

Cicadas incoming: Billions of insects poised to emerge in double-brood invasion



The winged insects are set to pop out of the ground in the coming weeks in a rare synchronized event that last occurred in 1803.

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This year's emergence is expected to be unusually large, with some experts estimating that more than a trillion cicadas could blanket parts of the country where the two broods overlap.

Cicadas are harmless to humans, though some people find the sheer number of insects and their loud mating songs a nuisance.

For bug enthusiasts, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience the two cicada broods emerging together, given that it last occurred in 1803, when Thomas Jefferson was president.

"It's something that no one alive today has ever seen and no one alive today will ever see again," said Jim Louderman, a collections assistant in the insect division at the Field Museum in Chicago. "For entomologists, it's a really, really huge deal."