PEST PROFILE

Budapest Slug

Tandonia budapestensis

KEY IDENTIFICATION FEATURE

A dark brownish-grey, slender slug with a prominent yellow or orange stripe along the raised keel on its back.

Current Situation

Budapest slug (*Tandonia budapestensis*) has been detected in Australia. Agriculture Victoria was alerted to the pest after several slug specimens collected from a private residence in a northern suburb of Melbourne were identified as Budapest slug.

Testing and tracing identified a local commercial plant nursery where the slug is believed to have been established for at least five years.

Trace-forward investigations have identified that the nursery regularly supplied plants to a range of customers, including plant retailers, other nurseries, local governments and a major university.

Overseas, Budapest slug is commonly associated with urban and modified environments, including gardens, greenhouses, nurseries, parkland, roadsides and waste areas. It can also occur in agricultural areas, particularly where potatoes and other root crops are grown. This means horticulture and floriculture businesses may be at risk of infestation.

Budapest slugs are particularly difficult to detect and manage because it lives below the soil surface and can burrow to depths of around 40 cm. This can make traditional slug control methods, such as baiting and cultivation, less effective than they are for above-ground slug species.

A national response has not been activated for Budapest slug. The national Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests determined that, based on current evidence, eradication is not considered feasible or cost-beneficial. This allows industry to focus on practical management options without unnecessary regulatory impacts on affected businesses.

Agriculture Victoria is investigating whether a naturally occurring biocontrol nematode may help control the slug. Biosecurity authorities will continue monitoring the situation and consider movement controls if required to limit spread between jurisdictions.

Description

The Budapest slug is a large, slender slug that can expand up to 70 mm long when crawling. It is usually dark brownish-grey and has a distinctive yellow or orange stripe along the raised ridge, or “keel”, on its back. When resting, it commonly curls into a “C” shape.



David Nichols



Steve Mathers

SIZE	RESTING SHAPE
Up to 70 mm long when crawling	Often curls into a “C” shape

Where It Is Found

The Budapest slug is a burrowing species that spends much of its time underground. It may also occur in moist, sheltered places, including:

- Under wood and stones.
- Gardens and greenhouses.
- Roadsides, waste ground and farmland.
- Woodland and urban parkland areas.

It can survive dry conditions and frost by burrowing deeply into the soil.

Plants at Risk

The Budapest slug is associated with damage to potatoes and other root crops, cereals, bulbs, tubers and some ornamental flowers. It feeds on leaves, bulbs, tubers, roots and decaying plant material.

Identification

Look for:

- A slender slug up to 70 mm long.
- Dark brownish-grey colouring.

- A prominent yellow or orange stripe along the keel.
- A “C” shaped resting position.
- Slugs in moist locations or beneath the soil.
- Holes in tubers or bulbs leading to hollowed-out chambers beneath the surface.

IMPORTANT: If you suspect you have found Budapest slug please call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

Control

Avoid overwatering as it creates a suitable habitat for the slugs to breed. Ensure that all areas of the nursery and surroundings are kept clear of dense vegetation and clean up and dispose of crop residues and organic matter.

Commercially available molluscicidal slug baits are available for chemical control option. However control can be difficult because the slug spends much of its life underground, where it may feed directly on roots, bulbs and tubers.

Use chemicals only as directed: Any chemical treatment should follow the product label and applicable regulatory requirements.

Hort Innovation NURSERY FUND

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit horticulture.com.au