

Elm trees dying from disease that started in Asia

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

Dutch Elm disease has been hard on trees in Oberlin this year, but homeowners can treat the trees when they begin to see the disease starting to work on their trees.

Larry Van Otterloo, with the city's tree committee; Rocky Diederich, the tree expert on the city crew; and Bruce Hoffman from McCook, who owns Common Sense, met with Jim Strine, district forester with Kansas State University, last Wednesday to discuss the disease and what homeowners should do about it.

There is more Dutch Elm disease in Oberlin this year, than there has been in the past, said Mr. Van Otterloo, owner of Van's Tree Service. There is also more here than in Atwood and Norton, he said.

The disease wiped out century-old elms across the Midwest decades ago, but hasn't been that active on the High Plains until now.

Mr. Strine said Oberlin might see more of the fungus infection, which if not treated, will kill the trees, and there are a lot of American Elms in town. The disease only infects some varieties of elm trees, he said, but Oberlin has a lot of them.

The disease originated in Asia, said Mr. Strine, but was discovered by a biologist in Holland. The disease attacks mainly American elms in this country, but also can hit other types of elms. It spreads in two ways, he said, either through bark beetles or root grafts where nearby trees join root systems.

Once a tree is infected, he said, there really is no good cure. If the disease is caught when less than 5 percent of the tree is damaged, it can be injected with fungicide which might stop the disease from spreading.

The very best control, said Mr. Strine, is to remove a dying tree right away. It is important to get rid of dead elms and those that have more than 5 percent damage so that the disease doesn't spread.

Mr. Strine said he arrived in Oberlin last Tuesday and decided to drive around and look at the trees. He saw two dead American elms and four others with early symptoms of the disease.

He said the leaves on one branch will turn yellow and then brown as

the disease starts. It will then spread to the whole tree. Recently wilted branches will have streaking on the wood if the bark is stripped.

Homeowners can send in a sample of the wood to be tested through the county Extension Office for a small fee, he said. For information, call the office at 475-8121.

The disease runs in cycles, said Mr. Strine; some years are bad, then some years there isn't much damage.

Mr. Van Otterloo said he has taken samples to get a positive ID before, but he has seen a lot of the disease and feels confident that is what the elms in town are dying from.

During the growing season, if you notice a branch going, said Mr. Strine, the best thing to do is to cut the tree down. If someone wants to burn the wood, the bark needs to be stripped since the beetles live under the bark.

Mr. Strine said all dead trees, whether killed by this disease or not, should be removed.

In the past year, he said he has removed nine trees because of Dutch Elm disease and four the year before.

The city, by ordinance, can help homeowners in removing trees on city property along the street. Basically, said Mr. Diederich, the city will pay \$25 to remove a stump and \$75 for a tree if they are located up to 25 feet away from the curb. That's generally beyond the original sidewalk, if there is one, but distances vary.

The beetles, which infect the trees, stay under the bark for a whole year, said Mr. Strine. The first generation is under the bark in the spring, and by July a second generation is active, and by September the third generation will winter over. The only time the bugs travel is as winged insects. They can fly about 1,000 feet.

When a tree is cut down, said Mr. Strine, the bark doesn't have to be burned after it is stripped off the tree because it will dry out and that will kill the beetles.

Mr. Strine said the most important thing is to cut the tree down when more than 5 percent of it is involved with the disease.

Supporting the hospital...



AT THE HOSPITAL BENEFIT on Friday night, Kaine Fredrickson walked through the dinner line before he sat down. The hospital played host for a golf tournament at the Oberlin Country Club and then dinner at The Gateway. As of Monday the hospital didn't have any figures worked up for the fundraiser, which will help improve the dining room at Cedar Living Center.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Summer projects completed

Superintendent Kelly Glodt told Oberlin School Board members last Monday that he is pleased with the building improvement projects completed over the summer.

Mr. Glodt said the district is holding 10 percent of the money for both the roof and air conditioner projects until the final walk-through inspection. He said he would like to have one or two board members take part.

On the air conditioners, said Mr. Glodt, there is a possible problem with where the heat exchange units were placed at the grade school. They may need to be moved.

So far, he said, he hasn't heard any complaints from the teachers on the cooling units. Mr. Glodt said he would like the teachers to check out and use the units before the walk-through to see if there are any problems.

It would be nice if every board member could look at all of the work that was done over the summer, suggested member Monte Moore.

Mr. Glodt said he needs to get a bid on a water softener for the cold water for the new part of the high school. Currently the hot water is softened, he said, but the cold water isn't.

Although there will be some cost, he said, it will save the district money in the long run because the water will be easier on towels, uniforms and valves.

City council approves new budget

The Oberlin City Council approved a \$4,242,583 million budget for next year at their meeting Thursday night with no opposition or comments from the public.

The budget includes a tax increase of .248 of a mill, but the budget is down \$84,431 from last year.

The hearing at the beginning of the meeting was held without any opposition and the budget passed with all council members voting yes.

The city's valuation went down

so it will take more tax dollars to raise less money. There won't be extra money in the budget for next year.

The council approved the purchase of a supervisory control and data acquisition system for the power system for \$55,000 from MidStates Energy Works.

The equipment will help operators track what is happening with the electrical system and control switches and routing for power. The power plant, said City Administra-

tor Gary Shike, used to have a system back in the 1980s but it isn't working right and hasn't for a long time.

Councilman Jay Anderson asked about assigning an amount to the museum for utilities. The museum gets free utilities from the city. Dr. Anderson suggested giving the museum a certain amount in utilities and then if they use the credit, they pay the rest.

The council asked the city staff to do some research on how much the

museum uses in power and water each year, including what it costs.

In other business, the council:

- Appointed Councilman Rob McFee to the minimum housing and standards board as council representative.

- Received copies of the proposed new strategic plan and reviewed it. The council fixed a job title in one section. The plan will be sent to the State Department of Commerce for approval.

Board hires new coaches

The Oberlin School Board hired two teachers, two bus drivers, a cook and several coaches at its meeting last Monday.

The board received resignations from Jody Shike, a teacher at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, and Jennifer Monaco, a grade-school teacher.

The board wasted no time, with school just around the corner, and hired Judy Elwood of Oberlin as a grade school teacher, Deb Lohoefer to teach at the ranch, retired teacher David Olson as a bus driver, John Stanley as a substitute bus driver and Linda Weber as head cook.

The board also hired coaches, some who have been with the district before and others who haven't. Before agreeing on the supplemental duty assignments, the board met in a closed session for non-elected personnel with High School Principal Charles Haag. The board started out with a 15-minute session and

extended it by 10 minutes.

Following the session, the board approved hiring:

- Trevor Williams as football coach and Keith Grafel, Joe Dreher, Ken Badsy and Shane Bird, who works at Creative Dimensions, as assistants.
- Caleb Howland as the junior high football coach and Mark Bricker and Tim Breth as assistants.
- Dick Ahlberg as the cross country coach.
- Pat Dorshorst as the volleyball coach and Sherri Ruf and Melissa Lippelmann as assistants.
- Melissa Dreher as the junior high volleyball coach and Gina Witt as the assistant.
- Rusty Montgomery, a farmer, as the new boys basketball coach, with no assistants named.
- Terry Ream as the girls basketball coach and Williams as assistant.
- Breth as the junior high boys basketball coach with Jason Ketterl

as assistant.

- Melissa Dreher as the junior high girls basketball coach and Cindy Sattler as the assistant.

- Joe Dreher as wrestling coach and Bird and Howland as assistants.

- Bird as the junior high wrestling coach and Mark Bricker as the assistant.

- Joe Dreher as track coach and Bricker, Dorshorst and Williams as assistants.

- Grafel as the junior high track coach and Breth and Ruf as assistants.

- Ahlberg as golf coach with no assistant named.

- Tiffany Farr, who works at Decatur County Co-op, as cheerleading coach.

- Witt as the junior high cheerleading coach and Gina Montgomery as assistant.

- Randy Olson as activities director and Joe Dreher, who teaches physical education, as assistant.

City pays for more dirt work

The Oberlin City Council paid the second request for \$163,170 for work at the new waste water treatment plant.

Chris Miller, with Miller and Associates, said he has reviewed the bill and thought everything is OK. He said the dirt work is pretty much done.

The crew will be back at the be-

ginning of September, he said.

At the end of the project, said Mr. Miller, the old waste water treatment plant will be torn out. Mr. Miller said they will have to do an asbestos inspection on each part. When it is time for demolition, he said, the state has to be notified so the Kansas Department of Health and Environment can send an in-

spector.

Was this a planned expense or in the contingency reserve? asked Councilman Joe Stanley. Mr. Miller said he wasn't sure.

The engineer said the new computer controls are in for the water system. He said technicians will be back in a week or so to work out any glitches.

School could receive rebates

The Oberlin School Board agreed to sign up with Nex-Tech Wireless for customers to be able to select the school district here to receive a 3 percent cash rebate for all the bills paid.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said participating schools can get a rebate if customers choose the Oberlin School District. Payments will be made to the districts four times a year once the account reaches \$50 for a district.

Mr. Glodt said it is kind of like the

box top program, where the box top coupons can be brought to the school and mailed in for a cash rebate.

If the board agrees, he said, the Oberlin School District will be put on the list of schools the customers can choose from. Part of the agreement is allowing Nex-Tech to put up posters in the schools.

If the board is uncomfortable doing the advertising, he said, then the district can decide not to do it.

Does the district need to set a

policy so when other companies come in and ask for something it is in place? asked Board Member Monte Moore. At the high school, said Mr. Glodt, anything that is posted has to be approved by the office.

The agreement, said Board Member Kurt Vollertsen, looks like it rolls over every year if the district doesn't say no.

Board Member Dewayne Jackson said they could give it a try for a year and see what happens.

KPA-Great Plains
3 x 10
OBH
Ad in GDN