



Giant African Land Snail; *Achatina sp*

Adult size; 20cm plus

Origin; Africa

Temperature; 20°C to 25°C (68°F to 77°F)

Longevity; 5-6 years

Housing

African land snails can be housed in a variety of enclosures depending on the size of the snails and the number of individuals. Glass and plastic are more suitable due to them requiring a high humidity level. One African land snail would normally be housed in an enclosure around 30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm.

Substrate

There are a number of different substrate available for use with snails. Peat free compost (care should be taken to ensure it doesn't contain any pesticides or other chemicals), orchid bark, coco fibre are suitable Substrates as they help maintain humidity. These substrates can also be mixed and used together. The substrate layer should be at least 5cm deep as snails like to burrow. Sphagnum moss will also help hold the humidity. Substrate should be completely changed at least every 2 months or so due to bacteria build up in the damp soil.

Temperature and Lighting

The temperature of the enclosure should between at 20°C and 25°C, a lot of people keep their snails without any heating due to their homes being at the correct temperature from their central heating. For People whose homes are cooler it is advised that they use a heat mat to supply the required warmth. The temperature should be monitored by the aid of a thermometer and a thermostat to control the heat-mat to stop any overheating which could harm the animal. Snails do not require additional lighting.

Decor

This is an area of real personal preference, just bear in mind that your snail will climb on all surfaces. Having large stones/pebbles can be problematic, the last thing you would want for your snail to fall and injury itself. Items commonly seen in snail enclosures are; Natural wood and cork bark. Live plants are not really advisable as snails will mistake them for food and eat them.

Diet

Land Snails are known to eat up to 500 different plant species. Lettuce, cucumber, apple and banana are usually given but make sure to remove anything that has gone over. Limit acidic fruits like oranges as too much acidity is bad for your snail. Thoroughly rinse fruit & veg to remove any pesticides. Supplements should be provided to help maintain and aid shell growth. This is normally calcium either in a powder or Cuttle fish bones.

Water

Snails need high humidity of 60-70% spraying with water once a day is an easy way to maintain this. A separate water dish isn't needed.