

Eco-Tip of the Week for 3/5/17

After Rains Come the Worms

Following recent rains, worms wiggled across wet pavement. You might wonder if these were friends or foes of your garden.

Other crawling creatures, such as slugs and snails, devour plants you worked hard to tend. In contrast, worms aerate soil, add nutrients, and eat only items already rotting. Leave them alone, and let them help you. Or, if you want to put them to work, place them in your compost pile.

The best worms to eat your food scraps are *Eisenia Fetida*, or “red worms.” Red worms feed at all levels of an enclosed container, quickly eat anything rotting, from banana peels to carrot tops, and tolerate many conditions, as long as they have sufficient moisture. A few local gardening shops, and two local breeding facilities, sell red worms and offer instructions for starting a worm box.

Although a non-native species, they are controlled by their inability to thrive outside a compost pile, so they are unlikely to be the type sending a suicide squad squiggling across your street.