Pest Profile

Photo credit: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Common Name: Periodical cicada, 17-year locusts

Scientific Name: *Magicicada septendecim* (Linnaeus)

Order and Family: Hemiptera, Cicadidae

Size and Appearance: This species of cicada goes through a 17-year life cycle. The nymphs live underground, feeding and growing for 17 years, then emerge in large numbers to breed and start the cycle again. When the nymphs emerge, they find a tree to climb and shed their skin. The different broods that occur every 17 years are given specific Roman numeral designations. Males sing using a special organ to produce a loud noise that attracts the females to mate.

	Length (mm)	**Appearance**
Egg		Eggs rice like in appearance. The eggs are laid in branches of trees in slits, where they hatch and drop to the ground. They burrow into the ground, where they remain for the rest of their nymphal life.
Larva/Nymph		Tan or brownish in color, no wings, front legs modified for burrowing and clinging on tree. Nymphs undergo five instar stages, growing slowly for 17 years. Most of the life cycle is spent underground until it emerges and molts to an adult to mate.
Adult	27-30mm, wingspan 76mm	Adults have black bodies, red eyes, and membranous reddish orange wings. Can crawl and fly; short antennae; 3 ocelli; males sing loud choruses, females don't sing.
Pupa (if applicable)		

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Nymphs and Adults: Piercing-sucking

Host plant/s: They feed on a wide variety of deciduous trees and roots of trees.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): As nymphs, the periodical cicadas suck juices and nutrients from roots of trees. The adults can feed on juices from twigs. The nymphs go through instars and they molt, which allows them to grow. As they get bigger, the cicadas go deeper into the ground and survive

off of bigger roots. When the females lay eggs, they use their sawlike ovipositor to make a V-shaped cut into young branches. Heavy egg laying on a young branch can cause the branch to die. Twigs that are damaged from egg laying can fall off. Nymph and adult feeding is of little concern; it is the egg laying that can damage trees.

References:

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