

Shelly and friends



Species

Giant African land snails or GALs (*Lissachatina fulica*)

Habitat

Native to Eastern Africa, especially rainforest areas. GALs like a warm, wet habitat with lots of vegetation to eat.

Care

Shelly and her friends live in a big tank with plenty of soil for burrowing and a heat mat for warmth. The tank is misted daily to maintain humidity levels.

Food

The snails love to tuck into veggies, especially cucumber, though they don't like the skins. They also like to suck on cuttlefish as this gives them calcium for their shell.

Characteristics

Shelly and her friends have lovely brown and cream cone-shaped shells and are still growing. The average shell length of this species of GAL is 12cm, though some have reached 20cm long!

Why we love Shelly and friends

They are quirky, unique and surprisingly cute! Watch them wiggle their tentacles to wave hello!

Read Shelly and friend's story on the next page...

Shelly and friend's story



It's worth getting a little slime on your hand to see the expressions that Shelly and her friends make with their four face tentacles. They can wiggle them, lengthen them and pop them in and out. It's surprising how much character it gives them!

These tentacles are very important. The top two have eyes on the end. The snail will pop these out first, one eye at a time, so they can take a good look at you. The lower ones are for smelling and they use them to find food.

GALs live an average of 5-6 years, though some have been known to reach 10 years. They are hermaphrodites, which means they are both male and female. So when they are old enough to mate, any two snails can produce young together. They can even self-fertilise, though it is rare.

Shelly and her friends were born at South Angle Farm, the Lion Learners HQ, and came to live with Clare in June 2018. Shelly is the biggest at 9cm long.

Due to their gentle, non-threatening nature, the snails are great introductory animals for younger kids and brilliant for minibeast topics at schools!

