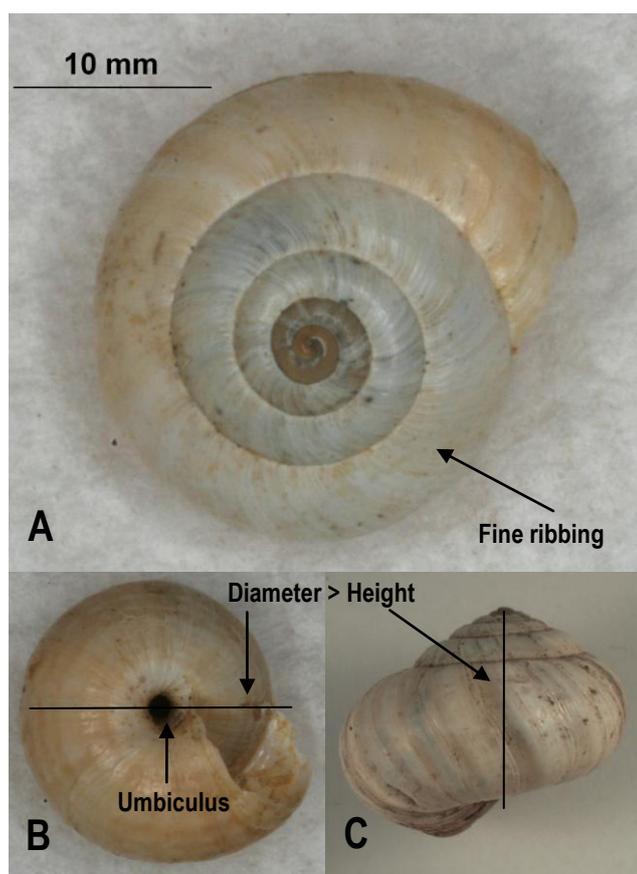


# Common White Snail

## (*Ceruella virgata*)

Common white snail is not a notifiable pest. However, DPIPWE entomologists will confirm identifications free of charge.

### Distinguishing features



- Shell diameter up to 22 mm, variable white (sometimes with brown bands), relatively shiny with fine transverse ribbing, (A).
- A round open hole (umbiculus) is present at the base of the bottom of shell (B).
- Shell diameter greater than height (B,C).
- Eggs are around 1 mm diameter, milky white and are laid in the soil.

### Background

Common white snail (CWS) arrived in Australia from Europe around 1920. It is now a significant pest problem in South Australia and has spread into Victoria. CWS first arrived in Tasmania in 2007 and has established in several localities. It is expected to expand its range over the coming years.

### Biology and damage

CWS is a pest of cereal crops and pastures, primarily because it can contaminate pasture and fodder. Stock reject pasture and hay that is heavily infested.

CWS feeds primarily on decayed organic matter. It also eats seedlings of cereal, canola and pulse crops and clover in pasture. It has been recorded feeding on native plants.

In Mediterranean countries, CWS hosts several nematode worm and fluke parasites of livestock. In South Australia, the snails climb fence posts, and cereal stems to get away from hot soil during summer. They are harvested with grain and fodder and relocated when it is fed out.

As of August 2010, known Tasmanian localities with CWS include Campania, Cooe, Hagley, Lenah Valley and Tea Tree. Eradication by baiting may have been achieved at some earlier sites where infested, imported feed grain was detected in 2007 including Bothwell, Campbell Town, Cressy, Hamilton, Jericho and Ross. Further spread via feed grain and machinery will happen slowly but can be delayed considerably by vigilance and focussed baiting.

The climate and soil types in Tasmania are only marginally suitable for CWS. Its future spread may favour warm, wet, undisturbed localities with alkaline soils but it has established on acid soils.

## Management tips

- When storing or feeding grain or hay, monitor for snails. This includes keeping an eye out for crushed or partial snail shells because this would indicate a greater risk of live CWS in the grain or hay.
- When feeding out grain or hay, use specific feedout sites rather than changing feedout sites or scattering/broadcasting the feed. Not only will this make it easier for you to check for any signs of CWS, it also means that if you do find CWS it will be in a contained area and therefore much easier to eradicate.
- Destroy small infestations by hand.
- If appropriate, target infested areas with registered snail bait\*.
- If you find signs of CWS in grain or hay you have bought in, let your supplier know. If the source is a Tasmanian property, the owner should be alerted to the likelihood of CWS on their property as well.
- If you are buying in feed grain that has originated from the mainland, let the importer/agent know. While CWS is unlikely to establish in large numbers as successfully here in Tasmania as it has in those mainland areas with a more CWS-favourable climate and environment, we are encouraging importers to consider diversion to processing or crushing imported feed grain where there is a known risk of CWS contamination.

**\*Important note on chemical use:** Agricultural chemicals, including insecticides, are not to be used for any purpose or in any manner contrary to the label unless authorised under appropriate legislation. Before using a chemical, read and adhere to the instructions for use on the label. For information on registered chemicals and current off-label permits, visit the APVMA website ([www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)).

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