

Superworms

A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

Superworms (*Zophobas morio*) are the larva of Darkling Beetles (144308). They are used as a food source for animals like fish, reptiles, and birds. Superworms are similar in appearance to mealworms; however, Superworms are larger (2.5-5 cm; 1-2 in) and require different care. Superworms do not pupate easily and may remain in the larval stage for 3-5 months.

Habitat Setup & Maintenance

To prevent escape, keep the Superworms in a container with smooth sides. Add 5-8 cm (2-3 in) of substrate material (peat moss, oat bran, bran cereal, etc). Mist the substrate every other day to maintain humidity. (Too much moisture will kill the Superworms, while too little moisture may cause cannibalism.) Maintain a constant temperature of 21°-27° C (70-80°F). Do not let the temperature drop below 16° C (60° F) or rise above 29° C (84°F). Do not refrigerate Superworms.

Fruits and vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, apples, and carrots, are good sources of nutrition and moisture. Feed Superworms a diet of oats, wheat bran, or chicken meal (sold commercially by Purina as Layena®). As an added benefit, Layena is fortified with vitamins and minerals, which add to the Superworm's nutritional value.

If you want pupae or adult beetles, you will have to force the Superworms to pupate. First, separate the larvae into pupation chambers, such as black film canisters or vials. Punch some holes in the lid for ventilation. Place some wheat bran or oatmeal to serve as a substrate and as a source of nutrition. Add a carrot slice to provide them with some moisture.

FAQs

What are some uses of Superworms?

In addition to their use as live food, Superworms are interesting subjects for behavioral studies. They respond to a variety of stimuli: light and dark, touch, etc. Their relatively large size, ease of maintenance, and the ability to control pupation, make them interesting organisms for life cycle studies.

Can Superworms bite?

If roughly handled, Superworms may pinch. However, their jaws cannot break through human skin.

I have tried to culture Superworms, but the cultures haven't responded well.

Separate Superworms into individual chambers to get pupae and produce adults. They are also sensitive to air-borne substances such as tobacco smoke, incense, perfumes, and chemical fumes. If you have the culture set up in a stockroom, you may have to move it.

Problems? We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

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Technical Support and Questions: caresheets@carolina.com



