

# Agriculture Adventure for Families

Our Family Adventure this month focuses on the role of earthworms in getting your soil ready for planting. Earthworms are one of the main contributors to the soil ecosystem because they help restore soil nutrients, improve soil structure and allow water and air to enter the soil. If you don't find any worms in your garden, you may need to research the causes. If there are few earthworms in your garden it could mean that the soil is compacted or low in organic material. Take your family out into the garden and start digging. What a fun adventure! If you need advice on your soil or worms, feel free to call our Master Gardeners here at the farm bureau on Mondays or Thursdays from 9am-1:00pm.

Spring showers bring flowers...  
and earthworms!

Worms breathe through their skins. They don't mind the soil around them being wet, but if their tunnels are flooded, they come up to the surface to move around more easily.

When it's very hot and the soil gets too dry to slither through, a worm will wriggle down to where the soil is still damp, curl up, and wait for rain.

When it's very cold, a worm will wriggle down even deeper, below the frost level, and curl up with other worms for warmth.

Source: *Yucky Worms* By Vivian French

Do worms have teeth?

Earthworms are considered good friends of farmers and gardeners, and have proved to be helpful in agriculture. They enable farmers in effective plowing, manuring, and harrowing. They till the ground and create small tunnels that allow air and moisture to pass through, which, in turn, helps in plant growth. Tunnels store water that can be used by plants and allow the air to pass, which causes bacteria to break down organic matter within the soil. After they digest food, they produce excreta that is known as 'casting' or 'vermicompost', which functions as a good soil-conditioning material. It improves the porosity of soil and helps it retain moisture.

Source: [www.animalsake.com/earthworm-facts](http://www.animalsake.com/earthworm-facts)

Worms cannot really chew their food like you do. They do have something inside of them close to their mouth called a gizzard. You might have heard this word before because birds, including chickens and turkeys, have a gizzard almost like worms. As they eat their food, some grains of sand and soil get into their gizzard. These grains of sand and soil push against each other, mix with moisture and grind the food into tiny pieces (kind of like their own personal food processor). When the food leaves the gizzard, it goes into the intestine. The food is dissolved there and absorbed into the blood. Then it is carried to all parts of their body to keep them strong, healthy and slimy.

Source: [www.extension.illinois.edu/worms/anatomy/anatomy](http://www.extension.illinois.edu/worms/anatomy/anatomy)

This classic by Doreen Cronin, is written from the perspective of a worm. He lives with his parents, plays with his friends, and even goes to school. There are differences, however, such as he never has to take a bath, he gets to eat his homework, and he can't chew gum. Enjoy this book whether you are young or old as the lessons taught are presented in a humorous, engaging way. A farm bureau favorite here in Cook County.

No, worms do not have teeth.

A worm has ridged muscles all along it's body. To move, it pushes it's front end forward,

And uses it's bristles to hold that end in place while the back catches up.

The bristles on the back end keep the worm from sliding backward.

While the front end tunnels forward again into the earth.

## May Word Search

Bristles  
Casting  
Farmers  
Garden  
Gizzard  
Ground  
Moisture  
Plants

Showers  
Sliding  
Soil  
Spring  
Tunnels  
Water  
Worms  
Wriggle

B C D Y A E W S L U E Y S F M  
H H A L C R E W Q S M C R S Q  
C U K S I Q D R O Z O Y E S U  
P U O G T R J I U Z Q Z M T F  
H K G U A I L T D T V Z R N W  
Y L I Z T U N N E L S X A A A  
E Y Z T B N T G Q L Z I F L T  
W I S R E W O H S W T V O P E  
G O W D S E L T S I R B P M R  
R N R X H U E M L G R O U N D  
P A I M U O R K I O B S T H P  
G A Z R S O O T D I X J X E R  
N M S N P Z G G I S D W I D I  
G Q V N D S T M N R Q R L T O  
U W N J D Y J W G T S F A O X

Choose your prize:

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, a \$25 Home Run Inn Gift Card, OR \*3 AMC Movie Tickets \*AMC Yellow tickets not valid in California, New York & New Jersey.

Complete the Word Search puzzle for your chance to win! Winners will be contacted by mail.

Mail to: Cook Co. Farm Bureau

Ag Adventures Word Search

6438 Joliet Rd

Countryside, IL 60525

Fax to: 708-579-6056

Email to: FBcooperator@gmail.com

Complete and submit an entry every month all in 2019 and your name is automatically entered into an "End of Year" drawing for a gift basket full of ag themed goodies. Good luck!

Last's months word search winner is...

**Yay!** Daniel Curcio

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_

(Membership # is located on front of paper)

If you were to win, check your preference:

\_\_\_Beggar's Pizza GC \_\_\_HRI GC \_\_\_3 Movie Tix  
(If a choice is not made, movie tickets will be sent)

Deadline is the 20th of each month.