

White Worms

Genus: *Enchytraeus*
Family: Lumbriculidae
Order: Haplotaxida
Class: Oligochaeta
Phylum: Annelida
Kingdom: Animalia



Conditions for Customer Ownership

We hold permits allowing us to transport these organisms. To access permit conditions, [click here](#).

Never purchase living specimens without having a disposition strategy in place.

There are currently no USDA permits required for this organism. In order to protect our environment, never release a live laboratory organism into the wild.

Primary Hazard Considerations

White worms do not pose any hazard considerations for handlers, although it is recommended to wash your hands after handling the worms.

Availability

White worms are available year-round.

Arrival Care

Our white worms are shipped in wax food containers, with soil as their substrate; a moist paper towel may be used to help keep moisture during shipment. Holes are placed in the lid for air exchange. Enchytraeus or white worms may be held in a refrigerator in containers of soil, but will need to be fed in about a week. They are very thin, white worms about ¼ inch long.

Captive Care

Habitat:

- White worms must be kept in moist, but not wet, soil. Therefore, the container should be water resistant. It should be covered to prevent escape, yet still allow for air exchange. Clear plastic or glass containers will allow you to evaluate your cultures without digging. Use a rich organic soil as a substrate; potting soil or seed starter works well. For long-term storage of the worms, it is recommended that you incorporate new soil on a regular basis. The worms will survive at room temperature but are very sensitive to high temperatures. Therefore, cultures may be kept in a refrigerator at 50–60° F (10–15°C).
- **Food:** White bread soaked in milk works well. Feed the worms once a week by burying the food in furrows across the container. Crackers, bread crumbs, and rolled oats soaked in milk can also be used. If the bread starts to bear mold, remove from the culture and replace with new food.

Information

- **Method of reproduction:** White worms are hermaphrodites (both male and female reproductive organs within the same organism), but reproduce sexually. The mating pair overlap front ends ventrally and each exchanges sperm with the other. The mating process occurs slowly in lower temperature; ideal conditions are around 65–70°F (20–22°C). The fertilized eggs are in an egg case (formed by the clitellum, the wide segment near the anterior end) that slips off the worm and is left in the soil. Each cocoon contains about 10 eggs. Eggs are laid about once a month.

Life Cycle

Eggs hatch in about 12 days. Sexual maturity is reached after about 20 days.

Disposition

If you no longer want your vinegar eels, you may:

- Feed them to fish.
- Autoclave them in a beaker at 121°C for 15 minutes.
- With plenty of tap water running, pour them down the drain.