



PASCO COUNTY
**GIANT AFRICAN LAND SNAIL
ERADICATION PROGRAM**
MEDIA KIT

As a regulatory agency of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Division of Plant Industry works to detect, intercept and control plant and honey bee pests that threaten Florida's native and commercially grown plants and agricultural resources.



DIVISION
of
PLANT INDUSTRY

Background

The giant African land snail (GALS), *Lissachatina (Achatina) fulica*, is an invasive pest to the state of Florida and the United States. This pest has a lifespan of up to eight years, the ability to grow up to eight inches long and produce 2,500 eggs per year. They feed on more than 500 host plants, can damage structures by consuming stucco to obtain the calcium necessary to build shells and can carry the rat lungworm parasite, which can cause a form of meningitis in humans and animals which makes them a significant threat to landscapes, crops, and buildings along with human and animal health.



History of GALS in Florida

The giant African land snail has been eradicated twice in the world and both times those eradications were accomplished in Florida. The first was reported in 1966 when three GALS were smuggled into Miami, Florida. The outbreak was discovered by FDACS-DPI in 1969 and an eradication program began immediately. In the end, more than 17,000 snails were found in the state. After seven years, and \$1 million, FDACS-DPI became the first in the world to declare the eradication of this pest.

In 2011, GALS were found in Miami and a second eradication was initiated by FDACS-DPI and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The FDACS-DPI quickly established a presence in Miami and began what would become a decade-long partnership with the community that included outreach, inspections, surveys and treatments. This collaborative eradication program between USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine, the FDACS, Miami-Dade County and its various municipalities cost \$23 million and spanned over 10 years. Eradication was declared in August 2021.

On June 23, 2022, the detection of giant African land snail was confirmed in the New Port Richey area of Pasco County. This detection was reported from a homeowner to UF/IFAS and referred to FDACS-DPI for official identification. The phenotype of the population in Pasco County differs from the ones previously eradicated in the state. This population has a light-dark brown shell with a creamy white flesh opposed to the greyish-brown flesh of the Miami area populations.

How Does Eradication Work?

Cores or core population areas include properties around the location of a live snail detection. Cores are surveyed and treated to eliminate the population. Cores can be released from quarantine after following established treatment and survey protocols.

Quarantine and Treatment

A quarantine is in place starting at the northwest corner of U.S. Highway 19 and Ridge Road. Proceed east on Ridge Road, south on Little Road, west on Trouble Creek Road, north on U.S. Highway 19 in New Port Richey, Florida.

It is unlawful to move the giant African land snail or a regulated article, including but not limited to, plants, plants parts, plants in soil, soil, yard waste, debris, compost or building materials within, from a quarantine area without a compliance agreement.

Metaldehyde is a pesticide used to control snails and slugs and will be used to eradicate this pest. It is approved for use in a variety of vegetable and ornamental crops in the field or greenhouse, on fruit trees, small-fruit plants, in avocado and citrus orchards, berry plants, banana plants and in limited residential areas.

Property owners inside the treatment area will be notified in person or by posted notice at least 24 hours in advance of the planned pesticide treatment.

Metaldehyde works by disrupting the mucus production ability of snails and slugs. This reduces their digestion and mobility and makes them susceptible to dehydration. Snails and slugs that have eaten metaldehyde often seek hiding places, become inactive and begin to die within days.

Locate | Communicate | Eradicate

Partnership between the cooperative program and the community is a critical part of the eradication process. Up to 97% of live snail finds in the 2011-21 Miami-Dade eradication were a result of the public reporting sightings to the FDACS-DPI. FDACS-DPI is dedicated to building this relationship with the New Port Richey community.

To report a sighting, please contact the FDACS-DPI Helpline at DPIHelpline@FDACS.gov or 1.888.397.1517

Current Statistics

Houses Surveyed	242
Positive Properties	29
GALS Collected Alive	874
GALS Collected Dead	142



Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Division of Plant Industry

1-888-397-1517
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FDACS.gov/GALS

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