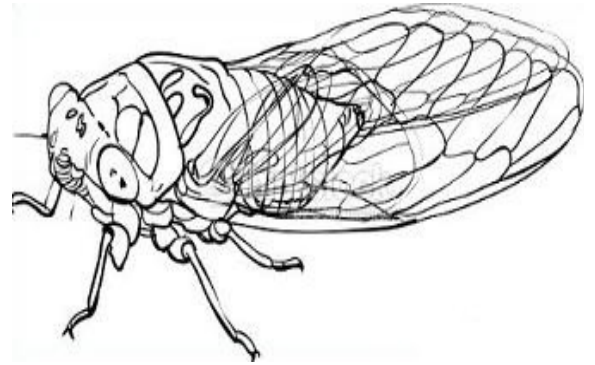


Cicada Guide

Identification

Cicadas are approximately 1-2 inches long, with large clear wings (nymph stage is wingless) and large reddish or black eyes set far apart.

The male cicadas give off a very loud shrill call that is very annoying and can be heard up to a ½ mile away! It is the rapid vibration of the tymbals on the sides of the abdomen that create the loud mating call.



There are annual and periodical cicadas. The annual cicadas complete a life cycle each year, while the periodical cicadas complete a life cycle in 13 or 17 year intervals. They have been documented so well, that their emergence can be predicted as to where and when they will emerge. The different broods are categorized, dated and mapped out across the Midwest and east coast when they are expected to emerge. North American Cicada Brood X, is the one identified for our Ohio area.

Life cycle

Adult female cicadas lay eggs in trees and shrubs at the outer end of small branches. Eggs will hatch between 40-60 days and develop into the nymph stage.

The nymphs drop to the ground and burrow 1 to 2 feet down and feed on nutrients from small roots of trees or shrubs. They will remain in this hibernation for 17 years for Brood X. Nymphs will mature and emerge from the soil when the soil temperature reaches 64 degrees. They will spend their time in trees and shrubs while they mature into adults.

The adults will live 4 to 6 weeks, mate, lay eggs then die. This is usually mid May thru June. Some may linger into July.

Cicada Diet

The adults will not harm mature trees and woody shrubs. They need the trees and shrubs for nutrients when they are in the nymph stage in the ground, where they are feeding on the small roots. You may notice some damage from them cutting slits in branches to lay their eggs, but they do not eat leaves. Young or newly planted trees and shrubs may be damaged from the attempted egg laying given they are smaller with fewer branches. You may see their discarded nymph exoskeletons attached to low growing plants, like annuals and perennials, but they won't harm them. For egg laying purposes, Cicadas seem to prefer oak, maple, willow and ash trees. You can apply netting to small trees and shrubs to help protect them, other than that, we just have to be patient until they leave.

Conclusion

Cicadas do not bite or sting and they are not poisonous. There are a few known insect predators, the Cicada Killer Wasp is one. It is a large yellow jacket that has the ability to sting and paralyze the cicadas and carry them off for consumption. Praying mantis, some spiders and robber flies will consume them too. Birds, wildlife, amphibians, and fish will also eat cicadas. Cats and dogs have been known to snack on them as well. But you may want to control their consumption to limit gastrointestinal problems.