

Catalpa Worm Farming

If you are from the southern portion of the United States, you may not know about catalpa worms, but chances are you've at least heard of them. Catalpa worms are not really worms, but they are lumped into the worm family anyway. Try telling the redneck fishermen these little buggers aren't worms!

Catalpa worms are usually called "Catawba worms". Although it isn't likely you'll find many catalpa worm farms, this may be a very good reason you should start one of your own. It's a way to enlighten the public and provide something unique for consumers.

Catalpa trees are the way to get Catalpa worms. So, a tree farm of catalpas is your first investment. Other things you may need to invest in are: sprinklers, wheelbarrows, shovels, rakes, containers, a business license, fertilizer for your tree crop, and advertising.

Your catalpa trees are going to make quite a mess with litter, so you'll want to decide how to handle that as well. It's an idea to turn this litter into a profit. Toss it into your compost pile to help build up some valuable food for your trees. Sell it for seeds to others who may want to grow a tree. Use it to start campfires.

One tree can provide a worm farmer with hundreds of worms. They're a hot commodity for southern fishermen. The fat worms draw catfish like crazy. Their juices are the enticement for the fish. They just can't seem to resist. The best way to use the worms is to break them, tear them, or cut them somehow to allow the juices to flow. Place them on your hook and put the hook as near to the bottom of your fishing hole as possible. This keeps the juices close to the bait instead of allowing it to float down and away, which causes the fish to also go down and away to chase after the juice instead of the bait!

If you invest in a freezer, you can also freeze the worms to sell out of season. The caterpillar stage only lasts about three weeks.

You can buy a starter tree from the Arbor Foundation for \$9. If you're lucky enough to have a relative or friend who has a tree, you can try growing your own from the seed pods that hang from the limbs. Your best bet for starting the worms is to harvest eggs from a tree that is already established and attach them to your own tree. The caterpillars emerge in the spring, so you'll want to attach them in February or March. You could try ordering the catalpa sphinx moth yourself from an insect source of some kind. This is what the catalpa worm evolves into, so obviously it would lay the eggs to start more!

The downside to catalpa worms is their ability to devour leaves. All species of the catalpa tree are subject and can be host trees. You'll have to guard against small wasps and parasites that can destroy your worms.