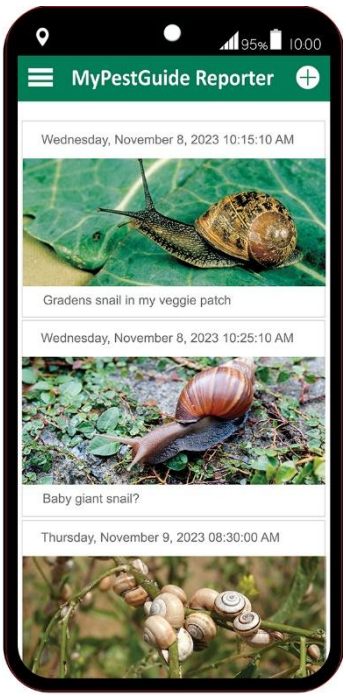
Garden snail safari - spot and re-find

After sunset, snails emerge, and so can you! Grab your torch, download the MyPestGuide® Reporter app, and begin your weekly night safari.

We're not just spotting any snails – we're using observations and inference reporting to check for exotic pest species like the Giant African Snail (*Lissachatina fulica*), one of Australia's most unwanted invaders.

Even if you only find native snails (or no snails at all), your report still helps. That is what inference reporting is all about, making smart guesses based on what's there – or not there.

Why it matters



Not all snails are bad! Native snails are little recyclers that play a vital role in healthy ecosystems. They help break down plant material and improve soil health. Even their empty shells provide nutrients for birds. But exotic snails like the Giant African Snail can hitchhike into Western Australia on imported goods and become serious pests. They:

- damage crops and native plants
- outcompete local species
- spread parasites that can affect humans, pets and livestock.

Exotic snails to watch for

- Chocolate-band snail *(Eobania vermiculata)*
- Lens snail *(Caracollina lenticula)*
- Carthusian snail *(Monacha cartusiana)*
- Grove snail *(Cepaea nemoralis)*
- Rosy wolf snail *(Euglandina rosea)* – a predator of native snails.

Use the *'How to Identify Land Snails'* resource and take clear photos – experts can help identify them.

Early detection is critical. That's where you come in.

What you'll do

- Download the free **MyPestGuide® Reporter** app.
- Go on a night-time snail safari in your garden.
- Spot, mark and report your snail visitors.
- Return each week to see which ones you can find again!

Common garden snail

What you'll need

- phone with MyPestGuide® Reporter app downloaded
- torch or headlamp
- gloves, shoes and garden-friendly clothes
- a few small containers or jars with lids
- tissue or kitchen paper towel
- *barcode* (cut from a cereal box) for tracking
- non-toxic markers or nail polish (blue, green, grey or UV pen + blacklight)
- a notebook and pen (optional).

How to safari like a scientist

Step 1 Get set

- grab your equipment
- locate and label each spot in your garden where snails tend to hide.

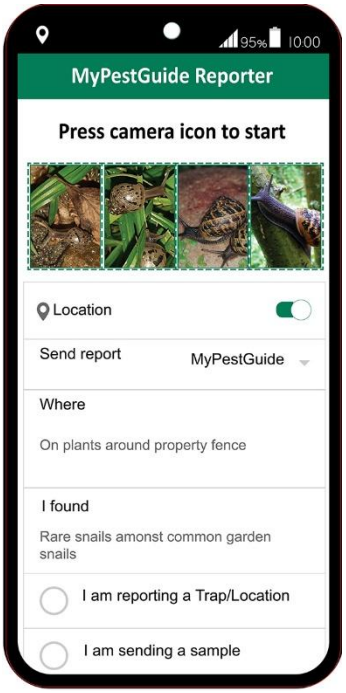
Step 2 Search and collect

- in each spot, look under leaves, pots, rocks, walls, and damp shady areas
- gently collect individual snails
- place each individual snail into a container.

Vineyard snail

Step 3 Mark your snails (Day 1)

- Dry the shell by dabbing gently with a paper towel.
- Mark each snail shell with a number.
- Take 4 photos:
  - a clear photo of snail (side view and view of mark)
  - close-up of key characteristics
    (refer to *How to Identify Land Snails*)
  - a wide view of the habitat where you found the snail
  - a photo of any damage signs or symptoms.
- Open MyPestGuide® Reporter and submit a report:
  - **Where** – what plant was nearby?
  - **I found** – take a guess (inference) about the organism responsible, even if the organism is absent!
  - Scan your barcode to track your individual snail through time and space.
- Release snails close to where you found them (release spot).
- Wash your hands and avoid touching your face!



Step 4 Observe and re-find (weekly)

- Return to the release spots and search again.
- Look for marked snails and record each using **MyPestGuide® Reporter app :**
  - **Where** did you find marked snails? What were they doing?
  - **Take** a close-up photo showing the mark.
  - **Scan** your ***barcode***.
- Leave marked snails where you found them.
- Collect any unmarked snails and repeat Day 1 steps to mark new snails.
- Wash your hands and avoid touching your face!

When to safari

Snails are most active:

- after sunset
- during cool, damp evenings
- in shady, moist garden spots.

You can do this any time, but it is extra helpful during the Biosecurity Blitz period (Oct – Nov).

What is ‘inference’ reporting?

It means using your observations to help scientists make conclusions – even when a pest isn’t found.

- **Observation:** Chewed edges on a leaf
  Inference: Snail activity nearby
- **Observation:** Poo – soft, stringy or tube-shaped poo near a plant
  Inference: Poo is likely to belong to a snail or slug, not a beetle or grasshopper.

Why it matters

Your snail safari is more than just a nighttime adventure – it is real biosecurity science. Your photos and reports help:

- confirm WA is free from invasive snails
- track changes in native snail populations
- protect plants, wildlife and food production.

Left-: Two white snails (*Theba pisana*); Middle: two green snails (*Cornu apertus*); Right: two garden or brown snail (*Cornu aspersum*)

Make a report

Whether you spot something or not, your report matters. Submitting a report through the **MyPestGuide® Reporter app** is easy. Your observations help scientists confirm the absence of harmful pests.

Your reports help scientists confirm where harmful pests aren’t found.

Important Disclaimer

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