

Giant African Snail



USDA/APHIS, David G. Robinson

Figure 1. A mature *Lissachatina fulica* (formerly *Achatina fulica*) in its environment. These snails cause extensive damage to plants in tropical and subtropical agricultural systems and to the environment.

“Giant African snail” is the common name used to describe several snail species that are native to Africa and considered serious agricultural pests in the United States.

These species are large, terrestrial snails that reach up to 8 inches (20 cm) in length and nearly 5 inches (13 cm) in diameter—about the size of an average adult fist. The brownish

shell covers at least half the length of the snail.

To report or dispose of a giant African snail, call your State department of agriculture or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) office in your State. For a list of APHIS offices, visit www.aphis.usda.gov/services/report_pest_disease/report_pest_disease.shtml.

For more information about the dangers of these snails, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/gas/index.shtml.



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Figure 2. A ruler is used to show the actual size of an adult giant African snail (*Lissachatina fulica*). These snails generally reach their maximum size within 10 months.

A menace to more than 500 agricultural crops, the giant African snail poses a serious agricultural threat. These snails:

- Are illegal to sell, distribute, and/or ship across State lines in the United States;



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Figure 2. An APHIS inspector holding a mature specimen of *L. fulica*. The shell of an adult snail consists of seven to nine whorls (spirals), with a long and greatly swollen body whorl.

- Contain both male and female reproductive organs and reproduce rapidly, laying up to 500 eggs at a time; and
- Can transmit diseases to humans through the consumption of raw or improperly cooked meat or by contact with human mucous membranes (e.g., eyes, nose, and mouth).

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United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Program Aid No. 1777
Issued July 2004
Slightly revised April 2011

