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Potato: Slugs

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Slugs are common garden pests in western Washington. They resemble snails, but lack shells. They may vary in size from as little as 1/4" up to several inches in length, depending on age and species. Foliage of older plants is raggedly chewed, while younger plants may be totally consumed. Slugs leave behind a characteristic slime trail, which appears silvery when it dries. Slugs typically feed at night and do more damage during cool, moist weather.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Remove weeds and debris in and around the vegetable garden.
- ~ Clean up rocks, boards, and other materials which may provide shelter to pests.
- ~ Hand-pick pests when noticed.
- ~ Trap slugs with cans of stale beer sunk into the ground.
- ~ Use chemical slug baits with caution, as pets can be poisoned. Iron phosphate-based baits are safer for pets!

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: *Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides*

Apply around borders and between rows when slugs or damage are first observed. Do not apply to plants.

Listed below are examples of pesticides that are legal in Washington. Always read and follow all label directions.

- ~ Escar-Go! Slug & Snail Bait
 - active ingredient: iron phosphate
 - EPA reg no: 67702-3-56872
- ~ Monterey Sluggo [Organic]
 - active ingredient: iron phosphate
 - EPA reg no: 67702-3-54705
- ~ This list may not include all products registered for this use.

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Images



~ Caption: Slug damage and slime
~ Photo by: R.S. Byther



~ Caption: Brown slug
~ Photo by: C.R. Foss



~ Caption: Slug
~ Photo by: C.R. Foss