



Buzzy Bugs



Cicadas are the loudest insects on earth! Their buzz can reach over 100 decibels—that’s like standing beside a revving chainsaw!

Most male cicadas make a loud mating call by flexing a drum-like organ called a tymbal (TIM-bel). This causes their muscles to vibrate 300–400 times per second, producing the loud buzz. If a female likes the male’s song, she responds by making a clicking noise with her wings.

Female cicadas carve holes in tree branches and shrubs to lay 400 or more eggs inside. When the babies, called nymphs (nimfs), hatch, they fall to the earth and burrow underground where they survive by drinking the sap from tree roots.

Depending on the cicada species, the nymphs may wait underground for 2–17 years. When it’s time to come out, they climb a tree and molt (shed) their exoskeleton to transform into adult cicadas.

Insects were created around 6,000 years ago during creation week. After the flood, insects quickly multiplied throughout the earth. Now, there are more than 3,000 species of cicadas.

Scientists divide cicada species into two groups: annual cicadas and periodical (pir-ee-AHD-i-kel) cicadas. Annual cicadas emerge in the summer.

Periodical cicadas only emerge every 13 or 17 years, depending on the species and the brood (group). After a brood emerges, they spend around four weeks above the ground, morphing to adults, making noise, and laying eggs. Then the adults die, and the brood cycle starts over.

The next time you hear a cicada buzz, make your own “joyful noise” to glorify the Creator too (Psalm 100:1)!



I’m **Peter Schriemer!**
As a wildlife educator and TV host, I get excited about tracking down God’s creatures! Join my adventures on my Answers TV show *Hike & Seek*.

+ w Cross rd

Use what you learned about cicadas to solve this crossword!

Across

- 4. Where cicadas molt
- 6. Where a cicada waits for years
- 8. Where a male's sound comes from
- 10. Food for baby cicadas

Down

- 1. Cicadas shed, or _____, their exoskeleton
- 2. Sound made by female's wings
- 3. Group of cicadas that emerges every 13 or 17 years
- 5. Cicadas live above ground for about _____ weeks
- 7. A baby cicada
- 9. Sound a male cicada makes



Fun Facts

- » There are 12 broods of 17-year cicadas and 3 broods of 13-year cicadas.
- » Cicadas don't bite or sting. If a cicada lands on you, just enjoy inspecting it before it flies away!
- » Periodical cicadas are grouped into 15 different broods only found in the central and eastern United States.
- » In 2024, brood XIX (19) on the 13-year cycle and brood XIII (13) on the 17-year cycle will both come out. These broods haven't emerged together since Thomas Jefferson was president in 1803!
- » Not every periodical cicada brood emerges together, since the 13- and 17-year cycles fall on different years.



ANSWERS—
ACROSS
4. TREES
10. MOLT
DOWN
1. MOLT
2. CLICKING
3. PERIODICAL
5. FOUR
7. NYMPH
9. BUZZ
10. SAP
8. TUMBAL
6. UNDERGROUND
2. CLICKING
3. PERIODICAL
5. FOUR
7. NYMPH
9. BUZZ