



Learning with Gyu Min

for dummies (Article Edition)



Today's lesson: Banana Slugs!

Introduction

Out in the outskirts of the pacific northwest in North America, there lies one species above it all: The *Ariolimax columbianus*. Or more commonly known as the Banana slug, this extraordinary beast of an organism in unlike any other (It's actually a mollusk, not a worm). So what better way to inform you all on this creature than through its reproduction! This is going to be a fun one.



<https://bit.ly/2PzQLid>

The Real Deal (Reproduction)

When the moist night or day is not too dry or not too cold, two slugs exchange looks with each other. One may have found the other through its slime, or it may have just been a coincidence. If both slugs are ready to breed, they will quickly join up together to preform their courtship dance, a dance in which both slugs become stimulated and ready for penetration (Around a few hours). This dance includes actions such as nipping the other's flesh off and raising the front of their bodies to strike each other like venomous snakes. Once the stimulation is complete, the two slugs approach each other like a yin-yang symbol with their heads meeting (See photo). The slugs then penetrate each other, exchanging their sperm. Once the deed is done, the slugs leave and go about their own ways.



<https://bit.ly/2WAd2ad>

Crispy Context

Now, before I get into the real deal of sexual reproduction, there are some important "context" facts we must know first.

- Banana slugs are hermaphrodites, which means they possess both the male and female reproductive organs (Self fertilization is possible, but not very common).
- The slime trails that they leave contain pheromones to attract and lead their mate. It can also numb the tongue of predators if consumed.
- They have their penis emerge from the genital pore on their head. The penis can grow up to 6-8 inches when erect.

What about the babies?

Once the sexual intercourse is complete, each slug will produce between 3 and 50 translucent eggs in hiding spots such as in logs or on leaves. The eggs hatch in about 1-2 months, and the baby slug looks very similar to its parent except with its color as you can see with its pale white. Within a few months, the baby slugs gains the yellow colors and cannot be told apart from their parents. And speaking of parents, slugs don't have any. The parents that laid the eggs will abandon them immediately.



<https://i.redd.it/0f5ll2vbexc11.jpg>