

Cicadas are Coming

By: Wayne Jewell

"Cicadas are coming" is the title of an article published by David J. Shetlar, PHD, an extension entomologist with The Ohio State University. In it, he states that brood V of the periodical cicada will appear in our area in 2016. Periodical cicadas emerge every 17 years in our part of the country. Farther south, it is every 13 years that they emerge. It takes this long for the cicada to complete its life cycle as opposed to the annual cicada which completes its life cycle every 2-5 years with cycles of various broods overlapping which is why we hear annual cicadas every summer.

The periodical cicada emerges in vast numbers and can cause severe destruction to young trees and shrubs as they lay their eggs on branches from 1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter. Larger trees can withstand the damage caused by these insects but smaller trees and shrubs can be killed. The annual or "Dog Day Cicada" rarely causes much damage to plants and is usually most noticeable in late July in to August as they sing their mating song. The Periodical cicada which (as a kid we referred to as the 17 year locust) is most noticeable in late May through June as they give off their loud deafening sound of vibrating wings. By the way, a true locust is actually a grass hopper as stated in his article by Dr. Shetlar.

I did the math and since I was born in 1953, the periodical cicada has made its appearance in this area in 1965, 1982, 1999 and will be here again in 2016. I really did not notice them as much in 1982 or 1999 as I did in 1965. The summer of that year while I was 11 years old, I spent much of my time out in the fields and woods and it seemed like they were everywhere !

The periodical cicada is about an inch long and has orange eyes with orange coloration in its wings while the annual cicada is larger and appears more green and black in coloration.

Dr. Shetlar does not recommend blanketing your landscape with insecticide to control these insects. However, should you have some small trees or shrubs that may be vulnerable to destruction from the egg laying, you can spray them with a product such as Sevin for control at label recommended rates. If you are planning any new tree or shrub installations during 2016, it is suggested that you wait until Fall of that year to do so.