

Mealworm Larvae

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About Mealworm Larvae:

- The lesser mealworm is the larval form of the **Alphitobius darkling beetle**. The larval period lasts between 8 and 10 weeks.
- The lesser mealworm are mostly **found in poultry rearing houses** which are warm and can offer a constant food supply — ideal conditions for them to grow and reproduce.
- **Distribution:** These are **thought to have originated in Africa**, they can be found in many countries around the world.
- Mealworm larvae are **capable of consuming polystyrene**
- The bacteria living in the mealworms' gut help them break down the complex polymers in plastic.
- These bacteria produce enzymes capable of digesting the plastic.

What is polystyrene?

- It is known as **Styrofoam**.
- **Applications:** It is a plastic material that's widely used in food, electronic and industrial packaging.
- It's difficult to break down and therefore durable.

Q1: What is larva?

It is a stage in the development of many animals, occurring after birth or hatching and before the adult form is reached. These immature, active forms are structurally different from the adults and are adapted to a different environment.

News: Plastic-eating insect discovered in Kenya

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