

Animal Care Club News Letter

Issue 2, June 2020

Intro

In this issue the Giant African Land Snails are the focus. They are not everyone's favourite, but they are fascinating in their own right.

The breed I have in the classroom are Albino Lissachatina Fulica Jadatzi.

The children decided that they should be named after the four communities of the school: Heene, Salvington, Broadwater, and Taring.



Picture 1. A rout or walk of Giant African Land Snails.

General Care

Snails like damp environments (75-90% humidity) with a warm temperature (20-29c).

They are omnivores (eat vegetation and animal protein) feeding mainly on vegetables with a protein supplement

once a week. Which is provided using fish flakes made into a paste. The favourites on the menu include sweet potatoes, cucumber and salad leaf.

The pupils are all very good at washing their hands before touching the snails to avoid accidental salt contamination, and after for Hygiene purposes.

Breeding

Snails are hermaphrodites, which mean they have both male and female reproductive organs. These are hidden away in their neck. When two snails decide to mate they will investigate each other. This is a very gentle process. The snails will act as both female and male.

So the male reproductive organ from each snail will extend to reach the other snail.

This is the male reproductive organ.

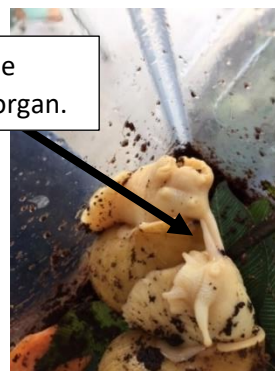


Fig 2. Giant African Land Snails Mating.

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This means that both snails can lay eggs. The eggs are laid 8-20 days later. They can lay 50-300 in a clutch. The eggs take several days to 6 weeks to hatch depending on the temperature and conditions.

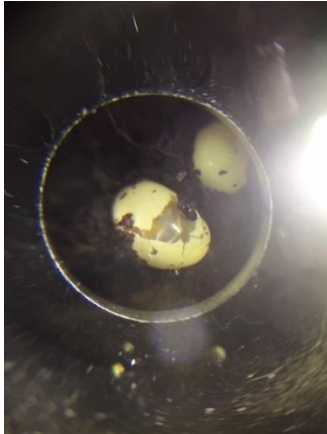


Fig 3. Snail hatching from egg.

As the route of snails matured a nursery was set up. It quickly got busy.

Two days after bringing them home I upgraded the nursery as we woke up to tiny snails all over the kitchen floor!



Fig 4 Snap shot of nursery after health checks and clean out.

Sustainability

As part of Creature Care club we discussed the cost of pets and sustainability. One of the key areas that was highlighted during the discussion was the cost of food. Just before lockdown seeds were planted with the aim of investigating the possibility of growing some food for them in the classroom.

I have carried this on at home and have so far successfully grown salad leaves and herbs. I am waiting for the courgettes to grow big and juicy.

When we return I hope to continue this process.

FUN FACT, The largest Giant African land snail recorded weighed 900g

Coming In The Next Issue

- All about Stick Insects