

Giant African snail

Lissachatina fulica

Known to be present in Hawai'i

A large snail that reaches up to 8 inches in length, giant African Snails are a garden and crop pest that can also carry rat lungworm. Take steps to prevent the accidental movement of these pests from Hawaii.



Giant African land snails, Lissachatina fulica, can grow up to 8 inches (20 cm) long. (Photo: Andrew Derksen, FDACS/DPI, Bugwood.org)

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Impacts

- The Giant African land snail (GAS) is one of the most damaging snails globally, and consumes over 500 different kinds of plants. The snails are also a potential risk to human health because they can carry a parasitic nematode that can cause meningitis.
- These snails can reproduce several more times without mating again. They can generate clutches of eggs every 2 to 3 months. A single mating can result in multiple clutches of eggs over time resulting in up to 1,200 eggs per year.
- GAS may carry organisms that can cause diseases in humans. These organisms can be transferred by ingesting improperly cooked snail meat or by handling live snails and allowing their mucus to contact human mucous membranes.



Identification

- Full-grown adults can grow up to 20 cm (8 inches) in length and 13 cm (5 inches) in diameter.
- Adult shells are brownish with darker brown lengthwise stripes, have seven to nine whorls, including a swollen long body whorl, and cover at least half the length of the snail.



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Vectors/Commodities

- Like other invasive pests and diseases, giant African snails could enter the United States as hitchhikers on imported cargo.
- GAS has also been illegally imported by individuals for classroom exhibits, as pets, or for food.



Distribution

- Giant African land snails are native to East Africa and found in Asia. In the USA, the pest was eradicated from southern Florida in. Transportation of the snails is prohibited under USDA APHIS quarantine rules.
- This species was brought to Hawai'i in 1936 as a garden ornamental. It is the largest land snail in Hawai'i and is considered an invasive pest because it feeds on the tender green leaves of garden and crop plants throughout the islands.



Giant African land snail infestation in Florida tree. (Photo: David G. Robinson, USDA APHIS PPO, Bugwood.org)



Best Management Practices

- Local control efforts prevent the spread from Hawaii and help protect the nursery industry and community from other impacts.
- BOLO: Be on the lookout! Routine nursery surveys are a proactive way to detect the presence of new pests.
- Search in heavily vegetated areas near where feeding damage has been observed, under debris, rocks, pots, and other areas where slugs/snails seek refuge.
- Trapping cannot be used alone but can be used to supplement visual surveying. Traps are not species-specific and will attract non-target species, including non-mollusks. Trap placement can occur in the same areas that visual surveys occur.
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- Manage slug and snail populations by limiting the number of places slugs and snail can hide in. Remove unnecessary groundcover, cut back vegetation, and remove unnecessary items stored in contact with the ground.
- NOTE FOR WEB: DO NOT INCLUDE REPORT INFORMATION FOR THIS SPECIES AS IT IS NATURALIZED



Selected References:

- USDA APHIS <http://caps.ceris.purdue.edu/> (CAPS site through Purdue CERIS is also a way to look up pests. Google CERIS + species name <http://caps.ceris.purdue.edu/>)
- <https://pestlens.info/>
- State Departments of Agriculture

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