

## **Problem:** Slugs and Snails



**Hosts:** Too many to mention but hostas are a favorite.

**Description:** A slug is a snail without the shell. They like moist areas and live on or in the ground. Slugs may be found from early spring to late fall and will feed on a wide variety of plant material. As slugs move, they leave a slimy trail that becomes silvery upon drying. There are a number of species of slugs that vary from 1/4 inch to 7 inches long.

Slugs reproduce by laying eggs. The number of eggs laid varies with species but average 20 to 30 with up to 100 being possible. Most eggs are laid in the spring to early summer. Eggs are round, filled with a watery substance and range from 1/8 to 1/4-inch in diameter. Newly hatched slugs appear much like the adult except they are smaller and may not be as fully colored. Slugs overwinter in the adult or near-adult stage and seek out shelter

### **Recommendations:**

There are three common strategies used for slug control:

*Cultural:* Reduce the habitat that slugs like. Slugs need moist soil for egg-laying and cool shelter for protection during the day. Opening up the garden to more light and air movement will reduce the amount of favorable habitat. Do not apply mulch over 3 inches thick.

*Trapping:* Place a shallow pan in the garden and fill with beer or a mixture of sugar, yeast and water. Slugs fall into these pans and drown.

*Commercial Slug Baits:* These baits or pellets are the most effective in slug control. There are two main ingredients used in slug baits; metaldehyde and iron phosphate. Metaldehyde can be toxic to pets, fish and humans. Iron phosphate is not. Products with iron phosphate include Bonide Slug Magic, Bonide Bug & Slug Killer, Natural Guard Slug and Snail Bait and Monterey Sluggo. A product with metaldehyde is Hi-Yield Improved Slug & Snail Bait.

### **References:**

[Slugs and Snails on Flowers](#), Maryland Cooperative Extension

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