



New Bait Available for Slugs & Snails

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For the last 30 years, the primary mollusk (snail and slug) baits used in the landscaping industry have been those containing metaldehyde as the active ingredient. About 10 years ago, iron phosphate came on the market and is now also widely used, particularly in areas where people and pets may encounter the bait. Recently a new active ingredient, ferric sodium EDTA, has become available for both home use and professional pest management.

You can find this active ingredient in new formulations of Corry's Slug & Snail Killer as well as Dr. T's Slug & Snail Killer, Slugexx, Iron Fist Slug & Snail Bait, Amdro Snail Block Slug & Snail Killer, and Ferroxx. Ferroxx is marketed to the professional, while all of the others are available to both home and professional users. Depending on the brand, these products contain 2 to 6% active ingredient (Table 1).

Although all these active ingredients are effective against snails and slugs, there are important differences. Metaldehyde works very quickly, and you will see foaming and dead snails by the morning if applied at night. However, metaldehyde can poison and even kill dogs and other mammals that might feed on it.

Iron phosphate is much safer but also much slower acting. Snails may stop feeding on plants after consuming iron phosphate baits but can take up to seven days to die. On the plus side, iron phosphate may be more effective than metaldehyde during periods of high humidity or if there are rainy conditions.

The newest active ingredient, ferric sodium EDTA, works in a similar manner to iron phosphate but is somewhat faster—three days instead of seven. EDTA is used to make the iron (ferric) more available and therefore kill the mollusks faster.

Also note that recommended application rates for ferric sodium EDTA may be considerably lower than iron phosphate (Table 2). Formulated iron phosphate and ferric



A tawny slug on a ripe strawberry.



A brown garden snail.

sodium EDTA molluscicides look very similar, so it is important to check the label to be certain the product is applied correctly.

Still, be aware that these new products, as well as the others, ought to be used in a way so that pets and children won't be tempted to eat the pellets. To be most effective, all of the snail bait products should be broadcast or spread, not piled, near areas where the mollusks are causing damage.

Home and maintenance gardeners are reminded to remove plant debris and other snail and slug hiding places and to avoid overwatering, which increases mollusk activity.

Table 1: Registered Molluscicides Containing Ferric Sodium EDTA.

Product	% of A.I.
Amdro Snail Block Slug & Snail Killer	5
Corry's Slug & snail Killer*	5
Dr. T's Slug & Snail Killer	6
Eliminator Snail & Slug Killer	2
Ferroxx	5
Ironfist Slug and Snail Bait	1
Slugexx	2

* Corry's is changing over its products to ferric sodium EDTA, but you may find packages with the same or similar name containing metaldehyde until stock is depleted.

Table 2. Comparison of rates and active ingredients for some snail and slug products.

Product example	Active ingredient and %	Ounces per 1000 sq.	Remarks
Deadline T&O	metaldehyde, 4%	3.6 – 7.2	Apply to ground only, not plant parts. Moisten ground before applying. Don't apply on ditch banks or other areas where bait may enter bodies of water.
Ferroxx	ferric sodium EDTA, 5%	1.8 – 7.0	
Sluggo	iron phosphate, 1%	8 - 16	

* Read the label and apply as directed. These rates are for the products in the example.

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