

Jumping Worms in Wisconsin

Background Information and Suggested Control Methods



- All earthworms in the USA are not native to North America. Most earthworms came with European settlement. The Jumping Worm found in Wisconsin is from east Asia
 - Jumping worms (NR 40 Restricted Species) came from Japan or Korea around 1939 and were recently found in Wisconsin in 2013
 - Jumping worms have a distinct dark body with a flat, white clitellum along with a stiff body that wiggles rapidly when disturbed
 - Jumping worms reproduce asexually and need only one egg or worm to start an infestation
 - Jumping worm adults have two reproductive cycles per year and then die over the winter leaving behind the cocoons that survive Wisconsin winters
 - Jumping worms deplete the soil rapidly and live in the upper 8" of soil and duff layer
 - Jumping worms do not aerate the soil, but dry it out to a consistency of coffee grounds that exposes plant roots, which causes shallow rooted plants to die
 - Jumping worms spread in hardwood mulch and leaves the fastest
 - Jumping worms travel in soil of exchanged plants (i.e. peer-peer, organizational and un-regulated plant sales)
 - Do not use composted manure unless it is heated to a minimum temperature of 115 degrees Fahrenheit for three days to kill any potential cocoons
 - Avoid municipal compost unless it has carefully managed and processed at the proper temperature for extended periods
 - To evaluate a worm population, mix a solution of 1/3 cup of dry mustard powder with one gallon of water and then pour it over the bare soil surface to bring worms to the surface
 - Make sure to alert your neighbors of Jumping Worms and encourage them to manage them
 - Control methods are a three-step and multiple year process, so be patient
1. In the fall apply a BioChar® or similar product (ground-up charcoal) that will puncture the Jumping worm's skin and start the control process
 2. Follow up with an application of tea seed meal (i.e. Early Bird®) to kill the remaining worms in late April or early May. The tea seed meal is a common organic fertilizer used in golf course management practices to control earthworms. The tea seed meal burns the skin and then brings the Jumping worms to the surface where they will die
 3. Apply a second application of tea seed meal in late July or early August to kill the remaining worms before they start their second reproductive cycle

Repeat this three-step process for two to five years or more if needed



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Search "Jumping Worms" on the [Wisconsin DNR website](http://www.wisconsin.gov) to find out more information