

Cicada



GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST
ECO-SERVICE CARDS

CICADA

FAMILY: Cicadidae

ORDER: Homoptera (means "same" wings)

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ large, 1 - 2 1/2 inches
- ◆ black body and head marked with white and green
- ◆ large, veined, transparent wings; wings longer than the body
- ◆ very sturdy legs
- ◆ loud call of adult males on summer evenings



Where to Look

Forests and woodlands in trees (adults) or underground near the roots (nymphs). You often find the shell (cast skin) of nymphs attached to tree trunks.

What It Eats.

Root juices, sap from trees, shrubs and vines. It has a very long sucking proboscis for tapping into roots and branches.



Life Cycle INCOMPLETE METAMORPHOSIS

Eggs are laid on trees. Nymphs hatch and fall to the ground where they burrow in and feed on roots. When mature, they leave the soil and climb up trees to shed and become adults.

Who Eats It?

Cicada killers (a type of wasp) and other predatory insects, birds and small mammals.



Did You Know

Some Cicada species go through the life cycle in 1 - 3 years. Other species may take up to 17 years to complete the nymph stage and emerge as adults. The 13- and 17- year species have local populations that emerge altogether creating large swarms.

Role in the Ecosystem

Important part of the food chain for many species.