

词汇: worms 蠕虫

Are **worms** the heroes we didn't know we needed? Silent, **slimy** and **wriggling**, you might think that worms are good for nothing except **bait** on the end of a fishing rod. However, there is more to the **humble** worm than meets the eye.

The British **naturalist** Charles Darwin said that no other animal has "played such an important part in the history of the world as these **lowly** organised **creatures**". They have lived on Earth for 600 million years and have even survived five **mass extinctions**. So, what do worms do that is so great?

Earthworms literally move the earth, and this is why farmers love them. As they travel, they **aerate** the **soil** by **loosening**, mixing and **oxygenating** it, which increases the ground's capacity to hold and drain water. They are effectively a small but very efficient **plough**. But it's not just earthworms that deserve praise.

In 2022, a group of scientists at the Margarita Salas Center for Biological Research isolated **enzymes** found in **wax worm saliva** which are **plastic-eating**. These can break down polyethylene, a very common plastic that normally degrades over many years. It's hoped that by producing these enzymes on an industry-level scale, we will have a more environmentally friendly way to reduce plastic pollution.

And worms are even inspiring the building industry. **Bloodworms** are small sea creatures which **burrow** into the mud of the ocean floor. Scientists at the University of California, Santa Barbara have been studying their **jaws**, which are made up of 10% copper proteins and are so strong that they last the worm's entire five-year lifespan. Because of this research, engineers may start using the jaws as inspiration for the design and manufacture of materials like concrete.

So, next time you see a worm, show it a little respect. They really are changing the world!

词汇表

worm	蠕虫
slimy	黏糊糊的
wriggling	蠕动着, 扭动着的
bait	(鱼) 饵
humble	不起眼的, 普通的
naturalist	博物学家
lowly	低等的
creature	动物, 生物
mass extinction	(生物) 聚群绝灭
earthworm	蚯蚓
aerate	使(土壤)透气
soil	土壤
loosen	松动
oxygenate	给...供氧
plough	犁
enzyme	酶
wax worm	蜡虫
saliva	唾液
plastic-eating	分解塑料的
bloodworm	血虫
burrow	钻, 打洞
jaws	口部

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. How long have worms existed on Earth?
2. How do earthworms help farmers?
3. True or False? *Wax worms eat plastic.*
4. Why might enzymes help to reduce plastic pollution?
5. What makes the jaws of the bloodworm so special?

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. I hate touching animals like slugs and frogs – they're so _____!

lowly	slimy	humble	plastic-eating
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2. They are trying to remove the rats – they have _____ into the riverbank.

loosened	aerated	burrowed	oxygenated
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3. We often use worms as _____ when we go fishing.

bait	enzyme	jaws	extinction
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4. Only use this in emergencies. It's a blanket that's _____ to fire.

efficient	resistant	wriggling	inspiring
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5. This new plant isn't growing. I think it should be in sand, not _____.

saliva	soil	naturalist	creature
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. How long have worms existed on Earth?

They have lived on Earth for 600 million years.

2. How do earthworms help farmers?

As they travel, they aerate the soil by loosening, mixing and oxygenating it, which increases the ground's capacity to hold and drain water.

3. True or False? *Wax worms eat plastic.*

False. Enzymes found in wax worm saliva are plastic-eating.

4. Why might enzymes help to reduce plastic pollution?

Because the enzymes can break down polyethylene, a very common plastic that normally degrades over many years.

5. What makes the jaws of the bloodworm so special?

They are made up of 10% copper proteins and are so resistant that they last the worm's entire five-year lifespan.

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. I hate touching animals like slugs and frogs – they're so **slimy!**

2. They are trying to remove the rats – they have **burrowed** into the riverbank.

3. We often use worms as **bait** when we go fishing.

4. Only use this in emergencies. It's a blanket that's **resistant** to fire.

5. This new plant isn't growing. I think it should be in sand, not **soil**.