

Pest aside

17-year invaders call it quits early

By Stanley Rachesky

Entomologist— University of Illinois

THE 17-YEAR periodical cicada phenomena has rapidly come to an end. In some areas of Chicago and suburbs, cicada nymphs emerged at the rate of 10 nymphs a square foot. In other areas, where emergences were predicted to be high, very few or no cicadas were seen.

Much cicada damage to the trees may be seen in many communities. The tips of the limbs have turned brown. A single female may have laid 400-600 eggs, depositing 12-20 in each puncture she made beneath the bark of the tree limb tips.

The eggs are now developing and should be hatching in a few weeks. They usually take six to seven weeks to develop. Soon, tiny cicada nymphs will be dropping to the ground, entering the soil and attaching themselves to the roots of trees and shrubs. There, the Rip van Winkle of the insect world will stay for the next 17 years.

APHIDS ARE NOW appearing on many trees and shrubs in northern Illinois. Homeowners should check their tulips, willows, sycamores, maples, poplars, honeysuckles, roses, and other plants found on their property. These little trouble-

makers appear in shades of red, black, yellow, or green. They suck the sap from plants and may cause leaves to curl up and eventually dry out.

Aphids secrete a sugary, sticky material called "honeydew" that is easily noticed on the plant leaves. It causes the leaves to shine or glisten. A black mold may grow on the honeydew. This mold will not harm your tree or shrub.

Ants love the sugary secretions of the aphids. So, if you see large numbers of ants crawling on your plants, check for honeydew deposits. Then, by looking a little closer, you'll discover the culprits—aphids.

Aphids may be controlled by spraying with malathion or diazinon. Follow label directions for application rates.

LACE BUGS ARE appearing on sycamore trees. These trees really have their problems. If it isn't insects, it's disease [sycamore anthracnose]. Lace bugs are small, usually whitish insects and can easily be recognized by the sculptured lace-like patterns on the upper surface of its body.

Check the leaves of your sycamore tree for yellow spotting. As the lace bug continues to feed, the leaf becomes brown and falls off. If you think control is necessary, you may apply a spray of Sevin or malathion.

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POISON IVY

by Stanley Rachesky

Entomologist, University of Illinois

In the past few weeks, our office has received numerous requests for information on the control of poison ivy. The first step in poison ivy control, of course, is proper identification. Sometimes proper identification can be a problem because the plant can assume many different appearances.

Poison ivy may vine on fences, walls or trees, or it may spread along the ground, or even may appear as an erect shrub. Each leaf is made up of three leaflets. These leaflets may be either glossy or dull green, and may have smooth, toothed or lobed edges. Variations can even occur on the same plant. Keep this in mind when trying to identify poison ivy. (1) Each leaf is made up of 3 leaflets. (2) Each leaf is 2-4 inches long. (3) The edges of the leaflets may be smooth, toothed or lobed. (4) White flowers may occur on some plants during the summer. (5) The plant may grow as a shrub, vine, or along the ground.

Modern weed killing chemicals (herbicides) offer the easiest and safest method of controlling poison ivy.

Amitrole-T provides particularly effective control of poison ivy. It is available under such trade names as: Amino Triazole, Weedazol, and Poison Ivy Killer.

Aerosol cans containing amitrole are available and are convenient for killing small patches. Purchase the concentrate, dilute it with water and apply it with a small compressed air sprayer for larger areas. Spray the poison ivy plants until they are thoroughly wet. Do not let the amitrole contact desirable plants. Where this danger exists, amitrole should be applied to ivy leaves with a long-handled brush. In all cases, directions on the label of the container should be read and followed.

Apparently, there is no absolute immunity to poison ivy infection, although some people are more susceptible than other. People who do consider themselves immune may become more susceptible after sufficient exposure. Clothing, garden tools, and pets can become contaminated and can serve as sources of the irritant. Smoke from burning poison ivy may also carry the toxin.

ANTI-POLLUTION TREE BELTS

Japan—While devices to reduce the amount of pollutants have been and still continue to be important, more far-reaching overall programs are needed, according to **Nippon Steel News**.

Under the supervision of the noted ecologist Dr. Akira Miyawaki of Yokohama National University, studies were conducted on plant life around the 11 Nippon Steel plants. The findings will serve as a basis for re-creating an environment of plants and other natural forms of life indigenous to each particular area. This will go far beyond the planting of grass, flowers, and saplings to create man-made gardens. Under Professor Miyawaki's concept, the best form of plant life around steel works (and other industries) is plant life indigenous to the locale, since such species as survive are those able to adapt to the area.

It was found that many forms of plant life—trees in particular—while affected by pollutants also serve the function of helping halt the spread of pollutants in the atmosphere by catching polluted matter as it falls. Rain washes the matter off the leaves and returns it to the earth.

Dr. Miyawaki points out that such trees also provide valuable oxygen, and that trees in an area covering 1 hectare (2.5 acres) are capable of returning to the earth from 70 to 100 metric tons of dust and contamination particles a year. If the trees wither, it would indicate that contamination is exceeding reasonable limits and would serve as a warning of the need for remedial action.

Tree belts are also useful as fire corridors, a refuge in the event of a major earthquake, and in absorbing noise and breaking wind.

Plans are to plant belts of trees around all of Nippon Steel's plants, as well as bushes and grass within the compounds. The first to have such a belt is the new Oita works. A green belt 50 m (164 ft.) wide and 5 km (3 mi) long is now being planted.

The height of the trees in the belt will vary, some ranging to 20 or 30 m (65 to 98 ft). Under present plans the trees will be planted fairly close together, and when they have grown to a certain height some will be removed to make room for younger trees, so that ultimately trees of varying heights and species will provide a thick cover.

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Rotting Logs

Roland F. Eisenbeis
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Trees are like people. They die from diseases, infections, injuries, burns, drowning, malnutrition, and sometimes just plain old age. Walking thru the woods we see, here and there, dead or dying trees of various kinds. For example: a big white oak, with its bark ripped from crown to root, was literally cooked by a bolt of lightning during a summer thunderstorm. In a grove of black oaks, many are dying lingering deaths from infected wounds started years ago when an autumn fire swept thru the fallen leaves and scorched the living wood. In a dense forest there are many that have lost the battle for space and sunlight. In some places we see trees that are slowly starving because dashing rains have carried away the fertile topsoil and the trampling feet of picnickers have injured the shallow roots that bring them food.

In our forest preserve picnic areas, for public safety, we remove dead trees but elsewhere we let them stand until they fall and then rot where they lie. A lot of people think that is both untidy and wasteful but there is an important reason for it. In order to restore or maintain a healthy natural woodland and all of the wheels within wheels of the living machinery that makes it tick, those slowly decaying trunks, branches and twigs are vitally necessary. It would be a strange forest without them.

A forest is more than trees. The trees are the framework but around them is woven an unbelievable complex fabric of life: squirrels, mice, birds, bees, beetles, worms, wildflowers, weeds, mushrooms and many, many more. Over a period of years a slowly enlarging hole in a standing dead snag, for instance, may be occupied in turn by a fungus, a boring beetle, a colony of carpenter ants, a woodpecker, a deer mouse, a squirrel, a screech owl, and a racoon. The dead roots, the loosening bark and the softening trunk also shelter or feed a host of other wood colonists. The roots gradually weaken until one day, in a gust of wind, the snag crashes to the ground where the final act of the drama takes place.

Some fallen trees rot much more rapidly than others, depending upon the kind of tree and whether or not it lies in contact with damp soil. Bacteria and the root-like threads of fungi — whose fruits are mushrooms — spread inward thru pores and crevices in the dead wood, eating away some of it and leaving the remainder soft. The mushroom growths on the outside of the rotting log may include several sizes, shapes and colors: bracket types, puffballs, parasols, and some resembling a turkey gobbler's tail, oyster shells, or crusts.

There is little hint of the wealth of small animal life within until you pull off a big piece of loose bark. Ants, centipedes, millipedes, daddy-long-legs and beetles scurry away. On the exposed wood are artistic patterns made by the engraver beetle. A fiery red mite may creep under a shred of bark. Soon there is left no visible sign of life except tunnels into the softened wood and perhaps a silk-covered ball of spider eggs hidden in a crack.

Now roll the log over. On the moist underside there are likely to be sow bugs, slugs, snails, earthworms, spiders, crickets, firefly larvae and various beetles. There may be a salamander or two, a toad, a harmless snake, and a mouse's nest with her store of seeds.

At this season all of these creatures are in their winter sleep, so be sure to roll the log back in place. Living and dying, generation after generation of them convert that wood back into soil and humus which a healthy forest must have.

There is drama and treasure in a rotting log.

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Guest Editorials

ANTIPOLLUTION DEVICE
(Augusta, Ga., Chronicle)

When you survey the possible means of replacing pollution with cleaner, fresher air, don't overlook trees.

This is true of forests being grown for cutting, and renewed systematically.

That's right, trees. According to Jack Davis, Canada's minister of fisheries and forests, woodlands can be one of the best antipollution devices. Each acre of young, vigorous forest area, he says, produces not only four tons of wood per year, but also takes in 12 tons of carbon dioxide and turns out four tons of oxygen.

It is not true of old, declining trees in wilderness areas. As trees become overmature and begin to decay, intake of carbon dioxide declines. Rot means oxidation, so trees take more oxygen from the air.

This has significance for Georgia and South Carolina, with their well-managed, young and vigorous commercial woodlands. In addition to the benefit of the economy, of stabilization of water runoff, to better wildlife habitat and to recreation. They also can help restore the clean air which in recent years has been threatened by air pollution.

"The Government is my shepherd, I need not work. It allows me to lie down on good jobs, it destroyeth my initiative, it leadeth me in the paths of the parasite for politic's sake. Yea, though I walk thru the valley of laziness and deficit spending, I will fear no evil; for the Government is with me; its doles and its vote-getters they comfort me. It prepareth an economic utopia for us by appropriating the earnings of my grandchildren. It filleth my head with bologna; my inefficiency runneth over. Surely the government shall care for me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in fool's paradise forever."