

Cicada 303. Walkthrough

GCBQ2Z0 - puzzle trail notes

1. Start with the cache page cipher

The cache page contains a symbol cipher. The symbols resemble the cipher from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold-Bug*, but the puzzle gives confirmation in the Additional Hints area.

```
;‡ -‡*16(9 :‡?( .(‡3(8)) :‡? ]600 *88† ;‡ ?)8 ;48 78: 5356*  
;48 78: 45) *‡; -45*38†  
;48 78: 6) 95†8 ]6;4‡?; ;48 *?928() 2?; ]48(8 6) ;48 78:  
;48 78: ]600 ;578 :‡? ;‡ ]48(8 6; 6) *88†8†
```

2. Decode the Additional Hints area

The Additional Hints area contains a ROT13-encoded URL:

```
uggcf://bhg14aq3e.pbz/jc-pbagrag/hcybnqf/2026/05/uvagTPOD2M0.jni
```

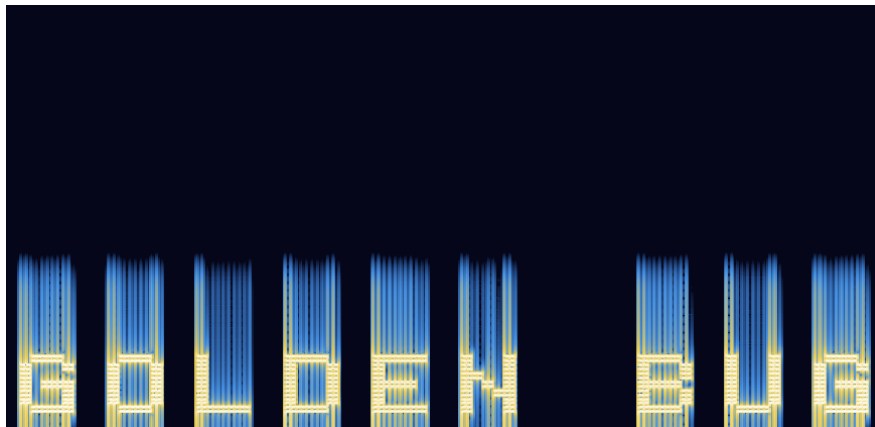
Decode with ROT13:

```
https://out14nd3r.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/hintGCBQ2Z0.wav
```

3. Analyze the hint WAV as a spectrogram

Open the hint WAV in a spectrogram analyzer. The hidden text reads:

GOLDEN BUG



Hint WAV spectrogram showing the GOLDEN BUG clue.

4. Decode the Gold-Bug cipher

Using the Gold-Bug substitution, the page cipher decodes to:

```
TO CONFIRM YOUR PROGRESS YOU WILL NEED TO USE THE KEY AGAIN  
THE KEY HAS NOT CHANGED  
THE KEY IS MADE WITHOUT THE NUMBERS BUT WHERE IS THE KEY  
THE KEY WILL TAKE YOU TO WHERE IT IS NEEDED
```

5. Reuse the previous Cicada key

The decoded message says the key has not changed. From the first Cicada puzzle, the spectrogram message was:

```
AFFE3F0AD3BFCE
```

The clue says the key is made without the numbers, so remove the digits:

```
AFFEFADBFCF
```

6. Click the Cicada image

Clicking the Cicada image at the top of the cache page opens a special Certitude checker. This is different from the normal final checker.

```
https://www.certitudes.org/certitude?wp=W1BQ2Z0
```

Enter the key:

```
AFFEFADBFCF
```

7. Read the Certitude bonus info

The special checker accepts the key and returns bonus information:

```
Congratulations!  
AFFEFADBFCF  
is the correct answer.
```

```
Bonus info:  
You have proven yourself worthy. For final follow this link.  
7hi39tv4/dge.skxnfoz  
Remember not to share your answer.
```

8. Decode the bonus-info link

Use a keyboard cipher on the bonus-info text:

```
7hi39tv4/dge.skxnfoz
```

keyboard cipher ->

```
7ph39ew4/moc.lruynit
```

Notice that the result is reversed. Reverse it to reveal the TinyURL:

```
tinyurl.com/4we93hp7
```

9. Analyze the final WAV

The TinyURL opens another WAV file. Analyze that WAV as a spectrogram, the same way as the earlier audio clues. This final spectrogram shows the final coordinates.

Enter the coordinates shown by the final spectrogram into the normal Certitude checker for this cache:

```
https://www.certitudes.org/certitude?wp=GCBQ2Z0
```

Stage	Result
Additional hint ROT13	hintGCBQ2Z0.wav
Hint WAV spectrogram	GOLDEN BUG
Gold-Bug cipher message	The key has not changed

Key	AFFEFADBFCF
Special checker	W1BQ2Z0
Bonus link after keyboard + reverse	tinyurl.com/4we93hp7
Final step	Analyze final WAV spectrogram and check coords in GCBQ2Z0 Certitude