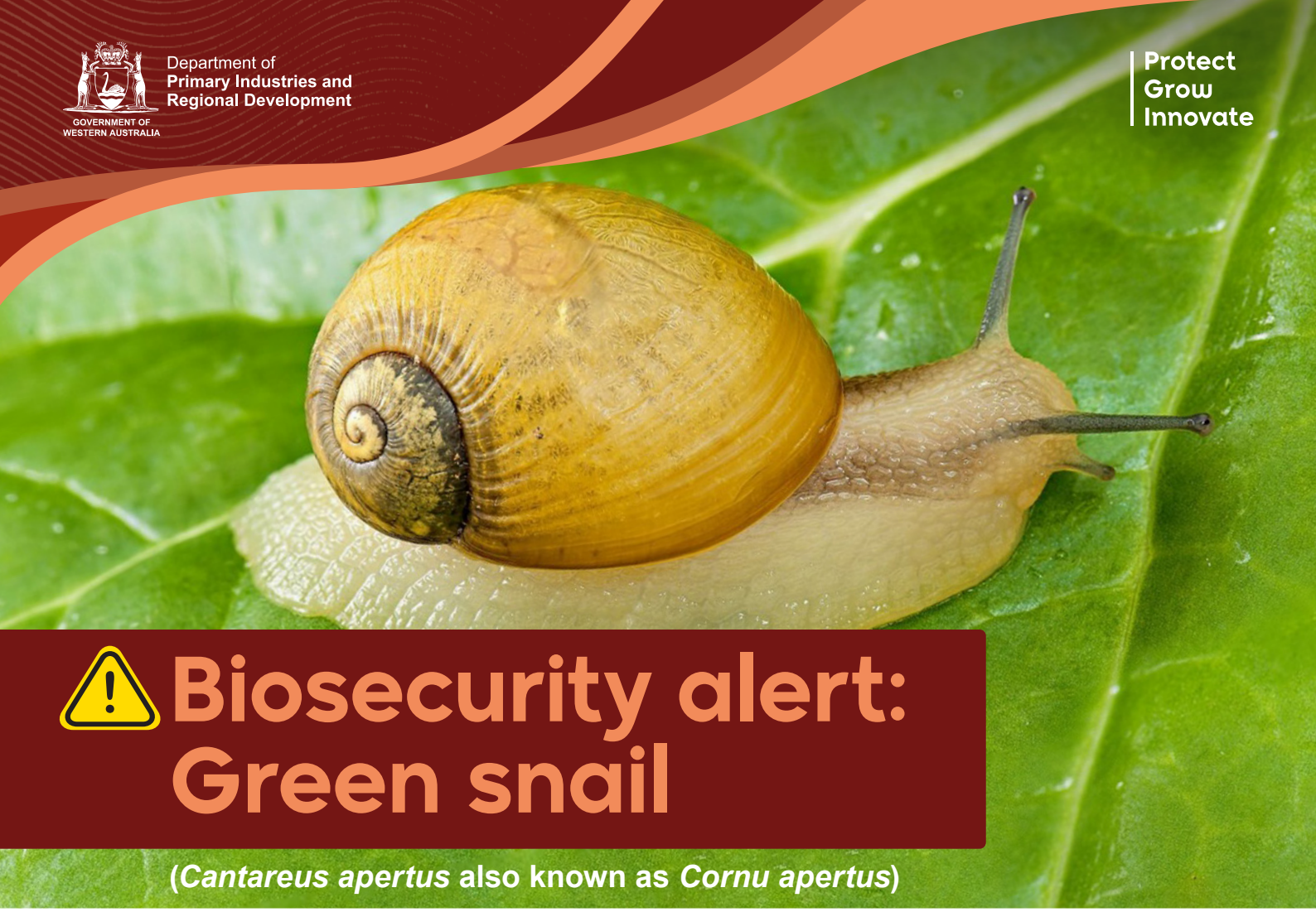
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Protect Grow Innovate



Biosecurity alert: Green snail

(*Cantareus apertus* also known as *Cornu apertus*)

The pest and its impacts

Green snails are a declared pest in Western Australia and except for a small area in northern Victoria, is not found elsewhere in Australia. Green snail originates from southern Europe and northern Africa and was first found in Western Australia in 1980 and has been slowly spreading since.

Green snail is established in many parts of the Perth metropolitan area and some regional areas of Western Australia including parts of Albany, Beverley, Busselton, Capel, Esperance, Kendenup, Keysbrook, Northam, Wanerie, Waroona and Yallingup. As it is a declared pest in Western Australia, landholders who find or suspect the presence of green snail outside its known distribution are required to report their location.

Green snails may look similar to juvenile common garden snails, *Cornu aspersum*, and are intermediate in size between the common garden snail and the white Italian snail.

REPORT Green snail

DO NOT report Garden snail

LOOK for this pest

Damage

- The damage caused by green snail is similar to that of the common garden snail, although the host range of plants attacked by green snail is greater.
- Young snails feeding on surfaces of leaves often only penetrate shallowly leaving a ‘windowpane effect’ but older snails eat holes in the leaves and may reduce them to veins only.
- Slime contamination (indicating snail or slug activity) is often associated with feeding damage.
- During their underground summer dormancy, snails do not pose a risk to crops.
- Green snails vary in colour from light green to olive to dark brown when they are fully mature. The shells are without any banding but can be marked with black flecks and grow to about 15–25 mm in diameter. The body, or foot, is usually a light creamy yellow, but can darken with age.
- Green snails do not appear to be restricted to any particular soil or vegetation type. They tend to be ground dwelling and thrive in open grasslands. They can also inhabit areas of natural bush.

(Left) juvenile and adult white Italian snails, (middle) green snails, (right) common garden snails

Feeding damage

Rasping damage by a juvenile green snail

Slime contamination

What plants are affected?

The host range for green snail is very broad, and includes broadacre and horticultural crops such as cereals, canola, lucerne, pasture grasses, lupins, cultivated flowers, vegetables (such as cucurbits, brassicas, peas, beans, potatoes), nursery stock and citrus. They can be a serious nuisance to growers and domestic gardeners alike.

> **Fun fact:** green snails are also known as the 'singing snail', because of the frothing and wheezing noises they make when disturbed. This serves as a defence mechanism and is a characteristic of the *Cantareus* group.

How does the pest survive and spread?

They can breed very quickly, resulting in up to 1000 young snails per square metre.

During the dry summer months (November–March) the snails burrow underground and lie in a dormant state (or 'aestivate').

Following autumn and winter rains the snails become active, laying eggs in the soil from May–August with young snails appearing in early winter.

Snails can be spread over long distances on infested machinery and containers, and in soil, plants and plant material, including hay. Please take care not to spread green snail from infested areas.

Control

Effective control can be achieved by baiting twice per year:

- Bait should first be applied before the break of the season (March/April) in readiness for hungry adult snails, post aestivation (dry season dormancy). This is also the time when alternative green feed sources are scarce.
- The second baiting should occur in September/October to kill snails including young snails who actively feed prior to entering aestivation.

- Snails are attracted to disturbed earth. A freshly dug perimeter furrow that has been baited is an effective method for snail control or surveillance, and can reduce baiting costs for growers compared to broadcasting baits throughout larger areas.
- There are a variety of products available to control snails (and slugs) ranging from bait pellets with varying levels of toxicity, to copper based sprays which will repel and provide a barrier to snails.

Please be aware that some bait products pose a risk of serious illness or death if eaten by animals such as pets or livestock and may also pose a risk to children.

Management

- To prevent distribution of declared pests in Western Australia, practice good biosecurity measures including cleaning any containers or machinery, and avoid moving soil, plants and plant material from infested to un-infested areas without close inspection to remove any pests.
- Practice good biosecurity measures including keeping the property clear of dense weed or grassy patches and other areas where pests can hide, breed and feed.
- Further information on methods and products recommended for snail control, and the conditions in place relating to the export of plants, produce and agricultural equipment from Western Australia is available from **agric.wa.gov.au/green-snail**

REPORT suspected sightings

- Help protect WA's horticultural and agricultural industries through early pest detection.
- Report green snail or suspected green snail sightings, especially in Perth's peri-urban and rural areas.

Report your observations

MyPestGuide® Reporter
via app or online
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

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