

Spiders

Who knew there were so many spiders! Lately, I've seen a lot of spiders.

Protect spiders in your garden because they prey on insects and other pests. Most spiders observed in the open during the day are not likely to bite you or cause lasting harm if they do bite you. Spiders whose bites might require you to seek medical attention spend most of their time hidden.

Spiders are arachnids, not insects. They have 8 legs and 2 body parts—an abdomen and a combined head and thorax. They lack wings and antennae. Spider families vary by body shape, web type, hunting or other behavior, and the arrangement and relative size of their eyes.

Cellar spiders have long, skinny legs and hang upside down in dark corners, often indoors, sometimes bouncing when disturbed.

Cobweb spiders hang upside down in sticky, irregularly spun webs waiting for prey. Most cobweb species are small and harmless, such as the *Theridion dilutum*.

Western black widow, *Latrodectus hesperus*, is the most well-known cobweb spider. Most black widow bites come from mature adult females, which can usually be recognized by a red hourglass on the underside of the abdomen. The adult male is lighter-colored and smaller than the female.

Crab or flower spiders, such as *Misumena vatia*, have enlarged front legs. They hunt during the day without webs.

Dwarf spiders are tiny, hunt during the day, and produce sheet-like or irregular crisscross webs on surfaces.

Funnel weavers spin thick, flattened webs and sit at the center of a silken hole, or funnel, running out to capture prey that contact the web. Often seen are *Hololena nedra* and the common house spider, *Tegenaria* species, found in gardens and on walls and ceilings inside the house.

Lynx spiders are active hunters that stalk and capture prey. Legs are spiny, and the abdomen is narrowest at the rear. They don't spin webs.

Jumping spiders hunt during the day, stalking and pouncing on prey. They are hairy, sometimes iridescent, and don't spin webs.

Orb weaver or garden spiders, such as this western spotted orb weaver, *Neoscona oaxacensis*, often are large and colorful and wait in their webs or nearby for prey to become entangled. They spin elaborate webs in concentric circles in the garden.

Sac spiders hide in silk tubes in places such as corners, beneath plants, or on bark, and stalk prey at night. They occur indoors and out and usually are pale, such as the agrarian sac spider, *Cheiracanthium inclusum*.

Wolf spiders have long, hairy legs and are often found running along the ground. They don't build webs to capture prey but can have a silken retreat. Females carry young on their backs.

For information about spiders go to; ipm.ucanr.edu