



Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Frequently Asked Questions about Iron Phosphate

What is iron phosphate?

Iron phosphate is used in baits to control snails and slugs. Iron phosphate baits are used in a variety of settings, such as lawns, gardens, and non-crop areas. Farms (including certified organic crop production) also use this product. Iron phosphate is a common mineral in soil. It can also be made in a factory. Both iron and phosphorus are key elements for healthy plant growth. They are often added to fertilizers.

How does iron phosphate kill snails and slugs?

Iron phosphate is mixed with snail and slug bait. Once a snail or slug eats the bait, the iron phosphate triggers changes in the pests that make them stop feeding. Snails and slugs that eat iron phosphate bait often seek a place to hide, stop moving around, and begin to die a number of days later.

Where, when and how much iron phosphate may be applied?

The iron phosphate product used for control of Giant African Land Snails is Sluggo[®]-AG. It is a granular bait. The granules are scattered on the ground around areas infested with snails or around plants to be protected. To cover larger areas, spreaders or other tools may be used to spread the bait. Sluggo[®]-AG can be used for snail control in a wide range of areas. These include lawns, shrubs and flowering plants, gardens, farms, and non-crop areas. The normal rate to apply the bait is 0.5 to 1 pound of granules per 1,000 square feet. The bait can be reapplied as pests eat it or at least every two weeks, as needed.

What happens to iron phosphate in the environment?

Once applied, iron phosphate does not easily run off the area during rain. It also does not tend to seep into ground water. Even when spread in the garden and on the lawn, rain will not dissolve it quickly. Any iron phosphate that the snails and slugs do not eat will become part of the soil. Over time, the plants and microbes in the soil will use it as nutrients.

Is iron phosphate harmful to people's health?

No adverse human health effects from iron phosphate are likely other than slight to moderate eye irritation should eye contact occur. If you do come in contact with the product or snails and slugs that have been treated, make sure to wash hands soon after. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration classifies iron phosphate as "Generally Recognized As Safe." It is widely used as a dietary supplement. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that levels of iron phosphate in food treated with this product are very low in comparison to levels that occur naturally in food.

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Will iron phosphate harm my pets?

Iron phosphate is not likely to harm pets. In general, it is regarded as safe for food use (for both humans and pets).

Will iron phosphate harm wildlife or other non-target species?

Snails and slugs are more sensitive to the effects of iron phosphate than other species. Iron phosphate is practically non-toxic to mammals, birds and fish. In addition, it does not harm earthworms and certain ground beetles when used according to the label.

What can I do if I believe that iron phosphate might be making me sick?

If you are ill, you should call your doctor. You can also call:

- Your local county health department,
- The Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Environmental Public Health Medicine, Pesticide Surveillance toll-free number at 1-800-606-5810, or
- The Florida Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

How do I get more information about iron phosphate?

You can get more information on the use of iron phosphate in Giant African Land Snail control from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) Division of Plant Industry by calling: 1-888-397-1517. You can also get more technical information about iron phosphate by calling the Florida DACS Bureau of Pesticides at 1-850-617-7917 or visiting the website at <http://www.flaes.org/pesticide> for further contacts.