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CULTURING MICROWORMS (Panagrellus sp.)

Equipment required:

- Microworm Starter Culture
- Ventilated culturing container
- Instant porridge oats

Microworms are tiny non-parasitic nematode worms that are easily cultured and have a fast lifecycle making their production quicker than a lot of similar sized foods. They can survive in water for very long periods and for this reason they are a great food for obligate live feeding fish fry as well as some amphibian larvae (notably caudates and hymenochirus).

To start with you need a suitable culturing container. Plastic takeaway containers with lids are perfect or unventilated cricket tubs. You will need to ventilate the lid as the worms will suffocate without but as the reproducing worms will climb the sides of the container it is best not to have ventilated sides.

The microworms are cultured on instant porridge oats. Make this using boiling water until you get a thick, very sticky consistency. Spread this mixture into your container to about an inch thick (depending on height of your container of course – you want about an inch separating the lid from the culture surface).

Once the oats have cooled they should have set and have a rubbery feel with no tackiness or stickiness to the surface. In the middle of this spread your starter culture and set aside at room temperature.

If you get excess condensation you need to improve ventilation in the lid. Carefully remove any excess moisture from the lid as if the culture becomes too wet it will begin to smell dreadful.

The worms will be ready to harvest after about 2 to 3 days and will appear as vein like structures growing up the sides of the container. The worms can be swept off using a soft paintbrush.