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Cicadas



There are about 2000 species of cicada. Their song can be deafening. It is their mating call, produced by males only. Some cicadas sing during the heat of the day, others only at

night. Some species are so loud they can be heard from almost a kilometre away!

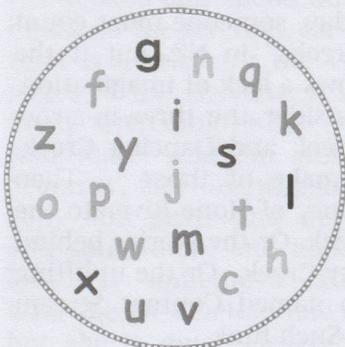
Cicadas have a built-in pair of 'drums', called tymbals. These ribbed membranes are attached to a cicada's abdominal muscles. When the cicada tightens and releases these muscles, the tymbals vibrate. Hollow spaces in the cicada's abdomen act like an amplifier to make the sound louder. Each species of cicada has its own song, so when a male sings, he attracts mates only from his own species.

Female cicadas have a sharp spike on the tail end called an ovipositor. Once she has mated, the female uses her ovipositor to pierce a plant stem, then lays her eggs in the slits. When the eggs hatch, the nymphs fall to the ground and bury themselves in the soil.

Underground, the nymphs feed on the sap from plant roots. As they grow, they shed their skin over and over again. Around the time when cicadas are due to come out, you might notice that the ground is dotted with little mud 'chimneys'. These are made by the cicada nymphs pushing mud up out of their burrows after a spring rain.

When they are almost through moulting, the nymphs dig their way to the surface. Then the cicadas climb a tree and moult one last time, leaving their nymphal skin behind. Depending on the species, it can take from 9 months to 17 years for the nymphs to come out of the ground. The most common interval spent underground is seven years.

Find the letters

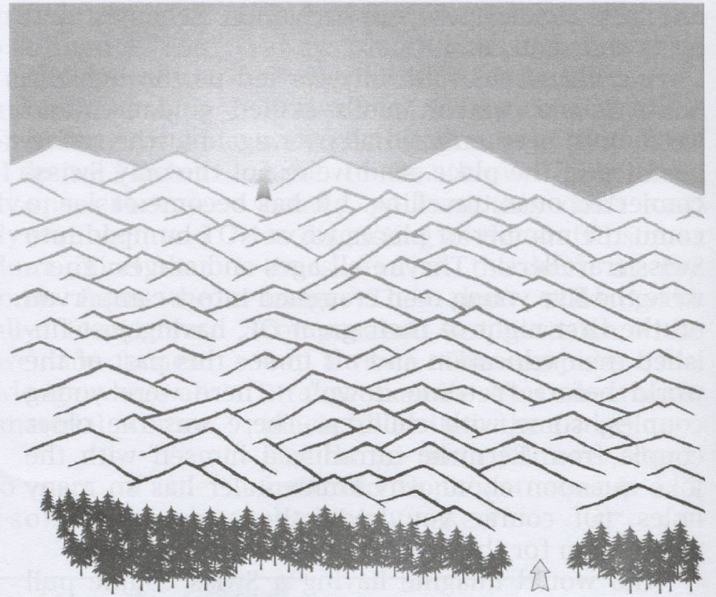


Some letters of the alphabet are missing from the circle. Can you use the missing letters to find something to eat?

Solution on page 18

Maze

Find your way through the valleys to the sky



Jokes

Where is the best place to see a man-eating fish?
In a seafood restaurant.

What did the beach say when the tide came in?
Long time no sea.

What is good on bread, but bad on the road?
Jam

What is the quickest way to make soup taste terrible?
Change the U to an A, and you get soap.

Which continent is related to the Arctic Ocean?
Aunt Arctica

Why is doing nothing so tiring?
Because you can't stop and rest.

Why can a man living in Auckland not be buried in Nelson?
Because he is still alive.

Who are the slowest talkers in the world?
Convicts; they can spend 25 years on a single sentence.

What is the oldest fruit?
Adam's apple.