

# Vinegar Eel

## A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

### Immediate Care and Handling

When your vinegar eels arrive, open the shipping container, remove the culture jars, and inspect the culture. Once you have verified that the shipment is OK, loosen the lids on the jars.

Using the supplied pipettes, aerate the cultures to replace any oxygen depleted by the shipping process. Place the pipette tip in the culture liquid (vinegar) and squeeze the bulb, bubbling air into the liquid. Withdraw the pipette and release the bulb, allowing it to refill with air. Repeat about 4 times.

It is important to note that it is almost impossible to remove all traces of vinegar from these pipettes. Never use the pipette with any other culture, as even a trace of vinegar can kill most microorganisms, including algae.

After aerating, place the lids loosely on the jars. Store the cultures at room temperature out of direct sunlight (a dim corner of the room works well), and use them as soon as possible.

### Culturing

Vinegar eels are among the easiest of organisms to continuously culture. Add vinegar eel medium to a clean glass or plastic jar, filling it  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way. This medium is unpasteurized apple cider with the bacteria and yeasts, which ferments the cider into vinegar. Inoculate with 1 mL or so of liquid from the vinegar eel culture. Place the lid loosely on the jar but do not tighten it. Add vinegar as needed, to replace any lost to evaporation.

### FAQ's

*How long can I keep my cultures before using them?*

If possible, use them within 2 to 3 days of receipt. However, the vinegar eel culture is fairly hardy and may last for a long time. The longer you delay, the more likely the culture will go bad, you may knock it over, etc.

*Will the cultures last longer if I refrigerate the jars?*

We don't recommend refrigeration or rapid temperature changes. Refrigeration may kill the organisms.

*Can I make my cultures last longer?*

With minimal care, your vinegar eel culture can last for weeks or even months; they are easy to culture. This would make a good project for your students.

*What if my students can't find the vinegar eels?*

Place a light beside the jar so that the light shines through sideways. Observe the vinegar from the side, but don't look directly into the light. You should see wiggly areas in the vinegar. The masses of vinegar eels thrashing about cause this wiggly effect, so these are the areas to sample.

*Does the vinegar I buy at the store contain vinegar eels? Am I eating these things on my salad?*

Relax; the vinegar purchased at a store has been filtered and sterilized. Even if you bought "natural," unfiltered vinegar, the vinegar eels that might be in it would not harm you.

**Problems?** We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

**Orders and replacements:** 1-800-334-5551 then select Customer Service

**Technical Support and Questions:** [caresheets@carolina.com](mailto:caresheets@carolina.com)



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