



Giant African Land Snails

Giant African Land Snails make excellent pets and are easy to care for. They can live for around nine years and grow as big as an adult hand! This care sheet can be used as a guideline for how to keep and care for your snails.

You will need to provide a nice home for your new pet(s). Obviously the more snails you have and the bigger they grow, the larger the habitat you will need to provide.

Fill the tank to a depth of at least 5cm with coir (coconut fibre)/peat/top soil/Vermiculite or Sphagnum Moss available from pet shops, garden centres and on-line (depending on which product you decide to go with).

You need to keep the substrate damp but not wet (so it sticks to your hand but without puddles of water). Once damp you can maintain this easily by spraying a couple of times a day with water.

Snails like to hide out so providing a place/s to hide such as an overturned plant pot is a bonus. Giant Land Snails love warmth (around 21-25°C) and a heat mat is a really good idea, particularly if keeping the snails somewhere which can get a little cool. Heat mats are available from pet shops and online, prices start at around £7.00.

If they get too cool, the snails will hibernate by going inside the shell and forming a crust over the entrance. You can wake them up by keeping them warm and gently running the shells under tepid water. Once the snails are happy the conditions are going to remain warm they will become active again.

Around once a month the tank will need to be thoroughly cleaned and the substrate replaced. Between complete cleans you should also wipe the inside of the tank to remove the slime. **DO NOT USE ANY CLEANING FLUIDS AS THESE CAN HARM YOUR SNAILS.**

Snails like to be handled and have a wash. When handling your snail it is a good idea to have wet hands. If the snail won't come off the side of the tank, don't pull at the shell, just slide a wet finger under the body to gently remove it. It's an odd sensation when a snail tries to mouth your hand with no teeth.

As with all pets it is best to wash your hands after handling.

To wash your snails sit them in a shallow dish or saucer with a little tepid water and use a soft tooth brush/small sponge to gently clean the snail being careful not to damage the shell. **NEVER SUBMERGE YOUR SNAIL AS IT COULD DROWN** and of course, **NEVER USE ANY CLEANING FLUIDS.**

You will need to provide a source of calcium. We use cuttlefish bones, but alternatives are available, and of course food. Snails are not particularly fussy eaters you can feed them many fruits and vegetables. We have found them to be particularly fond of cucumbers. You can also try apple, banana, melon, peach, tomato, lettuce, cabbage, carrot, and parsnip to name but a few. If a snail isn't eating, try changing the food - they won't eat food they do not like. **NEVER** feed your snails pasta, rice or anything salty. Make sure you throw away any uneaten food if it starts to go off.

If you would like to see a shy snail come out of its shell, place it on top of a cucumber sliced in half lengthwise!

Snails can lay up to 200 eggs at a time. If you do not want to be overrun with snails you will need to destroy the eggs humanely by freezing them for 48 hours before disposing of them. You should check the soil every few days once your snail starts to lay eggs, which can usually be found at the bottom or side of the tank.

You may find some of the snails have very light bodies and even very light coloured shells. They're healthy, just different.

Extensive information can be found on various websites should you require additional information or just want to delve deeper into the world of snails.

Enjoy your new pets!

