

# INVASIVE JUMPING WORM

Originating from Asia, jumping worms are invasive earthworms that were found in New Brunswick in 2021. In March 2022 they were found in the soil of a houseplant purchased from a local Nova Scotian nursery.

Jumping worms alter the soil properties in areas they have invaded, making the soil look like dried coffee grounds. These changes in soil properties can negatively impact native plants and animal.



Adults are identifiable by the band, also known as the clitellum, that completely encircles the body. This differs from other worm species which have a band only on the tops and sides of their bodies.

Aside from their appearance, their behaviour is also unique. When handling a jumping worm, they tend to thrash around much more than other worm species. One could even say they "jump".



Help prevent the spread of jumping worms in Nova Scotia by checking the soil of recently purchased plants, cleaning off tools, or buying bare root plants. If you find jumping worms in a potted plant, do not dump the soil from the plant into your yard as there may be eggs in the soil.



**If you think you have found a jumping worm in Nova Scotia, please report to NSISC at <http://nsinvasives.ca>**

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## How can you reduce spread?

- Check for jumping worms when you buy plants, compost, or soil.
- Clean compost and soil from vehicles, equipment, and tools before moving to new sites. Anything larger than a poppy seed could contain jumping worm cocoons.
- When possible, buy plants that are bare root or propagate from cuttings and seed.
- Jumping worms may be in tropical house plants or garden plants.

## Cleaning roots

- If you can't buy bare root plants, try to wash the roots.
- Place the root portion of the plant in a bucket and gently massage the roots to remove attached soil.
- Let the soil settle in the bucket and then strain through a fine mesh colander.
- Place any remaining solids in a garbage bag in the sun to kill earthworm cocoons.



## Buying soil

- Try to purchase soil, mulch, or compost that has been heated following protocols for reducing pathogens (a minimum of 40°C) or solarize the material yourself.
- To solarize compost or soil from plants, wrap clear plastic around your soil/compost and leave out in the sun for a few days in summer.
- Make sure to securely fold over the sheets so that jumping worms can't escape.

## What should you do if you find a jumping worm?

- If you find jumping worms, please report to the Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council (NSISC) at <http://nsinvasives.ca>
- Depending on where you live, NSISC will ask you for samples to confirm that they are jumping worms and will help you to dispose of the soil you found them in.
- You can kill jumping worms by freezing them in a sealed bag or container or place them in a garbage bag in the sun for at least 10 minutes. Watch to make sure they do not escape.
- If they are in a potted plant, do not dump the soil outside but instead re-pot your plant, wash the roots of your plant, and place the soil in a garbage bag to be disposed of as directed by the NSISC and explained above ('Cleaning roots').