

Commonly mistaken for jumping worms.



European nightcrawler
(*Lumbricus terrestris*)

- Body is pink or flesh-toned with a well-defined raised clitellum further down on the body.
- Generally larger, slower, and produce slime when handled.
- Nightcrawlers live deep below the soil surface.



European nightcrawler
Raised clitellum, further from head

Jumping worm
Smooth clitellum, closer to head

More information at:
dnr.wi.gov, keyword "jumping worm"

To report a sighting, email:
Invasive.Species@Wisconsin.gov

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Photos by Colleen Robinson

JUMPING WORM FIELD GUIDE



Jumping worms (*Amyntas* spp.) dwell on the soil surface and eat leaf litter. They can turn up almost anywhere from urban parks, to suburban backyards, to rural forests. Because they reproduce on their own, a single worm can start a new population. You can help prevent jumping worms from spreading to new areas by knowing what to look for.

The jumping worm's appearance and behavior allow for easy identification.



- Jumping worms are brown to grayish black.
- The smooth, cloudy white to gray clitellum (lighter colored band) completely circles the body near the head end.
- The body is rigid and does not produce slime like many other earthworms.
- They thrash wildly and may shed their tail in defense.
- They live on the soil surface and in the leaf litter.

Jumping worms remove a protective layer from the soil surface. This changes how the soil looks and feels. Where there are jumping worms, the soil becomes grainy and can look like coffee grounds (right photo).