

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Nassau County



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Slugs and Snails

Slugs and snails are not insects but mollusks, belonging to the large animal phylum *Mollusca* along with oysters, clams and other shellfish. A slug is merely a snail without a shell or a shell reduced and located internally.



Spotted Garden Slug

Damage

Slugs and snails are often a problem in the home garden and greenhouses. Without the protection of a shell, they need damp places to hide and are usually found in the daytime under decaying boards and logs or any debris around the garden. They feed at night by rasping holes in foliage and in severe cases, total destruction of the plant may occur. Slugs and snails often leave a trail of slime to indicate their presence.

History

Eggs are found almost any time of the year and, from observations made in the field, can overwinter at any stage of development from egg to adult.

In the early spring, when temperatures are consistently above 40°F (5°C), survivors begin to move, hatch, feed and lay eggs. A wet spring and early summer will usually result in a large population of slugs.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic methods first.

A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away. Regarding household pests, in addition to regular house-cleaning, the best preventive method is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames, poorly-fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc., and correct such examples/situations.

Chemical control

Remove unnecessary refuse where slugs may hide. As a bait, use beer or molasses in water 3/4 inch deep in a steep-sided dish or tray. If needed, use molluscicide bait as per label directions. Caution: Baits may resemble pet food. Be sure to place them under boards or other objects where slugs hide during the day and away from children and pets.

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Land Snail

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