

Bloodworm

Bloodworms are also known as Non-biting Midges.

What they look like

Worm-like and C-shaped. Chironomid larvae can be various colours and only the red ones are known as bloodworms.

Where they live

The majority of Bloodworms or Non-biting Midges are found in the top five centimetres of sediment (sludge at the bottom of streams). Many species live in silken tubes while others are free living. Some can live in mud and water with low levels of oxygen. They are an important source of food for larger aquatic insects and fish.

What they eat

Bloodworms are generally *detritivores* (det-try-te-vorz) feeding on dead plant and animal matter, while others are *herbivores* (herb-ee-vorz) eating only plant matter.

Pollution tolerance

Very tolerant, rating 1
Bloodworms have red blood, similar to mammals, that helps carry oxygen through their bodies. This means they do not need as much dissolved oxygen in their environment.

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Pollution tolerance	Very sensitive Sensitive Tolerant Very tolerant
Size	Up to 20 mm long

What's interesting about Bloodworms?

- Most of their life cycle is spent in the larval stage.
- Adults live for a few days to weeks and usually don't feed, just mating and laying eggs.
- They are red in colour due to the presence of haemoglobin (blood protein that carries oxygen), which helps them tolerate poorly oxygenated water.

Where they fit in

Phylum Arthropoda > **Class** Insecta > **Order** Diptera
> **Family** Chironomidae - seven subfamilies recognised > **Genera** 86 recorded > **Species** More than 200 in Australia

