

## Storm-Related Online Resources

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County has compiled a wide variety of storm-related resources online at [lancaster.unl.edu](http://lancaster.unl.edu).

Included is Cooperative Extension information on:

- Guidance for Cleanup Following Tornadoes, Severe Storms
- Inspecting Homes for Structural Damage
- Cleaning Up After Severe Storms: Household Tips & Help
- Storm Damaged Trees: Evaluating Damage
- Assessing Hail, Wind and Flood Damage to Crops
- Family / Parenting Resources for Tough Times
- Weather Safety Information

There are links to other University of Nebraska resources, local government Web sites, local agencies and national resources. A special section for youth include safety games, safety checklists and other fun activities.



## Indoor Mold, Dampness Are Linked to Respiratory Problems

You may have heard about the new Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies report linking indoor mold and dampness with respiratory problems.

The people that have had recent rain, flooding and tornado damage to their home should be especially cautious about drying out interior structures for several weeks to months BEFORE any materials are replaced covering existing damp wood and other materials. Research has indicated (Red River Flooding, etc.) that without thorough cleaning and drying, cavities and other areas can product mold causing even more damage and repair, and sometimes loss of the house itself.

Scientific evidence links mold and other factors related to

damp conditions in homes and other buildings to asthma symptoms in some asthmatics as well as to coughing, wheezing and other upper respiratory tract symptoms in otherwise healthy people, says the report. The available evidence does not support an association between either interior dampness or mold and the wide range of other health complaints that have been ascribed to them, but the possibility of a link cannot be ruled out.

More information (news release, audio of the news conference, and links to the report) is available online at [www.nationalacademies.org/topnews](http://www.nationalacademies.org/topnews).

Source: Shirley Niemeyer, PhD Extension Specialist/Research Housing and Environment, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

## Can You Guess It?



Did you guess it? Find out at [lancaster.unl.edu](http://lancaster.unl.edu)

Did you guess it from the June NEBLINE?  
The answer was a robin's nest.

## Disaster Recovery Assistance from FEMA

The tornadoes, severe storms and flooding that struck Nebraska between May 20 and June 1 resulted in a presidential disaster declaration on May 25 that now extends eligibility for federal and state disaster assistance to 30 counties in Nebraska — including Lancaster County.

Renters, homeowners and businesses of all sizes in Lancaster County are now eligible to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to access state and federal disaster relief programs. Call 1-800-621-3362 to register for disaster assistance. The service is available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. **The deadline to register is July 24, 2004.**

Disaster aid to renters, homeowners and businesses of all sizes generally falls into the following categories:

**Disaster Housing** may be available for up to 18 months, using local resources, for displaced persons whose residences were heavily damaged or destroyed. Funding also can be provided for housing repairs and replacement of damaged items to make homes livable.

**Disaster grants** are available to help meet other serious disaster-related needs and necessary expenses not

covered by insurance and other aid programs. These may include replacement of personal property, and transportation, medical, dental and funeral expenses.

**Low-interest disaster loans** are available after a disaster for homeowners and renters from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to cover uninsured property losses. Loans may be for repair or replacement of homes, automobiles, clothing or other damaged personal property. Loans are also available to businesses for property loss and economic injury.

**Other disaster aid programs** include crisis counseling, disaster-related unemployment assistance, legal aid and assistance with income tax, Social Security and veteran's benefits. Other state or local help may also be available.

**Assistance Process** — After the application is taken, the damaged property is inspected to verify the loss. If approved, an applicant will soon receive a check for rental assistance or a grant. Loan applications require more information and approval may take several weeks after application.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Building & Safety Department Offering Assistance in Hickman

The City of Lincoln Building and Safety Department has set up an assistance station for the Lancaster County homeowners victimized by the May 22 storms. Building and Safety set up their assistance station in the Hickman City Office in Hickman, 115 Locust (south entrance). Hours of their operation will be every Tuesday and Friday during the month of June from noon until 7 p.m.

Assistance will be offered in the following areas:

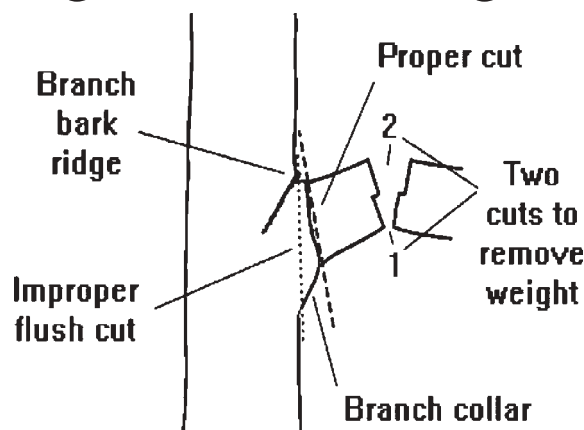
- Discuss building permits
- Discuss remodel project
- Applications for building permits
- Accept building or remodel permit & plans.
- **Schedule inspection of property before construction starts**
- Application for a Temporary County Mobile Home Placement
- Homebuilder information handouts

For more information on the storm relief/cleanup effort, visit the county Web site at [lancaster.ne.gov](http://lancaster.ne.gov).

## Pruning Storm Damaged Trees

For the trees that survive severe storms, the job of repairing them and bringing them back to good health is critical. Before broken branches are removed, they should be examined carefully, and proper pruning methods should be used to minimize the damage from the pruning cuts. Trees too large to handle from the ground should be pruned only by professional arborists.

Safety is the first consideration in removing branches from storm-damaged trees. All branches that are loose should be removed as soon as possible to eliminate the chance of injury or damage if they were to fall. Other branches that are cracked or broken should be removed after the loose branches are gone. Branches that did not break but were bent over may have internal cracks or other hidden damage, especially if these branches have not returned to their original upright positions. These branches may become hazards in the future and should be considered for removal. A branch (or trunk) that was partially stripped of its bark when an attached branch pulled away should be removed if more than a third of the original circumference is lost. These branches will always be structurally weak and may become serious hazards if they are allowed to remain and gain weight.



Pruning cuts should be made so only branch wood is removed and the trunk or supporting stem is not injured. If only branch wood is removed, the wound is smaller, the tree will be able to seal the wound more effectively, and the chance of problems with wood decay will be greatly reduced. To locate the proper place to make a pruning cut, look for the "branch bark ridge" on the upper surface of the union of the branch with the supporting stem. This is a line of bark that has been pushed up as the branch and supporting stem have grown. Some branch unions will not have this if they did not form properly. Instead they will have the branch simply pressing into the supporting stem, forming a sharp V-shaped union. At the base of the branch, and mostly on the underneath side, look also for the "branch collar," which is a slightly swollen area of stem tissue that wraps around the base of the branch. A proper pruning cut begins just outside the branch bark ridge and angles down and

slightly away from the stem, avoiding injury to the branch collar. Do not make flush cuts that remove the branch collar. Wounds created by flush cuts cause substantially more injury to the tree than wounds left by proper pruning. Branches should be pruned using a series of three cuts. Two cuts to remove the weight of the

branch (first under then over the branch), then the final pruning cut. Branches that have pulled away from the trunk should be removed at the bottom of the split. Avoid causing any additional damage to the trunk. Remove any loose bark, but do not cut into bark that is living and still attached.

The only pruning that really should be done at this time is the removal of broken branches. Leave the fine pruning and finishing cuts until late winter or early spring. All pruning cuts will dry out to some degree during the winter. Dieback of the inner bark around a pruning cut can be minimized if the final pruning is left until just before the tree begins to grow in the spring. Never top trees. Topping creates serious hazards and dramatically shortens the life of a tree. Never use paint or wound dressing to cover wounds. These materials do not help the tree and actually interfere with the tree's wound healing process.

Source: Nebraska Forest Service Storm Damage Bulletin No. 3 (MJF)