

Pest Profile



Photo credit: By Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Cicada Killer

Scientific Name: *Sphecius speciosus* (Drury)

Order and Family: Hymenoptera: Sphecidae

Size and Appearance: Cicada Killers get their common name from the fact that they hunt and paralyze a cicada as a provision source for their young. Adults are quite large at 25-40 mm in length, black in color with yellow markings on the first 3 abdominal segments. It is also common for the wings, legs, and top of the head to be a yellowish-orange hue. The pronotum is collar-like and the abdomen slender.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	1 mm	1 egg is laid per burrow dug out by the female.
Larva/Nymph	10-27 in length depending on instar and species	White, cylindrical. Feeds on cicada paralyzed by female and deposited in burrow.
Adult	12-25+ mm long	Large, black, yellow markings on first 3 abdominal segments, orange color on wings, head, and feet. Collar-like pronotum, and slender abdomen.
Pupa (if applicable)	10-25 mm long	Larva spins silken cocoon and overwinters inside, not pupating until the following spring. Emerges from burrow in summer.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host /s: The female *S. speciosus* paralyzes cicadas, laying an egg on each one to support developing young.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): This species does a positive service by helping to control the cicada population; they are solitary and tend not to readily sting. However, if they are close to a home, removal is warranted. Stings can cause severe allergic reaction in certain individuals.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Bees, Hornets, and Wasps-Cicada Killers. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (2.8.1). National Pest Management Association International.

Vail, K.M., Williams, H.E., Yanes, J. (April 1999). *Mud Daubers and Cicada Killers*. University of Tennessee, Agricultural Extension Service. Retrieved on August 1st, 2016 from:
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