FOUR RECORDS OF NEW TO EGYPT GASTROPOD SPECIES INCLUDING THE FIRST REPORTED TROPICAL LEATHERLEAF SLUG \textit{LAEVICAULIS ALTE} (D’A. DE FÉRUSSAC, 1822) (PULMONATA: VERONICELLIDAE)

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Abstract. A survey of terrestrial mollusks was performed during their activity season in various spots of gardens, nurseries and agricultural fields in Cairo, Giza as well as in some neighboring areas between December 2014 and October 2018. Several invasive terrestrial gastropod species were identified. These gastropods are invasive and abundant pests causing considerable and serious damage to agricultural areas in the Nile Delta Region of Egypt. The specimens were collected from different locations in the governorates of Cairo and Giza. A total of 12 species (8 species of terrestrial snails and 4 of slugs) were identified by their shell characteristics and genital-anatomical characters. The following four species were identified for the first time in Egyptian gardens and nurseries: 1) \textit{Polygyra cereolus} (Megerle von Mühlfeld, 1816), 2) \textit{Oxychilus cf. cellarius} (O. F. Müller, 1774), 3) \textit{Zonitoides arboreus} (Say, 1816) and 4) \textit{Laevicaulis alte} (d’ A. de Féru ssac, 1822), which is particularly injurious to agricultural production. The other invasive species reported in this study were recorded in other agricultural fields and are common pests of gardens, nurseries and agricultural areas in Egypt. This study presents essential information on each species, their original and current distribution in Egyptian agricultural fields.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous species of terrestrial gastropods are economically important as agricultural and horticultural pests in the Nile Delta Region and occur in high numbers in the North Coast belt of the Mediterranean Sea (Kassab and Daoud 1964; El-Okda et al. 1977; El-Okda 1980; Nakhta and Tadros 1995; Mahmoud and Awad 2008; Mohammed 2015) as well as in other countries of the world (Godan 1983; Frank 1998; Baker 2002, 2008; Davis et al. 2010).

A number of these species are already known as serious pests of agricultural and ornamental plants in greenhouses, nurseries and gardens and are agriculturally important in the Nile River Delta Region including the governorates of Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Beheira, Shar kia, and Dakahlia (El-Okda 1979; Hashem et al. 1993; El-Deeb et al. 1999; Mahmoud et al. 2002; Genena 2003; Daoud 2004; Mohamed and Ali 2009; Ali 2011).

This region represents a major pathway for the movement of non-native terrestrial mollusks, because it both imports agricultural produce from the rest of the world (Baker 2002; Sallam and El-Wakeil 2012) and exports agricultural goods from Egypt.

Most previous studies focused on \textit{Massyala vermiculata}, \textit{Theba pisana} and \textit{Monacha obstru}cta as the most prevalent and widespread species in the Egyptian agricultural environment increasing economic losses due to their activity, population density, feeding habits and successful adaptation to the new climatic conditions, which are not similar to those in their original environments (Mahrous et al. 2002; Ismail et al. 2003; Mahmoud and Awad 2008; Mohamed and Ali 2009; Sallam and El-Wakeil 2012).

These pests inflict damage to cereals, field crops, seeds of oil plants, medicinal and ornamental plants, citrus, mango and peach orchards, palm trees and vegetables such as cabbage, carrot and beans (El-Okda 1979, 1981, 1984; El-Deeb et al. 1999; Ismail et al. 2003; Lokma 2007; Shahawy et al. 2008).

Furthermore, animals avoid feeding on plants contaminated with snail slime. As a result of snail slime contamination, the consumption value of plants reduces (Kassab and Daoud 1964; El-Okda 1984), agricultural crops lose their marketing properties and their export potential in different international markets (Baker and Hawke 1990; Ittah and Zisman 1992).
Monacha obstricta has been recorded as the most widespread agricultural pest of different field crops, fruit orchards, vegetables and ornamental plants in the Delta Region (Kassab and Daoud 1964; El-Okda 1984; Hashem and El-Halawany 1996; Mahrous et al. 2002). In addition, it is of veterinary importance as an intermediate host to trematode parasite, i.e. Brachylaima (Rashed et al. 1995; Wanas et al. 1995; Rashed 2008), nematode parasite Angiostrongylus cantonensis in Egypt (Yousif and Ibrahim 1978), and other agents of parasitic diseases that affect humans and animals worldwide (Godan 1983).

Economic damage is caused not only by terrestrial snails, but also by terrestrial slugs, which are recorded as serious pests of agricultural crops and ornamental plants in multiple spots in Delta River Region governorates. They mainly inhabit more humid and shady places such as green houses and nurseries (Lokma 2007; Ali 2011; Rady et al. 2014; Abou Senna 2016). The slugs Deroceras reticulatum and D. laeve were first recorded on Egyptian clover in Meniet El-Kamh and Zagazig districts, Sharkia governorate (Lokma 2007). As reported by Rady et al. (2014) D. laeve and D. reticulatum infest different crops in the governorates of Ismailia and Sharkia, the latter species being first recorded in the Ismailia governorate. The destructive impact of these pests is far greater today than it was in previous years, which is due to the ever-increasing traffic congestion and flow.

Limacus flavus is one of the slug species recorded in Cairo gardens and nurseries (Azzam 2003; Mohamed and Ali 2013).

In recent years, surveys of mollusks with a focus on their feeding habits and financial losses caused to farmers due to the damage inflicted by gastropods have been carried out in different governorates of Egypt, i.e. in the governorate of Ismailia (El-Okda 1984), in new reclaimed lands in the northern region of Egypt (Hashem et al. 1992), in governorates of Beheira (Hashem et al. 1993; El-Deeb et al. 1999), Sharkia (Hegab et al. 1999; Mahrous et al. 2002), Gharbia (Metwally et al. 2002), Kafr El-Sheikh (El-Deeb et al. 2004), Dakahlia (Genena 2003; Daoud 2004), Damietta (Mahmoud and Awad 2008), the governorate of the Suez canal and that of South of Sinai (Shoieb 2008), the governorates of Ismailia, Qalyubia, Monufia (Mohamed 2015), and Assiut (Ramzy 2009).

Until now, there has never been a comprehensive survey of terrestrial mollusks in the Nile Delta Region of Egypt performed or a complete list of non-native terrestrial mollusks compiled. Their predatory or omnivorous behavior has not been studied either.

This study was undertaken with a view to obtain the first-hand knowledge of the gastropods present in agricultural-productive areas in Egypt, and to document the agricultural impact of these pests.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Terrestrial mollusks were collected from nurseries, gardens and agricultural fields in the governorates of Cairo, Giza, Qalyubia and Monufia between December 2014 and October 2018. Mollusk sampling was conducted at thirty-four sites in the evenings and in the early morning hours in relatively cool and humid conditions, when slugs and snails were most active. Larger specimens were usually found on ornamental plants, while smaller specimens in humid areas, e.g. near irrigation tubes, close to water faucets, in leaf litter, and under stones.

The gastropod survey locations, where numerous specimens were collected and numerous species of land mollusks were recorded, are given in Table 1. They include the governorates of Cairo, Giza (Faculty of Agriculture Cairo University, Shabramant, El-Saf, El-Hawamdia, El-Ayat, El-Badrashin, Aba Rawash, El Mansouria village), Qalyubia (Qalyub – El Qanater El Khayreya – Shubra El Kheima), and Monufia (Ashmoun – El Bagour).

Most gastropods were collected in cool cloudy weather from the soil surface between plant crops, seedlings, plant pots, logs, leaves and stems whether from gardens, nurseries, green houses or from agricultural fields.

The collected specimens were kept in labeled plastic containers, lined with moist paper towels, and then transferred to the laboratory of the Zoology and Agricultural Nematology Department, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University. The collected gastropods were kept in containers with moist soil.

The snails and slugs were drowned in cold water for 10–12 hours, or until no response to external stimuli was received, after which they were transferred to 80% non-denatured ethanol. The tentative species identification was made based on the external appearance, including shell characters, and was confirmed by the second author, who performed the analysis of their dissected genitalia. The examined specimens were assigned to the following species: Deroceras laeve, Ambigolimax valentianus, Laevicaulis alte, Monacha obstricta, Cochlicella acuta, and Oxychilus cf. cellarius although the specimens assigned to the latter species were not mature enough for final confirmation.

Specimens of all twelve species were vouchered in the collection of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Cairo, Egypt, and in the USDA APHIS National Mala
cology Collection in Philadelphia, USA.

RESULTS

Twenty-two out of the thirty-four sites surveyed in this study harbored more than 60 specimens representing 12 terrestrial mollusk species, most of which are synan
thropic and invasive alien. These mollusk species with
substantial population densities were found to cause severe damage to a wide range of crops and ornamental plants (preferably more succulent and leafy vegetables and plants), and, thus, can be potentially considered as new agricultural and garden (both urban and suburban) pests of serious concern.

The above mentioned species, which are considered to be agricultural pests in Egyptian agricultural system, and their distribution are presented in Table 1. *Monacha obstricta* and *Massylaea vermiculata* were the most abundant gastropod species recorded in 19 and 10 localities, respectively, out of the twenty-two surveyed ones. Meanwhile, slugs were found to be common in nurseries and in shady spots in conditions of heavy irrigation and humidity.

**Terrestrial slugs**

**AGRIOLIMACIDAE:**

*Deroceras laeve* (O.F. Müller, 1774) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Deroceras laeve* (O. F. Müller, 1774) found in an ornamental plant nursery near the road leading to Ashmon, Monufeia. The number of slugs exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

*Description:* the slug is up to 15–25 mm in length with a short keel. The mantle has fewer and coarser ridges. The tail is almost of the same length as the mantle, the mucus is colorless (Rowson et al. 2014).

**LIMACIDAE:**

*Ambigolimax valentianus* (d’A. de Férussac, 1821)

*Original distribution:* The Iberian Peninsula (Welter-Schultes 2012), reported from Valencia, eastern Spain (Rowson et al. 2014).

*Introduced to:* Widely distributed throughout warmer parts of the world and, also, in greenhouses in temperate climates. This species is known as a greenhouse slug or a three-band garden slug. It is spreading throughout northern Europe outdoors and indoors, and is also widespread across southern and western Britain and Ireland (Rowson et al. 2014). It has been recorded in mountain forests of cedar and cork oak of Algeria at an altitude up to 1700 m (Wiktor 1983).

The species is widely introduced to most parts of Europe (Kerney et al. 1983; South 1992) and worldwide (Herbert 1997; Barker 1999; Wiktor et al. 2000). The species first recorded in Serbia in 2010 (Stojnić et al. 2011) and in Turkey in 2017 is distributed in the Northern Anatolia Region (Ekin and Şeşen 2018). The species, which is mainly established in China and is likely to spread through Asia, is mainly recorded in Chiana (Wiktor et al. 2000). It was formerly known as *Lehmannia valentiana*. Following the example of Rowson et al. 2014, we have attributed it to *Ambigolimax*.

*A. valentianus* prefers moist and shady locations with lots of vegetation, inside bushes and herbs, along stream banks, under moist stones and fallen logs (Stojnić et al. 2011).
Four records of new to Egypt gastropod species including the first reported Tropical Leatherleaf slug *Laevicaulis alte* (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) (Pulmonata: Veronicellidae)

Table 1. The list of sampled terrestrial gastropod species in alphabetical order and their sampling localities in the governorates of Cairo and Giza and their surrounding areas (Twenty-two infested locations out of the thirty-four locations studied).

| Terrestrial gastropod          | Population density | Location name                                                                 | Geographical co-ordinates |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. *Ambigolimax valentianus*   | **                 | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 4), Giza                    | 30°01.140’N 31°12.486’E   |
|                                | **                 | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456’N 31°13.468’E   |
| 2. *Allopeas gracile*          | *                  | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1), Giza                    | 30°01.102’N 31°12.481’E   |
| 3. *Cochlicella acuta*         | ***                | Private property farm, Kerdasa, Giza                                          | 30°03.488’N 31°05.955’E   |
|                                | *                  | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1), Giza                    | 30°01.102’N 31°12.481’E   |
|                                | ***                | Agricultural Horticulture Research Institute El Qanater El Khayreya (Tropical Fruit Research Station), Qalyubia | 30°11.601’N 31°06.693’E   |
|                                | **                 | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456’N 31°13.468’E   |
| 4. *Deroceras laeve*           | *                  | Ornamental plant nursery in El Mansouria, Giza                                | 30°06.235’N 31°07.141’E   |
|                                | *                  | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1), Giza                    | 30°01.102’N 31°12.481’E   |
|                                | **                 | Ornamental plant nursery close to Tropical Fruit Research Station, Qalyubia   | 30°11.636’N 31°06.958’E   |
|                                | **                 | El Ahaly village in El Qanater El Khayreya, Qalyubia                          | 30°11.878’N 31°06.732’E   |
|                                | ***                | Ornamental plant nursery near the road leading to Ashmon close to Ezbet Abo Seif, Monufcia | 30°14.040’N 31°05.215’E   |
|                                | **                 | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456’N 31°13.468’E   |
| 5. *Laevicaulis alte*          | ***                | Abo Rawash, El Saliba district, near the road leading to El Mansouria, Giza   | 30°05.975’N 31°04.717’E   |
| 6. *Limacus flavus*            | *                  | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 4), Giza                    | 30°01.140’N 31°12.486’E   |
|                                | ***                | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456’N 31°13.468’E   |
| 7. *Massylaea vermiculata*     | **                 | Private property nursery, Kerdasa, Giza                                       | 30°03.248’N 31°05.891’E   |
|                                | **                 | Ornamental plants nursery in El Mansouria, Giza                               | 30°06.235’N 31°07.141’E   |
|                                | **                 | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, Giza                                | 30°01.119’N 31°12.674’E   |
|                                | ***                | Agricultural Horticulture Research Institute El Qanater El Khayreya (Tropical Fruit Research Station), Qalyubia | 30°11.601’N 31°06.693’E   |
|                                | ***                | Ornamental plants nursery close to Tropical Fruit Research Station, Qalyubia   | 30°11.636’N 31°06.958’E   |
|                                | **                 | El Ahaly village in El Qanater El Khayreya, Qalyubia                          | 30°11.878’N 31°06.732’E   |
|                                | *                  | El Bagor, Ezbet Shahin Monufcia                                               | 30°13.588’N 31°05.402’E   |
|                                | ***                | Ornamental plant nursery near the road leading to Ashmon close to Ezbet Abo Seif, Monufcia | 30°14.040’N 31°05.215’E   |
|                                | ***                | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456’N 31°13.468’E   |
|                                | **                 | Abo Rawash, El Saliba district, near the road leading to El Mansouria, Giza   | 30°05.975’N 31°04.717’E   |
| Terrestrial gastropod | Population density | Location name | Geographical co-ordinates |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| **8 Monacha obstricta** | * | Shoubra El Kheima, Qalyub, Qalyubia | 30°10.464' N 31°13.876' E |
|                      | ** | Shoubra El Kheima, Qalyub, Qalyubia | 30°10.569' N 31°13.917' E |
|                      | * | Shoubra El Kheima, Qalyub, Qalyubia | 30°10.605' N 31°14.068' E |
|                      | * | Private property nursery, Kerdasa, Giza | 30°03.248' N 31°05.891' E |
|                      | * | Private property farm, Kerdasa, Giza | 30°03.488' N 31°05.955' E |
|                      | * | Ornamental plants nursery in El Mansoria, Giza | 30°06.235' N 31°07.141' E |
|                      | ** | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, Giza | 30°00.119' N 31°12.674' E |
|                      | * | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1), Giza | 30°00.102' N 31°12.481' E |
|                      | *** | “Kale’et El Marazik” (El Marazik Castle) Manshiet Dahshour, Giza | 29°47.734' N 31°15.268' E |
|                      | ** | El Ayat, Giza | 29°48.111' N 31°16.679' E |
|                      | ** | Small village, El Hawmdeia, Giza | 29°53.829' N 31°15.060' E |
|                      | *** | Abo Seir Village, El Badrashein, near the road leading to the Faculty of Agriculture, Giza | 29°53.902' N 31°13.612' E |
|                      | ** | Near the road leading to El Qanater El Khayreya, Qalyubia | 30°01.140' N 31°12.486' E |
|                      | * | Gezeret El Kertieen, near the road leading to El Glatma, Giza | 30°09.464' N 31°08.165' E |
|                      | *** | Agricultural Horticulture Research Institute El Qanater El Khayreya (Tropical Fruit Research Station), Qalyubia | 30°11.601' N 31°06.693' E |
|                      | *** | Ornamental plants nursery close to Tropical Fruit Research Station, Qalyubia | 30°11.636' N 31°06.958' E |
|                      | ** | El Ahaly village in El Qanater El Khayreya, Qalyubia | 30°11.878' N 31°06.732' E |
|                      | * | El Bagor, Ezbet Shahin, Monufia | 30°13.588' N 31°05.402' E |
|                      | *** | Ornamental plant nursery near the road leading to Ashmon close to Ezbet Abo Seif, Monufia | 30°14.040' N 31°05.215' E |
| **9 Oxychilus cf. cellarius** | * | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456' N 31°13.468' E |
| **10 Theba pisana** | * | Ornamental plants nursery close to Tropical Fruit Research Station, Qalyubia | 30°11.636' N 31°06.958' E |
|                      | * | El Ahaly village in El Qanater El Khayreya, Qalyubia | 30°11.878' N 31°06.732' E |
|                      | * | Abo Rawash, El Saliba district near the road leading to El Mansouria, Giza | 30°05.975' N 31°04.717' E |
| **11 Polygyra cereolus** | *** | The Marriott Hotel garden, El Gezira Street, El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo | 30°03.456' N 31°13.468' E |
| **12 Zonitoides arboreus** | * | Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1), Giza | 30°01.102' N 31°12.481' E |

Notes: (*) = The number of snails varies from 3 to 5 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area; (**) = The number of snails varies from 6 to 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area; (*** = The number of snails per 50 × 50 cm² area exceeds 10 individuals.
Four records of new to Egypt gastropod species including the first reported Tropical Leatherleaf slug *Laevicaulis alte* (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) (Pulmonata: Veronicellidae)

In this study, this species was found at one location of the Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 4) (30°01.140' N 31°12.486' E) feeding on mango seedlings and in the shade of plant pots. In green houses, it can be a serious pest of orchids and other varieties of roses (South 1992).

**Description:** The body color is variable from cream to brownish, the body length of a medium sized slug ranges from 50 to 80 mm (Rowson et al. 2014). There are at least two longitudinal stripes on the mantle (except in unicolor forms) and along the body to the tail; the sole is lighter in the middle. The mucus is colorless and watery (Stojnić et al. 2011).

**Limacus flavus** (Linnaeus, 1758)

**Original distribution:** Possibly the Mediterranean region, western and central Europe (Welter-Schultes 2012).

**Introduced to:** South Africa (Herbert 2010); Zimbabwe (Van Bruggen 1981); Saint Helena (Crowley 1978); British Columbia, Canada (Forsyth 1999); throughout most of the USA (Pilsbry 1948); Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania (Smith and Kershaw 1979); and New Zealand (Barker 1999). It has been reported as a pest of various flower species in greenhouses (Godan 1983). It is common in gardens and nurseries of ornamental plants (Ali 2011; Mohamed and Ali 2013).

**Description:** it is a medium-size to large-size slug species up to 80–130 mm in body length with a short and unclear keel. The body is characterized by yellow-brown or yellow-green blotches with a central yellow stripe along the back to the tail tip (Rowson et al. 2014).

**VERONICELLIDAE:**

**Laevicaulis alte** (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) (Figure 2).

**Original distribution:** This species is native to southern and central Africa (Forcart 1953; Cowie 2000), is established in southern and southeastern Asia and is recorded in the Pacific Basin and the Hawaiian Islands (Cowie et al. 2009; Robinson and Hollingsworth 2009). It is considered as a national quarantine pest of top significance in the USA with adverse effects on agriculture, human health and natural ecosystems (Cowie et al. 2009). The species has been reported in India as well (Ray and Mukherjee 1963).

**Introduced to:** India, where it is considered to be a very serious agricultural pest with increasingly high rates of infestation (Raut and Mandal 1984; Raut and Panigrahi 1989; Das and Parida 2015; Bhavare and Magare 2017), Sri Lanka (Kumburegama and Ranawana 2001; Marame et al. 2011), Australia (Smith and Dartnall 1976), Fiji (Brodie and Barker 2012), Samoa and American Samoa (Gomes and Thomé 2004; Robinson and Hollingsworth 2009), Pratas Islands, Taiwan (Wu et al. 2007) as well to Qatar (El-Alfy et al. 1994) and Saudi Arabia (Neubert 1998). This species has been introduced to many regions (Herbert and Kilburn 2004).

In the Egyptian agricultural ecosystem, this species was first recorded in October 2018 in a nursery of ornamental plants and in a garden in Abo Rawash, in the El Saliba district near the road leading to the El Mansouria village, Giza governorate, at the coordinates 30°05.975' N 31°04.717' E, on seedlings, under plant pots and old leaves in nurseries and green houses, where it is more shady and humid, avoiding direct sunlight. Slugs of this species were found aggregated in big numbers on numerous ornamental plants attempting to hide in the shade of plant pots, close to the ground surface, where more humid conditions protect them from direct sunlight.

The other two terrestrial snail species found at the same location, were *Massylaea vermiculata* and *Theba pisana*.

**Laevicaulis alte** was recorded in the field on the following ornamental plants: *Nephrolepis* spp. Fern (Ne-}

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Figure 2. *Laevicaulis alte* (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) found on ornamental plants in a garden located in Abo Rawash, El Saliba, El Mansouria, Giza governorate. The number of slugs exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.
phrolepidaceae), *Plectranthus scutellarioides* Common coleus (Lamiaceae), *Duranta erecta* Golden dew-drop (Verbenaceae), *Aptenia cordifolia* Heartleaf ice plant (Aizoaceae), *Kalanchoe marmorata* Penwiper plant (Crassulaceae), *Aloe nobilis* rubble aloe (Asphodelaceae), *Tradescantia pallida* Purple heart (Commelinaceae), *Ruellia brittoniana* Britton’s wild petunia (Acanthaceae), *Senecio mandraliscae* Blue Senecio (Asteraceae), *Agave americana* century plant (Asparagaceae), *Crassula ovata* jade plant (Crassulaceae), *Polianthes tuberosa* the tuberose (Asparagaceae), *Tradescantia spathacea* the boat lily (Commelinaceae) and *Mangifera indica* mango seedlings (Anacardiaceae) as fruit.

The infested garden and nursery were irrigated almost every day to maintain the level of continuous humidity necessary for slug reproduction and successful completion of their life cycle.

In the future, this gastropod pest is expected to endanger the agricultural ecosystem and cause serious threat to ornamental plants and other field crops.

**Description:** *Laevicaulis alte* is an elongated dark-colored slug capable of contracting itself into an oval shape. On its head, the slug has 2–3 mm long tentacles, rarely extending beyond the edge of the mantle; the slug can retract its head under the mantle. The central keel is beige in color. Adult specimens of this slug have a unique, very narrow foot, which is around 4 or 5 mm in width. The notum is dark-grey to light yellowish-grey, with darker spots. Hyponotum is lighter than the back, both surfaces are minutely granular (Benthem-Jutting 1952).

The body is usually large reaching up to 10 cm (Robinson and Hollingsworth 2009) and sometimes up to 12 cm (Herbert and Kilburn 2004) in length.

**Terrestrial snails**

**OXYCHILIDAE:**

*Oxychilus cf. cellarius* (O. F. Müller, 1774) (Figure 3, Figure 4).

**Original distribution:** Europe.

**Introduced to:** Introduced worldwide, i.e. to New Zealand (Spencer et al. 2009), the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Horsák et al. 2010).

As specimens of this species were juvenile and their genitalia were not fully developed, they could be identified to the species level only tentatively. However, as shown in Figure 4a, b, c, the shells are consistent with those of *Oxychilus cellarius*, which is known as a pest of *Phaeseolus* beans in gardens and greenhouse environments (Godan 1983). Another species belonging to the genus *Oxychilus* is *Oxychilus alliarus* found on navel orange trees, i.e. the most land snail-infested plants in the Berkat-El Sabaa district, Monufia governorate (Mohammed 2015). In the region of Abbes, Alexandria governorate, this species is recorded on grapevines (Eshra 2013).

It is a mesophilic species of woods, rocks, fields, and, occasionally, of gardens and greenhouses, where species rest under rocks, logs, and under bark of fallen trees, or in leaf litter and moss (Kerney et al. 1983).

**Figure 3.** *Oxychilus cf. cellarius* (O. F. Müller, 1774) found on grass and some ornamental plants in the district of El Zamalek on Gezira Island, the Cairo governorate. The number of snails ranged from 3 to 5 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

**Figure 4.** A close-up of the shell of *Oxychilus cf. cellarius* (O. F. Müller, 1774): dorsal view, ventral view, lateral view (scale: 1 mm).
The related species *Oxychilus alliarius* (Oxychilidae) reported as an invasive predator and facultative carnivore species is one of the main causes of the extinction of the rare species *Kaala subrutulosa* (Helicarionidae) and *Pleuropropoma cf. sandwicensis* (Helicinidae) that are native to the Hawaiian Islands (Curry and Yeung 2013).

As an invasive predator species, *Oxychilus* sp. may be potentially threatening to other native species of gastropods or other beneficial worms in the Egyptian ecosystem in the future.

**Description**: The shell is medium sized, spire is low, color is greyish yellow and paler below than above, the surface is polished, growth lines are faint, suture may appear channeled, aperture is elliptical (Long 1972). The shell is 9–12 mm in diameter, very flattened, very pale, transparent, shiny, glossy with 5½ to 6 whorls. Umbilicus surface is polished, growth lines are faint, suture may appear channelled, aperture is elliptical (Long 1972). The shell is 9–12 mm in diameter, very flattened, very pale, transparent, shiny, glossy with 5½ to 6 whorls. Umbilicus is symmetrical, moderately deep and open (Kerney and Cameron 1979). The body color is usually bluish-grey.

As it is usually found dead, it is difficult to identify the species from broken or juvenile shells (Cameron 2003).

### HELICIDAE:

**Massylaea vermiculata** (O. F. Müller, 1774) (Figure 5).

*Massylaea vermiculata* (O. F. Müller, 1774) found on ornamental plants in a nursery close to the Tropical Fruit Research Station, Qalyubia. The number of snails exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

**Original distribution**: Countries in the Mediterranean Basin (Fechter and Falkner 1990). *Massylaea vermiculata* has a worldwide distribution due to human activities (Godan 1979).

**Introduced to**: the Crimean Peninsula (Likhachev and Rammel’mier 1952), the Netherlands (Backhuys 1966), Köln, Germany (Čejka et al. 2014), the Croatian coastal region (Puizina et al. 2013), Belgium (Ronsmans and Van den Neucker 2016), Ashkabad, Turkmenistan (Muratov 1998), Chiba, Japan (Ueshima et al. 2004; Ueshima 2006), Saudi Arabia (Neubert 1998; Desouky and Busais 2012), Qatar (Al-Khayat 2010), Israel (Mienis 1973), Jordan (Petney and Huset 1992), Kerman-shah, Basrah city, Iraq (Al-Khafaji et al. 2016), Iran (Mienis 2002), Georgia (Mumladze and Poposhvili 2016), Texas (Strecker 1935); California, USA (Roth and Sadeghian 2003) reported as a garden pest in Texas and California (Sakovich et al. 1984), New South Wales, Australia (Smith and Kershaw 1979).

*Massylaea vermiculata*, a dominant helicid land snail in Egypt, formerly known as *Eobania vermiculata* (Bouaziz-Yahiatene et al. 2017) and reported as a serious pest of *Citrus* (Hegab et al. 1999; Hashem et al. 1993; El-Deeb et al. 1996b; Mahrous et al. 2002) in the governorates of El Sharkia (Ismail et al. 2017), Beheira, and Alexandria (Eshra 2013).

As reported by Desoky et al. 2015, *M. vermiculata*, which is found in the districts of Tahta and Sohag, was first recorded in the Sohag governorate during 2014/2015 seasons. Later it was reported to be widely spreading and, during 2016/2017 seasons, it was recorded in six districts already (Desoky 2018).

*M. vermiculata* has been reported to infest navel orange trees, Egyptian clover and wheat in multiple spots in the North-East of Delta governorates such as the Toukh district – Qalyubia governorate, the Zaqazig district – Sharkia governorate, the El-Santa district – Gharbia governorate, the Berkat El-Sabaa district – Monufia governorate, the Mit Gharm district – Dakahlia governorate, the Karf Saad district – Damietta governorate and the Abou Sultan district – Ismailia governorate (Mohammed 2015).

The species was also recorded in fields of such crops as broad bean *Vicia faba*, Egyptian clover *Trifolium alexandrinum*, maize *Zea mays*, wheat *Triticum aestivum*, such vegetable crops as cabbage *Brassica oleracea var. capitata*, lettuce *Lactuca sativa*, Common bean *Phaseolus vulgaris*, on such fruit trees as guava *Psidium guajava*, mango *Mangifera indica*, and also on some ornamental plants such as Adhatoda *Adhatoda vasica*, Casuarina *Casuarina equisetifolia*, Kafor *Eucalyptus sp.*, Cocos *Syagrus amabilis*, Alternanthera *amabilis*, *Chrysanthemum Chrysanthemum indica*, *Acalypha Acalypha marginata*, Indian laurel *Ficus nitida* (El-Okda 1980; El-Deeb et al. 1996b; Mahrous et al. 2002; Ali 2006). In spite of that, this species is a food item in Turkey (Yildirim et al. 2004) and France (Welter-Schultes 2012).

**Description**: the shell is 22–30 mm in diameter, depressed globular in shape, has 5–6 slightly convex whorls. The umbilicus is closed by a reflected lip; the shell is thick, its background is creamy-white, with irregular growth ridges and 5 variable dark brown bands (Kerney and Cameron 1979).
**Theba pisana** (O.F. Müller, 1774) (Figure 6).

![Theba pisana](image)

**Figure 6.** *Theba pisana* (O.F. Müller, 1774) found on ornamental plants in Abo Rawash, El Saliba district, El Mansouria, Giza governorate. The number of snails ranged from 3 to 5 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

**Original distribution:** Probably from Morocco (Sacchi 1955; Gittenberger and Ripken 1987).

**Introduced to:** Throughout the Mediterranean Basin; established in numerous European countries such as Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Switzerland (Kerney and Cameron 1979) and also in Australia, South Africa, the Canary Islands, Madeira, Porto Santo, Bermuda, Brazil, Argentina, and in San Diego and Los Angeles Counties, and in California, where it was first reported in 1914 (Hanna 1966). It is considered to be a very serious agricultural pest attacking ornamental plants, fruits, vegetables and herbs.

In Australia, it is a pest of seedling crops including wheat, barley, oil seeds, seed carrots and legume-based pastures (e.g. annual medics, lucerne, clovers), causing severe damage and occasionally total destruction; *Theba pisana* is also considered to be a minor pest of *Citrus* orchards, as well as of grapevines in both South Africa and Australia (Sanderson and Sirgel 2002). In South Africa, this species feeds on grapes. Juveniles of this species feed on foliar buds and young leaves, causing stunted growth and decreased yield besides leaving their mucus on developing grapes, which reduces their quality and consumption and, consequently, fruit export markets (Sanderson and Sirgel 2002). Livestock refuse to consume clover or pasture that is heavily contaminated with snail mucus (Kassab and Daoud 1964; El-Okda 1984).

In Egypt, this snail is considered to be a serious pest of *Citrus* (Hashem and El-Halawany 1996; El-Wakil 1999). In Beheira and Alexandria governorates, it is also recorded on such fruit trees as apple and navel orange, and its presence on plants is common in the districts of Tahta and Dar-El Salam – Sohag governorate (Desoky et al. 2015), spread further, and during 2016/2017 seasons, it was recorded in five districts (Desoky 2018).

**HYGROMIIDAE**

**Monacha obstructa** (L. Pfeiffer, 1842) (Figure 7a, b).

**Original distribution:** Native to the western Palearctic region from Western Europe, the northern Mediterranean Basin and the Middle East to Iran. In Turkey, *M. obstructa* is known from the west and south coasts and central and south Anatolia (Hausdorf 2000). This species is widespread and common in the Near East of Africa, is recorded in Turkey (Hausdorf 2000; Güümüş and Neubert 2009), Syria, Lebanon (Neubert and Bariche 2013), Israel (Heller 2009), in the Palestinian Territory (Amr et al. 2018), Jordan (Neubert et al. 2015), Saudi Arabia (Neubert 1998), Iraq (Abdul-Sahib 2006), Qatar (Al-Khayat 2010), Iran and Egypt (Hausdorf 2000). The species is found on different ornamental flowers such as *Aconitum* sp., *Artemisia* sp., and *Eustoma grandiflorum*, on herbs as well as on vegetables, i.e. dill *Anethum graveolens* and beans *Phaseolus* sp.

*M. obstructa* is recorded in Beheira and Alexandria governorates on grapevines, navel orange, and apple as fruit trees and some ornamental plants (Eshra 2013). The same species was found to infest navel orange, Egyptian clover, tomato and cabbage (Mohammed 2015) in the Toukh district – the governorate of Qalyubia and in the El-Santa district – the governor of Gharbia. The species, which was first recorded during 2014/2015 seasons in the districts of Tahta and Dar-El Salam – Sohag governorate (Desoky et al. 2015), spread further, and during 2016/2017 seasons, it was recorded in five districts (Desoky 2018).
Four records of new to Egypt gastropod species including the first reported Tropical Leatherleaf slug *Laevicaulis alte* (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) (Pulmonata: Veronicellidae)

Moreover, in Egypt, *M. obstructa* was reported as a threat to *Citrus* (Hashem and El-Halawany 1996) and a vector of the trematode parasite *Brachylaima* (Rashed 2008). In the present study, the species was found mainly on Egyptian clover *Trifolium alexandrinum*, in addition to chicory *Cichorium pumilum*, chard *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *vulgaris*, onion *Allium cepa*, eggplant *Solanum melongena* in the fields, and in nurseries on some ornamental plants, i.e. coca palm, *Lantana camara*, *Tradescantia pallida* and *Chrysanthemum indica*. Our study revealed that *M. obstructa* prefers close-to-ground plant stems and the lower surface of the leaves (Figure 8a, b), in hot noon hours of the day hides inside soil cracks and is found closer to water canals where it is more humid and shady.

**Description:** The diameter of a medium sized shell ranges from 9.6 to 14.9 mm, the average diameter being 12.00 mm (Hausdorf 2000). The shell is conical, depressed-globular, with 4 ½ to 5 convex whorls, the body whorl is rounded; the aperture is elliptical, the upper insertion of the peristome is slightly descending. The peristome is sharp and hardly expanded; the color of the peristome is brownish with a strong whitish internal rib; the umbilicus is prick-like (Hausdorf 2000; Neubert and Bariche 2013).

Figure 7. *Monacha obstructa* (L. Pfeiffer, 1842), a: the species recorded on Chicory *Cichorium pumilum*, location: Agricultural Horticulture Research Institute El Qanater El Khayreya (Tropical Fruit Research Station), Qalyubia, b: the species recorded on Chard *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *Vulgaris*, location: Manshiet Dahshour, Giza governorate. The number of snails on both host plants exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

Figure 8. a: Effects of *Monacha obstructa* (L. Pfeiffer, 1842): Mucus secreted by a large number of snails close to the pot of ornamental plants in an ornamental plant nursery near the road leading to Ashmon, Monufeia, b: A large number of *Monacha obstructa* snails in the shade of ornamental plant pots at the same location. The number of snails exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.
SUBULINIDAE

Allopeas gracile (Hutton, 1834)

Original distribution: South America (Auffenberg and Stange 1988).

Introduced to: Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Feulner and Green 2003), Basrah city, Iraq (Naser 2010), India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Republic of China, Philippines, Fiji, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean Basin. In the USA, the species has been reported from South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and Louisiana. The species is widespread in tropical and subtropical areas of Asia and Australia as well as in Central and South America. The species is found in temperate areas as a greenhouse inhabitant (Capinera 2017). Allopeas gracile was found under potted ornamentals and young fruit seedlings.

It is known as an almost worldwide-distributed species. The species Allopeas clavulinum was first recorded associated with various ornamental plants in the Mansoura district, Dakahlia governorate (Genena 2003).

Description: The shell is conical, elongated and slender with 6 whorls, maximum length is 7.7 mm and diameter is 3.0 mm. The whors are rounded with a deep suture. The aperture is oval and lacks any dentition. The umbilicus is closed (Naser 2010).

GASTRODONTIDAE

Zonitoides arboreus (Say, 1816)

Original distribution: North America (Pilsbry 1946; Hubricht 1985).

Introduced to: Iceland, Hungary, Switzerland, the Czech Republic (Dvořák and Kupka 2007), Great Britain, Slovakia, the Pratas Islands, Taiwan (Wu et al. 2007), New Zealand (Spencer et al. 2009). It is known as “Orchid snail” as it is a common pest of orchids. Snails of the family Zonitidae usually hide under stones and litter by day, eat non-green vegetable matter or small animals (Ellis 1951; Long 1972). Many species of Zonitidae have been introduced to America, Africa and Australasia (Ellis 1951). The species is recorded in greenhouses, gardens and natural habitats, i.e. in woodlands and rotting woods. In this study, this species was recorded in the Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University (Nursery 1) (30°01.102' N 31°12.481' E). It was also found under ornamental plants pots in nurseries of the Faculty of Agriculture (30°01.102' N 31°12.481' E).

Description: The shell is very elongated, cone-shaped, 10–20 mm in height, 4–7 mm in diameter; with 8 to 10 convex whors, with a moderate suture and a minute umbilicus that is obscured by a reflected lip (Kerney and Cameron 1979).

POLYGYRIDAE

Polygyra cereolus (Megerle von Mühlfeld, 1816) (Figure 9).

Original distribution: Florida, USA (Pilsbry 1940).

Introduced to: such parts of the USA as North Carolina, Virginia and Texas (Cowie 1997), Yucatán, Mexican state (Bequaert and Clench 1936) and Quintana Roo, Mexican state on the Yucatán Peninsula (Rehder 1966), Mexico (Thompson 2008), Puerto Rico, the Greater Antilles (Charles and Lenoble 2020); Bermuda (Bieler and Slapchinsky 2000), the southern United States (Perez 2008), Spain (Navarro-Barrachina et al. 2012); Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia (Neubert 1995, 1998); Abu Dhabi (Neubert, pers. com.), the United Arab Emirates (Feulner et al. 2005), Qatar (Al-Khayat 2010), in
Four records of new gastropods species including the first reported Tropical Leatherleaf slug *Laevicaulis alte* (d’A. de Férussac, 1822) (Pulmonata: Veronicellidae) the Caribbean (Cowie 1996) and O’ahu, the Hawaiian Islands (Cowie 1997). The present study reports this species from the El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, the Cairo governorate for the first time, where it was spotted on ornamental plants.

**Description:** The discoidal shell is light brown, with radial streaks or spots of gray or pale brown on the base, varying to nearly uniform brown or fawn. The upper surface varies from flat to slightly conoidal, is obliquely, regularly rib-striated; the base nearly flat or slightly concave, with a small vortex-shaped central pit [umbilicus]; the whorls are strongly convex and lightly striated (Figure 10). Periphery is strongly angular to subcarinate. The first whorl emerging from the central pit is prominent, further, the width decreases. The last whorl is somewhat swollen near the aperture, the keel is weaker or obsolete there. Outer and basal margins of the peristome are reflected and thickened within the parietal, the margin is somewhat raised, free, bearing a short oblique parietal tooth. Within the first half of the last whorl, a narrow white lamina revolves on the parietal wall (Pilsbry 1940).

**Discussion**

The present study of gastropods has recorded twelve mollusk species (eight snails and four slugs) newly introduced to the Egyptian malacofauna. They have been added to the list of potential agricultural pests in Egypt with full descriptions of the species and their sampling locations. Ornamental plants in gardens and greenhouses are attacked by different injurious gastropod species, i.e. *Massylaea vermiculata*, *Monacha* sp., *Theba pisana*, and *Cochlicella acuta* that are common in Northern Egypt (Kassab and Daoud 1964). The mass appearance of these terrestrial gastropods has been gradually recorded in many different spots and locations in Cairo, Giza as well as in the neighboring areas.

El Deeb et al. (1996a) surveyed land mollusk species in various nurseries representing different environmental conditions and ecosystems (Helwan – Masr El Kadima – El Mohandssen – Bolak El Dakrour, Nasr City) distributed in five different regions of the Greater Cairo (Cairo and Giza cities). Six mollusk species, i.e. *Massylaea vermiculata*, *Monacha obstricta*, *Limax flavus*, *Cornu aspersum*, *Xeropicta krynickii*, and *Cochlicella acuta*, were recorded in these five nurseries. The population density of land mollusks was found to vary significantly according to the habitat, plant hosts and weather conditions.

*M. vermiculata*, *Succinea putris* and *Cepeae nemoralis* were determined in Kafr El Sheikh; *Monacha cartusiana*, *M. vermiculata*, *Cepeae nemoralis*, *C. acuta*, *O. alliarius* and *Helicella sp.* in the Damietta governorate; *Monacha cartusiana*, *S. putris*, *M. vermiculata*, *C. acuta* and *C. nemoralis* in the Dakahlia governorate (El-Deeb et al. 1996b). Many authors have surveyed land snails

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Figure 9. *Polygyra cereolus* (Megerle von Mühlfeld 1816) recorded in the El Zamalek district on Gezira Island, Cairo. The number of snails exceeded 10 individuals per 50 × 50 cm² area.

Figure 10. The shell of *Polygyra cereolus* (Megerle von Mühlfeld, 1816): dorsal view, ventral view and lateral view (scale: 1 mm).
in the Sharkia governorate and have found *Monacha cartusiana*, *M. vermiculata*, *C. acuta* and *X. krynickii* attacking field and vegetables crops, fruit trees and ornamental plants in certain localities (Nakhla and Tadros 1995; Ismail 1997; Hegab et al. 1999; Mahrous et al. 2002; Lokma 2007).

Land snails feed on economic and ornamental plants. They consume such edible parts of plants as leaves, fruits, roots, tubers (Bishara et al. 1968; El-Okda 1981) causing serious damage to cereals, maize, Egyptian clover, vegetables, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, cabbage, seeds of oil plants and leaves of ornamental plants, as well as to citrus, peach, and palm trees (El-Deeb et al. 1999; El-Okda 1979; El-Okda 1981; Ismail et al. 2003; Mahrous et al. 2002; Lokma 2007; Shahawy et al. 2008).

In twelve district localities of the Sharkia Governorate (Mahrous et al. 2002), terrestrial snails *Monacha cartusiana* were mainly recorded on field and vegetable crops, *Xeropicta krynickii* and *Cochlicella acuta* on fruit trees, *Massylaee vermiculata*, which was found to be the most abundant species, on ornamental plants and *Succinea* sp. The slugs *Deroceras reticulatum* and *D. laeve* were first recorded on Egyptian clover in the districts of Meniet El-Kamh and Zagazig, the Sharkia governorate (Lokma 2007).

*Massylaee vermiculata*, *Theba pisana*, *Xeropicta krynickii*, *Monacha obstraca* and *Oxychilus allariuus* were recorded on grapevines, navel orange and apple trees, on ornamental plants in the governorates of Alexandria and EL-Beheria. The most abundant species in Alexandria were *T. pisana* and *M. vermiculata* (Eshra 2013).

The species *Monacha cartusiana*, *Cochlicella acuta*, *Succinea putris*, *Deroceras leave* and *Deroceras reticulatum* were found to infest different crops and host plants in the governorates of Ismailia and Sharkia. Their population density and importance were reported. Our study showed the snail *M. cartusiana* to be the predominant species on field and vegetable crops (Rady et al. 2014).

*Massylaee vermiculata*, *Theba pisana*, *Xeropicta krynickii*, *Cochlicella acuta*, *Monacha cartusiana*, *Monacha obstrucata*, *Succinea putris*, *Succinea oblonga*, *Rumina decollate* and *Oxychilus allariuus* were recorded in field trials in the governorates of North East of Delta, i.e. in Qalyubia, Sharkia, Gharbia, Monufia, Dakahlia, Damietta and Ismailia, on different vegetation including Egyptian clover, wheat, rice, maize; cabbage, lettuce, tomato, potato, grapevines, navel orange, date palm and mango trees (Mohammed 2015).

Our study results suggest that these species have entered gardens with infested seedlings or ornamental plant pots. Based on our study results, we conclude that although not yet reported, these species may have been already introduced to at least a few greenhouses or nurseries in Egypt, and may spread far and wide in the future. In the first phase, terrestrial mollusks could become established in local areas and, in the absence of biological control agents for land mollusks, get ready for the next phase of transportation to the surrounding clean or reclaimed areas. Snails and slugs are most often translocated to other places through plant nurseries by the movement of plant material (Chichester and Getz 1969).

Having in mind large population densities of these species, their recent distribution in Egypt and their potential distribution in the future, gastropod studies must be continued. The above-mentioned mollusks can cause severe damage to gardens, nurseries and greenhouse plants in Egypt. They are more active in conditions of warm and hot weather, which is typical of Egypt during most of the year. However, the slug *Ambigolina valentinus* is unlikely to be active in winter in contrast to the other mollusks recorded during the survey.

The field observations have shown that Egyptian clover *Trifolium alexandrinum*, chicory *Cichorium pumilum* and many ornamental plants are sources of nutrition for *Monacha obstrucata* and other species.

It is interesting to note that adult specimens of the *Monacha obstrucata* population from El-Ayat, Giza (29°48.111' N 31°16.679' E) have a larger diameter shell than specimens of the population from Kerdasa, Giza (30°03.488' N 31°05.955' E).

As indicated by many malacologists, they identified gastropod species following the methods described by Kassab and Daoud 1964; Bishara et al 1968, or Godan 1983. However, the above mentioned methods alone without the examination of dissected genitalia and shell do not ensure correct species identification.

The gastropod species identification reported in some previous literature sources could be incorrect in many cases, which can be explained by the shortage of clear references, identification keys, the absence of materials and vouchered specimens needed for the verification of species identification. In this respect, a natural history museum housing specimens dating back to the 1990’s would be a great support to researchers working in this field.

However, the present study represents just preliminary attempts to record all species of the Egyptian malacofauna and to revise their identification as many species were possibly misidentified due to inadequate descriptions, leading to incomplete surveys of terrestrial snails and slugs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Noha M. Abu-Shady, Assistant Professor at the Department of Zoology and Agricultural Nematology, and Mohamed R. Salama, Lecturer assist-
ant at the Department of Economic Entomology and Pesticides, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University for assistance in collecting/samples/specimens/.

We also thank Asmaa B. El Attar, Associate Professor and Eman Zaky, Assistant Professor at the Ornamental Horticulture department, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University for the identification of ornamental plants.

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