NEW GUINEA FLATWORMS IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

PANIC AND REASON

BY RALPH E. MITCHELL
PANIC AS LOCAL NEWS REPORTS NEW GUINEA FLATWORMS FOUND IN LEE COUNTY
HOMEOWNERS PANIC ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN AND PETS
MANY PEOPLE REACT AND WANT THEIR FLATWORMS EXAMINED
A LAND PLANARIAN, *BIPALIUM KEWENSE*
FOOD SOURCE: EARTHWORMS
WE HAVE A SPECIMEN POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS A NEW GUINEA FLATWORM
MEET THE NEW GUINEA FLATWORM -
(PLATYDEMUS MANOKWARI)
NEW GUINEA FLATWORM FOOD SOURCES
CHARLOTTE COUNTY NEW GUINEA FLATWORM
CHARLOTTE COUNTY NEW GUINEA FLATWORM
SHOULD PEOPLE CALL THE POLICE IF THEY SEE A NEW GUINEA FLATWORM?
IF YOU ARE A SNAIL, YES!
IF YOU ARE A HUMAN – NO!

- The science behind the New Guinea flatworm and the parasite it could carry seems to indicate that the possibility of being infected by the rat lungworm parasite is possible, but miniscule. As Dr. Bill Kern mentions in his article: “The probability that a person could become infected with a rat lungworm from a New Guinea flatworm is extremely small at the current level of infestation within rats and snails in Florida.”
IF YOU WANTED TO, HOW DO YOU GET INFECTED BY THE RAT LUNGWORM?
A ROOF RAT WOULD NEED TO BE INFECTED WITH THE RAT LUNGWORM
LUNGWORM LARVAE MUST BE IN THE RAT DROPPINGS
A SNAIL MUST THEN EAT THE RAT FECES
THE NEW GUINEA FLATWORM MUST THEN EAT THE SNAIL
A person must then eat something raw covered in New Guinea flatworm slime.

- This could cause a type of meningitis.
CONCLUSIONS

• Don’t panic – the chances of being infected with rat lungworm are small

• Control local rat populations

• Wash raw fruits and vegetables before consuming

• Don’t handle New Guinea Flatworms

• Communicate accurate information to the public – Dr. Kern’s Factsheet
RESOURCES


• Miller, C. (2015) New Guinea flatworm detected in south Florida. Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service Department, IFAS.


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