushes of growth that attracts insects and that's what nitrogen does. It also will prevent your tree sometimes from hardening off at appropriate times, which leads to your next question, when is the good time to be fertilizing? Typically, you would want to fertilize with something that has nitrogen or not in it between late April and your cutoff date really [00:45:00] is the end of July, maybe that first or second week in August. I don't really like to add any nitrogen to woody plants after the end of July, just because I really want them to harden off and prepare for winner. That nitrogen will create that big flush of growth. Then we seem to have a little bit more trig dieback on that. So I'd be real cautious about utilizing any fertilizer that has high amounts of nitrogen. Frankly, your yard fertilizer is probably enough nitrogen for your trees. Now, I will say that those minor elements that trees need might be more important than nitrogen. I have a linden in my yard that has really struggled being chlorotic and what I've learned is that I do an application of iron before my tree leaves out. It's accumulated iron. So I apply that all around the drip zone of the tree. I've just watched to see how those buds are swelling and when things are coming out. It'll break down in the soil and the tree will be able to take it up fairly quickly. So I do the application late April, maybe early May, and then I know that my linden's going to put on another push of growth mid-June and so I tried to get an application of that on maybe early June. Again, I just watched to see what my tree is doing. It has significantly improved the color in my tree. We really don't want to push ridiculous amounts of growth. We just want healthy trees because healthy trees are going to grow at their normal growth rate. If you're having a oak tree that's growing three and a half feet, that's abnormal. You'll have some issues with that hardening off, maybe weak-wooded and that's not what we want. We want sturdy, strong trees and so that nitrogen, it makes me a little nervous when you get large amounts of that put around your trees. The other thing, your best fertilizer in the world, and Jeff does sucked it up with this vacuum, is all that leaf litter. That has every bit of nutrients in it that the tree wants and it just wants to recycle it in that drip line. So if you can tolerate a little bit of leaf litter in your yard, I would. That's your best bet for a good fertilizer for your trees.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Amy, it's all going back in a couple of years. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** I hate to do this. Amy, we love having you on the radio with us and our time seems to go incredibly fast when you're here. But thank you for your advice. I think we are going to have to say goodbye. I wish everybody Merry Christmas. Thank you all for listening to us and putting up with us, and we will continue on in 2021. [00:48:00] Jerry, we probably need to have a little planning session and talk about dates and times going into the new year. But Amy, again, want to thank you. Tom John, thank you for being here as well. You always seem to ask the questions we miss, so thanks a lot. [LAUGHTER]

**Amy Seiler:** It's great to be with everybody. Thanks always for inviting. Look forward to 2021.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, don't we all? [LAUGHTER] All right, we'll see you.

**Tom John McCreery:** Take care, everybody. Merry Christmas.

**Female Narrator:** [MUSIC] You've been listening to Lawn and Garden with University of Wyoming Extension Specialist, Jeff Edwards and co-host, Jerry Erschabeck. UW Extension wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season. See you next year. [MUSIC]