

Katydids Join July Summer Symphony

Joining in the July chorus of cicadas, crickets, and frogs this summer are katydids. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages people to discover nature by learning more about Missouri's loudest insect.

Katydids are a type of grasshopper. Their bodies have long slender legs, large, veined wings and antennae that are twice as long as most grasshoppers. Some call them long-horned grasshoppers because of their antennae.

Katydids are the insects that produce a distinct loud chirp, almost like singing "katy-did-katy-didn't." These insects create the sound by rubbing their wings together. The sharp edge of the right front wing moves rapidly against a file-like ridge on the left wing to make the distinct chirp. To attract a mate, male katydids produce an earsplitting hum that can be louder than a lawn mower.

These insects are believed to mate mostly at night, and to use their long antennae to help locate each other. Both male and female katydids chirp and hum to attract mates. After mating in the fall, the female lays her eggs on bark and young stems. The eggs are dormant through winter and hatch the following spring.

Most katydids look exactly like leaves. However, a genetic mutation caused by recessive genes producing too little pigment, can sometimes cause the usually green bug to appear bright pink.

Although it can be hard to ignore the sounds of katydids in the summer, it is rare to see them until autumn, when the cool air makes them clumsy and causes them to land on the ground. Keep an eye, and especially an ear, out for these loud yet elusive insects in July.

For more information on katydids visit MDC's online Field Guide at <http://on.mo.gov/29oOmrh> or watch a video [here](#).