

**Leaves = Food  
for worms and  
other animals.  
This is called  
organic matter  
in the soil.**

# **Worm tunnels allow more water to enter the soil**

**They act as a duct for rain & oxygen.  
Help reduce dangers of water-caused  
erosion! By letting the  
water infiltrate into the soil quicker!**

**Worm tunnels  
make it easier  
for roots and  
plants to grow.**

**As roots grow and reach the worm  
tunnel they can get into the  
ground easier!**

**Worm tunnels  
allow air to enter  
the soil.**

**Worms break through the muddy  
soil after rainfall. These openings  
in the soil help with successful  
root and plant growth and allow  
air to enter the soil!**

**Worms and  
other animals  
mix the soil by  
tunneling.**





**Worms help  
water  
flow through  
the soil!**

## **Worm Doo-Doo = Plant food**

Worm castings are a mixture of organic substances, microorganisms, and soil. When passing through the digestive system of the worm these are mixed together forming an awesome fertilizer. The worm castings have a higher concentration of nutrients than the surrounding soil. Plants with roots growing in tunnels lined by worm castings show a better uptake of nutrients and healthier growth.





**An earthworm can grow only so long. A well-fed adult will depend on what kind of worm it is, how many segments it has, how old it is and how well fed it is.**



**A worm  
has no  
arms,  
legs or  
eyes.**



Source: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/worms/facts/index.html>

**There are  
approximately  
2,700  
different kinds  
of earthworms.**



Source: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/worms/facts/index.html>

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**Worms live where there  
is food, moisture,  
oxygen and a favorable  
temperature.**

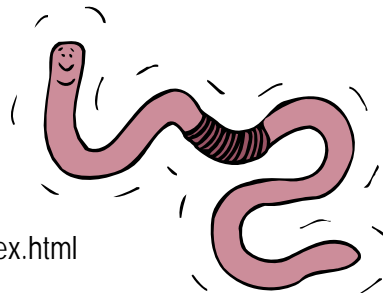
**If they don't have these  
things, they go  
somewhere else.**



**In one acre of  
land, there  
can be more  
than a million  
earthworms.**

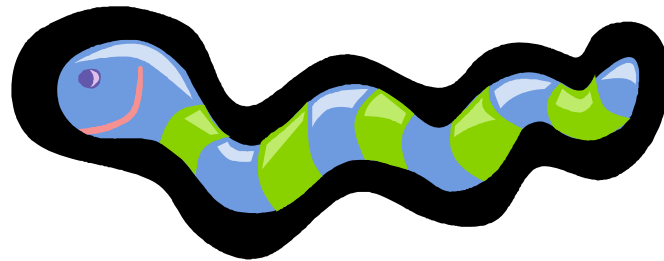


**The largest  
earthworm ever  
found was in South  
Africa and measured  
22 feet from its nose  
to the tip of its tail.**



Source: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/worms/facts/index.html>

**Charles Darwin  
spent 39 years  
studying  
earthworms more  
than 100 years ago.**



# **Worms are cold-blooded animals.**



Source: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/worms/facts/index.html>

**If a worm's  
skin dries  
out, it will  
die.**





**Worms can  
eat their  
weight each  
day.**



## Q. How do worms eat?

A. They don't have teeth but they have strong mouth muscles. Dew worms or nightcrawlers often surface at night to pull fallen leaves down into their burrow. When the leaf softens a little they pull off small bits to munch on. Worms also "swallow" soil as they burrow.

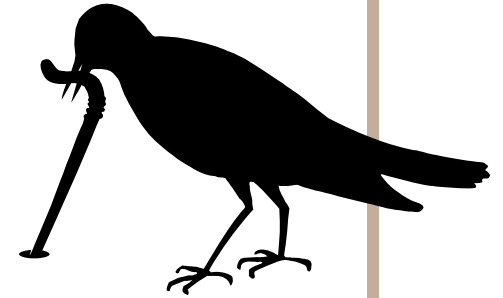


**Q. Why do earthworms stay underground and seldom come out of the soil?**

**A.** Darkness lets them avoid being dried out by the sun. If their skin dries out, they can no longer breathe. Light paralyzes them if they're in it more than an hour. Then they can't move back to the safety of the soil.



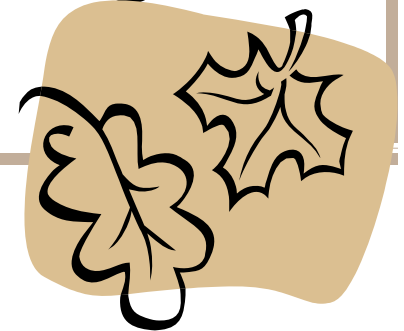
**Q. Why do robins tug at earthworms in the soil?**



**A.** Worms use the many tiny bristles or setae on each of their body rings to help them crawl as well as to anchor themselves firmly in their burrows. The robin has to tug because the worm is gripping the soil!

## Q. What do earthworms eat?

**A.** Earthworms eat soil! Their nutrition comes from things in soil, such as decaying roots and leaves. Animal manures are an important food source for earthworms. They eat living organisms such as nematodes, protozoans, rotifers, bacteria, fungi in soil. Worms will also feed on the decomposing remains of other animals.

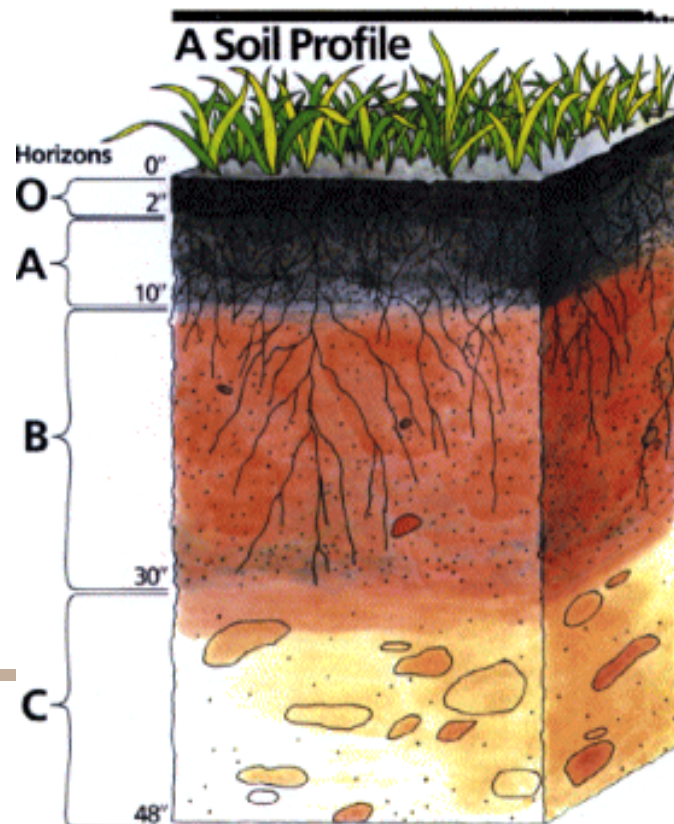


**Q. Can worms crawl forward and reverse?**

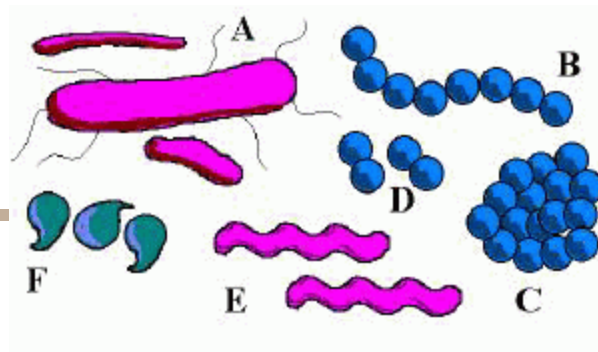
**A. Yes. Even though worms can move both frontward and backward they tend to travel forward more.**



**It takes more than  
500 years to form  
one inch of topsoil.**



**In one gram of soil, there are over 5,000 different types of bacteria.**





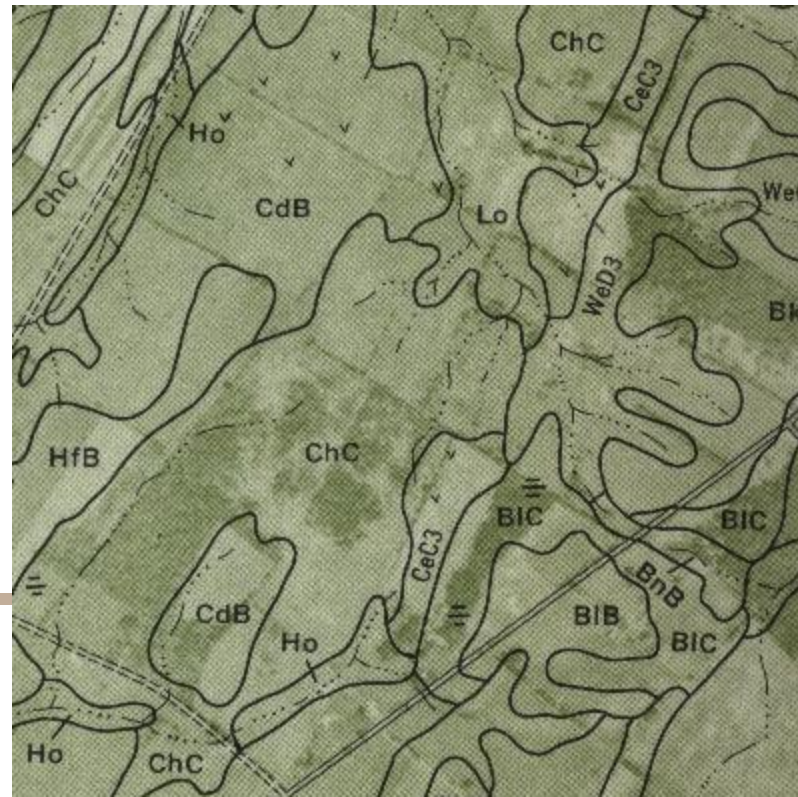
**Nearly all antibiotics  
used to fight our  
infections are  
obtained from soil  
organisms**



**One tablespoon of  
soil has more  
organisms in it than  
people on Earth.**



**There are more than  
70,000 types of soil  
in the United States.**



Source: [www.soils.org](http://www.soils.org)