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## SPIDER FACT SHEET

The fear of spiders is due partly to myths and the notoriety of harmful species (brown recluse and black widow spider). Several species of sac spiders are suspected of being responsible for most spider bites. Sac spider venom is cytotoxic, causing tissues at the bite site to die. However, the venom of most species is not very toxic to humans, usually resulting in no more than a slight swelling, inflammation, or itching sensation. Most spiders' fangs are too small or weak to puncture human skin.

**Identification:** Spiders have eight legs (four pairs), two body sections (cephalothorax - fused head and thorax) and an abdomen joined together by a narrow waist. Most spiders have six or eight simple eyes in various arrangements. All have a pair of jaw-like structures, each of which ends in a hollow fang through which venom can be ejected. The abdomen tip has a group of small finger-like spinnerets that produce silk. Young spiders resemble adults except for their smaller size and color.

**Life Cycle and Habits:** Spiders lay eggs in a silken, ball-shaped egg sac that is hidden in a web, affixed to a surface, or carried by the female. Spiders may produce several egg sacs, each containing up to several hundred eggs. Some species of spiders may live for years, but most only survive for one season.

All spiders produce silk, which is secreted as a liquid through the spinnerets and hardens on air contact. Spiders use silk for making egg sacs, capturing/holding prey, making shelters, and transferring sperm during mating. Spiders are predators that typically feed on living prey (insects, mites, and other small arthropods) by injecting venom through the hollow fangs to immobilize the prey and begin the digestion process. Spiders can only ingest liquids, so they either inject or regurgitate digestive fluids into prey. They then suck in the digested liquid food.

**Common Web Builder Spiders** use their webbing to ensnare their prey.

- **Cobweb Spiders** construct an irregular web where the outer sticky threads entangle insect prey. Some species construct a retreat within the web and hide there during the day, hanging upside down in the center of the web at night. Cobweb spiders have a rounded globular abdomen (black widow spider shape). The common house spider, is about 1/3 inch long, gray to brown in color, and its spherical abdomen has several dark stripes near the tip.



- **Orb Weaver** spiders range from 1 inch to 0.1 inch and have oddly shaped abdomen. Each species typically constructs a web with a distinctive design. They have poor vision and locate their prey by feeling the vibration and tension of the threads in their web then use silk to wrap the victim. The yellow garden species has silver hairs on the back of the head and a large abdomen marked in black and bright yellow or orange.



- **Cellar Spiders** are found in dark, damp places. They typically construct a loose, irregular-shaped web in a dark corner and continually add to the web. Cellar spiders have very long, slender legs up to 2 inches long. Their body is about 1/3 inch long and whitish-yellow to gray in color. They are sometimes confused with daddy-long-legs (Daddy-long-legs are not spiders and belong to the order of Opiliones).



- **Funnel Web Spiders** construct large, flat, horizontal webs of non-sticky silk. The funnel is open at both ends so the spider can readily escape. The spider hides at the narrow end of the funnel; when it feels the vibration of an insect crossing the web, it dashes out, bites the insect, and carries it back to the funnel. They are generally brown in color and up to a 1/2 inch long. The hobo spider species are known to bite humans and its venom has similar effect to that of the brown recluse spider. The bites of other funnel web spiders are not known to be very toxic to humans.



**Active Hunters** search for their prey. Any webs they construct are used as resting areas.

- **Wolf Spiders** are fast runners that will chase their prey. They are hairy and often large (up to 1-3/8 inches long) and sometimes confused with tarantulas. Their legs are long and spiny. Females carry their large, globular egg sac attached to spinnerets under her abdomen. Wolf spiders are not aggressive, but may bite if handled.



- **Jumping Spiders** have the ability to jump many times their own length. They make quick, sudden jumps to capture prey or avoid a threat. They can also walk backward. These common spiders are about 1/8 to 3/4 inches long, very hairy, stocky built, and short-legged with two of their eight eyes being very large. Many species have patches of brightly colored or iridescent scales. Some are black with spots of orange or red on the upper surface of the abdomen, at times confused with black widow spiders.



- **Nursery Web Spiders** are large with a leg span of up to 3 inches and are earth tone in color. They typically live near lakes and streams, running over the surface of water and, if chased, dive and stay submerged for some time. The sole use of their silk webbing is for the egg sac. The female uses her mouthparts to carry the egg sac under her body until the spiderlings are ready to emerge. She then fastens the egg sac to some leaves and encloses it within a "nursery" web, where the spiderlings remain until they are ready to disperse. The female stands guard near the nursery web to protect her young.



**Passive Hunter Spiders** lay in wait for their prey rather than searching for it.

- **Crab Spiders** have a flattened body and hold their legs at right angles to their sides, presenting a crablike appearance. They can walk forward, backward, or sideways. Many crab spiders have horns on the abdomen and some mimic bird droppings. Those that inhabit trees or hunt on the ground are usually colored with shades of gray, brown or black; those that frequent flowers are bright red, yellow, orange, white, and/or green.



**Control:** Residual liquid sprays can be applied to the outside perimeter of the home (including under eaves, patios, and decks; behind window shutters), cracks and crevices of decorative molding, undisturbed corners, and other suspected spider harborages.

A wettable powder residual insecticide can be applied inside the structure to corners, behind and under furniture, behind stored items, etc. to control spiders.