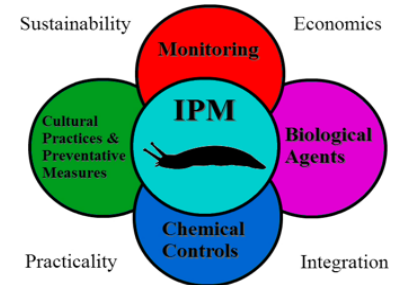


## How to Control Slugs and Snails Using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a decision-making system that combines many strategies in order to minimize the use of pesticides in controlling pest populations.

Terrestrial slugs and snails are soft-bodied, land-dwelling mollusks that feed on plant matter and cause irregularly shaped damage to leaves, flowers, and fruit. As they glide along on a muscular “foot,” they leave behind a signature slime trail. Slugs and snails are active at night and on cloudy or foggy days. During cold weather, they hibernate in the topsoil, but they will remain active in temperatures above 50°F.



*I.P.M. College of Agricultural Sciences Oregon State University*

### Monitoring and habits

- Look for trails and chewing damage (scrapes, shredding, ragged holes).
- Check for slugs, snails, and eggs on the undersides of plants, containers, and boards. Decide on a personal tolerance level for slugs and snails in that location.
- Avoid watering plants in the evening when slugs and snails would benefit the most.
- In the spring, turn over mulch to expose recently hibernating pests and their eggs to predators.



### Mechanical controls

- Remove damp, dark hiding places, such as unused containers, lumber, or dead plant material.
- Hand pick. Tweezers and chopsticks can be useful for this task!
- Set hiding traps, such as flat boards and inverted flower pots, and remove pests every morning.
- Erect barriers. Dry lime, ashes, diatomaceous earth, and copper strips slow the slugs down, but do not kill them. Some barriers also need to be replaced after rain or irrigation.



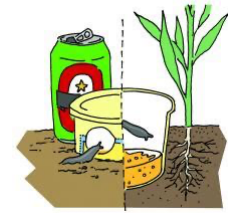
### Biological controls

- Encourage local predators. Many animals and insects prey on slugs and snails, including toads, frogs, salamanders, snakes, birds, beetles, and marsh flies.

*Phillip Brown, © Oregon State University*

## Chemical controls

- Set the bait
  - ◇ Beer traps - Set a deep trap, such as a small yogurt container, with the rim at ground level, and fill with about one inch of beer (any brand or type). Check the container daily, replace contents every 2-3 days.
  - ◇ If animal or child interference is a concern, cut a 2-inch hole in the container lid, and cover the trap. Alternatively, cut a hole in the side, near ground level.
  - ◇ Iron Phosphate (Sluggo, Escar-Go) interferes with calcium metabolism in the gut, causing snails and slugs to die in 3-6 days. Compared to other chemicals, Iron phosphate is a safer option to use around humans, other animals, and insects, and it may be applied near food crops, lawns, and ornamental plants.



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- Apply pesticide
  - ◇ Metaldehyde (Deadline) rapidly dehydrates slugs and snails when ingested. However, if there is a nearby water source or rainy weather, the slugs and snails may survive. Metaldehyde use is not recommended around edible plants, and it can be harmful to animals and fish.



Phillip Brown, © Oregon



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## Resources

- Slug Portal <https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/slug-portal/integrated-pest-management-ipm-strategy>
- How to Control Slugs in Your Garden / Cómo Controlar a las Babosas en su Jardín <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/em9155.pdf>
- Solve Pest and Weed Problems at <https://solvepestproblems.oregonstate.edu/>
- 10-Minute University™ handouts and class schedule in English [www.cmastergardeners.org](http://www.cmastergardeners.org)

*This handout is adapted from "Managing Slugs and Snails," presented by 10-Minute University™ Clackamas County Master Gardener™ Association.*

## More information:

