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Giant African snail

Biosecurity



The giant African snail is one of the world's largest and most damaging land snails. Native to Eastern Africa, it has quickly spread around the world and is now established in most tropical countries. Australia is free from the giant African snail and we want to keep it that way.

What the giant African snail looks like

Adult snails are very large with a long, narrow, cone-shaped shell. The shell is usually 50 to 100 millimetres long but can reach up to 200 millimetres. They can vary in colour however they are usually light brown, with alternating brown and cream bands on their upper whorls.

All adult snails have both male and female sexual organs.

Eggs are 4.5 to 5.5 millimetres in diameter and are cream to yellow in colour. They are oval in shape and each batch can have between 100 and 400 eggs. In a typical year, every mated adult lays about 1200 eggs.

What to look for

Adult snails can be found attached to shipping containers, machinery and motor vehicles.

Sometimes, snail trails may also be seen. Eggs can also be carried in soil associated with imported goods.

The risk to Australia

Giant African snails are one of the world's largest and most damaging land snails. They feed on more than 500 species of plants, including legume crops, ornamental plants, vegetables and the bark of large trees such as citrus and pawpaw. They could pose a serious risk to Australia's horticultural industries; their ferocious appetite is capable of destroying vegetable crops, fruit trees and Australia's native eucalypt forests.



Images

1. Giant African snail eggs and comparative size to a five cent coin.
2. Adult giant African snail the size of an adult hand.
3. Giant African snail.

Note: Images are not to size.

What to do if you find any suspect giant African snail

SEE. SECURE. REPORT.

If you see a giant African snail, soil, eggs or a snail trail secure the snails, eggs or soil in a closed container where possible and immediately report it to the Department of Agriculture on 1800 798 636.

For safety consult a Department of Agriculture entomologist before handling specimens.



Contact
Department of Agriculture 1800 798 636
(free call in Australia)



For more information
daff.gov.au/biosecurity/report