

Shell-shocked: Rare snail loses out in love triangle

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Jeremy the 'lefty' snail, has a shell whose spirals turn in an anti-clockwise direction, meaning that he cannot mate with the majority of the world's snail population

A lovelorn snail who failed to find a mate because of his unusually-shaped shell hit the headlines in Britain on Thursday after two potential partners got together and left him to share in parenting duties.

The rare snail—named Jeremy—has a [shell](#) whose spirals turn in an anti-clockwise direction, meaning that he cannot mate with the majority of the world's snail population who spiral the opposite way.

Angus Davison, a professor at the University of Nottingham in central England, took Jeremy into care and launched an international search last year to find a possible mate for the lonely hermaphrodite.

"This snail is very rare. It's literally one in a million," said Davison, who studies the genetics of these types of garden snails.

The BBC reported in November that Jeremy had finally found love after an enthusiast who heard the appeal introduced him to Lefty from Suffolk in eastern England, who has a similarly-shaped shell.

Enthusiasts also came forward with Tomeu, another left-coiling snail from the Spanish island of Majorca. While there was what one scientist described as "flirting" between the two, no lasting bond ensued.

Tomeu and Lefty decided to get together instead.

"It's like that thing where maybe you introduce your best friend to a girl you're interested in" and they couple up, Davison told BBC radio.

The duo has now produced their first offspring, of 170 baby snails who coil the opposite way to their parents and the same way as the majority of snails.

Jeremy remains with his new neighbours in the Nottingham laboratory and is helping to look after the children but Davison said he was not giving up on the search for more [potential partners](#).

"We would love to have them," he told AFP.

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