

Can You Guess It?

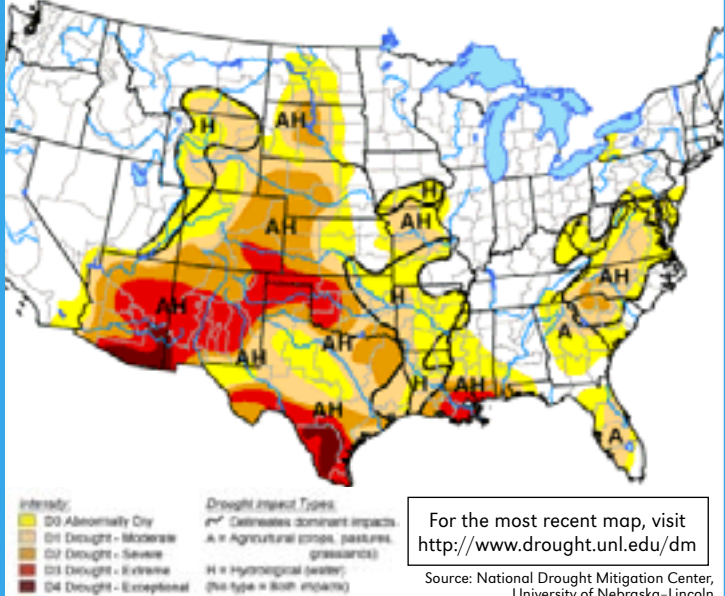


Vicki Jedlicka, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Did you guess it? Find out at
<http://lancaster.unl.edu>
 Did you guess it from the May NEBLINE?
 The answer was bark on a birch tree.

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of June 6, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.



Still Time to Sign Up for 4-H Summer Camps!

There is still time to sign up for 4-H summer camps held in late June, July and early August!

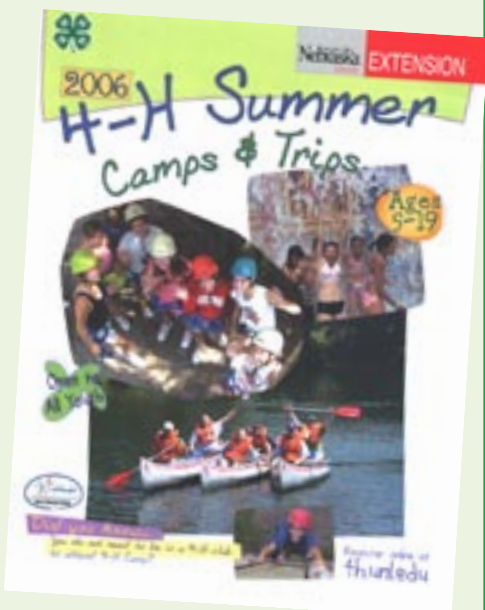
Open to all youth ages 5-19, 4-H summer camps are a great opportunity to meet new friends and experience a wide variety of exciting activities such as canoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, rappelling or climbing, volleyball, basketball, art, dancing, backpacking, shooting sports, water skiing and fishing!

Most camps include one to three overnight stays in comfortable cabins. Camps and trips are held at three 4-H camp locations in Nebraska:

- Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center, Gretna
- Nebraska State 4-H Camp, Halsey
- South Central 4-H Center, Alma

Brochures with camp descriptions, registration forms and more information are available online or at the extension office. New this year, register online!

<http://4h.unl.edu/camp>



Insect of the Month: Fireflies

Barb Ogg
 UNL Extension Educator

Fireflies are familiar insects in Nebraska on still, warm summer evenings. The common names *firefly* and *lightning bug* are misnomers. These insects are not flies or bugs, but soft-bodied beetles belonging to the family Lampyridae. There are about 200 species of fireflies in North America. Most are an inch or less in length.

Adults rest on foliage, but become active between dusk and midnight. Males and females produce these flashing light signals to find each other for mating. While flying, the males emit light flashes recognized only by females of its species. A responding female sits on vegetation and responds to the male's light pattern with her own flash pattern. After several back and forth flash sequences, the male locates her position.

Females lay eggs in the soil, particularly in cool, damp places. The predaceous larvae, called glow-worms, also produce light, but are rarely seen. Scientists think firefly larvae flash to warn predators they taste bad.

Bioluminescence is the term used when light is produced inside an organism. Fireflies aren't the only living creatures to produce light. Experts believe 90 percent of deep-sea marine life produce some type of bioluminescence. Bioluminescence is also found in some annelids (worms), arachnids (spiders), bacteria and fungi.

To increase the number of fireflies in your backyard:

1. Eliminate using insecticides or other chemicals on your lawn.



Adult fireflies — one turned to show light-producing organ.



Firefly larvae also produce light on the end of their body.

2. Reduce "extra lighting" on your property at night, because this light will interfere with firefly flashing patterns and make it harder for fireflies to locate mates. Light interference also occurs on clear nights when the moon is full.
3. Provide low overhanging trees, shrubs, tall grasses to give adult fireflies a place to rest during the day and remain cool.

Free Test Kits Available for Toxic Blue-Green Algae

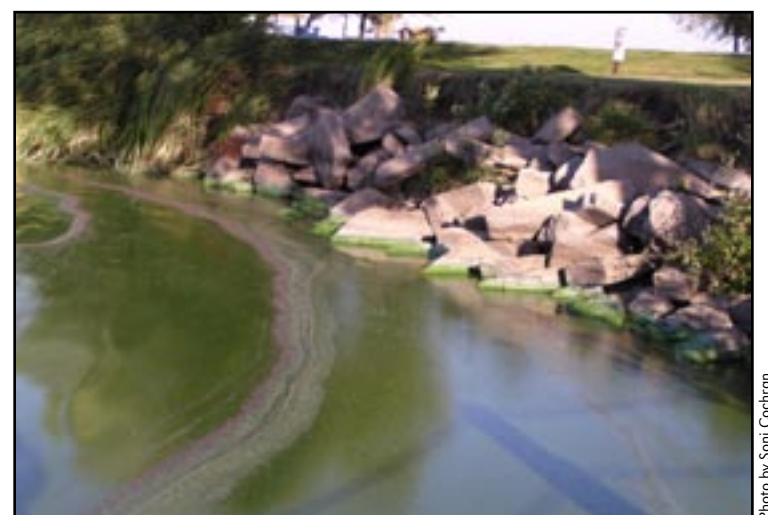
Soni Cochran
 UNL Extension Associate

According to UNL specialists, the incidence of toxic blue-green algae blooms in Nebraska lakes and ponds should remain the same from previous years. The algae blooms can pose serious health threats to both humans and animals.

Skin irritations and gastrointestinal problems are the main risks to people exposed to the toxins. In very rare cases, extremely high toxin levels can be fatal.

Children are at greater risk of exposure because of their tendency to explore the shoreline where algae blooms can be concentrated. Children also swallow a higher volume of water than adults based on their body weight, so are at greater risk. People with liver disease, kidney damage or with weakened immune systems are also at risk.

Free test kits from UNL Extension are available so lake owners, users and managers can check for toxic-producing algae. The kits include instructions on sample collection, a



During rapid blue-green algae growth, lake water becomes cloudy with a green or blue-green cast and blue-green streaks may be visible on the water's surface.

sheet for recording measurements, a questionnaire about the lake and sample bottles for water and algae. If you request a kit, and submit samples, you will be notified of the results.

For more information or a free kit, call Hilary Hansen at 472-8190.

What You Should Do

Learn what toxic blue-green algae looks like and avoid water where the algae is present. Avoid swimming,

water skiing, riding personal watercraft or any activities that put you, your pets or livestock in contact with water where the algae is present. If you come in contact with algae, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.

For an updated list of health alerts for area lakes, visit the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Web site at <http://www.deq.state.ne.us>