

Frequently Asked Questions about Iron Phosphate For Controlling Snails

What is iron phosphate?

Iron phosphate is used in baits to control snails and slugs in a variety of settings, such as lawns, gardens, farms (including certified organic crop production), and non-crop areas. Iron phosphate can be produced industrially and is also a common mineral in soils. Both iron and phosphorus are essential plant nutrients and are often included in fertilizers to help plants grow.

How does iron phosphate kill snails and slugs?

Iron phosphate is blended with snail and slug food additives. Once the bait is eaten, the iron phosphate triggers internal changes in the pests that causes them to stop feeding. Snails and slugs that have eaten iron phosphate bait often seek hiding places, become inactive, and begin to die several days later.

Where, when and how much iron phosphate may be applied?

The iron phosphate product chosen for control of Giant African Land Snails is Sluggo®-AG, a granular bait. The granules will be scattered on the ground around or near areas infested with snails or around plants to be protected. Broadcast applicators and spreaders may be used to cover larger areas. Sluggo®-AG can be used for snail control in a variety of areas such as lawns and ornamental plants, gardens, farms and non-crop areas. Typical application rates are 0.5 to 1 pound of granules per 1,000 square feet. The bait can be reapplied as it is consumed or at least every two weeks, as needed.

What happens to iron phosphate in the environment?

Once applied, iron phosphate does not easily run off the area during rain and it does not tend to seep into ground water. Even when broadcast in the garden and on the lawn, rain will not readily dissolve the pellet or the iron phosphate. Iron phosphate that is not consumed by snails and slugs will become part of the soil and eventually recycled and used as nutrients by plants and soil microorganisms.

Is iron phosphate harmful to people's health?

No adverse human health effects from iron phosphate are known or expected other than slight to moderate eye irritation, should contact occur. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration classifies iron phosphate as "Generally Recognized As Safe" and it is widely used as a nutritional supplement. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that when it is used as a biopesticide, iron phosphate residues in treated food are very low compared to levels naturally occurring in food.

Will iron phosphate harm my pets?

Iron phosphate is not expected to harm pets (other than pet snails or slugs, of course). Over all, it is generally regarded as safe for food use (for both humans and pets) and is a common component in lawn fertilizers.



Will iron phosphate harm wildlife or other non-target organisms?

Snails and slugs are more sensitive to the effects of iron phosphate than other organisms. Iron phosphate is practically non-toxic to mammals, birds and fish. In addition, no harmful effects were noted for earthworms and certain ground beetles when used according to label directions.

What can I do if I believe that iron phosphate might be making me sick?

If you are ill, you should call your doctor. You can also call your local county health department or call the Florida DOH Bureau of Epidemiology, Pesticide Surveillance toll-free number at 1-800-606-5810. You can also call the Florida Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

How do I get more information about iron phosphate?

You can get more information on the use of iron phosphate in Giant African Land Snail control from the Florida DACS Division of Plant Industry by calling: 1-888-397-1517. You can also get more technical information about iron phosphate by calling the Florida DACS Bureau of Pesticides at 1-850-617-7917 or visiting the website at <http://www.flaes.org/pesticide> for further contacts.