

The Cicada-Obsessed Prepare to Scratch a 17-Year Itch

BY MIKE OLSON 04.09.13

6:30 AM



Dan Mozgai at the Staten Island Museum, which houses a collection of about 35,000 cicadas.
Photo: Landon Nordeman

The plague of cicadas is what made the wedding memorable. Maybe not for the bride and groom, but for at least one of the guests the horde of chirping orange-and-black insects that descended on the 1996 ceremony was a life-changer. Dan Mozgai, an Internet marketer, could barely process what he saw. “All of these creatures were crawling around and singing,” he says. “My response was what a lot of people did back in 1996: I made a website.”

This spring Mozgai is finally getting some closure. Brood II, as entomologists call the specific swarm of cicadas he encountered, is set to reemerge after 17 years of living underground. It’s a moment Mozgai’s website, Cicada Mania, has been preparing for. The bugs will swarm the eastern seaboard from New York to North Carolina, turning up by the billions in a slow-motion mating ritual that guarantees no number of hungry birds (or twisted suburban kids) will be able to threaten the species’ survival. Mozgai’s website will be the de facto command center, offering a forum where photos and videos from like-minded *Magicalicada* aficionados will document the arrival of the winged insects.

After nearly two decades of feeding on tree roots, Brood II cicadas will disinter themselves, anchor to a branch, molt, sing, mate, and die. The next generation will then make its way underground, biding its time until 2030. Mozgai, however, won’t have to wait that long. Brood III will be turning up in Iowa sometime next year.

This article can be found at <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2013/04/obsessed-the-17-year-itch/>.