

Land Snail



GARDEN EARTH
NATURALIST

ECO-SERVICE CARDS

LAND SNAIL

CLASS: Gastropoda

PHYLUM: Mollusca

IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ Size variable
- ◆ conspicuous shells on their backs cover vital organs; shells are thin and have a clockwise spiral
- ◆ colors and patterns vary
- ◆ soft, mucus-coated “foot” protrudes from shell and has two pairs of tentacles; longer tentacles have eyes at the tip



Where to Look:

Snails are found in moist, shady areas in lawns, vacant lots, fields and woods. Snails need limestone to build their shells and so are more numerous in areas where the soils contain limestone.

Who Eats It?

Birds, frogs and insects such as firefly larvae feed on snails.



LIFE CYCLE

Snails produce both eggs and sperm. The mother digs a hole and buries the eggs. The young emerge 1-2 months later and look like tiny adults. Their shells are soft and transparent. They build a new, harder shell as they grow.

What It Eats.

Snails eat tender leaves and grasses or rotting plants. They have an organ in the mouth called a radula which grates the food into small pieces. Some species also eat algae, fungi and dead animals.

Role in the Ecosystem

Snails play a role as recyclers as well as an important role in the food chain.



Did You Know

Snails hibernate in cold weather. The structure of their blood actually changes and acts like an anti-freeze.