

# Look What's Out There

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<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/>

## The Giant African Land Snails



There are several species of exotic snails considered to be serious pests of plants and threats to public health. Recent information suggests that one or more of these species in the giant African snail group are being sold in pet stores or traded by exotic animal dealers. The origin of these snails is likely through illegal importation.

Scientists consider the giant African snail, *Achatina fulica*, to be one of the most damaging land snails in the world. It is known to eat at least 500 different types of plants, including breadfruit, cassava, cocoa, papaya, peanut, rubber, and most varieties of beans, peas, cucumbers, and melons. Believed to be originally from East Africa, *A. fulica* has established itself throughout the IndoPacific Basin, including the Hawaiian islands. This mollusk has also been introduced to the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Recently, *A. fulica* infestations were detected on Saint Lucia and Barbados.

In 1966, a Miami, FL, boy smuggled three giant African snails into south Florida upon returning from a trip to Hawaii. His grandmother eventually released the snails into her garden. Seven years later, more than 18,000 snails had been found along with scores of eggs. The Florida State eradication program took 10 years at a cost of \$1 million.

The purpose of this pest alert is to ask for public's assistance in identifying these snails and to convey the importance of reporting the existence of these snails in the United States. If the snails were to become established in the general environment, they could cause serious damage to plants, both in urban settings and in the natural landscape. They also may carry a parasite that can infect people. If you see a snail that looks like the giant African snail, please report it to your State Department of Agriculture or the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) office. (Pest Detection and Management program, APHIS.USDA.GOV)

## May is Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month

World Asthma Day is organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma.

Twenty million people in the U.S. are estimated to have asthma. This includes 6.3 million children. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness, and during the past 20 years, the number of school absences due to asthma has more than doubled.

Symptoms of an "asthma attack" can be difficulty with breathing, a tight feeling in the chest, coughing and wheezing. Asthma can develop quickly and it can range from being a mild discomfort to a life-threatening attack if breathing stops completely.

Ozone can aggravate asthma. When ozone levels are high, more people with asthma have attacks that require a doctor's attention or the use of additional medication. One reason this

happens is that ozone reduces lung capacity, making people more sensitive to indoor and outdoor allergens such as pet dander, pollen, dust mites, mold, and pests, which are common triggers of asthma attacks.

African-Americans continue to have higher rates of asthma than do Caucasians. Their ER visits for asthma are more than double and their hospitalization rates are more than triple.

Today, the Environmental Protection Agency released "The Ozone Report: Measuring Progress through 2003." The reports shows that in 2003, ozone levels nationwide were the lowest they have been since 1980. Vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions are major sources of pollution that form ozone.

EPA recently proposed rules to reduce the emission and transport of pollutants that result in ozone (EPA, News release, May 10, 2004).

- Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the framework for implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) designed to identify any agricultural premise exposed to a foreign animal disease so that it can be more quickly contained and eradicated.

Veneman also announced that \$18.8 million would be transferred from the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to provide initial funding for the program during FY 2004 (APHIS News Release, WASHINGTON, April 27, 2004).

## Chemical News

- Profume (Sulfuryl Floride) Now Registered. This Dow Agro Science new fumigant formulation has been registered for post harvest control of insects and rodents in cereal grains and dried fruit and nuts in processing plants, storage facilities, mills, and transportation vehicles. EPA established residue tolerances for this post-harvest fumigant on barley, corn, oats, sorghum, wheat, dates, figs, plums, prunes, raisins, almonds, pecans, pistachios, walnuts,

beechnut, butternut, cashews, chestnuts, shinquapin, filberts, Brazil nuts, hickory nuts, macademia nuts, millet, rice, and wild rice. (Federal Register Vol. 69, 1-23-04, via Chemically Speaking, UF, Feb. 2004)

- The Global Crop Diversity Trust, an international fund charged with securing long-term funding for the support of genebanks and crop diversity collections around the world, has obtained the commitments of Dupont and Syngenta for its program. The two companies pledged \$1 M each. Formed in 2002 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the 16 Future Harvest Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research, the Trust has been charged with raising a \$260 million endowment to maintain the world's most critical germplasm for agricultural and industrial crops as well as support struggling collections, especially those in developing countries. The crop diversity collections, holding millions of plant samples housed in gene banks, provide the raw material necessary for plant breeders to develop reliable, hardier, more productive and nutritious food crops for farmers. More information on the Trust is available at <http://www.startwithaseed.org/items/homepage.php> (Crop Biotech Update, 3/5/04, via Agnet).

## Events

June 23-24, 2004

Pest Control Operators Training Blitz, Charleston and Morgantown. Contact Dr. John Baniecki at 293-3911 ext. 2226 or Dr. Essam Dabaan at 293-3911 ext 2227.

<http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/ipm/pestprog/WVINPAS/Events.htm>