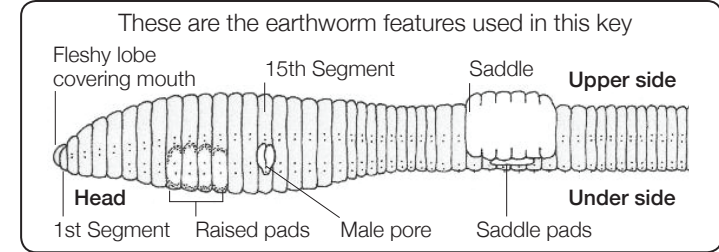


Earthworm Identification Guide

This guide can be used for the OPAL Soil and Earthworm Survey



Start here
Note that line drawings show the typical sizes of adult earthworms



Is it more than 2cm long, AND does it have a clearly developed saddle?



The saddle is usually a different colour to the rest of the body, and slightly wider

No

It is not a mature earthworm - you can't identify it with this Guide. At least 50% of the earthworms you find will be immature

Yes

Is the whole body clearly stripy on its upper surface when moving?



No

Yes

Stripy earthworms

Which description best matches your worm? Is the body:

A Longer and wider or **B** Shorter and narrower?

A

Saddle usually pale

B

Saddle usually similar colour to the rest of the body

Hint
Can exude an unpleasant smelling yellowish fluid when handled

1. Compost worm *Eisenia veneta*

2. Brandling worm *Eisenia fetida*

No

Yes

Is it greenish?



3. Green worm (green form) *Allolobophora chlorotica*

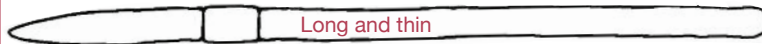
Hints
Often curls up in the hand
Yellow ring on body
Has 3 pairs of sucker-like discs (see 13)
Can exude a yellow fluid when handled

5. Black-headed worm *Aporrectodea longa*



Hint

Often a dark purplish head, the rear end of the body is much paler



Long and thin

Which description best matches your worm? Is the body:

A Long and relatively thin or **B** Long and relatively fat?



Long and fat

Hint

A stout worm, often as thick as a pencil



Sometimes it flattens its tail into a wide paddle shape

6. Lob worm *Lumbricus terrestris*

Yes

Are the male pores visible?



No

Yes

Is the earthworm longer than 8cm when NOT moving?

No

Red earthworms

Yes

Is the upper surface of the body, from the first segment to the saddle, entirely dark in colour (dark red, purplish red or chestnut brown)?

No



No

Is the body from the first segment to the saddle partly or entirely pale in colour (whitish, pink or grey)? It may have some reddish or dark segments



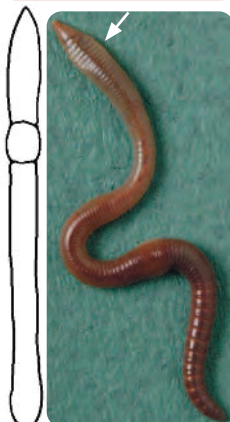
Return to start

Pale earthworms

Key continues on the other side

Key continues on the other side

Hint
Sometimes slightly flattens its tail into a paddle shape



4. Redhead worm *Lumbricus rubellus*

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10. Rosy-tipped worm *Aporrectodea rosea*

Hints
 The head is usually rosy pink or pale pink up to the male pores
 Often has 2 or more whitish raised pads before the male pores. The saddle is usually orange, and can be wider towards the rear end

8. Chestnut worm *Lumbricus castaneus*

9. Little tree worm *Satchellius mammalis*

Is there a raised whitish gland visible on the underside between the saddle and the head?

Yes → [Chestnut worm]
No → [Green worm]

Is the swelling around the male pore only covering one segment?

Yes → [Octagonal-tailed worm]
No → [Are the male pores visible?]

Are the male pores visible?

Visible → [Little tree worm]
Not visible → [Red earthworms]

You have probably found a rare worm which is not in this key. Record it as unidentified

Is the swelling around the male pores broad, covering the entire width of adjacent segments?

Yes → [Little tree worm]
No → [Grey worm]

13. Green worm (pale form) *Allolobophora chlorotica*

Hints
 Has 3 pairs of sucker-like discs on the underside of alternate segments of the saddle, **not always easy to see**. The yellow ring can be faint
 Often curls up in the hand
 Can exude a yellow fluid when handled

Does the worm have this colour combination?

Pink or pale grey	Whitish	Darker grey
		Saddle

Yes → [Blue-grey worm]
No → [Does it have a yellow ring towards the head?]

Does it have a yellow ring towards the head?

Yes → [Blue-grey worm]
No → [Does the front end up to the saddle...]

Hints
 The front end up to the saddle is usually in three distinct shades: pink or pale grey, then whitish, and then darker grey
 The saddle pads usually form a two-humped ridge across three segments, but these can be difficult to see

11. Grey worm *Aporrectodea caliginosa*

12. Blue-grey worm *Octolasion cyaneum*

Hints
 Distinct yellow tail
 Can vary from faint blue-grey to a pale rosy pink colour
 May have a lilac-blue line on the upper surface

Tail not yellow or only slightly yellow

Are the last four or five segments distinctly yellow?

Yes → [Blue-grey worm]
No → [Does the front end up to the saddle...]

