

all about worms



Worms are especially fascinating creatures. They are an essential part of the environment because they help to mix up and break down organic matter. They like to burrow deep into the soil and their tunnels help to aerate the soil. As they burrow and eat, earthworms leave behind worm casts (or waste) this contains valuable nutrients that enriches the soil. Plants need these nutrients to sustain healthy growth.

Have you ever wondered how a worm moves without legs, or if it will survive when you cut it in half by accident when you're digging in the garden?

Here are some fascinating facts about this very wriggly little creature.

A worm is a long, creeping animal, with a soft, segmented body. They've existed for about 600 million years.

They don't have legs but instead are covered in hairs or bristles that help them to move. Try getting a magnifying glass and see if you can see them.

They breathe through their skin, which must remain moist at all times so they can absorb oxygen from the air.

There are about 34,000 different types of worm; many of which are so small you will need a microscope to see them!

Worms are hermaphrodite, which means they don't need another worm to reproduce.

They lay their eggs, which hatch as little worms. Worms can live for up to 10 years.



Wow can they eat a lot!

Worms eat their own weight in organic waste, soil and minerals and excrete their own weight in castings daily. Worm castings help to make compost and enrich the soil. They don't eat living plant tissue, and so don't damage living plants. You can even keep them as pets and feed them on kitchen scraps so they can make lots of lovely compost for your garden.

They truly are a gardener's best friend!



INTERESTING facts

- Worms are about 1,000 times stronger than people (relatively speaking, of course!).
- The longest earthworm is the African giant earthworm, which can grow up to 6.7m (22ft) long.
- Worms are tough little creatures. If you accidentally cut an earthworm in half while gardening, only half will die. The piece with the saddle (the fatter, pink part) will survive. When it's really cold outside in winter or baking hot in the summer, worms are able to survive by burrowing deep into the soil - at the same time escaping from light, which they hate.

