



# WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Shade Tree Commission

### Periodical Cicada and Tree Damage

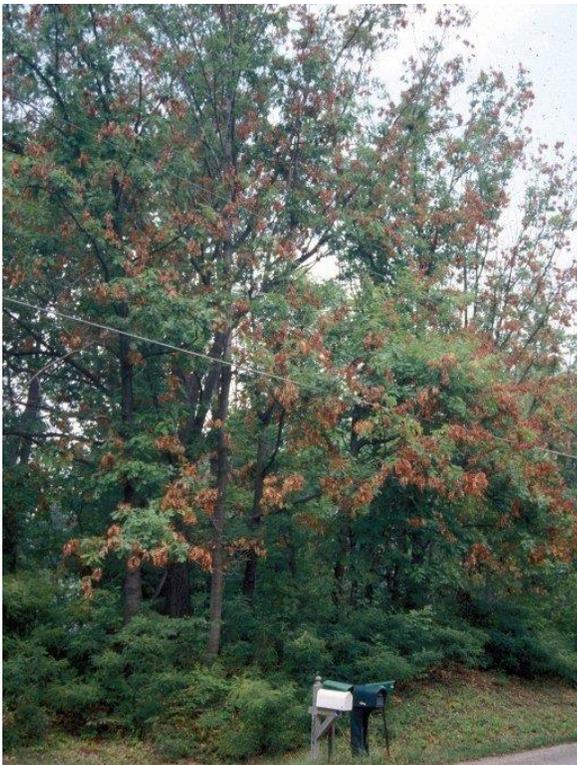
Periodical cicadas (*Magicicada species*) are native to the eastern United States and occur nowhere else in the world. These fascinating insects emerge in enormous "broods" (or 13 to 17-year life cycles) that are one of nature's great wonders - but can also be a cause for concern for some people.

Cicadas do not bite people and, in general, are at most a mild nuisance because of the noise they produce. However, young trees can sometimes be damaged or killed, but this can usually be avoided by delaying tree transplant based upon the anticipated year of Cicada emergence.



### Damage to trees

Female cicadas cut slits into twigs and stems of woody plants into which they oviposit (lay eggs). They prefer stems that are 3/16" to 7/16" in diameter. The slits the females create can appear as short punctures or extend up to 2–3 inches. While annual cicada oviposition does not usually damage trees, periodical cicadas emerge in such high numbers that they can collectively cause heavy damage that results in twig and stem dieback (see below). Large, otherwise healthy trees can withstand this damage without long-term consequences, although they may be aesthetically unpleasing for a time. However, small trees that have a majority of the branches within the cicadas' preferred size range can be severely affected and sometimes be killed. This is especially true of small, stressed trees, such as those that have been recently transplanted or are balled and burlapped in preparation for sale or transplantation. If possible, transplanting trees should be avoided the fall and spring before a periodical cicada emergence.



Deciduous trees are preferred hosts, especially oaks, maples, apples, and other trees that often have twigs of the appropriate size, although cicadas are not too picky and have been recorded to oviposit in more than 80 different species. Periodical cicadas do not usually deposit eggs in coniferous trees, although coniferous hosts are not totally unknown.

Source: (Penn State University, Extension Services) <https://extension.psu.edu/periodical-cicada>

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