



Make smart choices for your yard, garden and forest!

Jumping Worms

Appearance

- ✦ Dark brown/gray bodies are smooth, firm and shiny.
- ✦ The clitellum (cloudy white to gray fleshy band circling the worm's body) is not raised like on other earthworms.
- ✦ Adults can be up to 6 inches long.

Behavior

- ✦ Jumping worms move like snakes.
- ✦ They violently thrash and squirm when disturbed.
- ✦ They live at soil surface and feed on leaf litter and organic matter.

Impacts

- ✦ Jumping worms change soil structure, producing unique, crumbly soil that impacts plants.
- ✦ They may threaten:
 - forest health by altering soil structure and chemistry
 - biodiversity in affected areas
- ✦ Some forest and garden plants may have trouble growing in soil changed by jumping worms.

They're already on my property...

Don't panic. By taking precautions, you can continue enjoying your yard, trees and garden!

- ✓ Don't spread the worms to uninfested places on your property.
- ✓ Remove and destroy adult worms by sealing them in a bag and throwing it in the trash.
- ✓ Experiment with a variety of plants or try alternative landscaping in heavily infested parts of your property.



What can I do to slow the spread?

Learn to recognize them and teach others to do so.

Plant, sell, purchase and trade only those landscape and gardening plants that you are reasonably sure are free of jumping worms. Buy bare root stock whenever possible. Be cautious when sharing and moving plants.

Look for jumping worms in your yard, garden and forest, mulch, compost, potted plants and other suitable places.

Sell, purchase and trade only compost that you know was heated to appropriate temperatures for the correct amount of time following protocols that reduce pathogens.

Arrive clean, leave clean. Remove soil and debris from vehicles, equipment, footwear and personal gear before going to and from work and recreational areas.

Lifecycle



April - May:
Tiny jumping worms hatch from cocoon-encased eggs.

Summer months:
Jumping worms feed and grow.

August - September:
Mature worms reproduce, depositing egg-filled cocoons in surroundings.

First freeze:
Adult worms die.

Winter months:
Eggs spend cold months protected in cocoons.

- ✦ A single worm can reproduce on its own without a mate.
- ✦ Jumping worms live only one season; mature and reproduce throughout the summer, then die.
- ✦ Tiny, tough cocoons easily overwinter in the soil and hatch the following spring. They are only about 2-3 mm wide.

Visit the Wisconsin Jumping Worm website, dnr.wi.gov, keyword "jumping worm"
For a video of jumping worms in action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrGnUFDXuyQ>

It is illegal to buy, sell, bring into the state, or release jumping worms to water or land in Wisconsin under the Invasive Species Rule (ch. NR 40, Wis. Adm. Code). dnr.wi.gov, keyword "NR 40"
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