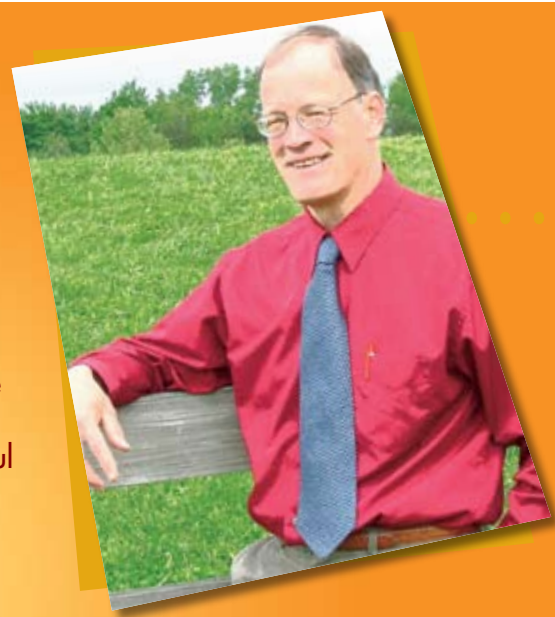


# The Challenges of Nature

**BY ANDY BAKER, FARM PARK ADMINISTRATOR**

My image of an ideal countryside is tinged by a rural New England childhood with its semi-open farm landscape of stone walls, large maples and elms along the roadsides. However, life is constantly changing and even then the beautiful, graceful elms were dying to Dutch elm disease and the remaining hillside pastures were growing up to shrubs and woodland. Twenty years ago Lake Metroparks began transforming Farmpark from a landscape of open fields and orchard to a mixed landscape of pastures, fields, gardens and tree-lined roads and livestock pens. For those that can remember back those 15 to 20 years, you can appreciate the changes as trees were planted and program areas developed.

However, nature has a way of always challenging us and the latest challenge is the emerald ash borer that has destroyed ash trees in much of Michigan and in parts of Ohio. We are anticipating the borer's invasion and are planting replacement trees near some of our ash trees. By the time the ash borer arrives we hope that our replacement trees will be established enough so that the impact on our landscape won't be as dramatic as the impact of the dying elms of my youth. In a little



bit of irony, the ash trees on our front drives are being replaced by the new American elms that are resistant to Dutch Elm disease and unaffected by the ash borer. So if you wonder why there are smaller trees planted next to some of our larger trees you are not seeing things and we are not crazy, but rather just trying to deal with nature's latest challenge.