

Monadenia Trapped Between Timbers by George Holm



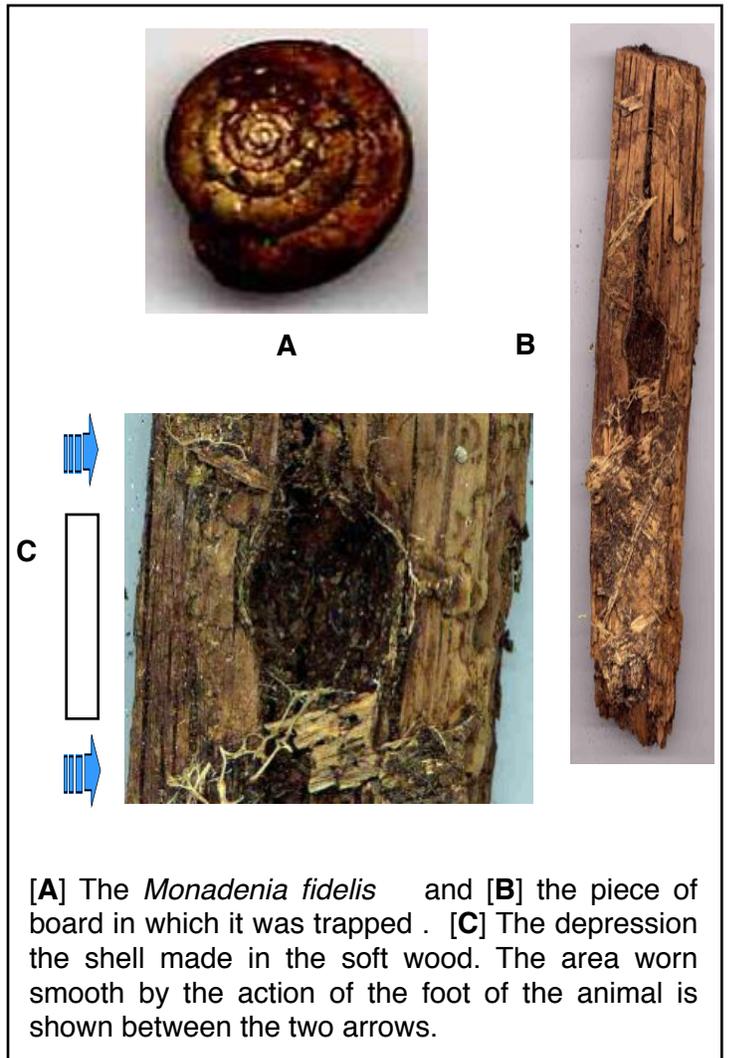
Monadenia fidelis (Gray, 1834) is called the Pacific Sideband snail and is by far our most beautiful large native land snail. It can reach 1.5 inches in diameter, but most will be smaller than that. The species has many named forms and it can be quite variable, even over a relatively small area. The name sideband is appropriate for this species. Most local specimens are colored a light tan with a narrow dark brown band and a narrow yellowish band below it circling the shell and the base is usually a solid brown color. The living animal is red and its foot can extend to over two inches. The umbilicus for this species is open.

The yellow subspecies *Monadenia fidelis flava* (Hemphill, 1892) that Phil Liff-Grieff observed in the Renton - Issaquah area has been found over a large area of north-west Washington. Drew Skinner has found the species in Port Orchard on the Kitsap Peninsula and I have found it near the Hood Canal, also on the Kitsap Peninsula, as well as on Whidbey Island, Fidalgo Island and on the Point Roberts Peninsula.

It was while searching for *Monadenia fidelis flava* among the decaying timbers of an old farm on Whidbey Island, that a specimen of *M. fidelis fidelis* caught my attention. I had just lifted a rotting floor board when I noticed the shell wedged between it and the timber below.

The snail may have crawled between the two boards to hibernate for the winter and during that time, some weight had caused the boards to press together. Had the wood been of normal strength, then the shell of animal would surely have been crushed, but the boards were wet and very spongy due to decay and they molded around the shell instead and made escape for the animal an impossibility.

Close examination of the wood showed that although the shell was solidly wedged between the two boards, the animal had been able to extend its foot out from its shell and even move the foot slightly from side to side. The smoothness of the soft wood over which the foot had moved suggested that the animal had managed to stay alive for some unknown period of time before it died.



[A] The *Monadenia fidelis* and [B] the piece of board in which it was trapped. [C] The depression the shell made in the soft wood. The area worn smooth by the action of the foot of the animal is shown between the two arrows.