

# STOP THE SPREAD: EARTHWORM EDUCATION

Earthworm photo from Bernie Williams

## Earthworms are NOT Native to the Great Lakes

Native earthworm species have never been documented in most of the Great Lakes region of North America. Earthworms arrived with the European settlers around the mid 1800s.



Photos by Great Lakes Worm Watch

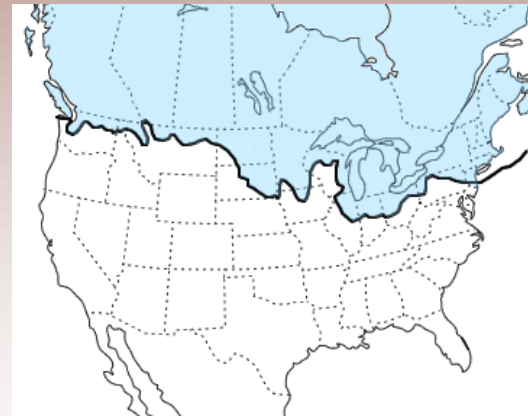


Photo by Great Lakes Worm Watch

Area in blue is where glaciers occurred and no earthworms existed.

## Earthworms Dramatically Change the Hardwood Forests

Changes include: losses of native understory plant species and tree seedlings, changes in soil structure and declines in nutrient availability, and other changes in the forest that affect small mammal, bird and amphibian populations, increase the impacts of herbivores like white-tailed deer, and facilitate invasions of other exotic species such as European slugs and exotic plants like buckthorn and garlic mustard.

## How are Earthworms Spread?

Earthworms are transported, intentionally and unintentionally, through a range of human activities such as the dumping of unused fishing bait and transporting compost & mulch. Earthworms eggs can also be transported by hikers shoes and boots.

## What You Can Do!

When done fishing, dispose of any live bait into a garbage receptacle. When hiking rinse the bottom of your boots or shoes to prevent eggs from being spread to your next hiking location! Lastly, if driving an ATV, rinse the soil from all treaded tires before heading to your next destination.

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