



Magical Molluscs

Normally at Holt Hall we would be looking for invertebrates in the woods, in the lake and at the Rocky Shore. In all those habitats we find snails. Have a look in your garden or at the park and see if you can find some.

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Snails are Molluscs. They have a soft body and a shell. Snails belong to a group of Molluscs called Gastropoda which means 'Stomach Foot'. They need to keep their skin damp so they can breathe. Try these activities to learn more about what it is to be a snail.

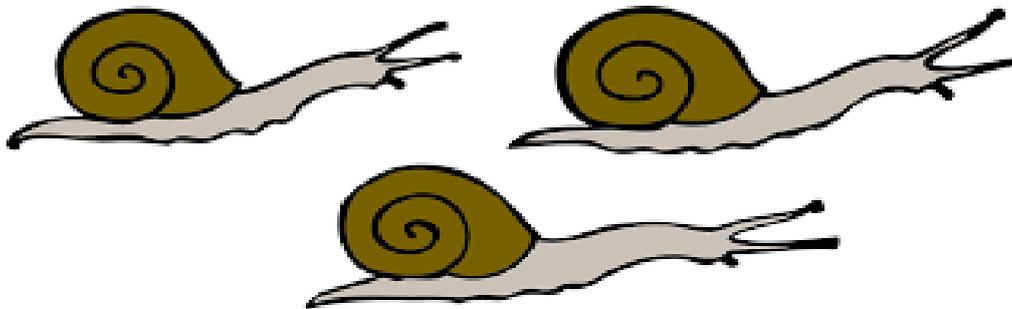


Go on a Snail Safari

Leave some empty flowerpots on their sides in a part of your garden where you think there might be snails. You could leave a few vegetable peelings or apple cores to encourage them. Next day come back and see if any snails have visited. Are they still there? If not, how can you tell if they have visited overnight? We had five snails, a millipede and two woodlice in ours!

Snail's Pace

According to www.snail-world.com a garden snail has a top speed of 1.4cm per second ; that's about 84cm per minute or approximately 0.5 kilometres per hour. Mark out 84cm and try to walk as slow as you can. Time how long it takes you to cover 84cm. What's the slowest speed you can manage? Why do you think snails travel so slowly?



Snail Trails

Try pushing an object like a large pebble, or a plastic cup half full of water, along the floor or a dry surface like a table. Put some water underneath your object and try again,. What's different? Try with other substances like Vaseline, hair gel, cooking oil. What do you notice about the movement? Why do you think a snail leaves a slimy trail as it goes along? You could use paper and pens or natural materials to make a trail like a snail.

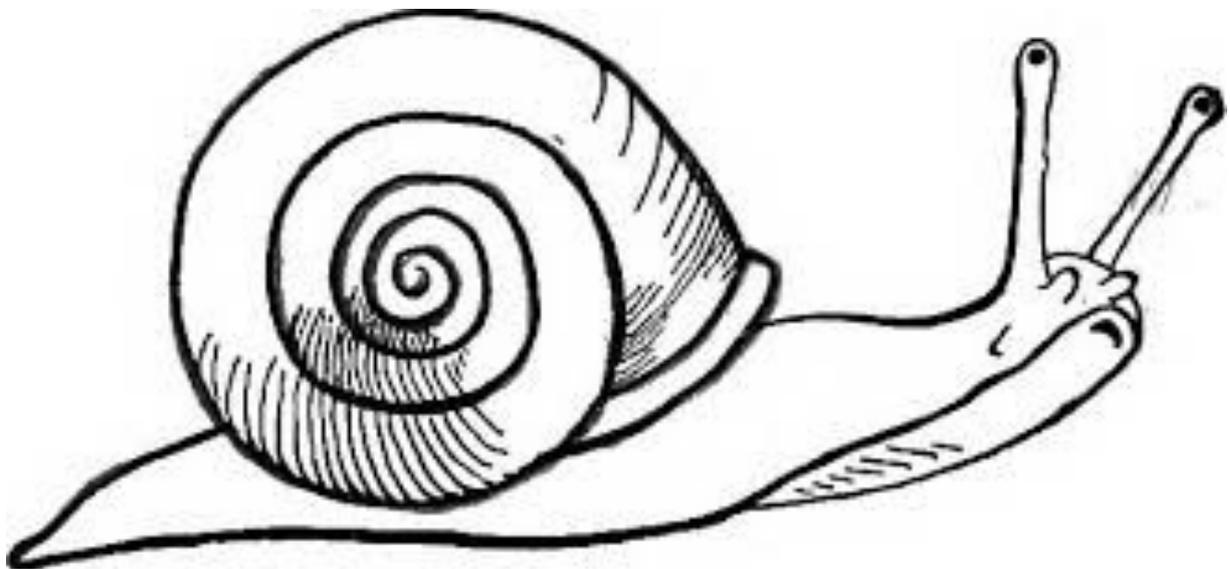
Shell Study

If you can find a snail, have a really close look at its shell (or find some pictures on the Internet). They often have beautiful colours and patterns. Why do you think some creatures have a shell? Do you have a special place you go to where you feel safe? You could use a laundry basket or large box and see what it feels like to tuck yourself away inside a shell. (Make sure an adult knows where you are in case you get stuck!)



Mollusc Mouthparts

A snail has a special kind of rough tongue called a Radula. It has thousands of tiny teeth which scrape away at food. Snails will eat just about anything, worms, vegetation, rotting vegetation, animal waste, fungus and sometimes even other snails! Collect some rough materials or objects (eg sandpaper, a cheese grater, Velcro fastener, an old toothbrush) try rubbing them against a cabbage leaf to get an idea of how a snail's mouth works. (Ask an adult to help so you don't grate your fingers!)



For more snail facts and other outdoor activities check out these websites:

<https://www.holthall.org.uk/>

<https://www.snail-world.com/snail-facts/>

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/slugs-and-snails>



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