

First observation of *Cantareus apertus* (Born, 1778) (Gastropoda, Eupulmonata, Helicidae) in Serbia

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We report the first documented occurrence of the allochthonous green garden snail, *Cantareus apertus* (Born, 1778), in Serbia. The single individual was found in a plant nursery in the city of Novi Sad. This is the eighth allochthonous helicoidean in Serbia.

Key words: plant nurseries, allochthonous species, Helicoidea

Cantareus apertus (Born, 1778) is a Mediterranean helioid native to south-east France (including Corsica), Italy (including Sicily), the south-eastern Adriatic coast, western Greece (BOUAZIZ-YAHIAENE et al. 2019) and Malta (CILIA et al. 2012). It is also known from Croatia (ŠTAMOL 2010) and Montenegro (KARAMAN 2014). Its occurrence in Albania is not mentioned by FEHÉR & ERŐSS (2009), as it most likely does not occur in this area (PÁLL-GERGELY et al. 2021). However, it has been introduced to the Aegean Islands and in Turkey (ÖRSTAN et al. 2005, BOUAZIZ-YAHIAENE et al. 2019) as well as in Germany (GODAN 1983), the USA (ROTH & CHIVERS 1980, COWIE et al. 2009), Australia (BLACKET et al. 2016) and New Zealand (NEUBERT 2011). It has been also reported from Hungary by PÁLL-GERGELY et al. (2021), when two living snails were found among vegetables in a supermarket, and it was suspected (based on the origin of the vegetables) that the species has already established a population somewhere in Hungary (PÁLL-GERGELY et al. 2021). However, this scenario is less likely nowadays (PÁLL-GERGELY pers. comm.). The species inhabits shrubland, cultivated fields and gardens. It is characterised by a thin, globular, brownish shell with a green colouring. The last whorl is particularly enlarged compared to the previous ones and the aperture is large. The diameter of the shell is usually between two and three centimetres (WELTER-SCHULTES 2012). The spread of the species is related to the food supply and plant transport (WELTER-SCHULTES 2012, PÁLL-GERGELY et al. 2021). *Cantareus apertus* is also known for its squeaking sounds, produced by the airflow through the pneumostome when disturbed (BOUAZIZ-YAHIAENE et al. 2019). Recently, GOJŠINA et al. (2025) listed a total of seven allochthonous helicoideans in Serbia, most of which are primarily dispersed via vehicle transport or establishment of snail

farms. Even though there are no examples of plant nurseries as a way of spread of allochthonous gastropods in Serbia, it is well known that they can contribute significantly to their spread (BERGEY et al. 2014, TURÓCI et al. 2023). Here we report the first observations of *C. apertus* in Serbia from a plant nursery in the city of Novi Sad.

The individual (Fig. 1) was collected manually from a plant nursery in the city of Novi Sad (45°16'49"N, 19°50'38"E) on August 26, 2025 by one of the authors (KI). The shell was photographed using a Nikon D5300 camera mounted on a tripod, a Tamron SP Di AF 90 mm F/2.8 macro lens and a Sigma EM-140 DG ring flash with a self-made light diffuser. A ruler was photographed together with the shell to determine the scale bar.

The single collected individual of *C. apertus* shows the typical characteristics as described for the species by WELTER-SCHULTES (2012) and BOUAZIZ-YAHIAENE et al. (2019) (Fig. 1). The collected individual's aperture was sealed by a thin and damaged, whitish epiphragm. The shell contained a body, suggesting that the snail had recently died. However the animal was already in a state of decomposition, making the soft tissues unsuitable for dissection and further anatomical examination.

Since a number of plant nurseries in Serbia import plants from Italy, it is possible that *C. apertus* could have originated from that country. We have not noticed that the snail has spread outside the nursery and we conclude that as for now, it does not pose an ecological threat.

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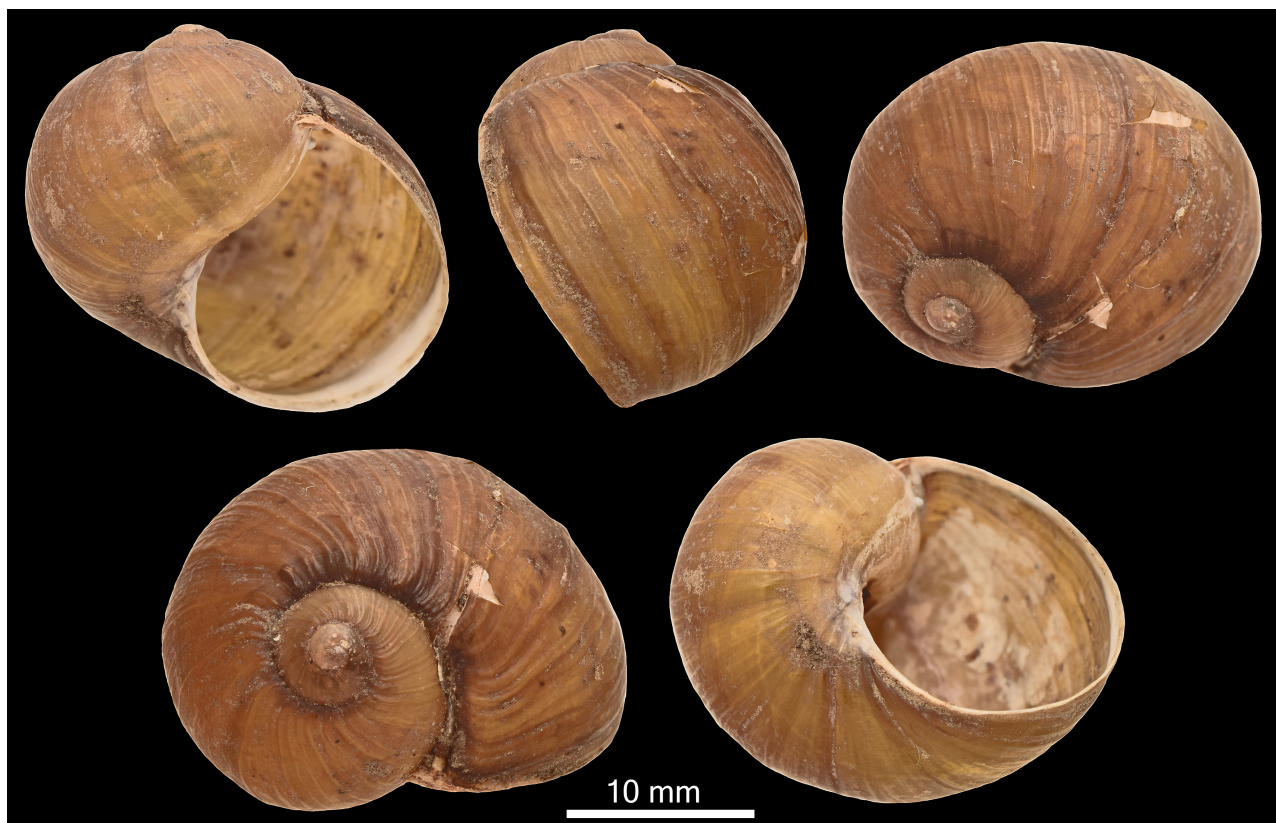


Fig. 1. Shell of *Cantareus apertus* from a plant nursery in the city of Novi Sad.