

All are welcome to attend the **Steele County Small Grains Plot Tour** which is this coming **Wednesday, July 24th at 9:00 am** at the plot. From Finley, the plot is located 5 miles south on Highway 32 then 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles west on Highway 200. The plot is on the south side of Highway 200. Joel Ransom, NDSU Extension Agronomist will speak about the hard red spring wheat and barley varieties that are in the plot.

This week I would like to write about Dutch elm disease. Although several of the elm trees in North Dakota were killed by the major Dutch elm disease outbreak in the 1970's, Dutch elm disease still kills a few of the remaining elm trees every year. There are two ways elm trees can become infected, either 1) vectored by the elm bark beetle or 2) through root grafts. The most common route of infection is from the elm bark beetle.

This is the time of the year when the first signs of Dutch elm disease appear. Signs to look for are when a major branch in the upper crown of the tree turns yellow and wilts. This is referred to as a "flag" branch. Trees may survive only two or three years if the disease progresses rapidly, or they may survive for several years with the number of affected branches increasing annually.

To confirm if a tree has Dutch elm disease, take a one-inch-diameter branch near the low spot of the affect area. Peel the bark back and look for brown streaking in the sapwood. Be aware that Dutch elm disease can be confused with other disorders. If you suspect Dutch elm disease but would like a confirmation of the disease, a sample of the newly wilted branches can be submitted to the Plant Diagnostic Lab at NDSU (www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/diaglab/). Samples should be 1/2 to 3/4-inch in diameter, 5-10 inches long, and show internal discoloration.

If Dutch elm disease is identified early, there is a chance to remove it through pruning. Prune wilting branches, going at least 8 feet into symptomless (non-streaked) wood. Make sure to practice proper sanitization by cleaning shears in between cuts and disposing of cut branches either by burning or burying them. Pruning must be done during the dormant season (October through March). Trees should be closely monitored to ensure the disease was entirely removed. For more information, contact the Extension office at 701-524-2253 or alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu. Also, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/steelecountyextension.