

# What Do Slow Worms Eat?

DIET, HABITAT, IDENTIFICATION & MORE!



EASTHAMPSTEAD PARK

Wokingham

Whether you are a nature enthusiast or simply intrigued by these legless lizards join us as we uncover what slow worms eat and gain a deeper understanding of their lifestyle.

Our gardeners at [Easthampstead Park](#) have had the wonderful opportunity to come across these fascinating reptiles which inspired us to delve deeper into learning about them.

Get ready to embark on a journey of discovery into the intriguing world of slow worms.

### What Do Slow Worms Eat?

Slow worms are carnivorous creatures that subsist on a diet primarily composed of small invertebrates.

Their agile and stealthy nature allows them to hunt with precision, targeting a variety of prey.

Commonly, they prey upon slugs and snails, which they capture and consume with their powerful jaws.

In addition to these slimy delicacies, slow worms are also adept at catching various insects like beetles, ants, and caterpillars.

Their ability to exploit a wide range of invertebrate prey contributes to their adaptability and survival in diverse environments.

## Do Slow Worms Eat Woodlice?

Yes, slow worms do eat woodlice. Woodlice are one of the many small invertebrates that make up a portion of the slow worm's diet.

Woodlice are abundant in many habitats, including gardens and wooded areas, making them easily accessible prey for slow worms

## Do Slow Worms Eat Ants?

Yes, slow worms are known to include ants in their diet.

Whilst they are not an integral part of a slow worms diet ants can provide essential protein.

Ants, being abundant in various terrestrial habitats, provide a convenient and readily available food source for slow worms during their foraging activities.

## Do Slow Worms Eat Worms?

Find out for yourself if slow worms eat worms by watching the video below!

But yes, slow worms do actually eat worms.

Earthworms are usually readily available and are valuable food source for slow worms, providing them with essential nutrients and energy.



## What is a Slow Worm?

Despite its misleading name the slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) is not actually slow nor is it a worm.

Slow worms have long, smooth, shiny bodies that are either grey or brown in colour.

Often mistaken for a snake the slow worm is actually a unique legless lizard native to Britain.

## Where do Slow Worms Live?

Slow worms prefer to spend most of their time in dense vegetation or underground particularly in moist and overgrown areas like rough grasslands and woodland.

You can even find them in urban spaces such as gardens and allotments.

Unfortunately, there is growing concern that the habitat destruction is leading to a decline in the number of slow worms.

## How long do Slow Worms live?

In the wild slow worms have been known to live for up to 30 years.

There is even a record of a slow worm reportedly living for an impressive 54 years in captivity at the [Copenhagen Zoo](#).

## Slow Worm or Snake? How to Distinguish

There are many distinctive differences between a slow worm and a snake.

1. Slow worms have eyelids, so they blink unlike snakes.
2. The tongue of a slow worm is notched, while snakes have a more forked tongue.



3. Slow worms lack a clear neck, making their head blend into the body.
4. Adult slow worms are smaller than the UK's native snakes and can reach 50 centimetres long. The [smooth snake](#) which is the smallest snake in the UK can reach 70 centimetres.
5. Slow worms have smooth scales while many snakes have rough scales.
6. Slow worms shed their skin in patches, unlike snakes that shed their skin all at once.



## How do slow worms reproduce?

During the breeding season which occurs from May to Jun slow worms go through a challenging time.

Males become aggressive and compete for a mate.

The male slow worm bites the female's neck or head as part of the mating process which can last up to 10 hours.

Slow worms are ovoviviparous meaning they lay eggs inside their bodies.

The eggs hatch internally and the young slow worms stay inside the female feeding on the egg yolk.

Eventually, the female gives birth to live young.

## Why did slow worms lose their legs?

Slow worms in the UK are special because they are legless lizards but it's not uncommon for lizards to have no legs.

Many lizard species worldwide including relatives of the slow worm have no legs and some have tiny legs.

Evolution has led to the reduction or complete loss of limbs multiple times especially among lizards with elongated bodies that burrow or live in tall grass.

Slow worms spend a lot of time digging into soft soil and rotting plants.

In October they dig underground to hibernate and stay there until March.

### **Do slow worms bite?**

Slow worms are calm reptiles that are generally tolerant of human presence and rarely bite.

You can handle slow worms gently without danger if you need to move them or want to reassure a child that they are harmless.

### **Where to spot slow worms?**

Look out for legless lizards basking in the sun especially on warm days.

You might spot them in the woods or even in your own garden.

Slow worms like to hang out near compost heaps to soak up the warmth.





## How to attract Slow Worms?

Here are some ways to attract slow worms to your garden:

1. Create a habitat: Leave piles of sticks, pruning's, and logs undisturbed in a quiet corner of the garden. These provide a home for garden bugs and insects that slow worms feed on.
2. Encourage biodiversity: Allow an area of your garden to grow wild, attracting a variety of beneficial insects and restoring the natural balance.

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3. Set up a compost heap: Let it naturally rot down for several months, creating a warm nest site for slow worms and a sheltered space for overwintering.
4. Be mindful when using compost: Take care not to disturb sheltering creatures when turning or using your garden compost.
5. Provide water sources: Keep a shallow bowl of water for wildlife and ensure ponds and pools have a gentle slope for easy access.
6. Create sunbathing spots: Slow worms love to bask in the sun on gravel, stones, or other heat-retaining surfaces. Leave a suitable area exposed to sunlight in a quiet spot.
7. Minimise pesticide use: Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides in your garden to preserve the natural balance and ensure a steady food supply for slow worms and other creatures.

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We hope you enjoyed learning about slow worms.

If you liked this article and share our love for animals feel free to explore our blog on [UK Deer Species](#).

## What Do Slow Worms Eat? | Diet, Habitat, Identification & More!

Our gardeners at [Easthampstead Park](#) have had the pleasure of encountering these amazing reptiles.

We invite you to check out our fantastic venue today and join us for a drink, dining experience, or hotel stay.

Explore our grounds and look out for the many species that call our place home.

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## Frequently Asked Questions Related To What Do Slow Worms Eat

**Q: Do slow worms eat woodlice?**

A: Yes, slow worms have an appetite for woodlice however primary feast on slugs, spiders and earth worms.

**Q: Do slow worms eat spiders?**

A: Yes, slow worms do eat spiders as well as other invertebrates.

**Q: How can you tell if a slow worm is male or female?**

A: Slow worms have a glossy look. Male slow worms are greyish brown, while females are brown with dark sides. Some females have a slender line running along their back.

**Q: Are slow worms endangered in the UK?**

A: Slow worms are [legally protected](#) in Great Britain, which means it is illegal to harm, kill, or trade them. Unfortunately, their population is decreasing in the UK, and they are considered a "Priority Species."

**Q: Is it good to have slow worms in your garden?**

A: Slow worms are harmless and beneficial allies to gardeners. They have a diet consisting of slow-moving prey such as slugs and other garden pests. These legless lizards are commonly found in gardens and thrive in damp and boggy areas near woodlands or tufty grasslands. Embracing their presence can contribute to a natural balance in your garden ecosystem.



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**Slow Worm | *Anguis fragilis***

