

Earthworms in Gardens

Earthworms have a significant impact on garden soil. When earthworms eat, they do two important things: They shred organic matter in the soil and till the soil by tunneling through it. This creates tiny tunnels underground that aerate the soil, allow more water into the soil, and helps to allow beneficial bacteria in the soil to flourish, which in turn also helps to break down organic matter in the soil. As earthworms tunnel through soil, they also help to mix microorganisms and organic matter into the soil and produce tiny bits of excrement called “castings”, which help to fertilize the soil.

All of these things mean that worms help plants to get the air, water and nutrients that they need, and also support plant root growth. This helps produce better quality fruits and vegetables, and can even increase garden production.



Image from: <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemap/2013/04/earthworms-a-nightmare-for-americas-orchids/>

Reflections:

1. In what ways do earthworms benefit plants?

Adapted from: <http://www.mnn.com/your-home/organic-farming-gardening/stories/the-dirt-on-earthworms>

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2. Where do you think the earthworms effects would be helpful? Is there anywhere you think they could be harmful?

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION