

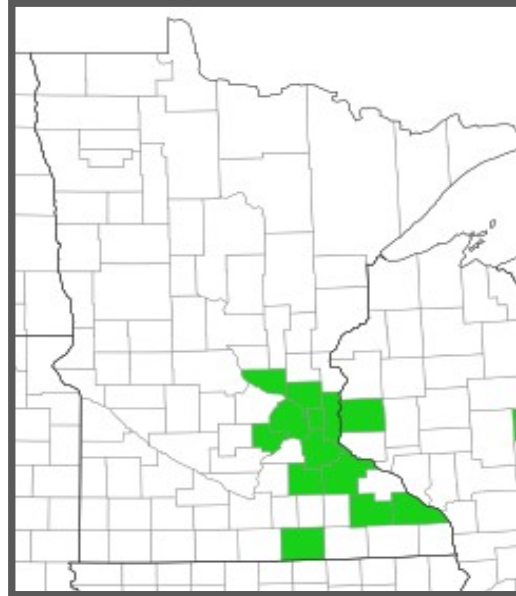


Jumping Worms

University of Minnesota Extension

Jumping Worms (*Amyntas spp.*)

Jumping worms are a newer invasive earthworm found in Minnesota. All jumping worms are in the genus *Amyntas*. They came from eastern Asia. They were first reported in Minnesota in Loring Park in Minneapolis in 2006. As with other earthworms, none are native to Minnesota. They are a very destructive worm in soils, lawns and plants. An EDDMapS map 10/02/2020 shows how they have spread since 2006 in MN.



EDDMapS map showing jumping worm spread

What they look like and how they act:

Jumping worms are fairly smooth and a light gray or brown color. The most striking difference between jumping worms and other earthworms is their clitellum. The clitellum is the raised band on earthworms. In European earthworms, the clitellum is more raised and swollen and doesn't always go completely around the worm. With jumping worms, the clitellum is cloudy-white to milky pink to gray, is barely raised, goes completely around its body and is closer to the end. Another helpful distinguishing fact is the way they act when disturbed. When disturbed, they are extremely wiggly and can even “jump” out of containers; therefore their name. Some say they move more like a snake, in an “S” pattern, different than an earthworm. They are also capable of losing their tail and still being able to flail. Once an area is infested, there tend to be large numbers of them. They alter the texture of the soil, making it resemble coffee grounds.

Potential Damage

The main concern comes from how jumping worms change our soils. They strip the topsoil of essential nutrients, promoting erosion and killing plants.



Photo credit: Flickr by Alfredo Eloisa

This damage can be done both in urban yards and gardens, and in rural areas with our forests and crops. Damage includes potential harm to our recreation, our economy, and our ecology.

Management of Jumping Worm Spread

As with all earthworms, none of which are native, prevention is the key. Currently, there are no pesticides that work. Steps to take in prevention in the spread are below.

1. This first one seems obvious, but do not purchase jumping worms. Some advertisers use such terms as “snake worms”, “crazy worms” or “Alabama jumpers.”
2. Do not dump unused bait worms outside. Put any unused bait in the trash. This rule goes for all bait worms.
3. Be watchful and question sources when possible to see if jumping worms have been found in soil, potted plants, mulch and compost. In late winter or early Spring, the eggs, which are hard to see, can be present without the worms.
4. If you use worms for composting, make sure you know how to identify the species you ordered. And check your order when you receive it.
5. Clean off your gardening tools before taking them into another location.
6. Use good hygiene when out in nature, cleaning off boots, gear, pets, and vehicles before leaving an area.
7. If dividing plants for others, it's best to share bare-root plants. The next best option is to remove soil from the roots, washing away with water any remaining soil. Repot in clean potting soil.
8. If you think you may have jumping worms, do not share plants or materials.

Reporting Jumping Worms

If you think you have jumping worms, it's important to report them. There are three ways to do this:

1. From a smartphone, download the free app from the Great Lakes Early Detection Network (Great Lakes EDN) and use the app to make your report.
2. On your desktop or laptop computer, visit EDDMapS Midwest and click on “report sightings.”
3. Email the Minnesota Department of Natural resources at laura.vanriper@state.mn.us.

References

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