

## Earthworm Eggs

Earthworms play an important role in the creation of healthy, productive soils. They feed on organic matter, leaving behind rich manure or “castings” that provide readily available nutrients for plants. As they burrow through the soil, they also open up passageways for air and water, making the soil more loose and crumbly.

### How to take care of worm eggs:

Your worm eggs are shipped in a moist medium of peat, worm castings and humus. The eggs are yellow/brown, oval-shaped to a small point at each end, and very small — not much bigger than  $\frac{1}{8}$ " in diameter! You'll have to look closely to see them.

Keep the plastic bag closed until you are ready to introduce the eggs to the garden. If you purchased the worms before your soil is prepared or if you are reluctant to place your worms outside during winter's chill, the eggs can be stored up to 3 months in a cool (40 to 50 degrees F) room or refrigerator. Leave the bag untied and slightly open, but check the medium fre-

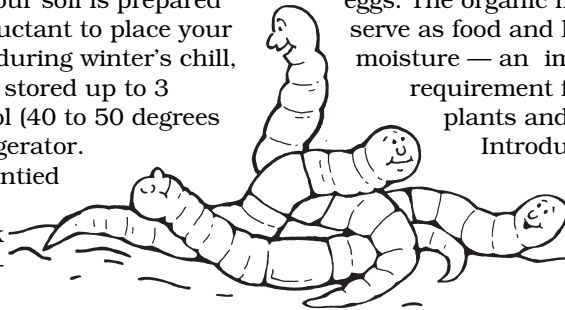
quently to make sure it doesn't dry out.

Worm eggs can be spread over the garden at any time of the year, even in mid-winter (a large percentage will survive even when placed on top of the snow). However, the best time to introduce worms outside is during the spring and summer when nighttime temperatures are above freezing and after the ground has been tilled or cultivated.

### Adding worm eggs to the soil:

Prepare your soil first. While worms are very adaptive to different soil types, they thrive best in soils that receive annual applications of organic matter such as grass clippings, compost, or manure. If your soil is depleted, till in organic matter before introducing the worm eggs. The organic matter will serve as food and help retain moisture — an important requirement for both plants and worms.

Introducing the worm eggs into the garden is easy.



Scatter the eggs and medium over the top of the soil in an 8 by 10-foot area. If possible, gently rake them into the top 2 to 3 inches of soil. Water the soil thoroughly and keep it moist. If the soil dries out during the first month, you could lose some of the young worms.

## **“When will the worm eggs hatch?”**

Your worms will hatch within 2 to 3 weeks after the soil temperature reaches 70 degrees F. Baby worms are small and whitish-purple when they leave the egg. Within 2 to 3 days, they begin to change color to eventually match their soil surroundings. Worms in a clay soil will be gray in color; worms in rich

organic soils will be reddish purple. In a short 3 months, they will reach maturity and begin to reproduce a second generation of eggs.

## **Overwintering mature worms:**

When winter approaches, worms burrow deep into the earth below the frost level. If your area experiences severe winters without snow cover, the worms may have difficulty finding unfrozen soil. You can help them out by mulching your soil with straw, grass clippings, or leaves, or by growing a green manure like clover to help insulate the soil. Apply the mulch in the autumn before frost penetrates the soil.

### **Our Live Goods Guarantee**

Our live plants and beneficial organisms are guaranteed to be shipped in good health. If your shipment arrives damaged or in poor condition, please notify us immediately. We will promptly replace your order or refund your money.

Live worms need immediate nurturing in order to thrive. We ask that you protect them from pests, drought, and cold temperatures. If after proper care you are not satisfied with your worms, we will gladly offer a one time refund or replacement, up to one year from date of purchase.

### **Ordering Information**

#02-217 Earthworm Eggs, approx. 1500  
please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery

*To order, please call us or see our web site for current prices.*

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