



# Project Summary

## Slowing Slugs



### Introduction

While most species of slugs and snails are [harmless to garden plants](#), some of them are particularly prolific crops pests. Chemical controls have non-target impacts. Barrier methods (non-chemical controls) are recommended, but many are not well studied. An RHS project 'Gastropod barriers' run in 2018 examined several of these barrier methods and how well they deterred molluscs from munching lettuce crops. They did not find much success with these barriers (see [project page for more information](#)).

Our 'Slowing Slugs' project was a pilot project, following this research. The RHS study looked at a leaf crop, but we wanted to see if there would be any difference for crops that are resistant to mollusk damage once established, or for which leaf damage is less of a concern for the final crop (such as peas, beans, sunflowers etc). Can barriers slow slugs enough for plants to get settled in?

### Aims

Investigating if non-chemical barriers can protect larger crop plants in vulnerable seedling / young plant stages. We wanted to test these in real garden environments.

The control methods used were: Copper tape, copper coins, sheeps' wool pellets, sharp grit, garlic mulch, and using a 'mini bottle greenhouse'.

This was a 'pilot' study to see if there were likely to be effects worth investigating with a larger piece of work.

### Results summary

None of these treatments were effective. Coins did not stay in place, and bottle greenhouses were quickly outgrown.

For the methods that stayed in place, results (and chi-squared tests) did not show significant differences in damage compared to the control plant.

However, we did ask participants to note *where* they kept their plants. Pots that were **raised up** (e.g. on a table or bench) **suffered less damage** from slugs, regardless of treatment applied.

Wool seemed to have an anecdotal benefit of being a good mulch for plants, results in more growth.

These were similar to the RHS observations.

More details can be [found in our 2019 newsletter](#).

### Follow-on

We decided not to continue further with this project, as it did not seem likely to show anything different to the RHS results.



Examples of the treatments, on broad beans

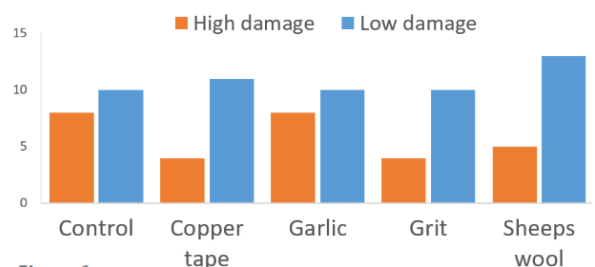


Figure 1

Damage to plants in experiment gardens



Kale was larger with sheep's wool mulch