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Garden Slug Dining

J. G. Porter



Slug Dining

In all the years I spent weeding Mother's gardens and, in later years, my own, I never witnessed a slug dining on them - until one day in August, six years ago, when I noticed this chap making his way toward the blossom, I didn't know what to expect until a stamen abruptly disappeared.

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"Slugs and snails are hermaphroditic animals. Each individual has both male and female sex organs, but they usually require another individual to fertilize the eggs that each carries in its body. Each one is capable of laying a total of about 300 eggs. These are laid any time conditions are optimal, but peak times are the spring and fall.

"The gel-like eggs are laid in clusters of 25, about an inch below loose soil in damp locations, and are covered with a layer of mucus. Eggs hatch in about 30 days. However, under dry conditions, the eggs may remain unhatched until adequate moisture has been absorbed. Slugs and snails reach adult size in 3 to 12 months and can live for several years. Temperature and moisture are the prime factors that influence their activity. In times of unfavorable environmental conditions, slugs can survive by burrowing as deep as 3 feet into the soil and snails will close up within their shells."

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/slugs-and-snails-flowers>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/86181924@N02/>



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J. G. Porter
Likeness by C. S. Henry

gerryporter1@gmail.com