

A forest is more than trees

A forest, large or small, native or exotic, is home to countless varieties of plant and animal life, many of which cannot survive outside the forest environment. It protects the ground from the effects of heavy rains, which cause soil erosion, provides attractive scenic backdrops in the countryside, and gives wide scope for recreation pursuits.



Native Slug

Because of their size and distinctive markings New Zealand's native land slugs are much more spectacular than the common introduced European species found in our gardens. They are much bigger, reaching up to 3-4 cm in length, and more colourful, having leaf-vein-like patterns on their upper side.

A unique feature of these slugs is their possession of a lung of a type not found in any other mollusc. Although similar species are found around the eastern Pacific, New Zealand has by far the largest number.

Slugs are snails which for all practical

purposes have lost their shells. A residual shell comprising a few calcareous granules buried within the body is all that remains. Having no shell to prevent moisture-loss, slugs secrete abundant quantities of mucous which helps them retain water.

Slugs are generally found under decaying vegetation and rotting logs, or at the base of flax bushes or palms. They also probably feed on either rotting vegetation or associated fungus. They reproduce by laying eggs which are enclosed in a film of translucent skin, and may be found in groups of twenty or thirty.



New Zealand Forest Service