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Killer wasps emerge in Anderson Twp. parks

Posted by lwakeland • Wednesday, August 03, 2011 5:24:08 PM

By Lisa Wakeland • lwakeland@communitypress.com

There's something invading Anderson Township parks. It's not your average insect, it's the cicada killer wasp.

Despite its name, the wasp is fairly harmless and females will only sting when provoked.

Emily Brown, an Anderson Township resident who comes to Juiifs Park often, said she's encountered the cicada killer wasp on a few occasions and tries to avoid it.

That's how most people at Juiifs or Beech Acres parks react when they encounter the wasp, which burrow in sand or dry, exposed soil, said Ken Kushner, executive director for the Anderson Township Park District.

"Even though (the parks) are highly maintained they are a natural area for many species of insects," he said. "Everyone is concerned when they see (the wasps), but most people are OK after they learn what it is."



The cicada killer wasp, seen above, has been spotted in a few Anderson Township parks. Adults can grow up to 2 inches long. (Provided)

The wasps burrow up to 10 inches under sand or soil where they lay their eggs, according to [a fact sheet from The Ohio State University](#).

Adults, which can grow up to two inches long, begin emerging in early July and can live through mid-September.

Only female cicada killer wasps sting and are generally docile unless disturbed. They fly during the day searching for cicadas as prey.

Kushner said there haven't been any reported cicada killer wasp stings this year and are more of a nuisance than a threat.

Chris Brown, who lives in Union Township, said he comes to Juiifs Park about once every month and hasn't noticed the wasps. The signs alerting parkgoers of the wasps' presence was the first time he's heard of the insect.

"To me it seems not much different than honeybees," he said. "It's not a huge concern."

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