

Cicadas are coming...

Brood V, the seventeen year cicada invasion will be starting when the soil warms to 64 degrees. Their scientific name is "Magicicada". In previous emergences, Brood V cicadas have appeared only in the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania. Counties: Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland.

These are not "locusts "or "grasshoppers", they will not eat every plant in your landscape. They will not descend like a biblical plague, your lawn and garden are not in danger of being eaten!!!

New trees and shrubs should be protected. The cicadas may feed on shrubs, but not to any extent that would harm them. But, the females will lay their eggs on branches of young trees, especially fruit trees. They prefer branches the diameter of a pencil.

The best protection is “remay”, spun polyester row covers, or even sheer curtains.

Do not spray pesticides, which will not reduce their numbers, but will poison birds and other predators looking forward to this feast.

The cicadas will emerge at sunset, almost pure white, climbing on a shrub or tree or any structure available, and then split their shell open. A giant red-eyed bug will emerge from the exoskeleton, after a few days will take flight. The males will sing their songs attracting the females to mate, and then lay their eggs on trees and shrubs. The eggs will hatch quickly and fall to the ground to burrow in the soil, feeding “gently” on plant roots. They will not emerge for another seventeen years.

Once the cicadas hatch the trees may be full of singing cicadas for the next month or so. Enjoy the show and protect those young trees.

In early May, they'll climb and fly awkwardly onto every available shrub and tree. The males will begin their deafening, incessant buzz, as they attempt to attract mates.

- Daddy long legs snacks on fallen cicada

Millions, maybe billions, of the insects may swarm some areas, although some recent swarms have been

disappointing in some parts of their former ranges, including Brood II in Central Pennsylvania in 2013. Some experts believe the enormous amount of paving and widespread use of lawn chemicals have played havoc with some cicada populations.

Those adults that do emerge this time around – Brood V – will be with us for four to six weeks, just long enough for the females that survive the barrage of predators, windshields and the like to be bred and lay their eggs.

Females will lay fertilized eggs in slits they cut with their ovipositor in small live twigs, as many as 400 per female across several sites.

The eggs will hatch in about six weeks and the nymphs will drop to the ground, where they will burrow down 6-18 inches. They will remain there, sucking juices from plant roots, for the next 17 years.

