



*Perionyx excavatus*



Image By Amy Weishuhn



*Perionyx excavatus*



*Eisenia fetida* (bottom) *Perionyx excavatus* (top)



*E. fetida* (bottom) *P. excavatus* (top)



3 *E. fetida* (top) *P. excavatus* (bottom)



*E. fetida* (top) *P. excavatus* (bottom)

The *Perionyx excavatus* (india blue, bark worms, spiketails) can be easily distinguished from the *Eisenia fetida* (redworms) by several factors.

1. The *Perionyx excavatus* lacks the alternate light & dark banding of the *E. fetida*.
2. The *Perionyx excavatus* clitellum covers segments 13-17 whereas the clitellum of the *Eisenia Fetida* covers segments 25-30. In laymans' terms, that means that the "collar" of the mature *P. excavatus* is much closer to its head than the *E. fetida*'s. This can be seen in the image above.
3. The *Perionyx excavatus* is considerably faster than the *E. fetida*.
4. The *Perionyx excavatus* leaves water incredibly faster than the *E. fetida*.
5. *P. excavatus* tends to have a pale colored clitellum that covers segments 13-17 and, for those inclined to look, has a single dorsal pore visible using a hand lens on segment 14, paired sperm pores at the juncture of segments 7/8 and 8/9, a pair of slit-like pores on segment 18, and paired rows of excretory pores on each segment along the side of the worm body. Per Kelly Slocum
6. The *Perionyx excavatus* is much thinner than the *E. fetida*, thus making the *P. excavatus* much more difficult to use as a bait worm.
7. The *Perionyx excavatus* has an iridescent blue sheen.



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8. The experts tell us that the *Perionyx excavatus* is a tropical worm species commonly found in India, the Philippines, the Dominicans, Australia and parts of South America.
9. *P. excavatus* will die quickly when exposed to temperatures below 45 degrees F. The image below are of *P. excavatus* after being exposed to 34 degrees F for 16 hours. They were still alive after 9 hours, but by 16 hrs they had expired.



*P. excavatus* after exposed to 34 degrees F for 16 hrs.

For great images of PEs see: <http://community.webshots.com/album/93031731AZXEzc>

"*Perionyx excavatus* are undesirable to home composters and bait worm sellers. They will compost in warm outside conditions but take over worm beds and drive the *E. foetida* out. They never ever get big enough for bait. They migrate for no reason even during daylight or with bright lights over them. They will be all over the floor in school or home bins. They are very undesirable for tropical fish food. Cold temps kill them." Dan Warco of KAZARIE Worm Farm

Happy D Ranch does not nor will we ever sell *P. excavatus* worms. We consider them an invasive species that has done a great deal of harm to the vermicomposting and bait industry. Many unscrupulous businesses sell the *P. excavatus* to use in worm bins. The well intentioned but uninformed purchaser wakes up to find worms everywhere but inside the bin. They think they did something terribly wrong but it was the dishonest grower that knowingly sold them the wrong worm for the worm bin that did something terribly wrong.

To eradicate *P. excavatus* from your beds, you can let the temps drop below 45 degrees F. for long periods of time, turn your beds to be sure that the *P. excavatus* that are in the inner parts of you beds become exposed to the cold temps.

Another way to get PEs to leave your beds is to flood the beds with water and place a piece of plastic over the flooded bed. Leave until evening (8 hours) then remove all PEs that are on top of plastic. Be sure to remove all worms on top of plastic within 8 to 10 hours after flooding begins. Any longer than that & the PEs will return to the bed. Allow beds to dry out, turn several times over a period of several days to prevent anerobic conditions from developing. Flood the beds at 3 week intervals for at least 6 months to remove any newly hatched PEs. Images below:



Flooded bed after 4 hours.

*PEs* coming to the top after bed has been flooded for 4 hours



*P. Excavatus* leaving flooded bed



Flooded bed after 8 hours.

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