

Arion vulgaris



Taxon	Family / Order / Class / Phylum
<i>Arion vulgaris</i> (Moquin-Tandon, 1855)	Arionidae / Pulmonata / Gastropoda / Mollusca

COMMON NAMES (English only)

Lusitanian Slug
Spanish Slug

SYNONYMS

Arion lusitanicus (Mabille, 1868)

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Large, 7-15 cm long, polyphagous slug feeding on a wide range of green plants, on decayed organic matter and animal carcasses; color variable, usually grayish-green

BIOLOGY/ECOLOGY

Dispersal mechanisms

Although this species is highly mobile for a slug (5-9 m/h) natural dispersal is low. Their home range is negatively correlated with population density. Large anthropogenic distance dispersal of eggs, immature and adult slugs is predominantly via plant material.

Reproduction

It is a hermaphroditic species. Mating usually takes place in spring. A slug can produce up to 400 eggs in autumn at one time (semelparous). Maturity of young slugs is reached within one year. It has one (sometimes two) generations per year.

Known predators/herbivores

Hedgehogs, some birds, amphibians and reptiles, larger ground beetles feed on eggs and young slugs.

Resistant stages (seeds, spores etc.)

Eggs may tolerate adverse conditions.

HABITAT

Native (EUNIS code)

G1: Broadleaved deciduous woodland (in the lowlands)

Habitat occupied in invaded range (EUNIS code)

I2: Cultivated areas of gardens and parks, I: Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats, G1: Broadleaved deciduous woodland (in the lowlands)

Habitat requirements

Moist habitats

DISTRIBUTION

Native (EUNIS code)

Southwest Europe (parts of Spain, France, UK)

Known Introduced Range

Large parts of central and the southern part of northern Europe, USA (since 1998)

Trend

In Europe, increasing in abundance, distributional and altitudinal range



Close-up of *Arion vulgaris*

Photo: W. Fischer

http://ipp.boku.ac.at/private/wf/Arion_vulgaris.html

MAP (European distribution)



Legend

	Known in country		Known in CGRS square		Known in sea
	Native in country		Native in CGRS square		Assumed native range

INTRODUCTION PATHWAY

The slug was unintentionally introduced with plant material, package and waste materials. Because of scattered first records across Europe, several independent introduction events are presumed.

IMPACT

Ecosystem Impact

It is an important plant defoliator. Outcompetes native slug species due to its large size and its high population densities and hybridises with the native *A. ater*. If combated with toxic baits, the toxicants can accumulate in predators.

Health and Social Impact

It is an intermediate host of nematode parasites affecting pets. The use of toxic baits could have adverse effects on children and pets in private gardens.

Economic Impact

It is the most important slug pest in Europe causing severe damage to horticultural plants in private and public gardens and cultivated crops in agriculture. It is also known for transmission of plant pathogens.

MANAGEMENT

Prevention

Screening of introduced plant material and packaging. No intentional releases from private gardens to natural sites.

Mechanical

Traps; slug fences; collecting by hand and killing slugs with boiling water.

Chemical

Several toxicants (e.g., Metaldehyds, Carbamates) are available.

Biological

Providing near-natural habitats so that natural predators are supported; use of nematodes (*Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita*) as biocontrol agents.

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