

Virginia Land Snails

Helix aspersa Müller, 1774 (non-native)

Family: Helicidae

Common name: Brown Gardensnail

Identification

Width: 25-35 mm

Height: 25-40 mm

Whorls: 4.5+

The shell of *Helix aspersa* is globe-shaped with a reflected lip and a closed umbilicus. The shell is light brown or yellowish with a variable number of dark brown spiral bands that are often interrupted with lighter radial streaks or spots. The lip is whitish. The animal is a medium-brown or gray.

Ecology

Helix aspersa is a European and Mediterranean native found in almost any habitat, from parks and gardens to woodlands, scrub, grasslands, or dunes (Kerney & Cameron, 1979). Although it is edible, it is also a pest of trees and crops. In North America it lives on rich soils in gardens and farmland (Pilsbry, 1939).

Taxonomy

Synonyms for *Helix aspersa* include *Cornu aspersum*, and *Pomatia aspersa*. In recent years, some workers have classified it in the genera *Cantareus* or *Cryptomphalus*.

Distribution

This animal is found on every continent except Antarctica. In North America, Pilsbry (1939) reported it only from locations in California, Louisiana and South Carolina, but NatureServe (2013) now reports *H. aspersa* from 16 states and two provinces. In Virginia specimens are reported from both ends of the state - Accomack, Chesapeake, and Wise Counties.

NatureServe Global Rank:G5

NatureServe State Rank:SNA

Ken Hotopp 2/2013

Range Map



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