

CICADAS 2024!!!

... It's going to be a buzz-fest!!

Between May and July 2024, the 17-year cicadas will return. After having spent time slowly developing underground, adult cicadas will emerge and begin their climb into trees and shrubs. Their presence will be unmistakable— expect a buzzing noise that rises to a thundering crescendo and recedes again.

This year, we will see an enormous number of cicadas, as two groups will be hatching at the same time. This has not occurred since the 1880's! Due to the enormous size of this year's brood, damage to woody plants is a greater concern than when smaller, annual broods arrive. Expect the cicadas to be around soon – and remain for about 4-6 weeks.

The adult cicadas do not have mouths, and therefore do not eat leaves. The damage primarily occurs when female cicadas lay their eggs by **creating slits in limbs ¼" -- ½ inch in diameter**. Frequently, foliage on these limbs will wilt and die. Generally, cicadas prefer oaks, maples, hawthorns, redbuds, and fruit trees—especially cherry and pear. Also any young tree is susceptible to damage since its limbs are usually the ideal egg-laying diameter. Larger, more mature trees typically sustain only minor damage from cicadas. but young trees can undergo significant damage if left unprotected. Additionally, cicadas avoid evergreens and do not damage flowers or vegetable plants, though you may see them perched on these plants.

Preventing Damage

To protect newly planted trees and those with small diameter branches, cover them with netting with openings of ½" or less, cheesecloth, or row-cover fabric (see photo - right). The material should be tied securely at the base. This will prevent cicadas from crawling up a tree's trunk when they emerge.

Small, damaged branches should be removed to keep eggs from hatching and reduce future populations. You may also want to delay planting new trees until adult cicadas are gone, usually by mid-July. Using insecticides to kill adult cicadas is not recommended since they will kill beneficial insects as well. These chemicals can also harm birds and other natural predators of cicadas. When cicada nymphs hatch from their eggs, they will drop to burrow in the ground where they will feed on the roots of their favorite trees (listed above). However, root damage is negligible since it occurs over such a long time frame. By taking adequate precautions, you can protect your trees from cicada damage. This brood won't be a threat again until 2041.



Information provided by the Edgebrook Community Association
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