The desert snail The desert snail can sleep from 4 to 6 years without dying and spends most of it's time inside it's shell. The desert snail eats plants, leaves and algae because there is nothing wet to eat. It lives in dry barrens of deserts, slopes of loose rocks. This is how the desert shell helps the snail survive. an animal which manages to keep cool and moist despite the hot desert sun. the snail is already basically a .natural building that keeps its inhabitants cool and protected. The desert snail is about an inch across