

Virginia Land Snails

Limax maximus Linnaeus, 1758 (non-native)

Family: Limacidae

Common name: Giant Gardenslug

Identification

Length: 100 - 200 mm

The introduced *Limax maximus* has a mantle covering the anterior portion of its dorsum (back). In this slug the mantle actually encloses a small vestigial shell. While the mantle is darkly spotted or marbled, the slug's posterior has two or three dark longitudinal stripes (Kerney & Cameron, 1979). Its upper color varies from brownish green to gray, and its sole (underside) is whitish. The posterior has a "keel," or ridge. Its slime is sticky and colorless, and its penis, which might be observed during mating, is pale blue. It is native to Europe.

Ecology

This giant non-native slug prowls gardens, yards, sidewalks, or old homesites in the woods, typically at night. It is omnivorous, generally eating plant material but also feeding upon other slugs. It conducts aerial mating, in which a pair of slugs mates while suspending themselves from a mucus strand attached to a tree branch or other object.

Up to several dozen eggs are laid under rocks or logs in the fall (Chichester & Getz, 1973). Eggs in the laboratory hatched in three to four weeks. Individuals may live four years.

Distribution

NatureServe Global Rank: G5

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Range Map



Photo(s): Image of *Limax maximus* by Ron Lutz II ©.

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