Giant African Snail

"Giant African snail" is the common name used to describe several snail species that are native to Africa and considered serious agricultural pests in the United States. These species are large, terrestrial snails that reach up to 8 inches (20 cm) in length and nearly 5 inches (13 cm) in diameter—about the size of an average adult fist. The brownish shell covers at least half the length of the snail.

To report or dispose of a giant African snail, please call the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) at this toll-free number: (888) 703–4457. For more information about the dangers of these snails, please visit

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/ga_snail/ga_snail.html on the Web.

A mature *Achatina fulica* in its environment. These snails cause extensive damage to plants in tropical and subtropical agricultural systems and to the environment. *(APHIS photo by malacologist David G. Robinson.)*

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A ruler is used to show the actual size of an adult giant African snail *(Achatina fulica)*. These snails generally reach their maximum size within 10 months. *(APHIS photo by Louis Volpe.)*

An APHIS inspector holding a mature specimen of A. fulica. The shell of an adult snail consists of seven to nine whorls (spirals), with a long and greatly swollen body whorl. *(APHIS photo by Louis Volpe.)*

A menace to more than 500 agricultural crops, the giant African snail poses a serious agricultural threat. All these snails

- Are illegal to sell, distribute, and/or ship across State lines in the United States;
- Contain both male and female reproductive organs and reproduce rapidly, laying up to 500 eggs at a time; and
- Can transmit diseases to humans through the consumption of raw or improperly cooked meat or by contact with human mucous membranes (e.g., eyes, nose, and mouth).

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