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The cold spell has pushed the cicada arrival back, but the Brood X billions will emerge soon locally as soil temperatures rise.

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The 17-year cicadas emerge en masse when ground temperatures reach 64 degrees, and often after a soaking rain.

“I suspect we will see them early next week. Once they start coming out they will be around for about six weeks,” said Gene Kritsky, one of the world’s leading experts in cicadas and dean of behavioral and natural sciences for Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati.

Trillions of the periodical cicadas will emerge in parts of 15 states, including Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, New Jersey and Maryland. Some areas will get more than others, but the entire region is expected to see them.

“Miamisburg and Dayton have historical records that the cicadas have been emerging in those areas since 1558 and 1885 respectively and still to this upcoming year,” Kraitsky said.



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GET STARTED

Mental health professionals say anxiety about the arrival of cicadas this month is common, due in part because the insects are noisy, perhaps a misperception that they cause damage and due to the rarity of the emergence.

However, Kraitsky says he hopes people embrace the red-eyed bug that's a klutzy flyer.

“This is a once in a generation event,” he said. “People will remember this for years.”

He recommends people get the smartphone mapping app CicadaSafari, which he helped to develop, to get to know the cicada.

Chelse Prather, who teaches ecology and biology at the University of Dayton, said Miami Valley residents should view cicadas as a natural phenomenon.



“These insects are some of the longest lived insects that there are, and it’s also the greatest insect emergence on Earth,” she said. “I hope people can be excited about it and marvel in how cool it actually is that we get to live in a place where we get to witness this.”

Cicadas do not bite or sting people or animals and they do not carry diseases.

“I’ve held cicadas, literally hundreds of them, and they won’t even try to hurt you,” said Mike Wedding, an entomologist for Scherzinger Pest Control.

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However, they are very loud. Cicadas can be heard up to a half mile away. To determine a cicada’s sex, turn it over. The male has a long, thin horn and the female has a groove.

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To prevent a female cicada from laying eggs, wrap the branches with cheesecloth. Pesticides are not effective at controlling periodical cicadas, which are not pests and do not need to be killed.

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After molting and drying their wings, the cicadas will mate, lay eggs and die.

Underground, the developing cicadas, called nymphs, live on tree sap from tiny roots. They are beneficial to the ecology by aerating the soil when they emerge, and the large number of adult cicadas is an all-you-can-eat buffet for insect-eating birds and other animals.

The 17-year life cycle is thought to have evolved in response to the Ice Age.