

# FACT SHEET

TT:Ag Ext 18:01

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## Managing Giant African Snail (GAS) in the Field and Around the Home

### Giant African Snail (GAS)

Giant African snail (*Lissachatina fulica*) formerly *Achatina fulica* can cause major destruction to crops, loss of income and may even cause human health problems. This pest can lay up to four hundred eggs at a time and it can lay three clutches in one year. Eggs hatch within eight to twelve days and the snails become sexually mature in five months. Since the snail can live up to nine years, management is critical in preventing the multiplication and spread of this pest.

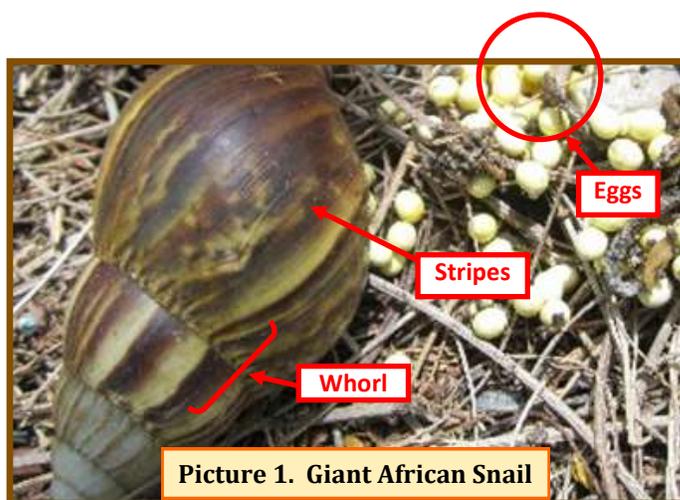
### What is the problem?

GAS is a scavenger which feeds on both living and decaying vegetation. This pest feeds on over 500 plant species including vegetables, fruit trees, field crops, forest trees and succulent ornamental plants. This means it can cause severe loss of income to farmers/growers.

- GAS has also been known to be a vector of the rat lung worm which can cause eosinophilic meningitis, a disease that affects humans.
- GAS feeds on the limestone in concrete to get calcium to maintain its shell. In the process the slime and droppings deface concrete walls and walkways.
- Dead snails give off a foul odour that can encourage rodents and other vermin into the area.

### What does GAS look like?

The shell of the GAS is reddish brown with lighter stripes running in one direction along the length, from the tip of the shell to the base (*Picture 1*). The shell of the adult has seven or more whorls .



### Where can GAS be found?

- Under leaves and mulched areas
- Along drains, water courses and damp or moist areas
- On concrete walls and walkways
- In or under garbage or any heaps of material that provide shelter from the sun.
- In soil and dirt
- On the under carriage of vehicles
- On fruits, vegetables and planting material

### How can I prevent the GAS from my area?

- Practice good sanitation around your area (keep weed growth to a low level; prevent the buildup of garbage, etc.).
- Do not move soil or planting material from infested areas to clean areas.
- Check under vehicles for snails, if you do go into an infested area.

## How is GAS spread?

Live snails and eggs can be spread in several ways:

- Movement of soil with snails and eggs
- As a hitchhiker on vehicles
- On planting material
- In garbage
- Through water movement (flooding, water courses)

## How can GAS be managed?

The giant African snail can be managed using two methods: Non-chemical and Chemical

### Non-Chemical Approach:

Collect and place snails in a container with a fitted cover. (Never touch snails with your bare hands; use plastic gloves or a plastic bag)

- Make a solution by dissolving:
  - 400 grams (2 cups) of cooking salt in 4 litres (1 gallon) of water **OR**
  - 500 ml (2 cups) of household bleach in 4 litres (1 gallon) of water
- Place snails in **either** solution ( **salt or bleach**).
- Cover the container and leave for 24 hours (During this time the snails will **drown** and **die**).

Dispose dead snails

### Chemical Approach:

Use a pesticide with the active ingredient **Thiodicarb** and spray the area around the home, field, empty lots or bushy areas. This pesticide kills eggs, juveniles (young snails) and adults. **OR**

- Use snail and slug bait with the active ingredient **Metaldehyde** and broadcast (sprinkle) around the home, field or empty lots. When this bait is consumed by the adult snails they would stop feeding. Then the snails would eventually die. **OR**
- Broadcast Iron Phosphate around the home or fields. This is safe to use especially around pets and children.

## Disposal of Dead Snails

- Collect and dispose dead snails as follows:
  - Place in garbage bag and send to the land fill
  - Burn in a safe area
  - Bury in a hole at least 60 cm (2 feet) deep

## How often should pesticide spraying (Thiodicarb) application or Baiting (Metaldehyde) be carried out?

Since the eggs of the Giant African Snail hatch in approximately eight to twelve days, it is recommended to spray or bait the area every fourteen (14) days. This should continue for a three (3) month period or until there are no signs of Giant African Snails.

Routine scouting (searching) must take place at night to determine if GAS is still present in the area, after the spraying or baiting cycle has been completed.

## How can fruits and vegetables be sanitised before consumption?

Fruits and vegetables can be sanitised using distilled white vinegar solution or bleach solution to make it safe for consumption.

- ⇒ Make a solution using 1 tablespoon of bleach in four (4) litres of clean water
- ⇒ Soak the fruits and vegetables in this solution for 5 minutes
- ⇒ Remove from solution

**DO NOT PLACE LIVE SNAILS IN GARBAGE BAGS AND DUMP.**  
**DO NOT BURN OR BURY LIVE SNAILS.**

For further information and advice contact your County Agricultural Office

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