

# earthworm NURSERY

Before redeeming the coupon and payment for your Earthworm Cocoons, make sure you are ready to receive and care for your hatchlings. Remember to plan for any school breaks, holidays, or extended weekends that may interrupt the project. Redeem your coupon and \$4.00 fee Online at [www.insectlore.com/coupon](http://www.insectlore.com/coupon), or by Mail.

## CARING FOR YOUR EARTHWORM COCOONS

Open your Earthworm Cocoons™ mailing container immediately. If for any reason you cannot prepare your cocoons right away, you can place them in the refrigerator for up to a week.



Hand crushing the soil brick – figure 1

Place the soil brick into a plastic bag and add 4 ounces of water. Let the soil absorb the water, then crush the soil brick by hand. You can also stir the soil to help the water absorb into the soil. After crushing, open the bag over the sink, then squeeze the soil so any excess water dribbles out.

Remove the Earthworm Nursery™ outer housing and empty the soil into the inner tray. Take a piece of paper towel, fold it in half three times, and then saturate it with cold water. Hold it over the sink until water stops dripping from it. Place this wet towel on top of the soil – you'll keep this towel moist while your worms are growing up by giving it a squirt or two of water from the included pipette. Change the towel as needed. Put the inner tray back into the Nursery and replace the outer housing and roof, making sure the top is secure so the soil will retain moisture.

Next, place the Encapsulated Earthworm Cocoons™ into their rinsing net, then submerge the net in a cup of cold or room-temperature water (figure 2). Let them soak for 15 to 60 minutes. This will help to dissolve the protective coating that covers the cocoons.



Soak for 30 mins – figure 2

While the cocoons are soaking, remove the top from the Earthworm Nursery™ hatching chamber and add enough water to cover your cocoons. One quarter inch is fine, but you can fill the hatching chamber deeper if you like. Worms breathe through their skin and get their oxygen from the water. If your worms' skin dries out, they will die. Moisture is very important... worms need oxygenated water to live.



Rinsing – figure 3

When your cocoons are finished soaking, take the cup with your Encapsulated Earthworm Cocoons™ to the sink and pour the cup's water through the rinsing net. With your earthworm cocoons in the net, use cold water to rinse away the rest of the coating from the cocoons (figure 3).

Rinsing them until there is

no longer any more coating material is important, don't miss this point! Turn the rinsing net inside out and gently tap or brush your cocoons into the water in the Earthworm Nursery™ hatching chamber. Do NOT put any coating material inside the hatching chamber along with the cocoons. If



Into the Hatching Chamber – figure 4

some cocoons stick to the net, use the included paint brush to dislodge them (figure 4). Once they're all in the hatching chamber, replace the top and get a good look at them through the magnifying cap!

## HATCHING YOUR EARTHWORMS

The cocoons need to stay wet throughout the earthworms' hatching period, so be sure to check the water level daily during the hatching period.

Some of your cocoons may hatch overnight; some may not hatch for weeks. Expect that some of your cocoons will hatch before others. This is perfectly normal. When worms hatch, remove the domed top, wet the paintbrush, and use it to lift or gently brush the worms onto the soil in the Earthworm Nursery™ (figure 5).

You can put your newly hatched babies into the Earthworm Nursery™ any time after they hatch. If you'd like to continue observing them, they can be kept in hatching chamber as long as there is oxygenated water, and you see that they are active and healthy.

## FEEDING AND WATERING TIPS

Feed your baby earthworms very sparingly. Place the earthworm food atop the soil underneath the wet paper towel, and add no more than just a few granules of the special feed a day – like the amount you would shake from a salt shaker. Do not feed them any more than they can eat in a day. If feed starts to accumulate, stop adding any until it is all gone, then resume feeding.

Use the pipette to squirt two to three bulbs of fresh water onto the towel atop the soil. Don't over water – just keep the towel moist. If you feel the soil needs watering, give it a squirt or two from your pipette. If you see fog, condensation, or water droplets form on the insides of the Nursery, it's a good sign that your soil is moist.

## RELEASING YOUR EARTHWORMS

You can keep can keep all the earthworms that hatch in your Nursery as long as you have food, or until the soil becomes moldy or begins to smell. After three months your worms will be fully grown, and you can release some of them outdoors in flower patches or into a garden. If temperatures are cold, you may find some warmer ground nearer a building or even indoors, if there's an atrium filled with plants nearby. When you're ready to release them, take the Earthworm Nursery™ outdoors, remove the top, and deposit the soil near a plant that looks like it needs some love and nutrition. The plant will appreciate the healthy soil you've created and the work your worms will do to aerate the ground around its roots!



Earthworm Nursery™ features Vermipod™ brand Encapsulated Earthworm Cocoons™.

Vermipod™



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