



J&L Garden Center

*The All Season Gift
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DECOLLATE SNAILS

Decollate Snails (*Rumina decollata*) or **Killer Snails** are extremely territorial towards other snails. Using slime trails they will search out and attack nearby intruders. Decollate snails attack the common brown garden snail (*Helix* snail) and their eggs. Decollate snails will feed on all stages of the brown garden snail's life cycle. Decollate snails do not feed on live plants, but they will eat decaying plant material when they can't find garden snails. They will always prefer to eat pest snails if they are present. Decollate snails are a long term, natural way to control pesky garden snails.



Release:

The best time to release decollate snails is during the late spring or early summer. Release them in the late afternoon or evening so they have plenty of time to find cover before the hot sun can dehydrate them. Always release decollate snails in a cool, shady, moist area. Water the area thoroughly before you release the snails. Put the decollate snails out in groups of 3 or 4 in areas where they are likely to find brown garden snails to eat. The more pest snail breeding areas you treat with the decollate snails, the better the results will be. Decollate snails do not travel very far from the area they are released. While decollate snails do not travel very far, they are very persistent, providing 100% control of the common garden snail populations, given enough time. Decollate snails will also control up to 50% of the common garden slugs, they prefer snails over slugs.

Recommendations:

Snail baits and poisons should not be used in the release area for about 30 days prior to releasing decollate snails. Decollate snails are attracted to the snail baits and will eat them. This waiting period can be a little shorter if the area has been regularly watered for a week or two prior to the release date. Water helps to wash the snail baits away. Chemical fertilizers should also be discontinued in the release area for a couple of months after the release date, while the decollate snails are getting established. To help get decollate snails started in an area, you may need to feed them squashed brown snails, dead leaves, or rabbit food pellets.

Life Cycle:

Decollate snails have a two year life span and during that time they will lay as many as 2,000 eggs. After hatching, they mature in about five months. They normally live in the upper inch of the soil, just under the surface. For this reason you may not see much of them after you release them. But when it rains or the area is watered, they will come to the surface to feed on brown snails. Decollate snails do not normally climb walls and fences unless they are flooded out of the soil.

General Information:

Using decollate snails can be an effective way to control the pesky garden snails, but control does not happen over night. It takes a few weeks for the decollate snails to get established in their new environment and a little longer to have a noticeable effect on the pest snail population. It may take the decollate snails a year or more to really take control of the yard.

In times of stress, decollate snails retreat into their shell and seal themselves inside with a membrane covering the opening, to conserve moisture. They appear to be dead but they can exist this way for weeks. Contact with water usually brings them back to activity. If some do not emerge from their shell when you first release them, they may need to be submerged in a pan of water for 8 to 10 minutes and then released again.

Decollate snails are not adapted to extremely cold temperatures and may die during severe winters. Decollate snails may need to be released several years in a row to completely control the brown garden snails in your yard.