

Bivalves

MANGROVE WORMS



Mangrove worms, found in intertidal roots of mangroves, are actually bivalves molluscs. Their long, thin worm-like bodies have two shell valves at one end, which they use for boring into wood.

Mangrove worms grow to about 60- 90cm in length. They start boring into wood from the time they are tiny larvae. The boring is done when the worm holds its two abrasive shell plates against the end of its burrow and scrapes the wood away using a rocking action.

The cellulose in the wood is broken down by the digestive gland and the digested wood passes through the worm's digestive system. Waste is passed out through the exhalant siphon at the other end of the worm.

Mangrove worms also feed on microscopic plankton.

Some people consider mangrove worms a delicacy which they eat raw or by boiling.