

Home Grounds Fact Sheet

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.

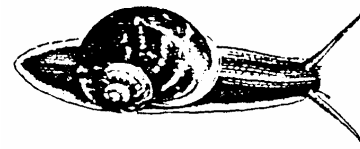
A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away.

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.

Prepared by C.Klass, Extension Aide and A.Muka, Entomology Dept.



Land Snail

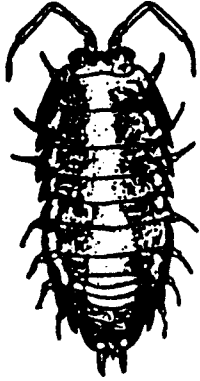
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Sowbugs and Pillbugs



Sowbug

Sowbugs and Pillbugs are not insects nor arachnids (spiders, mites) but members of the crustacean class (lobster, shrimp). They have oval bodies, 1/8" to 1/2" long, are dark gray in color and have many legs. Hard shell-like segments across the back give them an armadillo-like appearance. Pillbugs have the unique habit of rolling up like a ball when disturbed. Both Sowbugs and Pillbugs are nocturnal and prefer moist, dark conditions. They are often found under

rocks, bits of wood or vegetable garden debris.

Occasionally Sowbugs and Pillbugs invade homes, but do little damage. They are usually found in dark, moist areas such as laundry rooms or damp basements with dirt floors.

Sowbugs and Pillbugs feed on decaying vegetative matter and are destructive to plants only when their population becomes very large. Under these conditions, they may feed on the fine roots of garden or greenhouse plants.

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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.

Management

Outdoors

Try to eliminate breeding sites whenever possible and clean up debris (rocks, boards, leaves, etc.). Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and application. (Dust forms are more effective.)

Indoors

Repair cracks in foundation walls and seal any cracks around doors, basement windows and similar openings with caulking compounds. Prevent entrance into homes by spraying outside 10 to 15 feet around the outer perimeter. If infestation warrants, you may spray with a household formulation. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations. But sweeping up or vacuuming up Sowbugs is effective.

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