

Pest control: snails and slugs

To control the population of snails and slugs in your garden, it's not enough to kill them: you have to attract their natural predators. Slugs cause the most damage. As most snails feed on dead plants and organisms, they play an important role in the garden.

Prevention

- To help control the number of snails and slugs in your garden, try the following preventive measures:
- Attract natural predators of snails and slugs, such as hedgehogs, shrews, frogs, toads, slow worms, many species of birds, ground beetles, rove beetles, glowworms and millipedes (see also the **Pest control using beneficial organisms** information sheet),



Friends and enemies in the garden

- Dig the soil in autumn to loosen the beds and expose some of the snail eggs to the winter cold, thus reducing their population in spring.
- Spread only thin layers of leaf mulch. A thick layer of mulch can attract snails. Snails love moisture: drought is their biggest enemy.
- Don't water in the evening. Watering in the evening creates ideal conditions for nocturnal snails.



Snail and slug control

Mechanical measures

- Snail fences are expensive but effective. They should be 10 cm above and below ground level. It's important to keep them clean and free of weeds. The best times to search for snails inside the fence is in the evening or early morning,
- spread wooden planks around the garden. Get rid of the snails and slugs hidden underneath,
- beer traps attract slugs and should therefore only be used in conjunction with slug-proof fencing.
- lime or sawdust acts as a barrier. Snails and slugs avoid rough surfaces and lime irritates their skin. This method loses its effectiveness when it rains.

Organic measures

- For organic slug control, nematodes are commercially available. These helpful microscopic organisms feed on and kill slugs. Nematodes are highly selective and only parasitise slugs.

Chemical measures

- Chemicals do not act selectively. They harm both slugs and snails. To the extent possible, try to avoid using chemical products.
- Avoid using products containing metaldehyde, since many beneficial and domestic animals eat slugs.
- Opt instead for iron phosphate-based slug pellets. Scatter the granules over the flowerbeds, avoiding the plants. This product breaks down in the soil without leaving any residue and does not harm beneficial animals.

Outside the garden, Burgundy snails are protected. Like other snails, they feed mainly on fragments of dead plants.



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