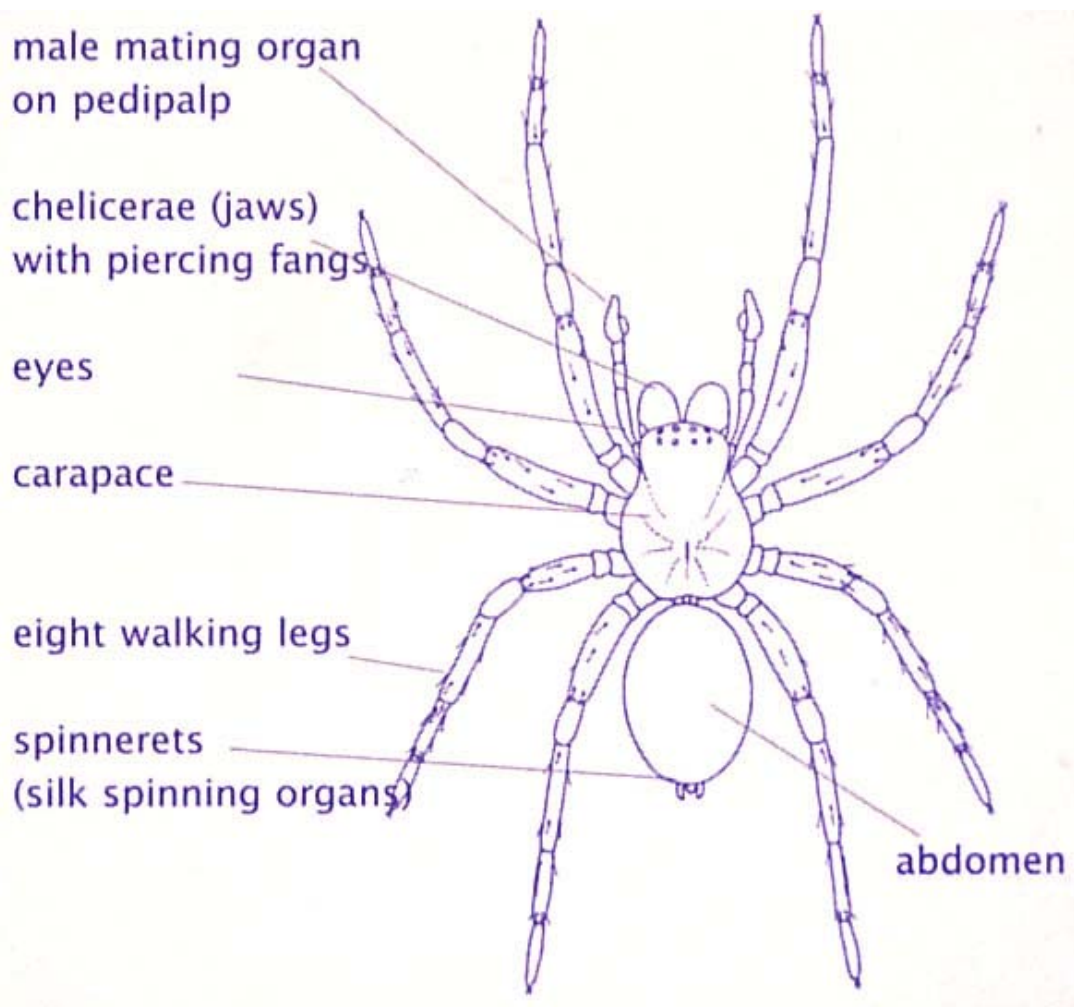


Spider Habits

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➤ Species

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Apart from a few poisonous species spiders are generally useful and have considerable influence on insect pest numbers.

The male spider is smaller than the female and is seldom encountered unless sought.

Generally web-spinning spiders live less than 12 months and ground dwelling spiders may live for several years.

After fertilisation female produces an egg sac. The spiderlings moult once before emerging and moving to colonate new areas.

To do this the spiderlings produce a small thread of web and disperse by drifting on the wind this habit stops overpopulation in one area.

"What can I do?"

Try the following tips

External

Go outside at dusk or night when the spiders are more active.

Treat the nests with a wet spray recommended for spider control.

Be sure to follow the instructions on the label.

It is best to leave the spider web for up to two weeks to be sure that your treatment will have maximum effect. This will allow the spiders, which have escaped treatment to ingest, the pesticide when renovating their web.

Internal

Seek out the areas inhabited by the spiders such as window and doorframes and apply treatments directly

When using pesticides within the home be sure to keep people and pets away when using them.

If members of the household suffer with asthma or other respiratory problems use only products, which are low irritant.

Hygiene

Clean up any rubbish such as brick and woodpiles in the garden, these areas will attract spider infestations.

SPECIES

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Redback Spider:
Latrodectus hasselti

Distribution:

Found all over Australia; common in disturbed and urban areas.

Identification and habits:

Abdomen with red or orange stripe above, 'hourglass' shaped red/orange spot below.

Females have a body about the size of a pea and slender legs. The tiny males, only 2-3 mm long, are not dangerous. Vertical, sticky catching threads run to the ground from the tangled retreat web above. Webs are built in dry, sheltered sites, e.g. among rocks, in logs, culverts, sheds, privies, etc.



Bite:

Redback bites occur frequently, especially in the warmer months. Bites can cause serious illness and some have caused deaths. Antivenom is available – no deaths have occurred since its introduction.

First aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain. Do not apply a pressure bandage. Collect the spider for identification. Seek medical attention.

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White-tailed Spider:
Lampona cylindrata

Distribution:

Lampona group spiders are found all over Australia; *Lampona cylindrata* is particularly common in disturbed and urban areas.



Identification and habits:

Cylindrical spiders, body 1–1.5cm long, females more robust than males. Body colour dull, dark grey with a distinct white spot on the end of the abdomen, (sometimes with paired spots toward front), legs shiny, brownish. Night-active, crevice dwelling hunters found under bark, rocks, in leaf litter and often in houses. They attack and eat other spiders including Black House Spiders.

Bite:

Symptoms usually confined to local burning pain followed by development of an itchy lump. Less commonly bites have caused localised blistering at the bitten area. There is little conclusive evidence that bites by these spiders are primary causes of extensive skin ulceration. A sensible precaution is to remove these spiders when found around the home.

First aid:

Cold pack may relieve local pain. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

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Mouse Spiders

Eastern Mouse Spider: *Missulena bradleyi*

Red-Headed Mouse Spider: *Missulena occatoria*



Distribution:

Eastern Mouse Spiders are found in east coastal and highland regions. Redheaded Mouse Spiders are found across the continent mainly west of the Great Dividing Range.

Identification and habits:

Squat spiders 1-3cm long. Carapace glossy; head area high and bulbous, eyes widespread across front. Spinnerets short and blunt. Males have characteristically coloured areas on their bodies. Burrows with two trapdoors. Males wander during summer/autumn, especially after rain.

Bite:

Mouse spider venom may be very toxic, but human envenomations are rare. In serious cases funnel-web spider antivenom has been used effectively.

First aid:

Treat as for funnel-web spider bite, especially if the victim is a child. Collect spider for identification.

Funnel-web Spiders:
Atrax and *Hadronyche*

Distribution:

Eastern Australia, including Tasmania, in coastal and highland forest regions – as far west as the Gulf Ranges area of South Australia. There are about 40 species. Sydney Funnel-web Spiders (*Atrax robustus*) occur from Newcastle to Nowra and west to Lithgow.



Identification and habits:

Large spiders (1.5-4.5 cm body length), carapace glossy. Males often have a ventral spur or swelling (arrowed) midway along the second leg, pointed *Atrax*, blunt or absent in *Hadronyche*. Spinnerets (silk spinning organs) usually obvious at end of abdomen, last segment longer than wide. Burrows in sheltered habitats – under rocks, in rotting logs, tree holes etc. in bush and garden. Irregular silk trip lines radiate out from burrow entrance. Males leave their burrows and wander in search of females during summer/autumn. Bites are most prevalent in this period.

Bite:

Dangerous. Can cause serious illness or death. Male venom sometimes more toxic than female. Antivenom is available – no deaths have occurred since its introduction.

First aid:

Bites are usually on a limb. Apply a pressure bandage immediately and immobilize the bitten limb by splinting. Restrict movement of victim. Capture the spider for identification. Seek medical attention urgently.

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Trapdoor Spiders:
Brown Trapdoor Spiders: *Misgolas*
Sigillate Trapdoor Spiders:
Aganippe

Distribution:

Misgolas group spiders are found in eastern Australia especially in coastal and highland regions of



New South Wales and Victoria. *Misgolas rapax* is a common Brown Trapdoor Spider around Sydney. *Aganippe* group spiders are found across southern Australia west of the Great Dividing Range and include the Adelaide Trapdoor Spider, *Aganippe subtristis*.

Identification and habits:

1.5-3cm. Body length. Spinnerets short. Males usually with a small double spur halfway along first leg. Brown Trapdoor Spiders – dull brown spiders with cover of paler gold hairs on carapace ('dusty' appearance, unlike the 'glossy' Funnel Web carapace). Abdomen often with pale transverse bars. Males with thick 'boxing glove' palps. Eyes in two compact rows. Burrows open (without trapdoor). Sigillate trapdoor spiders – dark brown spiders with glossy carapace and 4-6 hairless spots (sigillate) on top of abdomen. Eyes in three rows. Burrows with soil or litter trapdoors.

Bite:

Brown Trapdoor Spiders are often mistaken for funnel-web spiders but their bites are not dangerous. Sigillate Trapdoor Spider bites may be somewhat more severe but bites are uncommon.

First Aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary – seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

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Sac Spiders:

Slender Sac Spiders:

Cheiracanthium

Stout Sac Spiders: *Clubiona*

Distribution:

Throughout Australia in forest and grassland habitats.

Identification and habits:

Hunting spiders, 1-1.5 cm body length that make small cylindrical or ovoid silk retreat sacs. Slender Sac Spiders are common hunters on foliage in bush and garden. Males especially, have slender bodies, large jaws and long, thin legs. Most are shades of cream, brown or yellow. Their retreat sacs are made in folded leaves or grass blades. They sometimes enter houses. Stout Sac Spiders have stronger legs with robust, cylindrical bodies, reddish brown to fawn in colour. They may be found on house walls and fences but are most common in bush land under bark and in leaf litter.



Bite:

Bites are not common and symptoms are usually minor, although *Cheiracanthium* bites have caused headache, nausea and minor skin ulceration.

First aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

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Huntsman Spiders
Common and Banded Huntsman
Spiders: *Isopeda* and *Holconia*
Badge Huntsman Spiders:
Neosparassus
Tropical Huntsman Spiders:
Heteropoda



Distribution:

Isopeda and *Neosparassus* are widely distributed in Australia.

Holconia is widespread in southern and eastern Australia. *Heteropoda*, is common in northern tropical areas.

Identification and habits:

Large, long-legged spiders (up to 15 cm across legs) mostly grey to brown, legs sometimes banded. *Isopeda* and *Holconia* have flattened bodies adapted for living under loose bark. Badge Huntsmen Spiders have distinctive colour combinations of black, white, orange or yellow under the abdomen (the 'badge'). These spiders, and the motley brown, white and black patterned Tropical Huntsmen Spiders, have less flattened bodies and are found on vegetation, bark and in leaf litter. All of these spiders sometimes enter houses.

Bite:

Badge and Tropical Huntsmen bites can be painful and may cause transient headache or nausea.

First aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

Orb Weaving Spiders:
Garden Orb Weaving Spiders: *Eriophora*
Banded Orb Weaving Spiders: *Argiope*
Golden Orb Weaving Spiders: *Nephila*

Distribution:



Found all over Australia. Common Garden Orb Weavers are *Eriophora biapicata* and *transmarina* from eastern and southern Australia. A common Argiope is the St Andrew's Cross Spider, *Argiope keyserlingi*, of eastern Australia.

Identification and habits:

All make suspended, sticky, wheel-shaped orb webs. The commonly seen Garden Orb Weavers are 1-2.5 cm in body length. Most are stout, reddish brown or grey spiders with a leaf shaped pattern on their roughly triangular abdomens. Webs are placed in openings between trees and shrubs where insects are likely to fly. Transverse abdominal banding identifies many Banded Orb Weavers. Some, like *Argiope keyserlingi* (body 11.5 cm.), have thick zigzag bands of silk in their webs that may attract insect prey by reflecting UV light. Their webs are placed among shrubs or long grass. Golden Orb Weavers are large spiders (body 2-4 cm.) with silvery yellow to plum coloured bodies and black, often yellow banded, legs. Their orb webs are large and may have a 'barrier network' of threads. The silk has a golden sheen.

Bite:

Reluctant to bite, symptoms usually negligible or mild.

First aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if required. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

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Wolf Spiders: *Lycosidae*

Distribution:

All parts of Australia

Identification and habits:

Many species, 1 to 8cm across legs, robust, agile, ground hunters living in leaf litter or burrows in bushland

and gardens. Eight eyes, four largest arranged in a square on top of head. Body colours typically drab, most with variegated patterns in brown, grey, black and white. Underside sometimes with markings. Jaws often bear an orange spot on sides.



Bite:

Symptoms usually minor – local pain or itchiness.

First aid:

Apply cold pack to relieve pain. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

Black House or Window Spider

Badumna insignis

Distribution:

Widely distributed in southern and eastern Australia. Common in urban areas. *Badumna* group spiders are found all over Australia.

Identification and habits:

Dark, robust spiders, 1-1.5cm body length. Their webs form untidy, lacy silk sheets with funnel-like entrances(s). They are found on tree trunks, rock walls and buildings (in window frames, wall crevices, etc.), *Bandumna longinquus* is a slightly smaller species with a grayish carapace and grey-brown banded legs. It often builds its webs on foliage.

Bite:

Timid spiders. Bites are infrequent but some may be quite painful and have other transient symptoms like nausea.

First aid:

Cold pack may relieve local pain. Seek medical attention is symptoms persist.

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