



What is the Problem?

Jumping worms alter soil qualities, particularly in forested locations, and may even trigger changes that favor invasive plants in forest understories. Indeed, some of the most significant impacts of these earthworms have been seen in forest ecosystems. The worms have such an impact because they consume the upper organic layer of soil, which leaches away nutrients and can lead to erosion. Unwittingly, humans may spread earthworms without realizing it: jumping worm eggs (which are found in cocoons that are about the size of a mustard seed) or adults may be unwittingly transported when one moves soil, mulch, compost and potted plants from one location to another.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Two new UMass Extension fact sheets answer questions about prevention and spread as well as the biology and identification of these earthworms, and the available options, should you discover these worms on your property. The fact sheets are available here:

- [Earthworms in Massachusetts – History, Concerns, and Benefits](#)
- [Jumping/Crazy/Snake Worms – *Amyntas* spp.](#)

What If I Find Them In My Plants?

Do not share the plants. Dispose in the trash!

NOTE: It should be mentioned that the genera of earthworms commonly referred to as jumping worms are not directly harmful to people or their pets. Although they may quickly writhe or squirm when disturbed and may move like snakes, they pose no direct physical threat to people.