Choose eco-friendly products for your home and garden. Look for this symbol before you buy.
Protect plants with barriers
Before using barriers, pick snails and slugs by hand for a few nights.
• Wrap a strip of copper tape around a tree trunk, flower pot, or the sides of wooden garden beds or fences. Snails and slugs are repelled by the unpleasant reaction between their bodies and the copper.
• Cover seedlings with small cages made from plastic or galvanized metal window screen. Push the cages into the soil so snails and slugs can’t squeeze under. Check to make sure that no snails or slugs are caught inside the cage.
• Cover rows of vegetables with special horticultural fabric that lets in light and water but excludes snails and slugs.

Trap slugs and snails
• You can trap snails and slugs under upside-down flower pots, dark-colored plastic sheeting, and wooden boards. Place these traps around the garden and collect snails and slugs in early morning.
• Homemade or commercial traps that use beer or yeast mixtures to lure snails and slugs to death by drowning and/or intoxication may help, but hand-picking will probably still be necessary.

Encourage natural predators
Many species of ground beetles kill snails and slugs. Most of these beetles are large (1 to 2 inches), black, tank-like creatures. They are found in the same moist habitats as their prey: under rocks, boards, leaves, etc. Avoid killing these helpful bugs.

Use iron phosphate bait
• Iron phosphate baits are less toxic than other formulations. After eating iron phosphate, snails and slugs stop feeding and die within three to six days. They often crawl into secluded places, so you may not see dead bodies.
• Reapply iron phosphate baits every two weeks if needed.
• Keep iron phosphate baits and all other pesticides out of the reach of children and pets.
• Read the label before you buy a snail bait product. Avoid baits containing methiocarb, which kills earthworms and beneficial insects. Baits containing metaldehyde are more toxic than iron phosphate baits, and metaldehyde is very toxic to dogs.

PREVENTION
• Snails and slugs are attracted to large areas of ivy, nasturtiums, and succulent ground covers. They also hide in clumps of agapanthus, lilies, daffodils, alstroemeria, and iris. They are less attracted to plants with dry, hard leaves like rhododendrons, junipers, and bamboo. Regularly search their preferred plants for snails and slugs when you’re hand-picking.
• Moisture makes any area much more attractive to snails and slugs. Avoid over-watering and use drip emitters to deliver water only where it is needed. Water early in the day to allow the area to dry out before nightfall. You may need to remove mulch from areas with severe slug or snail problems.
• Remove any boards and flower pots that you aren’t using as traps.

WHAT TO DO WITH CRUSHED, DEAD SNAILS?
Leave a few dead snail and slug bodies on the soil surface to attract more snails and slugs and make your collecting easier. (Large piles will breed flies.) Or, bury crushed mollusks three or four inches under ground to add nutrients to the soil and avoid fly problems.