

Jumping Worms

What is a Jumping Worm?

- Jumping worms are an invasive earthworm native to Eastern Asia.
- They were first confirmed in Wisconsin in 2013.
- Some of the ways they spread are through leaf litter, top soil, compost, vehicle tires, garden tools and our shoes and gloves.

Worm Identification

Jumping Worm (*Amyntas* sp)

- Flop and wriggle vigorously when handled. When captured the jumping worm can shed its tails in defense.
- Clitellum (band) is white, smooth, flat, and closer to the head. Circles the body.
- Body is dark, gray in color.
- Reproduce rapidly – do not need to mate to generate multiple generations throughout the year. The cocoons are small and are not visible by eye.
- The jumping worm does not produce slime when handled like an earthworm.

European Earthworm (*Lumbricus* sp)

- Do not wriggle vigorously when handled
- Clitellum (band) is raised, ridged, and further from the head
- Body is paler, pink in color
- Reproduces more slowly – one generation per year
- Produces a slime when handled

What do we do if we find them on our project?

We begin working on our projects in April/May. The cocoon (eggs) will survive the winter and hatch when the soil warms up, approximately a soil temperature of 40 degrees.

- If you suspect you may have found jumping worms on your project, bring a worm(s) to the UW-Extension office so that Kimberly can make a positive identification. At this point we will need to evaluate the extent of the infestation and determine what steps will need to be taken.
- If you suspect you may have found them in your own garden, it is extremely important that you bring in a worm(s) for confirmation.
- A good test is to remove the leaf litter and mulch from around the plants in question. In a gallon of water mix three tablespoons of Dry Mustard. Pour the mixture into the soil and wait approximately five minutes. This mixture acts as an irritant and will cause worms and insects in the soil to surface. If necessary this process can be repeated.
- If you have a small amount of worms to dispose of, you can place them in a plastic bag and place them in the sun. The heat will kill them and then the bag can be placed in the garbage. You will probably never get all of them, but if we dispose of what we find it will help.

WCMGA Best Practices for Project: ARRIVE CLEAN, LEAVE CLEAN!!

- Clean soil and debris from gardening tools, shoes, gloves, etc. This needs to be done prior to arriving and before leaving the project.
- Check plants purchased from nurseries. Remove plants from the container and check the soil. You do not want to purchase if the soil looks like coffee grounds, or if there is an open area in the root ball. These are signs that jumping worm have been there and will have left cocoons in the soil.
- Home plant donations to the projects shall be accompanied with a Jumping Worm Certificate. It will be the Project Leads responsibility to obtain a completed certificate. The Jumping Worm Certificate will be submitted with the Project Leads year end reports. We are also discouraging the use of free mulch or compost. As with all invasive species the goal is to minimize their spread.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://hort.uwex.edu/jumping-worms/>