grow green

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 @ 512-854-9600 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

Slug with egg cluster

- 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

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 toxicity acute	human toxicity 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%*	○	?	◑	◑	○	○
	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%*	◐	◑	◐	●	◐	◐

most toxic

Check labels carefully as trade names and active ingredients may change.

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

Products rated by Grady J. Glenn, Ph.D., B.C.E., of the Pesticide Safety Education Program, Texas AgriLife Extension Service. The rating system was developed by Philip Dickey of the Washington Toxics Coalition.

why grow green?

The Grow Green program is based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles that encourage the LEAST TOXIC approach to pesticide and fertilizer use. The goal is to reduce the amount of landscape chemicals that degrade water quality when they run off into waterways or leach into our groundwater.

Grow Green is a partnership between the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department and Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Call 512-974-2550 or 512-854-9600 for more information.

www.growgreen.org

City of Austin WATERSHED PROTECTION 512-974-2550

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION 512-854-9600

09/16