

BAITS FOR GIANT AFRICAN SNAILS

The giant African snail (*Achatina fulica*) was introduced into Papua New Guinea by the Japanese during the war. It is now established on the Gazelle Peninsula and Kimbe areas of New Britain, on New Ireland, around Kieta on Bougainville, at Port Moresby, on Manam Island and around Bogia in the Madang Province, and at Popondetta.

The snails can do a lot of damage to food gardens and they can destroy vegetable crops such as Chinese cabbage and beans. Often damage is very bad when the snails are new to an area. There are several baits that can be used to kill the snails. A bait is a poison mixed with something that snails like to eat.

It is possible to buy commercially prepared baits in stores that sell agricultural supplies. Some of these are Blizen Snail Killer, Defender Snail Killer, and Mesurol bait, and

instructions for their use are printed on the container.

It is also possible to prepare a bait yourself. This is usually cheaper than a ready made bait and will last longer. You need sawdust, cement and a chemical called metaldehyde. Snails like to eat metaldehyde but it kills them when they eat it. Metaldehyde can be bought from stores which sell agricultural supplies. The sawdust, cement and metaldehyde should be mixed in equal volumes with a little water. The mixture is placed to dry on a flat surface such as a piece of timber. It needs to be dried in the shade. When the mix has set hard it is broken up into pieces about 2 centimetres across.

The pieces of bait are placed around the outside of the garden and inside it. They should be placed about a metre apart. Snails will eat the baits and die.



Shells of dead snails. If snails are eating your garden, you can put a poison in the garden to kill them.
Photo by R. M. Bourke.