

Crazy Snake Worms in Connecticut

November 14, 2019



ALERT: Crazy Snake Worms. New invasive worms to Connecticut. Avoid spreading Crazy Snake Worms (or Jumping Worms, *Amyntas* spp.) in your gardens, yards, and forests.

Be on the alert for these new pests spreading into New Haven County. This is serious. This complex of at least three worm species can kill or damage trees and

plants by decreasing growth, health, and vigor. This also includes our forest plants and trees. These worms are prohibited in New York State.

Damage

The worms are found in leaf litter and the soil below to a depth of 8". They change the composition of soil thereby depleting nutrients needed by plants. They reproduce very quickly and are highly invasive. We don't yet have controls for them.

Where are they found in Connecticut? Litchfield County is reporting damage to lawns by the worms, and they have been reported in Fairfield and now New Haven Counties, including the town of Branford.

How are they spread? One frequent way is by movement of leaf litter for mulch or compost, via landscape supply companies who harvest from infested areas. In addition, they can come into your gardens with purchases of nursery plants and soil materials such as topsoil, compost or even as fish bait.

Prevention

1. **Identification**-- The worms have a **white, unsegmented band (saddle)** toward the head that's flat. They are especially active and can jump. This is where they got their name. Destroy them by solarization or drowning in a bucket of water. Do not put them in your compost.
2. Do not accept leaf mulch, compost or topsoil from an unknown source. Buy local. Before buying new compost or topsoil for your garden, ask your landscaper or supply company where they got their product from. If they don't know, look for a supplier that does.
3. Inspect any amendments for Crazy Worms before purchase. If you are really concerned, you can have the supply company screen the soil before purchase.
4. Check potted plants. Inspect nursery trees, shrubs, and plants before buying. The worms are usually in the soil, so inspect the potted soil closely.
5. For more information call The Connecticut Agricultural Experimental Station at (203) 974-8600

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References:

1. Cornell Cooperative Extension, October 14, 2019-- <http://ulster.cce.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-pests/jumping-worm>.
2. Jumping Worm Video -- <http://ccecolumbiagreene.org/resources/jumping-worm-claymation-video>