

European Brown Garden Snail

March, 2016

The European brown garden snail, *Cornu aspersum*, syn. *Helix aspersa* (Muller), is quarantine pest. It is an edible species of terrestrial snail. Other synonyms are *Cantareus asperses* and *Cryptomphalus aspersus*.



Photo Courtesy Eric Odense, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Damage

Snails have rasping mouthparts that produce irregular holes with ragged edges on leaves and fruit. Silvery slime trails and excrement are signs of the presence of snails.

Life Cycle

At maturity, the European brown garden snail is large; with a body about 6 cm long from head to foot, and a shell measuring 3 cm in diameter. During warm wet periods of the year, the European brown garden snail lays its eggs in a cavity excavated about 3 cm deep in the soil. The eggs are round and white, 3 mm in diameter. Up to 100 eggs can be laid in a clutch, and one to two clutches will be laid per year in cooler climates. In warmer climates, one clutch per month may be laid. The eggs hatch in about two weeks and then the young snails crawl out of the soil cavity to forage. It takes two or more years for the snail to mature.

The snail is active at temperatures of 4.5 to 31.5 °C, and can survive temperatures as low as -10 °C. It can protect itself from harsh environmental conditions (cold or dry) by burrowing into the soil and withdrawing into its shell, where it can survive in a dormant state for weeks or months without eating until conditions become more suitable.

Host and Geographical Range

The European brown garden snail feeds on a wide variety of vegetables, flowers and fruit, ornamental plants and weeds. It is present in many temperate regions of the world. In British Columbia, it is found in limited locations on southern Vancouver Island.

Regulations

The European brown garden snail is a quarantine pest. Importation of live snails into Canada and some U.S. states is prohibited. Raising this snail as a food item is not permitted in Canada.

If you think you have European brown garden snail in a new area of BC other than previously recorded (southern Vancouver Island), please contact the CFIA.

Further Information

- [Helix aspersa \(Müller\) - European Brown Garden Snail \(Canadian Food Inspection Agency\)](#)
- [D-09-01: Phytosanitary requirements to prevent the introduction and spread of the European brown garden snail \(Cornu aspersum \[Müller\], syn. Helix aspersa \[Müller\]\) from the continental United States](#)