

NEWS & REVIEWS



Environmentally Fishing

Buying bait for fishing can get really expensive. So, what if you could breed your own worms for free, and be environmentally friendly at the same time?

Dendrobaena are the fisherman's favourite; they grow big, wiggle like mad in cold water, and can survive for ages on the hook. These amazing worms are also a favourite food of many fish such as carp, perch, tench, bream and roach. But what you probably don't know is that Dendrobaena (or Eisenia Hortensis for the Latin buffs) is also one of the most popular breeds of composting worm, and can eat up to half their bodyweight per day in food waste.

Although most of us think that all worms live in the garden and they are all the same, this is actually untrue. There are around 28 species of worm in the UK and their roles are very different. Worms live in different depths of soil, and are grouped into three main categories: deep-burrowing (anecic), shallow-burrowing (endogeic) and leaf litter dwelling (epigeic).

Commonly found deep-burrowers are lobworms, which is the largest British species and is easily recognised by its flat, paddle-shaped tail. Shallow-burrowing worms include the grey worm, which can be found in gardens and cultivated land, and lastly are the litter dwellers, Dendrobaena, that live in and under moist surface material (rocks, leaves, dung heaps and compost heaps.) These worms are often plentiful in the garden.

Because Dendrobaena worms, or 'dendras' as they are often affectionately called, live near the surface, they are ideally suited to be kept in a specialised container (called a wormery) and fed kitchen waste, damp shredded paper and cardboard.

A wormery is basically a box that has been specially designed to breed compost worms, and dispose of food waste. They can be made from plastic or wood, and can be any shape or size. The larger the surface area, the better your results, and as worms need oxygen to live, air-flow and good drainage is crucial for their survival.

There are many styles of wormery on the market, some easier to manage than others. You can make your own, or buy complete kits from reputable dealers.

Whatever style of wormery you choose the following points should always be considered.

Wood or plastic? Wood is breathable and naturally insulated. However, it will eventually rot away and they are very expensive to buy. Plastic wormeries can get too hot or cold (depending on the season) and therefore need to be placed in a shady, sheltered spot.

Bin/stacking system. Both types are commercially available but work in totally different ways. The bin system gets filled slowly with waste food, and when full you will need to completely empty it out, and sort out the worms which should be on the top and replace back into the bin to start again.



The stacking system is easier to manage as you have a series of trays with holes in the bottom. The idea is that, when the lower tray is full, the next empty tray is placed on top and food is slowly added. Your worms will eat the food in the lower tray then slowly migrate upwards in search of more food. So when the worms have eaten all the food in the lower tray, the compost can then be removed.

Wormery prices can range from £20 - to nearly £200. The bigger the wormery, the more it will compost, and the more worms it will eventually contain. Dendra worms have a fast reproduction rate and are really easy to breed in the correct environment.

Reproduction under ideal conditions:
1.6 cocoons per adult per week.
1.1 hatchlings per cocoon.
Net reproduction of 1.4 young per adult per week.

Growth Rate
97-214 days from egg to maturity.

From the figures above, approximately every 3.5 months, each adult will have 1.4 babies. So you can see how quickly worms can reproduce themselves.

Apart from that, worms are very easy to look after. You can feed them virtually anything, from vegetables to bread, teabags to pasta and waste paper to cardboard; just follow the golden rule of not feeding them too much, too quickly. Keep your worms warm in the winter and in the shade in summer, and before you know it, you will have a thriving community of Dendrobaena worms, that will continue to breed, and eat most of the waste your family produces.

So you can see how easy it is to breed your own bait, and be environmentally friendly at the same time!

For further information – Please see our range of wormeries at: www.wormcity.co.uk

Gardner Cyba-NightViz

Review by Steve Howard

When losing my much-loved lightweight Petzl Tikka head torch recently, I was forced to look for a replacement, so I searched a few sites on the web for head torches and up popped this little beauty. The option of switching instantly from normal white LED light to red light by means of a one-touch red lens cover appealed to me, so that's what I opted for.

By switching to the red light option when playing a fish under the rod tip, the effect on the fish is instant and very obvious. Red light certainly spooks them far less, and that can, obviously and ultimately, be the only difference between banking or losing a fish.

The Cyba-NightViz has two modes. One is the normal beam, and the other a flashing beam, which to my mind is a superb option to have on those occasions when it is necessary to go afloat. I consider it to be very useful either to use in emergency situations so that you can be easily located, or as a very effective navigation light from the shore to guide you in safely and accurately. On top of that, anyone who has struggled to bring fish to the net at night while out in a boat will realise the potential here!

The torch is extremely lightweight and comfortable to wear, has a good, positive on-flash-off button and uses two CR2032 button cell Lithium batteries (supplied - hearing aid batteries, I believe) from which you can expect up to 25 hours burn time.

If that's not enough, the ratcheted lamp tilts down 90-degrees when needed for close work, or when talking to friends, so it'll please them too if you buy one!

With a RRP of just £12.99, they are a bargain. Please check your local stockist or visit www.gardner-tackle.co.uk for further details.

