

Chirp, Chirp, Chirp, Chirp



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Field crickets are never a problem, right? They eat almost anything. They reproduce easily. Have you ever had one in your house, couldn't find it, and had to live with it for days on end?

These crickets usually stay in the field. Occasionally, they can damage cultivated crops when their populations are high. When the food stocks decline, such as just after harvest, they move about in search of something to eat. They will sometimes chew on fabrics, more so if the fabric is dirty. When hungry enough, they can damage wood, leather goods, some plastics and even rubber. Invariably, many invade our homes to satiate their hunger.

Crickets lay their eggs in the soil. Once they hatch, cricket nymphs dig themselves out of the ground. After emerging, they will feed and subsequently molt as many as ten times during a three-month period before they make their final molt to becoming adults.

There are usually several species in any given location. One will overwinter as nymphs with the adults being present in spring and early summer. Others overwinter as eggs with the adults present in summer and fall.

Some years, field crickets can reach very large populations during August and September. Factors that may cause these outbreaks include good sites to lay their eggs, plenty of food, plenty of vegetation for shelter, along with a scarcity of

parasites and predators. It is when these outbreaks occur that field crickets cause the most headaches for farmers and homeowners.

So how can you keep field crickets out of your home? They are attracted to the lights around our homes. Eliminating those lights or placing outdoor lights where they shine on your home rather than from it can help.

Crickets normally spend the day hiding in dark, damp areas. Remove piles of bricks, stones, wood, or other debris along with weeds and dense vegetation from around the home's foundation to help reduce numbers. Caulking, weather stripping, and making sure all screens and doors are tight fitting will also help limit cricket access to your home.

Spraying insecticides outside around the home's foundation and other areas that might harbor crickets in the day will help prevent crickets from moving into a building.

While adult crickets can be difficult to control, there are a number of insecticides that are effective. Inside homes or buildings, ready-to-use sprays or aerosols applied to baseboards, door thresholds, and cracks and crevices where crickets hide will usually kill them.

However, once killed, degradation will set in, and ultimately those little corpses can become quite smelly. Using glue board traps indoors, instead of insecticides, can limit the build-up of dead crickets as long as the traps are replaced often. Δ

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