

GARDEN SNAIL

The Latin name for the Garden snail is *Helix aspersa*.

This is probably the commonest snail to be found in gardens and towns. By day it hides under stones or logs, emerging at night to feed.

Snails have prominent tentacles on which the eyes are often located. Many snails are as small as 1 mm long. The spiral shell into which the snail withdraws serves mainly as protection against predators. The shell is variable in colour, but is generally yellow banded with brown.

Snails are monopods and move by means of a series of wave-like muscular contractions along the bottom of the foot. This motion is often aided by cilia and, in land snails, by a track of laid-down slime. They browse by means of a ribbon-like tongue, which contains many thousands of teeth, which is projected from the mouth opening and drawn along rocks or leaves.

Snails feed mainly on algae and decaying matter, and are important members of the food web, being a source of food to fish and waterfowl.