

# Creature Feature: Common Earthworm

By: Justin Biehler



# Where They Live

- The common earthworm is found in a multitude of places such as:

North America

Europe

Western Asia



# Where Do They Live in the Soil?

- There are three layers of soil earthworms are found in:

The epigeic species are found at the soil's surface.

The endogeic species are found in the upper soil.

The anecic species are found in deep soil.

More on Each layer:

Epigeic is for species that are always in contact with the soil surface (cannot fly, burrow, or swim)

Endogeic is for species living in upper soil regions (no permanent burrows)

Anecic is for species living deep into the soil

# Role in the Soil

- Earthworms play a vital role in soil health. More specifically they are able to help:
  - Increase microbial activity
  - Provide root growth channels
  - Improve water-holding capacity
- Their most important job could be their role as decomposers and recyclers

# Why are Earthworms Important?

- Earthworms are important to their ecosystems and to us as they keep the soil healthy.
- They are also important to us because a healthy ecosystem provides better land that we are able to work with and to create natural beauty we can enjoy.



# Threats?

- Earthworms are currently listed at the level of *least concern*.
- Here are a few things you can do to encourage earthworms around you:

Ensure the soil pH level is above 4.5

Increase organic matter

Permanent pasture, green manure crops, crop stubble, and rotating pasture with crops all help build organic matter.

Reduce use of some fertilizer and fungicides, keep the soil moist, improve drainage

# References

- Blackmore, Susan. "Why Do Earthworms Surface after Rain?" BBC Science Focus Magazine, 2020, [www.sciencefocus.com/nature/why-do-earthworms-surface-after-rain/](http://www.sciencefocus.com/nature/why-do-earthworms-surface-after-rain/).
- "Common Earthworm Classification (Taxonomy) and Characteristics." Biology Wise, 20 May 2009, [biologywise.com/earthworm-classification-taxonomy](http://biologywise.com/earthworm-classification-taxonomy).
- Edwards, Clive A. "Natural Resources Conservation Service." Earthworms | NRCS Soils, 2020, [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/soils/health/biology/?cid=nrcs142p2\\_053863](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/soils/health/biology/?cid=nrcs142p2_053863).
- "How Earthworms Can Help Your Soil." NSW Department of Primary Industries, 1 Jan. 1970, [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/soils/biology/earthworms](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/soils/biology/earthworms).
- Miller, Matthew L., et al. "The Real Reason You See Earthworms After Rain." Cool Green Science, 30 Apr. 2019, [blog.nature.org/science/2019/04/15/the-real-reason-you-see-earthworms-after-rain/](http://blog.nature.org/science/2019/04/15/the-real-reason-you-see-earthworms-after-rain/).
- Spence, Trent. "Don't Forget the Squirmies!" Holeman Landscape, 25 Mar. 2014, [www.holemanlandscape.com/2014/03/25/dont-forget-squirmies/](http://www.holemanlandscape.com/2014/03/25/dont-forget-squirmies/).