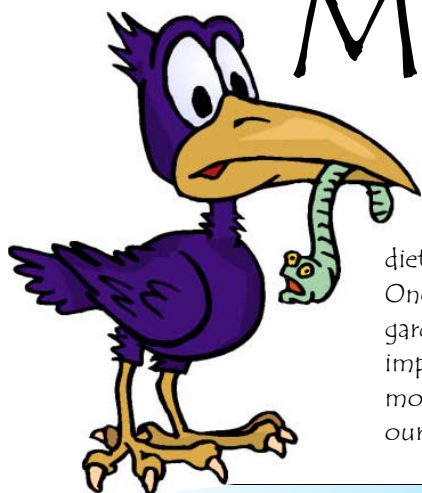


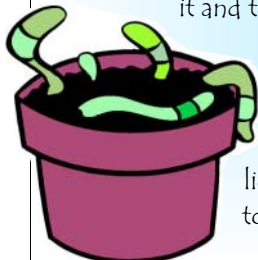
More Worms



On page 4, Captain Cockle tells us all about marine worms, but worms are found on land too. Worms are invertebrates (they don't have a backbone) and form part of the diet of many animals. This makes them an important link in most foodchains. One worm that most of us have seen is the earthworm, which can be found in the soil in your garden. (The next time the garden is being dug, see if you can find one!) Earthworms are very important for creating soil. They feed on debris, such as rotting leaves and plants. This food moves through their body and what comes out the other end contains nutrients that help build our soil!

What's a Wormery?

A wormery is a special bin that contains special types of worms. When food, such as rotten vegetables, stale bread or eggshells, are added to the bin, these worms will digest it and turn it into rich compost, which can then be used in the garden. The wormery will also produce a nutrient-rich liquid which can be used to feed plants.



Nasty Worms!

Some worms are of real benefit to us, such as earthworms. However there are worms that are not so good. Some are parasites, which means they live in other animals and cause them harm. Farmers in particular can have an awful time trying to rid their animals of worms. For example, leaf-shaped worms known as liver flukes can live in the bile-ducts of sheep, making them very sick and sometimes causing them to die. One of the worst parasitic flatworms is the tapeworm, which lives in the intestines of some animals. It has no mouth and absorbs food through the walls of its body.



The longest worm – One of the longest animals in the world is the giant ribbon worm that lives on the lower shore, coiled in a gentle knot. Specimens measuring 5 – 10 m are not uncommon but a specimen measuring 30 m (100ft) has been found and it is thought these worms might even reach 60 m in length if they stretch their body. Although they can grow very long, they are only about 5-10mm wide. These worms are found throughout northwest Europe and are usually found under stones on mud and muddy sand.



When is a worm not a worm?

Often the name "worm" is used to describe the young of some insects, such as beetles (grubs) and flies (maggots). Even the silk worm is not a worm. It is the caterpillar of a moth.

There is another type of "worm" that isn't even an animal! If you are reading this newsletter, then it's likely you are sitting at a computer. Computers, especially those connected to the internet, are open to attack from "bad" files known by such names as *worms*, *viruses* and *trojans*. These "bad" files could copy information from your computer, use your computer without your permission or even destroy everything on it! So, though your computer may be infected by a *worm* or a *virus*, it doesn't mean that there is a worm wriggling around inside or a virus needing to be cleaned with disinfectant!

