**Control slugs, snails in the landscape**

[](http://apps.lsuagcenter.com/NR/rdonlyres/3C46208C-CDA7-468E-8224-203A2C7532B6/102518/Figure1Slugfeedingonstrawberryfruit.JPG)

A slug feeds on strawberry fruit. (Photo by Raj Singh, LSU AgCenter)

[](http://apps.lsuagcenter.com/NR/rdonlyres/3C46208C-CDA7-468E-8224-203A2C7532B6/102517/Figure2Slugfeedingonzinnialeaves.JPG)

Slugs feed on zinnia leaves and cause damage. (Photo by Raj Singh, LSU AgCenter)

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BATON ROUGE, La. – Slimy slugs and snails can be pesky pests in Louisiana gardens and landscapes.

“We all know that pathogens and insect pests can cause severe damage to vegetables, fruits and ornamentals in home gardens and landscapes,” said [Raj Singh](http://apps.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/authors/RSingh.htm), plant pathologist and director of the LSU AgCenter Plant Diagnostic Center. “But slugs and snails also can cause considerable damage to vegetables, fruits and ornamentals if they’re not controlled.”

Slugs and snails are mollusks, and several species can be pests in gardens and landscapes, Singh said. They’re practically the same, except snails have external shells.

These mollusks leave slimy trails of mucus that facilitates their movement. Dried, slimy mucus turns white or silvery and can be a good indication of their presence, he said.

Slugs and snails are hermaphrodites, which mean all adults can lay eggs. Eggs are small, clear to white and laid in batches in soil beneath leaf material, mulch or other protected places.

Usually active at night, slugs and snails can be spotted during early morning hours before sunrise, Singh said. During daytime they hide and take shelter under plant materials or mulch.

“They can feed almost on any living or dead plant material, but they prefer young, tender succulent plant tissue,” he said. They chew on the leaves and flowers, producing irregular holes, and fruits damaged by slugs and snails are unsightly.

Slugs and snails can be effectively managed by using different tactics alone or in combination, Singh said. Beer traps, baits, barriers and hand picking are some of the common options.

“While hand picking can be an effective tactic, it may be labor intensive and time consuming, and some folks do not like to handle slimy things,” Singh said.

Beer traps can be very effective in small gardens or vegetable beds. “Fermented products attract slugs and snails, and they die by drowning in them,” he said.

Metal or chemical barriers also are effective ways to thwart these pesky pests.

“A barrier containing copper foil reacts with the slimy mucus and disrupts their nervous system,” Singh said. “Bordeaux mixture containing copper sulfate and hydrated lime is known to repel slugs and snails.”

Several baits are available from garden centers and retail stores to manage slugs and snails. Baits containing metaldehyde as an active ingredient are toxic to pets, so avoid using them around areas where children and pets are present, he said. “Always follow the bait label for the recommended dose and application methods."  
  
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