



CARING FOR AND RELEASING DUNG BEETLES

Now that your Beetles have arrived, it is important they are cared for before being released into their new natural environment. **Beetles need to be released as soon as practicable if not immediately on arrival.**

Prior to transport, the beetles will be washed completely free of dung and placed into an inert medium such as peat moss or coconut husk. The beetles will be concentrated significantly and have no food source, which is sustainable for up to 72 hrs – provided the beetles are kept cool and out of direct sunlight.

The beetle's activity will be prompted by different levels of light and temperature with the day flyers instantly wanting to take flight if exposed to direct sunlight. Equally the night flyers will start to get agitated at dusk. Despite this, beetles will tend to be less active in cooler conditions, hence requiring less oxygen and food. Just like us, overly agitated beetles will generate heat, use excessive oxygen and can damage one another in overly cramped conditions if left unchecked. Despite all this, it is quite normal to hear lots of buzzing going on in the containers – particularly at Dusk when the larger beetles attempt to take flight.

Soilcam recommends the beetles remain in an airconditioned or cool environment out of direct sunlight and inside the cabin of an airconditioned vehicle during transit. The sooner beetles can be released into the paddock the better.

Releasing of dung beetle consignment

Prior to transporting the beetles to the release sites – depending on the duration of the journey, a couple of cups of refrigerated water or ice could be placed or poured onto the medium to help keep them cool.

As beetles can sometimes be a mixed batch of species, it is important to maintain the ratio of beetles in each release. As each species has different behaviours and triggers, they will tend to find their self's at different corners of the containers, so it is important to gently mix them together before selecting a hand full of beetles for release.

It is important the beetles are not spread too thinly throughout the property, so we recommend Each colony or batch of beetles are released into only one site as near as practicable to the centre of the property, within a two-hectare area. Avoid areas that may be exposed to imminent flooding or inundation.

Recently dropped dung (2hrs old) preferred or the previous night's camp site is acceptable so long as the dung is not older than 12 hrs. Dung beetles often avoid camp sites due to the risk of trampling so some dung can also be picked up and placed just out of the main camp to avoid any such risk.

With a trowel (or similar) open the pad to expose the fresh dung.

Place a handful of beetles and medium into the pad where the beetles will instantly burrow into it. The beetles will arrive full of eggs and will be keen to get started so lighter soils will allow the beetles to instantly burrow and start doing their job.

Do not be alarmed if some beetles appear to be dead when released, this is a natural defence mechanism in many species to play dead. Once they are satisfied there is no threat, they will spring into action. During the harvesting and processing, some beetles may be accidentally killed and or damaged which may also appear in your consignment.

Do not be alarmed if some beetles fly away, they will only go as far as the next fresh pad.