

How to Identify an Asian Jumping Worm

Appearance

The jumping worm has a dark body with a buff- to cream-colored band near its head (called a clitellum). Common European earthworms such as night crawlers typically (but not always) have a darker head but light pink bodies and a clitellum that is about the same color. The clitellum on night crawlers is also farther from the head and may not completely encircle the body.

Movement

Like snakes, Asian jumping worms move along the ground with a vigorous “S-like” movement. (This is why they are also called snake worms.) A European earthworm moves much more slowly; it stretches out its head to where it wants to go, then pulls its body to meet it.

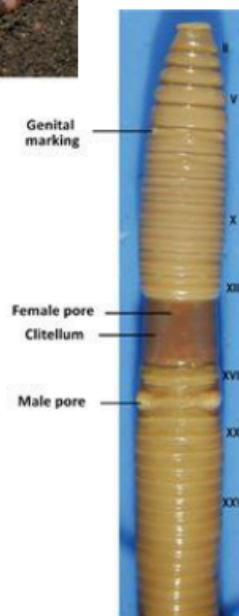
Texture

Still unsure which worm you may be dealing with? Give it a touch. A European earthworm is generally slimy to the touch and will coil into a ball or flatten its body when touched. Asian jumping worms are smooth but not slimy to the touch, and they live up to their name! When disturbed, these worms flail about wildly—even jumping off the ground to distract perceived assailants, enabling a quick escape.

Earthworm anatomy

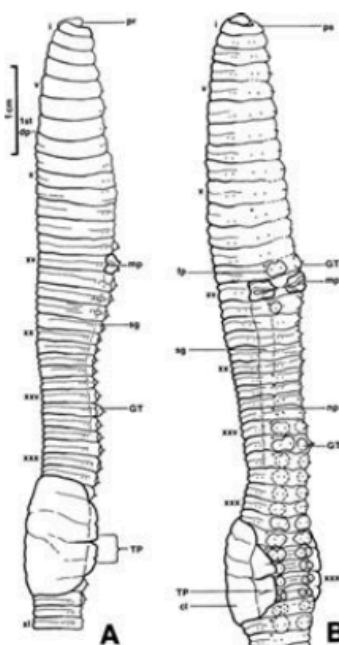


Jumping worm



- Dark or metallic pigment throughout
- Clitellum close to front of worm

European worm



- Becomes light at the tail
- Clitellum close to middle of worm
- Flattened beaver tail