

# Snails & Slime

Slugs, snails and worms are easy to find, even on a dry day. They may not be everyone's favourite minibeast but they are a very important part of nature. Lots of creatures such as birds, badgers and hedgehogs, rely on them for food. They also recycle nutrients and fertilise the soil.

## Go on a slug and snail hunt

Your local park or green space, or your garden if you have one, is a good place to start hunting for slimy creatures.

You will need: a bug pot or a jar / tupperware box with a lid and spoon.

Slugs and snails have soft bodies, which means that they need to stay in damp places otherwise they will dry out. So the best places to find them are under logs, flower pots and plants. Collect slugs and snails gently with your spoon and put them in your pot where you can have a closer look at them. Pop them back home afterwards.



Can you find a leopard slug? Find out more about these cool slugs at [Opal](#).

## Try Worm Charming

Worm charming is the old tradition of vibrating the earth to encourage worms to come to the surface. Many birds do the same thing when trying to find their lunch. You can dance, pat the earth, play music, water the soil - try them all! Why not make it a competition and see who gets most worms in 20 minutes? Did you know that there are many different species of worms? Identify your worms with Opal's [key to earthworms](#).

## Release and recapture snails

Become a scientist and investigate how many snails live in your local area!

You will need: a tupperware box, permanent marker/paint, pen & paper.

Choose an area of garden or local green space. Collect as many snails as you can find in that area, note it down. Mark each shell with a small dot of paint or marker, then release them. Come back in a couple of days, and collect all the snails from the same area. Note down how many do and don't have spots. Use this formula to find out how many snails live in your area:

$$\text{No. Snails in area} = \frac{\text{No. snails in 1st visit} \times \text{No. snails in 2nd visit}}{\text{No. snails with spots in 2nd visit}}$$

## Make a wormery



This is a good way to see how worms fertilise and mix our soil.

You will need: 1 litre bottle, soil, sand, scissors, clingfilm, leaves.

Cut the top off the bottle and fill with layers of sand and soil. Sprinkle leaves on top and add your worms. Cover the top with clingfilm and make a few air holes. Keep it damp and dark. Observe!

Surrey Wildlife Trust have a good [activity sheet](#) to show you how.

## Have a snail race

Snails are well known for moving slowly, however some are faster than others.

You will need: Some snails and chalk.

In a shady spot, mark out a large circle (about 60cm diameter) and a small circle in the middle. Place your snails in the middle circle and start the race. Keep the race track damp. The winner is the snail that reaches the outside circle first. National Trust's ['50 things to do before you're 11<sup>3/4</sup>'](#) has detailed instructions.

