

SPIDER IDENTIFICATION CHART



Red Back Spiders

Typically, Redback Spiders are entirely black except for the broad band down the back of the body and a red hour-glass shaped mark underneath. However some females are fawn and the red markings are orange. Males may be white to brown with red markings and the young are pale dirty-white, with six black spots down the back of the body and a paler hour-glass mark underneath.

Large females may span a 50 cent coin. Males are smaller and not commonly seen.

Redback Spiders build their webs anywhere out of the direct effects of the weather. Webs occur on public buildings, parks, under steps, in corners, in grass and window sills and in crevices of bricks. Redback spiders are more common in Summer but occur in all seasons. Ideal conditions can produce several egglayings in a season.

The egg-sac of the Redback Spider is the shape and size of a pea and creamy white in colour. Redbacks are generally timid spiders except when an object is placed in their web or when tending young or eggs in the nest.

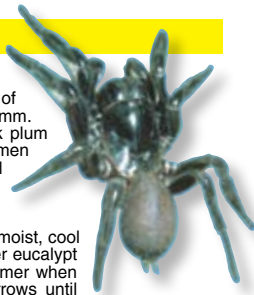


Only the female is large enough to effectively bite people. The bite is often felt but is apparently painless, although some victims have reported burning sensations. In most bites, intense local pain is experienced about five minutes after the bite. The main indication of a Redback Spider bite is localised sweating at the bite site. Other symptoms can include muscular weakness, lack of co-ordination, paralysis and tremors. Nausea, vomiting, local swelling, dizziness or fainting, palpitation, fever and muscular spasms have also been recorded.

Funnel-Web Spider

Funnel-Web Spiders are potentially the most dangerous spider in the world and one of the most feared in Australia. The body length of the male is approximately 25mm in length and the female up to 40mm. They have a shiny dark brown to black head/thorax with a dark plum to black abdomen. Spinnerets project noticeably past the abdomen and the legs are moderately long. Both males and females of all species of Funnel-Webs are very aggressive and bites from either sexes are potentially dangerous, even fatal.

In Queensland, Funnel-Web Spiders tend to be more common in moist, cool rainforests, whereas in southern states they occur also in the drier eucalypt forest. Male Funnel-Web Spiders are often encountered in Summer when they wander in search of females which tend to remain in burrows until disturbed.



Wolf Spider

Wolf Spiders vary in size from a one cent coin to almost the width of an average adult hand. They are drab-coloured spiders with dark brown or black heads with lighter markings which may resemble a Union Jack pattern.



The body may have a dark bell-shaped mark and a series of fine black vee-shaped lines and whitish spots tapering to a vee towards the back. The legs are usually brown or grey and may have lighter rings around the middle section. From the front, two large and two smaller pairs of shiny black eyes are evident, and the two large fang-bearing bumps have a small, distinctive orange patch on the side.

Wolf Spiders are ground hunters often disturbed in gardens where they dig burrows in the soil or live among fallen leaves; some enter houses. If mishandled they may bite and cause rapid pulse, dizziness, nausea, swelling and persistent pain and

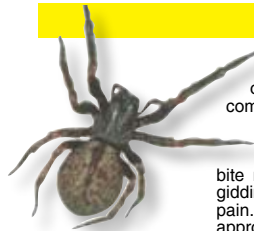
tingling. However, most bites produce no reaction.

Huntsman Spider

Huntsman Spiders are reasonably easy to recognise due to their flattened bodies and the tendency for their legs to turn towards the front when stationary. These spiders vary in size from medium to large (approx. 12.5 cm or 5 inch span). They are often referred to as the "Triantula or Large Crab Spider" due to their ability to move sideways as well as forward.

Huntsman Spiders are often found at night inside homes on walls and ceilings. In nature they hide by day under bark of trees and at night they hunt over tree trunks and on the ground. Although fast moving, they are timid spiders and will usually bite only if handled.

Some species are known to inflict a painful bite that may result in local discolouration and swelling, dizziness, vomiting, lethargy, irregular pulse, persistent nausea and sweating, local pain and in the form of a welt. In young children, the effects are probably more exaggerated.



Black House Spider

Black House Spiders are very black or very dark, hairy and have a indistinct faint pattern of lighter hairs on the body and legs. Webs are commonly found in the corners of windows, doors, eaves, under guttering and on brick walls. The web is very lacy and may appear funnel-shaped with one or more entrances. The bite may cause severe pain, numbness, headache, giddiness, nausea, vomiting, sweating and muscular pain. However, the spider is timid and retreats when approached. Bites are rare and occur usually when people attempt to move the webs.



St. Andrews Cross Spider

The St. Andrews Cross Spider forms an X of white silk in the centre of their orb web. Sometimes the X may be incomplete or absent altogether, but the characteristic X shape may be evident in the position of the spiders legs which are often held in pairs. These spiders are active both day and night and build their web in and near small shrubs and against walls.

The head is covered with silvery hairs and the body is marked with a series of transverse bands alternating silver and red or yellow with lighter spots. The legs are dark brown or black with one or two yellowish bands. The spider reaches an average leg span of about a 50 cent coin. It has not been known to bite.



Brown Widow Spider

The Brown Widow Spider is a member of the same group of spiders which contains the Redback. However, its toxin is approximately one-tenth the strength of the Redback. The Brown Widow is similar in shape to the Redback and may be slightly bigger. It has no stripe of any colour (red, orange or yellow) down the back. The body, head and legs vary in colour from fawn to black. In most specimens there are some lighter coloured markings along the side of the body.

Under the body, the hourglass mark characteristic of the Redback is yellow (not red). The egg sac is very unusual, about the shape and size of a pea, looking like a World War 2 marine mine. The major problem posed by this spider, apart from its painful bite, is its ability to produce up to 5000 young per season.



Brown House Spider

The Brown House Spider builds untidy tangled webs against walls, under eaves, around garage doors and among leaves on trees and shrubs.

The web may include a curled leaf as a retreat for the spider. In webs without the leaves, the spider sits among the tangle and when disturbed, drops and lies curled up and still until the apparent danger has past.

The body is distinctly mottled cream-brown. The legs are reddish brown and may span a 20 cent piece. The Brown House Spider has the same overall body shape as the Redback Spider but does not inflict a dangerous bite. Recorded symptoms include mild nausea and headache, pain and the formation of an itchy red welt at the bite site.



Mouse Spider

Mouse Spiders occur in all parts of Australia except Tasmania and are often considered as the true trap-door spiders. They live in vertical burrows in the soil which is lined with coarse silk and have two doors at the entrances. These doors may be thin silken flaps or solid structures reinforced with soil.

Mouse Spiders are medium to large in size (25mm-35mm). Dark, often black spiders with short legs and a generally broad, squat appearance. The head and fang bearing appendages are raised and slopes steeply down towards the abdomen. In one species, this section is red in colour. The female and immature spiders remain hidden in the burrows and males are found wandering, sometimes over considerable distances. When disturbed, these spiders will assume the characteristic defence stance and if provoked they will plunge forward with their large fangs.

Several bites have been recorded without serious effects. Localised swelling with some pain, burning or itchiness at the site of the bite, has been reported.



Garden Orb Web Spider

Large Garden Orb Web Spiders are moderately large, robust spiders and build sticky webs that cling tenaciously to hands and face. The body is a plump triangular shape and hairy and the legs are as thick as match sticks. They are nocturnal spiders and sit centrally in the web usually strung between low trees and shrubs. During the day the spider moves to an elevated retreat and may be found huddled under eaves, leaves and occasionally in washing that has been left out overnight.

The colour and pattern of the Garden Orb Web Spiders are extremely variable, ranging from pale white to dark brown and with many patterns and spots, stripes and patches. The male has a slightly smaller body with many sharp spines on the legs. Although docile, this spider may produce mild pain, nausea, dizziness, numbness and swelling around the site of the bite.



Brush-footed Trap-door Spider

The Brush-footed Trap-door Spider is distinguished by its stocky body, long-like palps and two knee-like lobes to which the fangs join in the front. Most live in burrows with or without trap doors in the ground. The Brush-footed Trap-door Spiders have brushes or tufts of hair (claw tufts) on the ends of their legs. Claw tufts enable small spiders to climb grass and other smooth surfaces. Most Brush-footed Trap-door Spiders, because of their large heavy bodies, can climb vertical surfaces at a slow, deliberate pace.

Brush-footed Trap-door Spiders range from small mottled brown spiders of 10-20 cent coin size to uniformly dark spiders larger than a 50 cent coin. The former are common in suburban gardens and may be dug up when gardening or flushed out by the heavy rain. The large Whistling Spiders are the largest Trap-door Spiders (their legs span about 12cm) and they make an audible hissing sound when disturbed. Their large, heavy body varies from dark-chocolate brown to pale fawn.



White-tailed Spider

The White-tailed Spider is found right across the Australian mainland, Tasmania and New Zealand. These spiders are cylindrical in shape, the male 12mm long, the female 17mm long. They have grey or black hairy bodies always with a white tip on the end with several paired white spots on the back. The legs are shiny and may span a 20 cent coin.

White-tailed Spiders can be found under stones and on the bark of trees. They frequently enter homes and can be found on the walls at night. They bite readily and frequently, causing discolouration, redness and blisters at the site of the bite, headaches, local burning, pain and itchiness.



Centipedes

Centipedes have a flattened, very flexible body with rather robust legs that extend from the sides of the body. Centipedes grow to a length of 15cm and live in logs, beneath damp and rotting wood, stones, spaces formed between rubbish and garden litter. They move rapidly and bite with two powerful jaws below the head.

The common garden Centipede is coloured dark green with amber coloured legs and their bite can cause severe pain which may last several days. No deaths have been recorded from bites of the centipedes within Australia.

Because of their length and many claws, Centipedes can easily climb a stick poked at them. Handling them in any way should be avoided.

Scorpions

Scorpions are easily recognised by having four pairs of legs, two lobster like claws used for grasping or seizing prey and a tail terminating in a stinger which is provided with poison glands. The large Brown Scorpions are common in gardens and forests throughout eastern Australia and are found under logs, rocks and in shallow burrows in earth banks. They are nocturnal but are often disturbed during the day. The sting is not known to be dangerous and the Scorpion tends usually to retreat than stand and fight.

Large Golden Scorpions include some of the biggest Scorpions of Queensland and are common on and west of the Great Dividing Range. Little is known of the habits and venom of those species, but no dangerous reactions to its sting have been recorded. Small Mottled Scorpions occur in moist forest areas along the east coast but are less common than the Large Brown Scorpion. The sting is not known to be dangerous.



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