

## Slugs and snails



# Bolton Council

### **What are they?**

Slugs and snails feed on a variety of plants as well as on decaying plant matter, chewing irregular holes on the leaves of plants. There are around thirty species of slugs in Britain.

Slugs and snails move by means of a muscular foot which secretes mucus along which the animal glides. This mucus later dries to form the tell tale silvery slime trails

### **How do they live?**

Snails lay approximately 80 round white eggs into holes or harbourages in the soil. It takes about two years for snails to mature and about approximately one year for slugs to reach maturity.

Both slugs and snails need moisture and are most active at night or during cloudy and rainy days. On dry, sunny days snails shut themselves into their shells, sealing the entrance to keep moist

During cold weather slugs and snails hibernate in the topsoil.

### **Control**

Eliminate, as far as practicable, anywhere where snails or slugs can hide during the day. Stones, debris, vegetation growing close to the ground, giving dense ground cover make ideal hiding places. Reducing hiding places allows fewer snails and slugs to survive

Hand picking slugs and snails can also control them. If you water infested areas of your garden in late afternoon you will encourage slugs and snails to come out. Searching the area at dusk and removing the slugs and snails can be a very effective form of control. Put them in a plastic bag for disposal.

Snails and slugs can be trapped under boards or flower pots positioned throughout the garden. Beer-baited traps are effective although their range is confined to only a few feet.

Barriers comprising of sand, ashes, broken eggshells and soot are physically difficult for slugs to cross by being either too sharp or by drying up the mucous glands that are necessary for their movement.



## **Slug pellets**

Slug pellets containing metaldehyde are a useful form of chemical control. They work either through being eaten or by contact with the slug or snail's skin. Metaldehyde is an irritant that causes the slug to produce masses of mucus, leading to dehydration of the animal and sometimes death. This dehydration process can take a day or more to kill the slug. If, during this interval, there is rain, or even heavy dew, slugs can replace the water they have lost and make a full recovery.

Make sure you remove all poisoned slugs and snails as soon as possible to make sure that the poisoned slugs and snails are not eaten by birds, hedgehogs or other animals, which can be harmed by the poison

Always apply slug pellets thinly otherwise they become repellent to slugs and snails.

**When using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label**

