

Latin name : Lumbricina

Size : 7 to 8 cm

Lifespan : 1 to 2 years, up to 8 years

Earthworm

All worms are hermaphroditic, meaning that they have both male and female reproductive organs. The ring we see on their body, the clitellum, is used for reproduction. It is a structure that descends from the head to the tail before being expelled, collecting the eggs that will be fertilised a little further down via the male organs. A cocoon is formed, which is sealed and buried so that the embryos can develop.



There are several types of earthworm. Some make vertical burrows in the ground, between 1 and 2 metres deep, in which they move to feed at night on leaves that have fallen to the surface of the soil, which they drag into their burrows. They defecate as they pass over the surface, depositing their turricules (small towers). Others dig horizontal galleries in the ground, which they use to move around. They can burrow very deep into the soil. Others live on the surface of the soil in leaf litter.

Earthworms are very useful for soil health. Their digestion transforms organic matter into mineral matter, which is then taken up by plants in their roots.