

How to keep and breed Giant Mealworms / Superworms



All you need to know about keeping and breeding
Zophobas morio

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Giant Mealworms are the larvae of a species of Darkling Beetle.



Beetle of the Giant Mealworm.

Giant mealworms are also known as Superworms in other parts of the world. Sometimes mealworms that have been fed on growth hormone (and therefore are larger) are referred to as Giant Mealworms. So to clear up the confusion, I will use scientific names instead. The scientific name of the Giant Mealworm / Super Worm is *Zophobas morio*.



They grow to over 2 inches (5cm) and they are great feeder worms for bigger mammals, birds, fish and arachnids.

They are however more difficult to breed than their smaller cousins, the mealworm or *Tenebrio molitor* but not impossible.

In order to keep and breed Giant Mealworms, you will need a container. The size of the container will depend on how many you plan to keep and breed. I use a multiple drawer system which I find works well for producing a fairly large number of Giant Mealworms.



Multiple drawer system for breeding and raising Giant Mealworms.

Once a container is sorted, you then need to decide on a substrate in which to keep your Giant Mealworms. Wheat bran or whole wheat flour will work, as well as chicken growing mash. Peat has also been used but wheat bran works best.



Wheat bran is a great substrate to grow your Giant Mealworms in.

Heat is important. Temperature ranges between 70 – 85F (21 – 28C) will suffice. Optimum results are achieved at around 78F (26C). This can be achieved by using heating cable or heating pads, attached to a thermostat if need be.



Heating cable or heating pads placed underneath container works well as a heat source.

Giant mealworms will feed off the substrate you place them in. Moisture can be provided by giving carrots and pieces of potato. Both the beetle and larvae will feed off these.



Carrots or potato can be used as a source of moisture for your beetles and Giant Mealworms.

As the Giant Mealworm grows, it will shed its skin a few times and then pupate. This can take quite some time BUT can be sped up, with some intervention. By placing a Giant Mealworm with a small amount of food into a dark film canister and leaving it for a few weeks, will cause the worm to pupate.



Pictures of a pupa which will emerge as a beetle.

The pupa simply lies there for a few weeks and will then emerge as a beetle. Beetles are initially red but turn black after a few days.



Once your Giant Mealworms have turned into beetles, placed the beetles into another container, same substrate and everything, where they will lay their eggs. Beetles can live up to 5 months and female beetles can lay up to 500 eggs.

If kept at the optimum temperature and carrots or potato are provided for moisture, the eggs will hatch a few weeks down the line. The juvenile Giant Mealworms will feed on the bran and carrot/potato. Congratulations! You have successfully bred Giant Mealworms.