

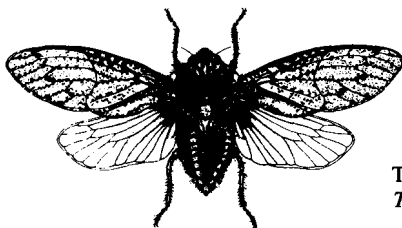
BOOK REVIEW

Australian Cicadas

by M.S. Moulds

University of New South Wales Press, 217 pp. R.R.P. \$39.95

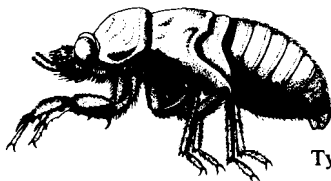
Reviewed by P.B. McQuillan



Tasmanian Hairy Cicada
Tettigarcta tomentosa.

Singing cicadas are as evocative of an Australian summer as sun cream, but until now it has been difficult to find reliable information about them.

Max Moulds, our leading authority on cicadas, has finally filled that need with a handsome and comprehensive book which distils decades of endeavour. All 200-plus described species are mentioned in this book, most with detailed notes and a map on distribution, habitat, distinguishing features and where known, life-history and song.



Typical soil-dwelling cicada nymph.

The seven Tasmanian species are well covered. The low diversity of our fauna is offset by its novelty, including the elusive nocturnal hairy cicada, which is unable to sing, and three species of *Diemeniana* which are conspicuous denizens of alpine heathlands and buttongrass plains in the west and south.

Part 1 of the book is given over to 9 chapters which, among other things, cover the principles of classification and history of vernacular names, details of how cicadas produce and receive sounds, and a useful account of procedures to follow for setting up a cicada collection. A key to assist identification is not provided but the 24 colour plates are an excellent visual reference which, together with the supporting text in Part 2, guide the reader to the appropriate name for their specimen. A glossary, extensive reference list and index complete the book.

A lasting impression is that much detail on the behaviour and biology of many species remains unknown and here is a fertile field for patient endeavour. I have no hesitation in recommending this book to all naturalists.