

# Smart Stuff

## with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
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**Notes:** Other names for the katydid include bush-cricket and long-horned grasshopper, though katydids are more closely related to crickets than to grasshoppers. Sources included *Journal of Experimental Biology*, "Katydid's' Speedy Serenade, <http://jeb.biologists.org/cgi/content/full/208/7/iii>; and the University of Florida, <http://buzz.ifas.ufl.edu/index.htm>. The latter has excellent song samples at <http://buzz.ifas.ufl.edu/a00samples.htm>. Also try <http://www.musicofnature.com/songsofinsects/iframes/twentySpecies.html> for song samples together with images of the singers. High-four to Davey W., Wooster, Ohio, for this week's question!

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### Q. Dear Twig: How do katydids make that sound?

A. Try this on a hot summer night: Open a window. Or step outside on your porch, deck or doorstep. Listen. You'll probably hear some crickets chirping. And, if you're lucky, you'll hear something else: the call of the **true common katydid**, cousin of the cricket, as green as a leaf and shaped a lot like a leaf as well. "Zz-zz-ZIT! Zz-ZIT! Katy-did! Didn't! Did! Didn't!" To me the sound sounds like August.

Hear it and try to picture the singer: First, it's a male. **Male katydids do the singing.** They do it to **attract females.** (Louder males attract more females. The females sometimes click softly back.)

Second, he makes the sound by rubbing together two small special parts on his **forewings** (front wings). One part resembles a **file**, the tool that has rough, raspy teeth that you use to smooth off wood or metal. The other part, on the other forewing, is hard and is called the **scraper**.

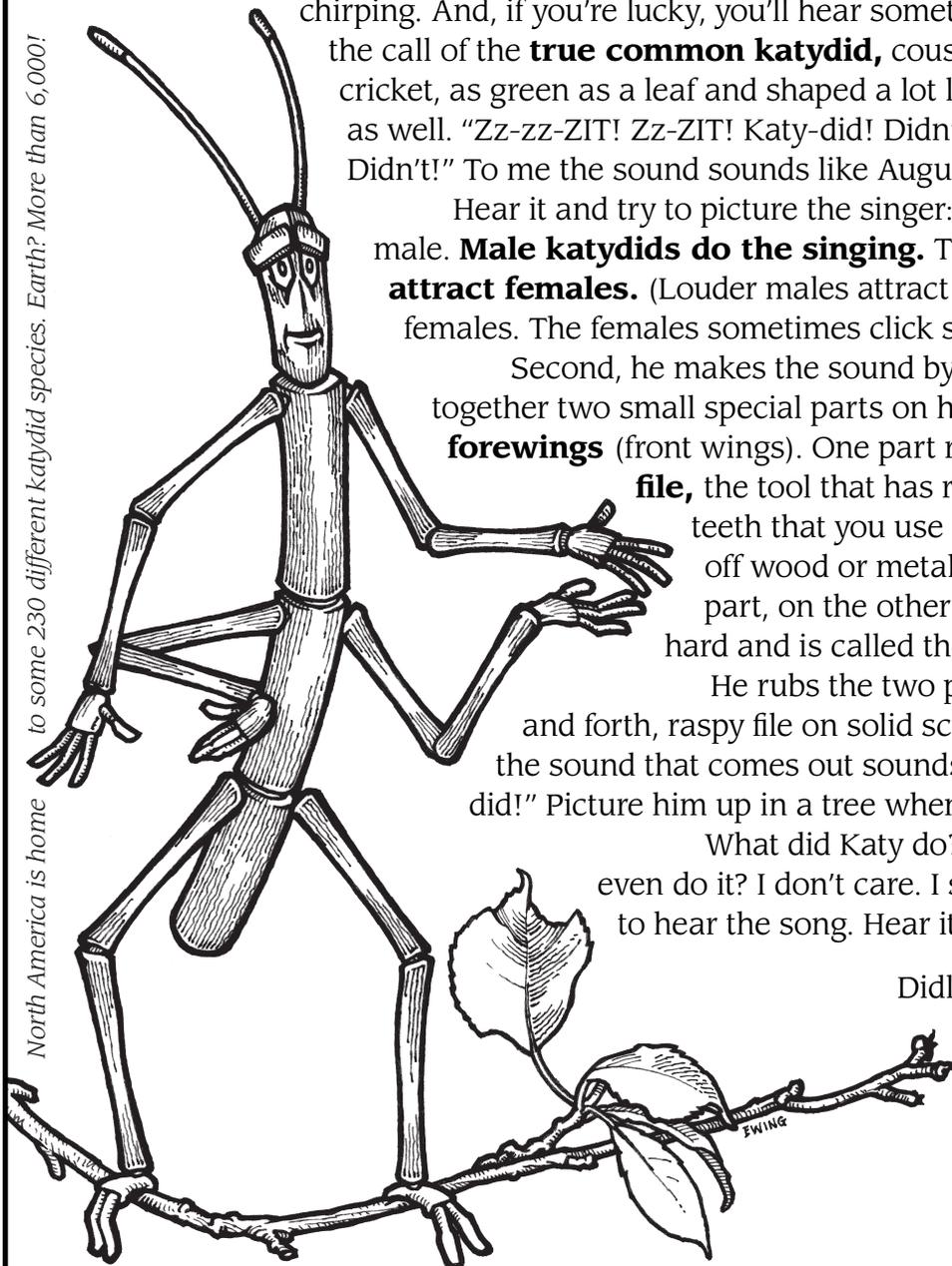
He rubs the two parts back and forth, raspy file on solid scraper, and the sound that comes out sounds like "Katy-did!" Picture him up in a tree when he does it.

What did Katy do? Did she even do it? I don't care. I sure do like to hear the song. Hear it? Listen ...

Didly,

Twig

North America is home to some 230 different katydid species. Earth? More than 6,000!



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center ([www.oardc.ohio-state.edu](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu)) and OSU Extension ([extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu)).