Giant African Land Snails (GALS)

A Threat to Florida Agriculture and Natural Resources

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The Snail:
- Giant African Land Snail, *Lisachatina (Achatina) fulica*, is one of the largest and most damaging land snails in the world.
- GALS are invasive and much larger than native snails. They grow to ten inches in length and four inches in diameter.

Why is it important?
GALS are a serious plant pest because:
- Reproduce very rapidly.
- Consume more than 500 plants.
- Destroy food and ornamental crops, forests, and gardens.
- Vector of:
  - fungus: (*Phytophthora* spp.) infecting peppers, coconut, papaya, taro, eggplant, etc.
  - nematode: (*Angiostrongylus cantonensis*) or rat lungworm, can cause meningitis in humans and animals.
- Outcompete native snails by eating them – Native snails are more susceptible to molluscicide.
- Quarantine snail that can affect the local agritourism business.

Invasion in Florida:
Reasons invasive snails are smuggled or illegally shipped into the U.S.:
- Souvenir pets.
- Cultural or religious rituals.
- Private or commercial plant imports.
International ports serve as the entry point for these pests and their potential spread across large regions.

Efforts to Eradicate GALS:
State and federal agencies are working together to eradicate GALS by:
- Hand collection and disposal
- Chemical treatments
- Debris removal
- Research
- Education/outreach
- Detector dogs

How can you help?
- GALS are currently only found in Miami-Dade County, but if you suspect the presence of GALS, call 1-888-397-1517.
- Look for GALS in damp areas or where water collects – often they are under plant debris, at the base of the plants, but can roam up into trees. GALS can also be found on buildings and elsewhere in yards and natural areas.
- Contact your local UF/IFAS Extension office for more information or visit the FDACS website: www.FreshFromFlorida.com/GALS

Literature:

More than 140,000 GALS collected to date!
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