



earth-wise guide to

Snails and Slugs



Enlarged photo of a snail

description

These mollusks have fleshy, soft, slimy, legless bodies; range in color from whitish-yellow to black; 1/2-4"; slow-moving; require moisture for survival

Snails have a hard spiral shell on their backs that provides protection from predators and during periods of excessive heat and dryness

infestation

Feed on plants by scraping off the tissue or eating holes in the leaves or flowers; leave glistening trails of slime wherever they crawl

attacks

Leaves, flowers and stems of plants. Snails and slugs can completely devour young vegetable seedlings overnight

identify before you buy

Need help diagnosing a plant problem? Call the Texas Agrilife Extension @ 854-9600 and ask for the Master Gardener desk or email them at travismg@ag.tamu.edu

Least Toxic Solutions

- Reduce excessive moisture through efficient irrigation
- Get out your flashlight and hand pick snails and slugs at night when they are active – drop them in a jar of soapy water
- Eliminate hiding places such as under flower pots and landscape timbers
- Destroy snail and slug eggs (they look like crystal beads) – they are often found in large clusters under rocks and debris
- Place barriers of copper stripping around planters to prevent snails and slugs from accessing plants
- Use window screen material or row covers to protect seedlings – be sure to bury the edges
- Attract snails overnight to a hollowed-out, melon rind or a shallow container filled with beer or apple cider. Dispose of them in the early morning and replenish the bait often
- Treat for snails and slugs only if significant plant damage begins to appear



Slug with egg cluster

If You Must Use a Pesticide...

- Use snail and slug baits as a last resort
- Place baits close to hiding places where snails will cross them
- Baits will be less effective in hot/dry or cold weather when snails are less active
- Be aware that metaldehyde baits are very toxic to dogs and cats
- Use a tamper-proof bait station for metaldehyde products
- Spread an iron phosphate product over entire lawn



Slugs are attracted to moist places

If you must use a pesticide...

- Use the least toxic pesticide first
- Read and follow label directions

product toxicity comparisons

Evaluation of active ingredients only; does not include toxicity information on inert or "other" ingredients.

Toxicity/Threat:

○ low ◐ low to moderate ◑ high ● highest NA not applicable
 ? unknown toxicity ☠ banned by EPA 🌍 earth-wise

Hazards:



note	Product Name	active ingredient(s) / concentrations	human acute	human chronic	aquatic life	birds, bees, pets	soil mobility	environmental persistence
	Green Light® Snail and Bug Bait	Orthoboric acid 5%	○	○	○	○	◐	○
	Bayer Advanced™ Snail and Slug Killer Bait	Iron phosphate 1%	○	?	◐	○	○	N/A
	Sluggo®	Iron phosphate 1%	○	?	◐	○	○	N/A
	Monterey Sluggo® Iron Plus	Iron phosphate 1% Spinosad .07%	○	?	◑	◑	○	○
most toxic	Ortho® Bug-Geta® Snail & Slug Killer	Metaldehyde 2%	◐	?	◐	●	◐	◐
	Green Light® Bug and Snail Bait	Metaldehyde 1%, Carbaryl 5%	◐	◑	◐	●	◐	◐
	Eliminator® Bug & Snail Bait	Metaldehyde 2%, Carbaryl 5%	◐	◑	◐	●	◐	◐

why grow green?

The Grow Green program educates Austin area residents on the LEAST TOXIC approach to pest management and responsible fertilizer use. The goal is to reduce the amount of landscape chemicals that run off into waterways or leach into our groundwater and degrade water quality.

Grow Green is a partnership between the City of Austin Watershed Protection and Development Review Department and Texas AgriLife Extension. Call (512)974-2550 or (512)854-9600 for more information or visit our website at www.growgreen.org.

Think least toxic!

If you have unwanted or banned chemicals (Dursban or Diazinon) in your garage, please take them for safe disposal to a household hazardous waste facility. In Austin call (512)974-4343 for information.

The City of Austin and the Texas AgriLife Extension provide this information as a comparative reference only. Listing of a specific product trade name does not constitute an endorsement of its use. Many other pesticides and pesticide products, other than those listed in these tables are available and may be suitable for use.

Products rated by Grady J. Glenn, Ph.D., B.C.E., of the Pesticide Education Program, Texas AgriLife Extension who can be reached for questions at (979) 862-1035. The rating system was developed by Philip Dickey of the Washington Toxics Coalition.



**Watershed Protection
 Development Review**
 512-974-2550

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
 Texas A&M System
 512-854-9600