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Food Utilisation in a Laboratory Colony of the Giant African Land Snail, *Archachatina marginata* (Swainson) (Pulmonata: Achatinidae)

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Abstract: This study investigates food consumption by juveniles and adults of the edible giant land snail *Archachatina marginata* under laboratory conditions. In one experiment, the snails were fed weekly from hatching for 13 months with weighed amounts of lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*), carrot (*Daucus carota*), potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), apple (*Malus pumila*), and calcium. Another group of 2-month-old *A. marginata* ovum was fed singly for 3 days on each of the test food items. The results show that, when given a choice, *A. marginata* can select from the 4 types of food and calcium. When given no choice, lettuce provided high digestibility and usability for the juvenile *A. marginata* but potato gave the best growth. The monthly consumption of calcium increased as the shell length was increasing rapidly until month 5, thereafter declining gradually, until from month 8 onwards the snails consumed very little calcium per month.

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