

# Invasive Terrestrial Snail

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Eastern  
Heath Snail





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## Terrestrial Snail

**Class:** Gastropoda  
**Order:** Stylommatophora  
**Species:** *Xerolenta obvia* (Menke)

The Eastern Heath Snail has white shells marked with dark brown stripes, which attain a maximum height of 16 mm and a diameter of 22 mm, with 5 to 6 whorls. Native species of the same general appearance do not typically climb vegetation and other upright objects, or aggregate in large numbers the

way this species does. This snail is native to Eastern Europe and was recently detected in Montana in southeast Cascade County. This is the first population reported in western North America. The Eastern Heath Snail prefers dry grassy areas and survives long periods of dry conditions by withdrawing into its shell and sealing the opening with a mucous membrane. The snail feeds on a wide range of plants including, alfalfa, clover, lupine, wheat, barley, fruit trees, and weeds. They can be found on vegetation, under rocks, boards, or attached to other hard surfaces including homes and barns. This species is known for climbing on vegetation, fence posts, and other upright objects to escape high temperatures and will aggregate in enormous numbers in a behavior called “massing.” The species readily attaches to hard surfaces such as rail cars, international shipping containers, stone and granite tile, and other transportation vehicles. The species is regarded as a pest because it has the potential to reduce crop yield and quality, contaminate fruits, vegetables, and hay, and transmit plant and animal diseases. The Montana Department of Agriculture is working with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to determine the extent of the population and possible local origin of this new to Montana pest. Any sightings of suspect snails should be reported to the Montana Department of Agriculture (406-444-9454 or agr@mt.gov), USDA APHIS (406-449-5210), or your local Montana State University county extension office. For more information and to visit the source see:

<http://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=IMGASE0040>

[http://www.theprairiestar.com/news/crop/eastern-heath-snails-becoming-a-threat/article\\_4ad55c6a-e8bf-11e2-b93b-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.theprairiestar.com/news/crop/eastern-heath-snails-becoming-a-threat/article_4ad55c6a-e8bf-11e2-b93b-001a4bcf887a.html)



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