

Earthworm

A quiz for earthworm experts

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Thing you know your earthworms? Then look at the following statements and decide if they're true or false.

Earthworms incorporate crop residue, fertilizer and lime.

Earthworms increase soil structure and reduce crusting, improving crop emergence.

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Earthworms increase water holding capacity of soils.

Earthworms increase water infiltration rates (water drains away faster).

A healthy population of earthworms could have 1,100 miles of burrows per acre.

Earthworms may reproduce up to 33 tonnes per hectare of castings.

Earthworms increase the solubility of phosphorous in the soil.

Earthworms lay 20 to 40 cocoons per year.

They reach maturity in less than one year but might live for up to nine years.

Populations build up slowly and it takes years for populations to build up after a change in tillage practices.

There are up to 3,000 species of earthworms in the world, but only a handful are common in Ontario.

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Population in one study showed 10 earthworms per square metre in plowed continuous corn and 20 per square metre in no-till corn (10 years).

Populations were six times higher in continuous soybeans than in corn.

A clover and ryegrass pasture had over 470 earthworms/square metre in the pasture that was manured.

Earthworms prefer to eat alfalfa or red clover over corn or bromegrass.

Populations increase on manured soils.

Populations may decrease with high rates of liquid manure.

Seagulls only get six per cent of the population when plowing. The plow kills 20 per cent. The plow also removes the residue that feeds them.

Pesticides vary in their toxicity to earthworms. In the extremely toxic category are: Benylate, Thimet, Sevin, chloropicrin, and Chlordane. Furadan ranks as very toxic. The moderately toxic include: Dyfonate, Counter, simizine.

Falling into the slightly toxic category are: Diazinon, Malathion, 2,4-D, DDT, pyrethroids, atrazine, cyanazine, glyphosate, linuron and paraquat are considered non-toxic.

Most herbicides have very little direct effect on earthworms.

Ammonia is toxic to earthworms.

Ammonium sulphate is used in some parts of the world to kill earthworms on low pH soils (not effective on neutral or alkaline soils).

How did you make out? All statements above are true.