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Field Crickets Abound

As we walk outside in the evening, a new sound might greet us. This new sound will be the male cricket's mating song, which is a high-pitched sound produced by the male cricket rubbing his front wings together to attract a female.

Crickets develop through simple metamorphosis, with an egg, nymph and adult stage. The female cricket will deposit eggs into the soil. The eggs hatch into nymphs, which gain wings every time they molt. Adult field crickets are ½ to 1 ¼ inches in length, black in color, and have a stout body. Several generations of crickets are produced every year.

Crickets feed on all organic matter, including decaying plant material and fungi. Since crickets breakdown plant materials, they are considered beneficial by renewing soil minerals. They are also a food source for many animals such as spiders, ground beetles, birds, lizards and small rodents.

Crickets are normally an outdoor insect, usually found under rocks, logs or any crack or crevice. However, they can sometimes enter our homes through such areas as doors and windows. In addition, their song can become an irritant to homeowners, since they live next to structures.

Some Control Options:

Non-Chemical Suggestions:

1) Caulk or seal cracks and gaps that are found in the foundation, around doors, windows, and garage doors.

2) Trim weeds and tall grass growing near the foundation.

3) Remove firewood, brush, rotting wood, boxes, bricks, stones and other objects from around the structure, in order to reduce the number of harborage areas.

4) For crickets found inside the home, vacuum or sweep up and then discard them.

Chemical Control Suggestions:

If a severe infestation exists, there are granular products that can be used for control, such as those containing hydramethylnon. There are also chemicals that can be sprayed outdoors to provide a barrier around homes, such as those containing pyrethrins or bifenthrin. There are also products that can be applied in indoor and outdoor cracks and crevices, such as those containing boric acid.

A field cricket, *Gryllus* sp. (Orthoptera: Gryllidae). Photo by Dr. Bart Drees, Texas A&M University.