



## Cicada Control

Between April and June 2024, the 17-year cicadas will return. After having spent time slowly developing underground, adult cicadas will emerge and begin their climb into trees and shrubs. Their presence will be unmistakable—a cycle of buzzing noise that rises to a thundering crescendo and recedes again.

Due to the enormous size of this cicada brood, damage to woody plants is a greater concern than when smaller, annual broods arrive. Damage primarily occurs when female cicadas lay their eggs by creating slits in limbs  $\frac{1}{4}$ " –  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch round. Frequently, foliage on these limbs will wilt and die.



According to Davey Tree, cicadas prefer oaks, maples, hawthorns, redbuds, and fruit trees—especially cherry and pear. Yet any young tree is susceptible to damage since its limbs are usually the ideal egg-laying diameter.

Larger, more mature trees typically sustain only minor damage from cicadas. But young trees can undergo significant damage if left unprotected.

Additionally, cicadas avoid evergreens and do not damage flowers or vegetable plants, though you may see them perched on these plants.

### **Preventing Damage**

To protect newly planted trees and those with small diameter branches, cover them with netting with openings of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or less, cheesecloth, or row-cover fabric. The material should be tied securely at the base. This will prevent cicadas from crawling up a tree's trunk when they emerge.



*Cicada damage from egg laying*

Small, damaged branches should be removed to keep eggs from hatching and reduce future populations. You may also want to delay planting new trees until adult cicadas are gone, usually by mid-July.

Using insecticides to kill adult cicadas is not recommended since they will kill beneficial insects as well. These chemicals can also harm birds and other natural predators of cicadas.

When cicada nymphs hatch and drop to burrow in the ground, they will feed on the roots of their favorite trees (listed above). Yet root damage is considered negligible since it occurs over such a long time frame.

By taking adequate precautions, you can protect your trees from cicada damage. This brood won't be a threat again until 2041.