

## Gardening Tips

### Snail And Slug Control (Part 2)

By John Ferguson

During 2011 and 2012 very few folks had any trouble with slugs and snails due to the drought. However, this year we have been blessed with abundant rainfall and mild temperatures hence the slug and snail population has exploded.

Over the last week we had several customers asking about snail and slug control. I have also received a couple e-mails about dogs dyeing from ingesting Iron Phosphate based snail baits.

In a previous TIP I talked about how effective baby ducks were in controlling slugs and snails. Today there is another completely NON-TOXIC method that works extremely well for snails.

I was taking out the trash this morning and I noticed hundreds (thousands?) of snails up on the brick, on the woodwork and up on tree trunks. When it rains snails climb up on various structures to keep from drowning.

For years I have kept a short wood block around (2" x 4" x 18" long) just for snail control. I have discovered that snails crush easily when pressed on by the wood block. The snails were so thick this morning I could lay the wood on its side and crush 8-10 snails at one time. In a just few minutes there were hundreds of dead snails that will no longer be eating my plants. The microbes will decompose them and all the nutrients will be returned to the soil.

I have also discovered that snails are cannibalistic. I would crush a couple snails close to each other and go away. When I come back 30-40 minutes later, there



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are often dozens of snails packed around the crushed ones eating them. Now my crushing efficiency has greatly increased.

If one does this a few times you can quickly reduce the snail population to a point where they do no noticeable damage to your plants.