

# What can I do to slow the spread?



## Impacts of Jumping Worms

- ◆ Change soil structure, producing unique, crumbly soil that impacts plants
- ◆ May threaten:
  - forest health by altering soil structure and chemistry
  - biodiversity in affected areas
- ◆ Some forest and garden plants may have trouble growing in soil changed by jumping worms



**L**earn to recognize them and teach others to do so.

**P**lant, sell, purchase and trade only those landscape and gardening plants that you are reasonably sure are free of jumping worms. Buy bare root stock whenever possible. Be cautious when sharing and moving plants.

**L**ook for jumping worms in your yard, garden and forest, mulch, compost, potted plants, and other suitable places.

**S**ell, purchase and trade only compost that you know was heated to appropriate temperatures for the correct amount of time following protocols that reduce pathogens.

**A**rrive Clean, Leave Clean. Remove soil and debris from vehicles, equipment, footwear, and personal gear before going to and from work and recreational areas.

# Lifecycle in Wisconsin

## April - May:

Tiny jumping worms hatch from cocoon-encased eggs.

## Summer months:

Jumping worms feed and grow.

## August - September:

Mature worms reproduce, depositing egg-filled cocoons in surroundings.

## First freeze:

Adult worms die.

## Winter months:

Eggs spend cold months protected in cocoons.

- ✦ A single worm can reproduce on its own without a mate.
- ✦ Jumping worms live only one season; mature and reproduce throughout the summer, then die.
- ✦ Cocoons overwinter in the soil; hatch the following spring.

*Tiny, tough cocoons have no problem withstanding Wisconsin winters. They are only about 2-3 mm wide.*



↑  
*Actual size*



# What if they're already on my property?

**Don't panic.** By taking precautions, you can continue enjoying your yard, trees and garden!

- ✓ Don't spread the worms to uninfested places on your property.
- ✓ Remove and destroy adult worms by sealing them in a bag and throwing it in the trash.
- ✓ Experiment with a variety of plants or try alternative landscaping in heavily infested parts of your property.

For more information, visit the **Wisconsin Jumping Worm website**, a collaborative effort between Wisconsin DNR, University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, University of Wisconsin-Extension, and Olbrich Botanical Gardens, at: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), keyword "jumping worm"

For a video of jumping worms in action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrGnUFDXuyQ>



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# Jumping Worms

## Watch For This Invader



## What do jumping worms look like?

- ✦ The clitellum (the cloudy white to gray colored fleshy band circling the worm's body) is not raised like on other earthworms.
- ✦ Adults can be up to 6 inches long.
- ✦ Dark brown/gray bodies are smooth, firm and shiny.



## Behavior

- ✦ Jumping worms move like snakes.
- ✦ Violently thrash and squirm when disturbed.
- ✦ Live right below and feed on leaf litter and organic matter at soil surface.