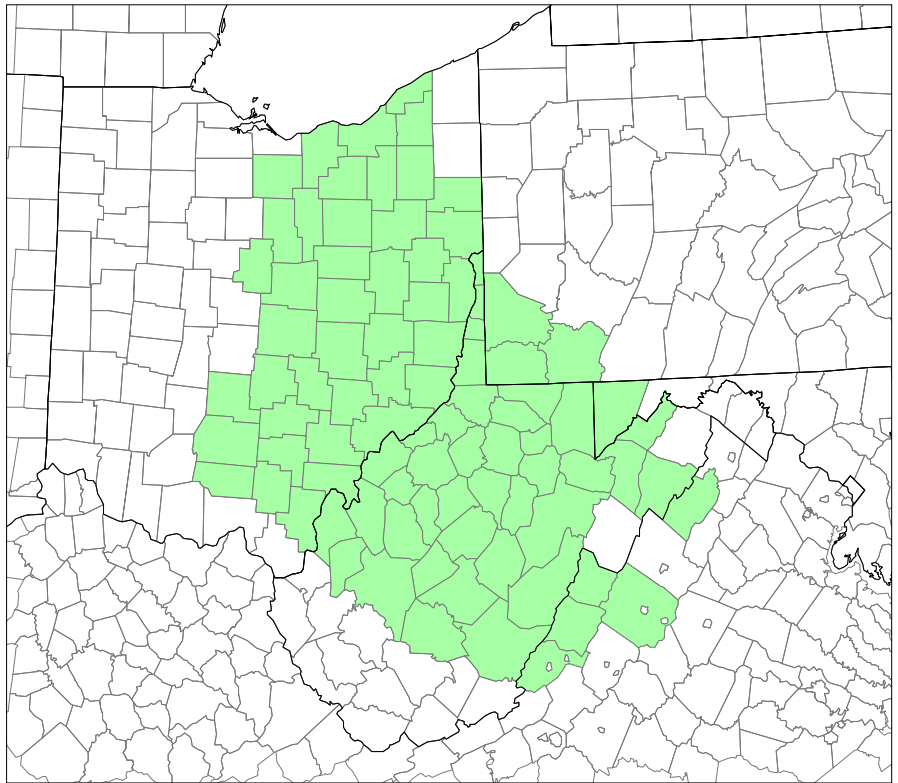


Periodical Cicada — Brood V

Three separate species of periodical cicadas, *Magicicada septendecim* (L.), *M. cassini* (Fisher), and *M. septendecula* (Alexander and Moore), will appear this spring over large portions of Ohio and West Virginia during the scheduled Brood V emergence. This brood is the largest that occurs in either state and was last seen in 1982. It will also emerge in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, the westernmost county of Maryland, and the northwest corner of Virginia.

Periodical cicadas are also called 17-year locusts because their life cycle takes 17 years to complete. This is a misnomer, because true locusts are grasshoppers, not cicadas. Based on year of adult emergence, cicadas are grouped into broods with each brood appearing during a different year. Due to staggered development, adults are emerging somewhere almost every year, and some areas may even have more than one emergence during a 17-year period.

Adult periodical cicadas have red eyes and dark bodies and measure a little over 1½ inches long. They are not capable of biting or stinging. Adults live about 4 to 6 weeks during which their sole purpose is to mate and lay eggs. Males are responsible for the droning noise as they call for mates. Cicada “songs” are heard from early morning to late evening as long as adults are present. Periodical cicadas should not be confused with annual (dog day) cicadas that are larger in size, mostly green with black eyes, and appear each summer in small numbers.



Cicada — Brood V expected emergence by county in 1999.



Adult Cicada



Cicada oviposition damage

Adult cicadas do not feed. Damage occurs when the female cicada cuts two parallel slits in small twigs where she lays 24 to 28 eggs. Sometimes a continuous slit 2 to 3 inches long is formed as she slowly makes her way up a twig. The slits cause “flagging”, or breakage, to the tips of the branches. The eggs hatch in 6 weeks, and young cicadas, or nymphs, fall to the ground where they burrow into the soil and spend the next 17 years feeding on small roots. At the end of this time, usually in May and early June, nymphs crawl out of the soil and climb up tree trunks or other vertical objects where they shed their nymphal skins and emerge as adults.



“Flagging” or breakage from slits



Emergence holes

To reduce cicada damage, it is recommended that homeowners prune ornamentals and trees lightly or not at all the winter before emergence. Damaged twigs may be pruned the following winter. Delaying new plantings of woody ornamentals and trees until fall or next spring will also avoid damage in heavily infested areas. Small shade and ornamental trees can be protected by covering them with cheesecloth, finely woven netting, or tobacco shade cloth. This physically prevents females from laying eggs in the twigs. Trees too large to cover may be sprayed with a contact insecticide. Contact your local extension agent or entomologist for insecticide recommendations and follow all label directions carefully. Chemical control is difficult during the peak of egg laying, because of the large number of cicadas present and relatively slow action of the pesticide.



Cast skins shed by adult

Deciduous trees (oak, apple, hickory, dogwood, etc.) are preferred hosts. However, other woody plants, such as grapevines, have also been damaged during an emergence year.

Photographs by Ohio Department of Natural Resources and West Virginia Department of Agriculture

For additional information, contact:



USDA Forest Service
180 Canfield Street
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 285-1541



WV Department of Agriculture
Plant Industries Division
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305-0191
304-558-2212



OH Department of
Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
1855 Fountain Square, H-1
Columbus, OH 43224-1327
614-265-7053