

Management of Slugs

Recognize the problem

Slugs belong to the class Gastropoda of the Phylum Mollusca. Different species are reported in Nepal. Among them, *Limax* spp are commonly found and are very problematic. Slugs are a serious pest of fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants. They are soft-bodied molluscs without a shell. Their body length ranges from 6 mm to 250 mm long. They are yellow, green to brown or black in colour and some may have spotting or coloured patterns. They have eye stalks that look like antennae.

Damaged leaf with slug. (Photo by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Slide Set (CC BY))



Background

Slugs reproduce year round. Each slug has male and female reproductive parts. During mating, two slugs cross fertilize to reproduce. Newly hatched slugs travel through the soil and feed on roots. Slugs can also climb up the plant and feed on foliage and fruits. Their feeding, and the slime trails they leave behind, can reduce fruit quality. The slugs feed at night and destroy young shoots of various plants. They also contaminate harvested food. When their population is high, they severely damage the crop.

Adult. (Photo by Gary Bernon, USDA APHIS (CC BY))



Management

- Using organized public campaigns, collect and destroy young and adult slugs during their aestivation period (January and April) when they hide under hedges and debris. Destroy slugs by dropping them into 5% salt solution.
- Remove all potential slug hiding places, habitats and shelters from the fields, including plant debris, mulches, large wood chips, etc.
- Crows, lizards, the common mongoose, swans, pigs and poultry birds prey on juvenile slugs so should be encouraged
- A kind of fire fly or lightning beetle also preys on the slugs
- Dust wood ash around the plants to keep the pests away from plants
- Sprinkle salt crystals in the paths or around the plots
- Create temporary hiding places for slugs by keeping plant debris as well as succulent plant parts in a pile in the crop field during the night, then collect and destroy the hidden slugs inside the pile in the morning
- Use 5% metaldehyde pellets @ 50 kg per ha along with wider sanitation and physical control measures
- Use poison baits (1kg wheat bran, 30g metaldehyde or copper sulphate, and 50 g of molasses)
- Spray chemical pesticides such as chlorpyrifos (e.g. Dursban) 20% EC @ 2 ml per litre water in the field during night hours

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Limax* spp.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Nepal



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