



JUMPING WORMS IN MAINE 2025 UPDATE

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What are Jumping Worms?

- Invasive earthworm that rapidly eats and disrupts soil nutrients and soil moisture
- First detected in Maine in **2017**
- Populations erupted in 2023
 - Now detected in 13/16 counties



When are they active?

- Worms active from May–October
- Adults **only live 1 year**
- Cocoons overwinter and usually emerge the following spring
- “Seed banking” makes management difficult

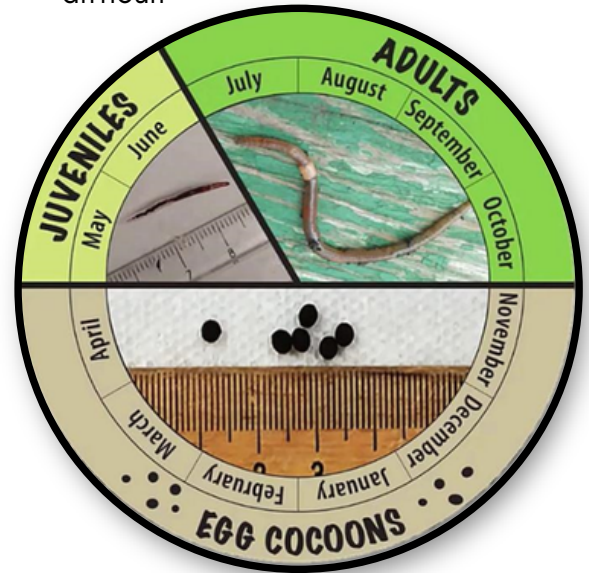
Why are they a concern?

- Dry and loose soils can't support native trees and plants and can lead to erosion

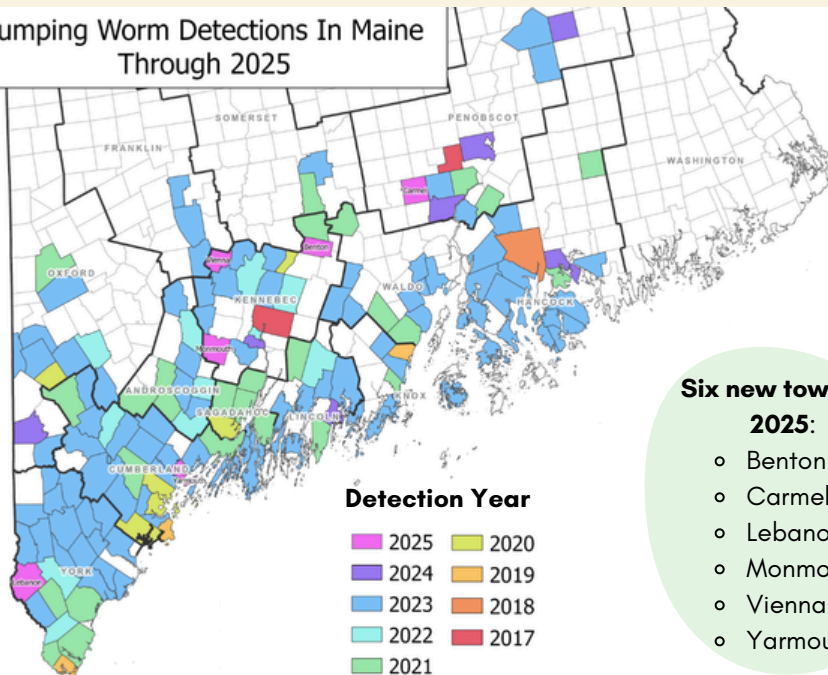


REDUCED:

- Soil nutrients & moisture
- Plant diversity
- Healthy tree roots
- Native insects
- Leaf litter
- Supported wildlife
- Disrupted soil may **support invasive plant species** (garlic mustard, Japanese barberry, glossy buckthorn)



Jumping Worm Detections In Maine Through 2025



Six new towns in 2025:

- Benton
- Carmel
- Lebanon
- Monmouth
- Vienna
- Yarmouth

Where are they?

- Jumping worms can be found on the **top 3 inches** of soil, leaves, mulched garden beds, crop beds, shaded forests, and newly disturbed areas.
- 90+ new towns in 2023
- 7 new towns in 2024

SCAN ME



View the 2025 detection map!

Jumping Worm ID

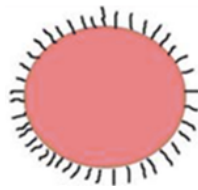
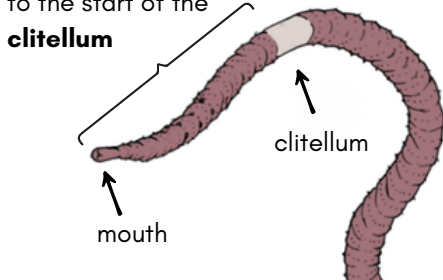
★ Best time to ID jumping worms is after mid-August because that is when most worms will be adults.



1. Clitellum fully **encircles worm** and is found on **segments 14-16**
2. **Bristle-like** hairs



Count from the **mouth** to the start of the **clitellum**



Common Earthworm ID

1. Clitellum is **saddle-shaped** and is found on **segments 32-37**
2. **Widely-paired** hairs

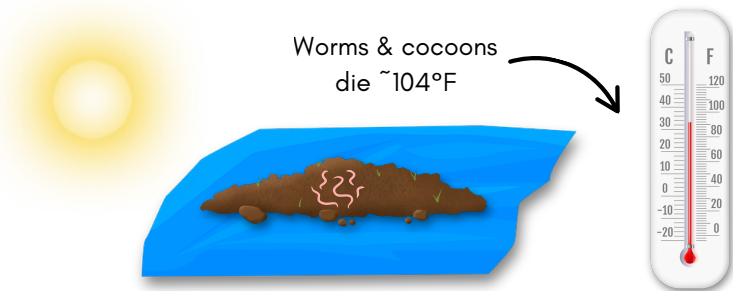


Photos: B. Schappach, Maine Forest Service. Graphics: Portland State University/Oregon State University

★ Young worms do not have a clitellum. A **hand lens** may help you see a worm's *setae* (hairs).

Management

- ★ Eradication of established populations is not a realistic goal for management
- **No products registered** for treatment of jumping worms in Maine
- **Hand-removal** of adult jumping worms may be effective with smaller infestations
 - Place in soapy water and leave for a few days before disposal
- Tilling soil in May before worms turn into adults may reduce populations



Solarization:

- Only effective in **summer**
- Lay out thin layer (~6-8 inches) of infested soil onto tarp, cover with clear drop cloth, and secure sides to make a "package"
- Leave out in direct sun for ~3 days

Prevention

- **Clean soil and debris** from vehicles, gardening equipment, boots, and other gear
- Check soil, compost, and mulch for signs of jumping worms before purchasing
- Ask nurseries if they **heat treat** their soil, mulch, or similar products
- Choose **bare-root plants** over potted when possible

Report suspected jumping worms!

Take photos of worms when reporting



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