



**For Immediate Release:** 04.18.07

From: David Powers  
Communications Director  
708.358.5781

Contact: Jim Semelka  
Forestry Superintendent  
708.358.5700

### **Cicadas to return this spring**

Oak Parkers are about to have several hundred thousand new neighbors – at least for six weeks. The *periodic* cicadas are expected to be back in late May, and the northern Illinois brood has a reputation for being one the largest emergence of the noisy insect known anywhere.

Periodic cicadas – often called the 17-year locusts – pose no real threat to humans. They aren't vegetation-destroying locusts, they don't bite or sting and they don't carry any diseases transmittable to humans.

The cicadas may look like a tasty treat to pets, however. While in small numbers they won't hurt animals that eat them, eating too many could lead to digestion problems.

As for lawns, cicadas may give away their pending emergence by building thousands of soil chimneys or stovepipes on the ground, especially near mature trees. They emerge through these structures from underground and crawl up trees and shrubs to shed their outer shell and begin their noisy mating ritual.

Mature trees will not be harmed by the cicada life cycle. However, small transplanted trees – particularly fruit trees –could sustain some damage as the female cicadas cut tiny slits into the branches for their eggs. A good way to protect small trees from serious damage is to cover the trunk and even the crown with screening or other material.

For more information on cicadas, or to report a damaged parkway tree, contact the Forestry Division at 358.5700 or e-mail [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

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