

# PEST ALERT



Giant African Snail (*Lissachatina fulica*): A Threat to Plant & Human Health

The Giant African Snail (GAS) has been regarded as one of the world's largest and most destructive land snails. It feeds on at least 500 different types of plants, including peanuts, beans, peas, cucumbers, and melons. If fruits and vegetables are not available, the snails will eat a wide variety of ornamental plants, tree bark, and even paint and stucco on houses. GAS is established in many countries around the world and are capable of surviving in many different environments.

## Description/Life Cycle

GAS reaches almost 8 inches (20 cm) in length and 5 inches (13 cm) in diameter, about the size of an average adult fist. When fully grown, the shell of GAS consists of seven to nine whorls, with a long and greatly swollen body whorl. The brownish shell with darker brown lengthwise stripes covers at least half the length of the snail. Each snail contains both female and male reproductive organs. After a single mating, each snail can produce 100 to 500 eggs; and can reproduce several more times without mating again. They can generate clutches of eggs every 2 to 3 months. GAS thrives in tropical and subtropical areas like The Bahamas.

## Distribution

Like other invasive pests and diseases, Giant African Snails could enter the Bahamas as hitchhikers on imported cargo or as illegal imports.

## Damage

Giant African snails cause extensive damage to plants as well as the environment. These snails are also known to carry organisms that can cause diseases in humans. These organisms can be transferred by ingesting improperly cooked snail meat or by handling live snails and allowing their mucus to contact human mucous membranes such as those in the eyes, nose, and mouth.

## Control

Because several species of this snail family are capable of becoming agricultural pests, they are illegal pest of quarantine importance. If you have seen a GAS, immediately report it to BAHFSA or the Department of Agriculture.

Help us to protect plants and protect life!

## Additional Information

For more information on Giant African snails, contact the Plant Protection Division of BAHFSA at (242)604-7004; email: [bahfsa@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:bahfsa@bahamas.gov.bs); [yasminjohnson@bahamas.gov.bs](mailto:yasminjohnson@bahamas.gov.bs)

\*Please include images of the following: a mature GAS in



of the eggs using a penny

\*Include BAHFSA, MAMR, International Year of Plant Health please



the environment; the shell of an immature GAS; a GAS infestation on a plant; size

Internal Logos