

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED GRINDAL WORMS?

by Harry W. Faustmann

From Pisces Press, Nassau County, NY Aquarium Society, Feb. '85

I had never tried Grindal worms until I began keeping killifish. Someone said that these worms were easily raised and harvested for instant feedings to carnivorous fishes. After acquiring some, I realized my fish were going to have fewer feedings of tubifex worms and more of the easy-to-propagate Grindal worms. The following is the method that I used to establish my present supply of these little whitish worms.

Once you've acquired a starter culture, the next thing you'll need is a container, preferably a clear plastic shoe box. Next step is to add some dampened peat moss to the bottom of the container. If you breed killifish, the peat moss can be the used medium from your aged-tank-water container. If you don't, why not? Moving right along, we are now spreading this mess of wet (damp) peat moss onto the bottom of the culture container until the moss is about a half-inch in depth. Next, add the starter culture, spreading it evenly over the top of the peat moss, but do not mash the starter worms down into the peat; this seems to retard growth.

Having progressed this far, you may now cover the container. (See why I recommended a plastic shoe box? They come with a clear cover.) Store the box at room temperature. After only a few hours you should be able to see that the worms have become established in the peat moss. Now you're ready to feed the worms. They will thrive on a sprinkling of mixed baby food cereal out of a 43¢ box which will last for over a year. After sprinkling some of the flaky cereal over the top of the peat moss, you are now ready for the next step. Lay a strip of glass or clear plastic on top of the peat and gently tap it into the surface so all the peat is against the bottom of the glass. Cover the container and go wash your hands of this mess. Several hours later, you will notice that the worms have surfaced to feed on the cereal. As they crawl about on the cereal, they take advantage of the smooth bottom of the glass strip and can be seen from above as they adhere to it. Pick up the glass strip; hundreds of worms will be stuck to it. Rinse them off into a cup and feed to your fish.

These worms are somewhat smaller than white worms, but they do not deteriorate as rapidly. After one month's use, the culture should be renewed--that is, scoop out a portion, and, using new peat moss, start over again. The old culture doesn't smell as bad as a microworm culture might, but the ever-present common mite becomes increasingly noticeable after one month's time. Not that they're very harmful, but who can put up with "bugs and squirm" all at once? That's reason enough for dumping the old mixture and starting anew.

GRINDAL WORMS, cont'd from p. 12.

Feeding these Grindal worms to your fish, in my experience, should be limited to once or twice a week, alternating other live foods. For example: On Sunday, I might feed newly hatched brine shrimp for the first feeding of the day (to the smaller fish, that is), and Grindal worms for the third or fourth feeding of the day. Tuesday, I'll feed tubifex worms instead of Grindal worms, going back to Grindal worms on Thursday. Works fine for me. Keeping live food is easy if you'll give Grindal worms a chance.

####