Mealworm Fact Sheet

Common Name: Mealworm
Scientific Name: Tenebrio molitor
Wild Status: Least Concern

Habitat: Underneath logs and amongst rotten vegetation.
Country: Native species of Africa now found in North America.
Shelter: Dark moist areas
Life Span: 1 year as a mealworm before pupal stage
Size: adults one inch

Details

A mealworm is the second stage in the life cycle of a beetle. The beetle lays hundreds of eggs and in 4 to 19 days, the eggs hatch and they enter the mealworm stage. After this stage they shed their exoskeleton many times and then turn into pupa. After this stage last stage, it turns into a beetle who will live for just a few months. Mealworms live in moist dark areas and are often found in stored grain containers. They also like to eat dying leaves and grass and insects. Many different reptiles, frogs, rodents and birds eat mealworms as well as humans who practice entomophagy. Entomophagy means humans who use insects for food.

Cool Facts

• A Mealworm is not a worm. It is the larval stage in the life cycle of a darkling beetle.
• The mealworm stage is the second stage in their 4 stage life cycle.
• Many different animals enjoy eating mealworms such as birds and lizards.
• **Humans** also eat mealworms. They are high in protein and low in fat.
• Mealworms have hard bodies so that they can burrow.
• An adult mealworm is about an inch long.

**Taxonomic Breakdown**

**Kingdom:** Animalia  
**Clade:** Euarthropoda  
**Class:** Insecta  
**Order:** Coleoptera  
**Genus:** Tenebrio  
**Species:** Tenebrio molitor

**Conservation & Helping**

The mealworm is considered a scavenger and because of that is considered a pest.

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