

WALKINGSTICK

Phasmida: Diapheromeridae
Diapheromera femorata

Bug
of the
Month



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‘Stick’ around to read about the common walkingstick! There are 30 known species of walkingsticks found in North America, but *D. femorata* (pictured) is the only species native to Pennsylvania. These insects are masters of camouflage, and physically resemble a tree, stick, or twig, which makes them difficult to spot in the wild. *Diapheromera femorata* are commonly found in deciduous forests, where they consume tree leaf tissue. While *D.*

femorata are considered generalist species and can eat all types of tree leaves, they preferentially feed on oak and hazelnut trees, so check these trees first to find them!

Diapheromera femorata reach adulthood in August and September, and range from 75 – 95 mm in length. Female and male walkingsticks can be differentiated by their coloration and size; females are greenish

brown and trend toward the larger size range, while males are brown and generally smaller in size. They breed in late summer, and once mated, female *D. femorata* drop fertilized eggs onto the forest floor. Walkingstick eggs then overwinter on the ground in the leaf litter until May, when environmental conditions cue the emergence and activity of immature walkingstick nymphs..

By Francesca Ferguson

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