

# Cicadas

## TREE DOCTOR TIPS

### Cicadas (Cicadidea)

#### WHAT ARE CICADAS?

Cicadas are insects of the Cicadidea family and are characterized by their stout bodies, broad heads, clear-membraned wings and large compound eyes. There are currently more than 3,000 species of cicadas, which are distinguished by two categories: annual cicadas, which are spotted every year, and periodical cicadas, which spend most of their lives underground and only emerge once every decade or two. Periodical cicadas have red eyes, orange wings and green bodies, compared with the annual dog-day cicadas, which have black eyes and brownish bodies.

#### WHY ARE CICADAS A PROBLEM?

Cicadas actually don't eat tree leaves or branches. Instead, they create slits in tree branches to lay their eggs. Those splits weaken the tree over time, and later, you could see those branches breaking, withering or dying. Once the cicada eggs hatch, they attach themselves to the roots of the tree, where literally hundreds or thousands of cicadas feed on tree roots for either 2 or 3 years—or up to 17.

Cicadas prefer to lay eggs on branches that are 0.25" to 0.5" round. They prefer trees such as oak, maple, hawthorn, redbud and fruit trees (especially cherry and pear) and young trees since these branches are the perfect diameter.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROTECT YOUR TREES?

Cicadas favor young trees, so if you've recently planted a new tree or have one of the trees mentioned above,

you can protect it from cicada damage by wrapping susceptible branches with mesh netting. Generally, mature trees can sustain the minor damage from cicadas. But, young trees can be hit harder. Consult your local arborist for more information on tree protection from cicadas.



FIGURE A. PERIODICAL CICADA

FIGURE B. ANNUAL, DOG-DAY CICADA

*The scientists at **The Davey Institute** laboratory and research facility support our arborists and technicians in diagnosing and prescribing based on the latest arboricultural science. For specific treatment and application details, your arborist may consult **The Davey Institute's Plant Health Care Book**.*

