

IDENTIFY

Jumping worms are an invasive species from Asia and have been reported in gardens, yards, and forest edges in Monroe County, Indiana. This threat to our environment is very difficult to eradicate once established, so preventing their movement and introduction through the movement of soil, plants, and mulch is very important.

There are different species of jumping worms, but they are all in the *Amyntas* genus and have similar characteristics and behavior. They get their common name from their dramatic thrashing when disturbed.



Common earthworm (*Lumbricus terrestris*)

- Wiggle gently
- Dull, red-brown
- Reddish raised ring (clitellum)
- Slimy, thick bodies

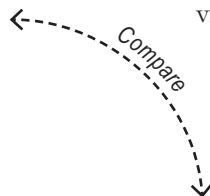
JUMPING WORM COCOONS



BEHAVIOR

Even when they hatch they're more active than other worm species. If possible, it is important to identify and catch these worms when they're immature (without clitellum) — before they can lay cocoons and eggs.

When disturbed, they thrash and wiggle violently — much more so than other worms. However, after prolonged or intense stimulation or during drought conditions there will be much less thrashing.



Some adults may be as long as nine inches!

The **clitellum** (the milky, smooth band circling the worm's body) is flush — not raised like other worms.

Jumping worm (*Amyntas agrestis*)

- Thrash, twitch and have a snake-like way of moving
- Shiny, slightly iridescent and gray-brown
- Milky-white ring (clitellum) on mature worms (June)
- Mostly firm, dry bodies; thinner than other worms.

Color: somewhat iridescent — not one solid color.

LIFECYCLE

Jumping worms live for less than one year, starting as eggs and dying at the first freeze. However, in mild winters they can potentially overwinter in protected sites like mulch piles or in plant pots kept above freezing.

Spring
April–May

Tiny jumping worms hatch from cocoon-encased eggs (hatching may occur sooner in southern Indiana).

Summer
June–September

Mature worms (which have a clitellum) start reproducing, depositing egg-filled cocoons in soil.

First freeze

Adult worms die.

Winter months

Eggs spend cold months protected in cocoons.

HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

Jumping WORMS



Monroe County - Identify and Reduce Invasive Species

MC-IRIS.org
Monroe County, Indiana

Jumping WORMS

TESTING

Mix 1/3 cup ground mustard in one gallon of water. Clear leaf litter and debris from the surface of a level one square foot area. Slowly pour half of the mustard solution over the soil. Within a minute or two,

all earthworms will come to the surface. Place all of them in a bucket to determine whether they are jumping worms or European worms. After collecting worms, pour the rest of the mustard water over the area and watch for any more to emerge.

IMPACTS

The worms eat organic matter and change the soil structure, leaving the soil nutrient-poor and difficult to grow in for some plants. The worms leave castings (poop) that look like coffee grounds.



REPORT



MC-IRIS

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Invasive Species

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More information on
jumping worms in
Monroe County



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REDUCE

ELIMINATE POPULATIONS

Remove and destroy worms by sealing in them in a bag and throwing them in the trash.

REDUCE THE SPREAD

Refrain from moving plants, soil, compost, mulch, or leaf litter, as these are the ways jumping worms are usually spread. Clean your boots to avoid moving eggs and cocoons.

If you think you have jumping worms in Monroe County please report to EDDMaps.

EDDMapS

Early Detection and
Distribution Mapping System

