

Green snail

A new pest in Victoria

The declared exotic plant pest green snail (*Cantareus apertus* - formerly *Helix aperta*) has been detected in Victoria for the first time, near Cobram in the north of the state.

The snail is native to southern Europe and north Africa. It became established in the Perth metropolitan area in the 1980s, possibly introduced by an overseas traveller.

What plants are affected?

The green snail has a wide host range. Near Perth it has damaged cabbages, cauliflowers, lettuces, peas, beans, wheat, lupins, pasture grasses and native plants. It thrives in dense grass and seems to have adapted to the sandy soils of the Perth metropolitan area. It also inhabits areas of natural bush.

The damage caused by green snail is similar to that of common garden snail – feeding on the surfaces of young leaves, often only penetrating shallowly and leaving a ‘windowpane’ effect. Older snails eat holes in the leaves and may reduce them to veins only.

During summer (December – March), green snails lie dormant below the soil surface and do not pose a risk.

How does it spread?

Green snails spread through the movement of infested plant material eg. in hay bales, nursery stock or harvested vegetables.



Adult green snail (actual length about 55mm).



Juvenile green snail (actual length about 30mm).

What does green snail look like?

Mature green snails have an olive-green shell and white flesh. They are intermediate in size between the smaller vineyard snail and white Italian snail and the larger common garden snail, rarely exceeding 25mm in shell diameter.

See images on this page and overleaf.

How does it behave?

Green snail is similar to both the white Italian snail and the common garden snail in that it remains dormant through the summer in dry situations. However, unlike the other snails, it burrows into the soil before becoming dormant.

Following autumn and winter rains the snail reactivates itself. The eggs are laid in the soil about May or June and the young snails appear in early winter. Green snails can breed very quickly, with up to 1000 young snails found per square metre.



Left: Juvenile green snail (top) and common garden snail.

Below left: Shells of the vineyard snail.

Below right: Shells of the white Italian snail.

(both of the below species are smaller than green snail).

Bottom: Juvenile green snail.



What are the implications of the green snail detection?

Restrictions will apply to the movement from the area around the Cobram infestation of most plant materials, including pasture grasses, fodder (hay), vegetables, cut flowers and nursery stock.

How can green snail be controlled?

For advice on controlling green snail, please contact DPI on 136 186.

Any chemical products used to control green snail must be applied, stored and disposed of according to instructions on the container label. In particular:

- Observe specified withholding periods.
- Ensure that pets and livestock are excluded from baited areas and chemical preparation areas.
- Do not contaminate waterways with chemicals or used containers.



Further information

For information on movement restrictions, please contact DPI on 136 186 or email market.access@dpi.vic.gov.au

If you suspect you have found green snail, please contact DPI immediately on 136 186.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on: 136 186, TTY: 1800 122 969, or email customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au

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