

Slugs



Description

- Slugs are molluscs (soft bodied animals without internal skeletons) of the class “Gastropoda” which literally translated is “stomach foot”.
- They use this single foot to glide along the mucous trail that they secrete.

Lifestyle

- They lay their eggs, in batches, in damp places, such as in the soil or under stones.
- A small replica of the adult emerges from the egg and takes between 2 months and a year to mature.
- The activity of slugs is highest in the spring and autumn. They need to keep moist at all times, otherwise they will dehydrate and die. Thus they emerge only at night or on wet days, just after it has stopped raining.
- Slugs live outside in damp, shady places among plants, plant debris and humus, crawling into crevices or beneath stones, pots, plastics etc, during the cold winter or sunny daytime.
- They feed on plant material, either growing or decaying.

Significance

- Slugs are normally a common garden or horticultural pest but sometimes they do enter houses. Why they do this is something of a mystery as they cannot survive for more than a day or two indoors.
- They are quite harmless (excepting damage to plants), though their presence is most objectionable and the silvery slime trails they leave are unsightly.

Control

- First examine under the sink and seal any gaps, in external walls or solid floors, around the sink waste pipe and the cold water supply pipe.
- Next, inspect the external walls of the house at, and just above ground level.
- Seal any gaps in the pointing, under doorsteps and around waste and gas pipes with sand and cement or mastic. (Airbricks **must not** be sealed as ventilation is required under the floor to prevent dry rot)
- Use slug pellets to kill as many slugs as possible out of doors and so reduce the numbers available to enter the house.
- Make sure to follow the instructions on the packet regarding the handling of slug pellets and the protection of domestic animals/pets should be followed.
- Do not use pellets indoors as the pellets not only kill slugs but also attract them.
- Do not expect to get rid of slugs overnight. There is no one easy answer to this problem. It requires both patience and persistence.