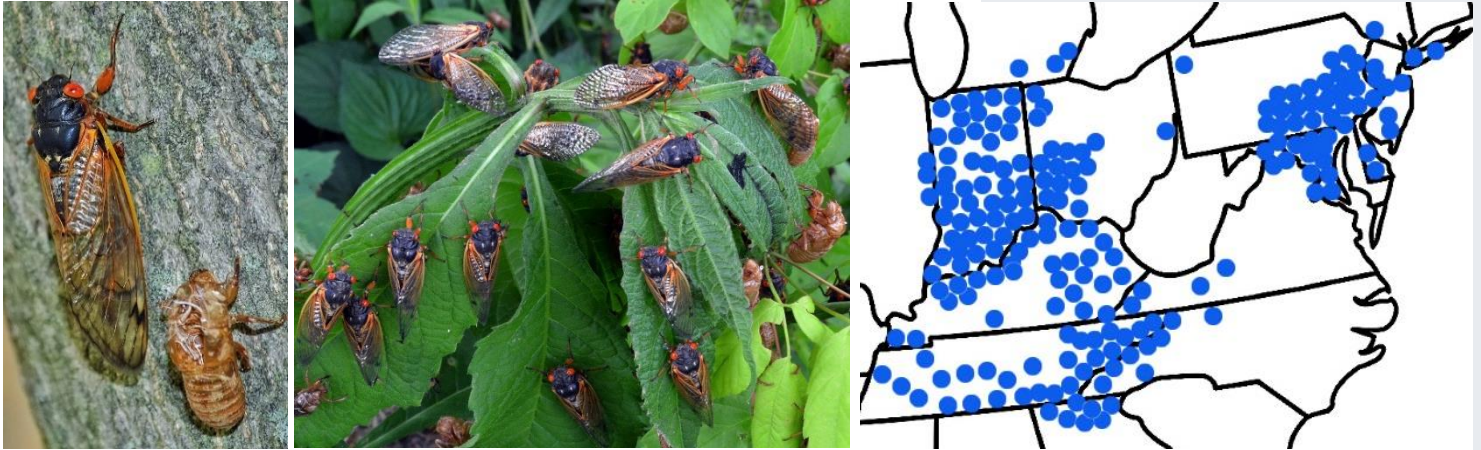


SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Look for it now in Southwest Ohio!

5/28/2021



Photos by Dr. Gene Kritsky, Mount Saint Joseph University, www.cicadasafari.org

Brood X Periodical Cicadas (*Magicalcica sp.*)

By Shannon Pennington

Cicada nymphs from Brood X (pronounced "brood ten") have started emerging from the ground, crawling to the trees, shedding their exoskeletons one last time, and becoming adults.

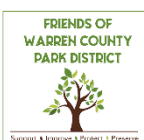
The adults will only be alive for a few weeks, and their only job is to reproduce. The males use special body parts called tymbals to make their very loud mating calls, while the females answer back by flicking their wings. Each of the females will lay approximately 500 eggs in tree branches, using their own special body part called an ovipositor. The eggs will hatch a few weeks later and the nymphs will fall to the ground, digging under the soil and starting the whole cycle over again, not to emerge for another 17 years!

While they are definitely loud, cicadas are harmless insects that provide several important ecological services. In addition to supplying native wildlife with an ample food source, cicadas aerate and fertilize the soil, and help naturally prune trees with a process called "flagging" which will lead to bumper crops of flowers and seeds next year!

To learn more about this species, visit our [YouTube channel](#) to watch a [fun video!](#)

FUN FACTS

- Brood X is also known as "the great eastern brood" and covers 15 states plus the District of Columbia
- Cicadas do not bite or sting
- Periodical cicadas are different than the annual cicadas that come out every summer because they emerge in huge numbers at once
- Periodical cicadas are smaller than annual cicadas and have red eyes
- Some people like to eat them. The best time to harvest them is when they are emerging from their nymphal exoskeletons; they apparently taste like canned asparagus
- Because the nymphs drink sap from tree roots, only places that have had trees for the past 17 years may have an emergence
- Although some people call them "locusts," cicadas are a completely different insect altogether!
- There are 14 other cicada broods in the US, emerging in different areas of the county at 13- or 17-year intervals, depending on the brood



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