

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

Earthworms In The Garden / Earthworm Facts

By Francis Kilkelly

Notice the lowly earthworm, squirming away, going about its everyday business. Simple creatures you may think but they have quite a important use in the garden. Did you know the earthworms are nature's first gardeners? They don't exist just for kids to eat and fishermen to use as bait :)

Some Basic Earthworm Facts

Earthworms are present in almost every type of soil but the healthier the soil the greater the numbers. A healthy soil permits lots of air and moisture, both of which are needed by the earthworm for a continued existence. Earthworms have no lungs like you or me but instead breathe through their skin. Their whole skin absorbs oxygen and releases carbon dioxide. They also need moisture to assist them in respiration but too much moisture is not good for them.

There are four types of earthworm that you may run into:

Nightcrawlers: 8 to 10 inches long and the fisherman's favourite. Garden Worms: 5 to 7 inches long and found commonly in damp soils. Manure Worms: 4 to 5 inches long and found in manure rich soils. Red Worms: 3 to 4 inches long and the most commercially available.

Why Earthworms in the Garden?

A garden without earthworms would miss out on all of the great benefits that they bring to it. Their first job is to till the soil by tunneling through it. Tunnels created allow air and moisture to pass easily through the soil, creating a healthy environment for plants. Tunnels retain water that the plants can take up and also hold air to help bacteria break down organic matter within the soil.

After digestion earthworms produce excrement about the size of a pin head. This excrement is called "castings" or "vermicompost" and is an excellent soil conditioning material. It improves properties of the soil such as porosity and moisture retention, aids plant growth and helps in the fight against pests and diseases.

Increasing Earthworm Population in the Garden

How does one go about increasing the number of earthworms in their garden soil? Well the best way to do so is to add more organic matter to the soil. Earthworms cannot get enough of the stuff and will seek it out wherever they can find it.

Finally...

The earthworm is just as important to the garden as the gardener that maintains it because they till the soil and add a soil conditioner in the form of castings. They are as much a gardener as you are. The next time you see one wiggling on the ground in front of you bend down and say "got any good gardening tips?" You never know it may answer :)

I will leave the final word to a one Charles Darwin who once had this to say about the earthworm:

"The plow is one of the most ancient and most valuable of man's inventions; but long before he existed, the land was in fact regularly plowed and still continues to be thus plowed by earthworms. It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world, as have these lowly organized creatures."

Francis Kilkelly runs one of the fastest growing home and garden communities at

<http://www.gardenstew.com/>

that has gardening forums and gardening blogs (

<http://www.gardenstew.com/blogs.php>

). Pop over to see what all the fuss is about. Original Article

Location:

<http://www.gardenstew.com/blog/e3-17-earthworms-in-the-garden--earthworm-facts.html>

Helpful Benefits Of Earthworms

By Jackson Porter

Earthworms are of great value when it comes to the health of your garden. The several benefits include : converting organic materials into absorbable nutrients, loosening of the soil enabling healthy root growth as well as enhancing water and air circulation. They dig out deep-rooted minerals and other nutrients, making it easier for plants to absorb them.

Apart from their invaluable contribution to plant life, earthworms are a good source of food for

Earthworms In The Garden / Earthworm Facts

songbirds during early spring, before seeds and berries become ripe. If stored in a dark container with moist peat moss, earthworms can live up to 2 weeks.

Known by names, more than a thousand species exist of earthworms. Their names depend on the species and the geographic location they are found. For instance they are called : night crawlers, field worms, red wigglers, red worms, red hybrid, and rain worms. More than one species can be found in one garden.

Earthworms are found in a variety of colors and size. They can be reddish, maroon, dark gray, or black. While most earthworms are 2 to 10 inches long, some species found in Australia are 12 feet in length. Damp soil, rich in organic material make the best home for earthworms. They live on partly decomposed animals and insects. Lettuce is one of their favorite foods. Watermelon rind is also one of their favorites. They love manure.

Eating habits of earthworms vary according to species. Night crawlers do not live on the surface but come up after dusk hunting for food. They live on small portions of organic matter including grass blades. They normally drag the food particle to their burrow where they eat it mixing with soil. Red wigglers and other species live on the surface. They don't eat food which is either highly acidic or alkaline.

If you want earthworms to thrive, keep on adding organic material to the soil. When the organic material is finished, earthworms either leave the garden or die. After death, their body, full of protein decomposes into nitrogen which gets added to the soil. This of course provide short-term benefit to the soil but definitely does not compensate the loss caused by the death of this beneficial reptile.

The food which the earthworm eats first goes to the gizzard where it is mashed and ground. After grinding, the food travels to the intestine where it is digested with the help of the worm's own enzymes. Some of the nutrients in the food is used for their growth, while the balance is excreted in the form of granular cast, which is rich in nutrients. Castings of the earthworms contain 5 times more soluble nitrogen, 7 times more phosphorous, 3 times more magnesium, and 1.5 times more calcium than was contained in the food the worms eat.

Winter makes the earthworms inactive. They usually move below the frost line in areas which freeze. It takes 2 minutes to kill an earthworm during frost. Spring is their peak activity time, when the temperature gets a little warmer and there is a lot of rain. This is their mating as well as egg-laying season. In one year two mature and healthy earthworms may produce a few hundred off springs. Again during summer, the earthworm becomes inactive. Because of lack of food, many earthworms die during summer.

An earthworm's chance to live also depends on the moisture level of the soil. It increases when the soil is moist. They die when the soil is dry. Fall sees an increase in activity. They lay more eggs and remain active till winter. This life cycle repeats every year.

While most earthworms can live up to 10 years, there are many elements which threaten their lives. These include, the danger of being eaten by birds and moles, food scarcity, harsh weather, and the

rampant use of pesticides. These result in some earthworms living only for a few months.

Jackson Porter is a staff writer at

<http://homegardenenthusiast.com>

and is an occasional contributor to

several other websites, including

<http://www.environmental-central.com>



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

Earthworms In The Garden / Earthworm Facts

