

Spiders_1995.txt

Subject: Re: Biggest Spider?

Date: Mon, 22 May 1995 23:25:38 -0700

On your last question: there are few dangerously venomous spiders in the world, and most of these, such as the black widow group, are not gratuitously aggressive toward people. The Australian "funnel web spider" Atrax (not related to Northern Hemisphere funnel web builders) is reputed to be more aggressive than most and may be a candidate for your question.

-----Rod

I hate to come in so late on a thread (lousy newsfeed!), but there is something I thought needed to be pointed out...

In article Steve writes:

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|> Steve wrote:  
|>  
|> : As far as "Balck Widow" bites/habitats, etc., I have seen some information  
|> : posted that I am not so sure is accurate. I will post a follow-up after I  
|> : dig out my medical references on insects bites and the like.  
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[lots of good info deleted]

Obviously, the best thing to do about spider bites is to avoid being bitten. :^) But seriously, although there are many antivenins out there for spider bites, you may not want to take the one for Black Widows if you live in a high risk area (like down here in the Southeast). The reason is that Black Widow antivenin, unlike most antivenins, can be administered only *once* in a lifetime. A doctor will point this out to you before administering the drug (unless, of course, you are

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unconscious from a severe reaction).

BTW, most bites occur on the fingertips and toes (the little buggers love to snuggle into pockets or the toes of your shoes).

Burgess

Newsgroups: rec.gardens

Subject: Black Widow Bites and Their Treatment

Date: 19 May 1994 22:35:42 GMT

I just checked a couple of basic emergency medicine texts for the treatment of Black Widow spider bites. Here is a brief version of what they say

1. The only first aid is the application of an ice-pack to the bite. This is only to relieve the pain. The bite may not hurt at first, but within 15 minutes severe pain will appear and spread.
2. The bite may cause a large number of symptoms characteristic of neurotoxin poisoning including--headache, vomiting, dizziness, profuse sweating, debilitating muscle cramps and spasms that may be confined to the bitten limb or may occur in any or all of the large muscle groups. The victim may alternate profuse salivation with extreme dryness of the mouth.
3. Abdominal cramps and muscle spasms that produce pain comparable to acute appendicitis are classic symptoms.
4. Hypertension is a serious problem that may require immediate treatment (diastolic pressure may exceed 130)

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5. Treatment consists of injections of a specific Black Widow antivenin and calcium gluconate for the muscle cramps.

6. Both sources agree that a healthy adult is unlikely to die from a Black Widow bite, but people with high blood pressure, heart disease or breathing problems could be in serious trouble if not treated quickly.

7 FINALLY AND MOST IMPORTANT!!! Black Widow bites are VERY dangerous to children. One source sums it up this way "A bite that may cause an adult several hours of severe pain and 2-3 days of serious discomfort can easily produce complete cardiac decompensation and respiratory failure in a child."

J. Del Col

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Jeff

Newsgroups: rec.gardens

Subject: Re: BLACK WIDOWS - I have alot; should I be concerned?

Date: Fri, 20 May 1994 12:24:11 GMT

Steve wrote:

: As far as "Balck Widow" bites/habitats, etc., I have seen some information
: posted that I am not so sure is accurate. I will post a follow-up after I
: dig out my medical references on insects bites and the like.

As promised - the follow-up gleaned from a few different texts. Only the most generally accepted prehospital treatments are presented below - some texts advocate other treatments (some of which I previously described), but I felt it better to stick with the basics as all texts stated that little can be done...

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Habitat background:

The female black widow spider is characterized by a shiny black body, thin legs, and a crimson red marking on its abdomen, usually in the shape of an hourglass or two red triangles. Do not be confused by appearances, however. Of the five species in the US, only three are black, and not all have the characteristic red marking.

The female is one of the largest spiders in the US. Males generally do not bite; females bite only when hungry, agitated, or protecting the egg sack. Contrary to folklore, the black widow spider is not aggressive. In fact, many bites occur when a finger or hand enters the web and is mistaken as prey.

Black widow spiders, as is true for most spiders, are usually found in dry, secluded dimly lit areas. The spider is known for its extremely strong, funnel-shaped web.

More than 80% of all bite victims are adult men.

Venom:

Black Widow Spider bites are among the leading cause of death from spider bites in the US. The venom - 14 times more toxic than rattlesnake venom, is a neurotoxin that causes little pronounced local reaction, but results in pain and spasm in the large muscle groups (which are the abdomen, upper leg, buttocks, etc.) within thirty minutes to three hours. Severe bites will affect the respiratory system and can result in respiratory failure, coma, and death.

Those at the highest risk for developing severe bites are children under 16, the elderly over 60, and people with chronic illness and anyone with hypertension.

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Signs and Symptoms (Sx):

The most common sign of a Black Widow Spider bite is high blood pressure.

The most common symptoms are flushing, sweating, and grimacing of the face within ten minutes to two hours. Other Sx include:

A pinprick sensation at the bite site, becoming a dull ache within 30 to 40 minutes

Pain and spasms in the shoulders, back, chest, and abdominal muscles within 30 minutes to 3 hours

Rigid, boardlike abdomen

Restlessness and anxiety

Fever

Rash

Headache

Nausea or vomiting

The symptoms generally last from 24 to 48 hours. The headache and general weakness, however, may last for several months.

Treatment (Tx):

Prehospital care is generally not effective in the long-term treatment of the bite. The goal is general wound care and transport. General treatment consists of:

Administer care for shock

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Apply a cold compress to the bite area - do not use ice!

Do not allow scratching of the wound and do not clean the wound, simply cover it with a loose dressing.

Transport as quickly as possible

Black Widow antivenoms are risky and are reserved for high risk patients. Nevertheless, you should try to find the spider and bring it with you so that positive identification can be made. ID can be made even if the spider is crushed.

If you don't know what kind of bite it is:

Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and tepid water ONLY! Using cold or hot water will aggravate certain toxins and also dilate the capillary bed.

Cover the wound with a loose dressing to discourage scratching

Keep the affected area below the level of the heart and in a position of function.

Don't use constriction bands unless you are sure its a snake bite from a poisonous snake (two distinct puncture wounds for land, or a series of scrape marks for the ocean) AND you are more than 30 minutes from a hospital. Constriction bands are not Tourniquets!

Apply a cold compress to the wound - NEVER place ice on the wound.

Anyone developing Sx of an allergic reaction should be transported to an ER ASAP!

Those who are allergic and don't know (and won't know until bit/stung) can

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actually die in under 10 minutes! Don't screw around if any of the following present themselves!

Sx of an allergic reaction include:

Burning pain and itching at the bite site

Itching on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet

Itching on the neck and the groin

General body swelling

A nettlelike rash over the entire body

Breathing difficulties

A severe reaction (Anaphylactic shock) includes:

Weakness and/or fainting

Nausea

Shock

Unconsciousness

Death, usually in less than 30 minutes

Hope this was useful!

Regards,
Steve

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Newsgroups: rec.gardens
From: (S.L.Compton)
Subject: Black Widows...
Date: Fri, 20 May 1994 16:27:06 GMT

Thanks so much to all who gave me some VERY valuable insight into these nasty little creatures. To sum up, over the past few weeks since my original posting, I have been on a personal extermination mission. Some of the first responses told of how serious a bite can be a truly life-threatening (not to mention "the worst pain" or "pain so bad I'd rather died" responses from those who knew first-hand).

IDENTIFICATION:

Getting close enough to positively ID the Black Widow is not quite as hard as it sounds. You do not have to turn them over and find their bright red hour-glass shaped mark on the underside of their abdomen. Most of the time, they will sit up-side down in their webs. Also, the female is slightly larger and has the brightest markings and color (or lack of - since they are black). Their bodies are a jet-black which is a very shiny black with very little 'fur' or hair giving a slick/satin appearance. The males tend to be not quite as intensely colored.

These spiders are recognizable also by their body shape. They have a very small head and upper 'torso' region, followed by a well-rounded (pea to marble sized) anterior.

Habitat also helps to identify, but most spiders tend to like the same type of hang outs. A funnel shaped web with thick webbing is common to the widows, but also of turantulas, wolf and other 'garden' variety spiders. The best indications of a Black Widow's web is the style, the location (dark, dank, slightly moist) and maintained. The widows will quickly clean out their webs and tend to anything which may prevent catching more

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food. A tear, foreign objects (grass, twigs, leaves) may stay in the web for a day or two, and sometimes hide the spider. These arachnids also like to be able to retreat, as well. Their funnel shaped web will usually flow back into a recess, a corner or a covered/hidden area. In general, watch from a distance and look at night to see if you can positively add up the above signs.

NEUTRALIZATION:

I have found several Ortho products which are intented for household/garden use which are effective on a large variety of insects - including the Black Widow. The rock retaining walls in my garden harbor mice, garter snakes and these lovely ladies. The webs of the spiders are obvious in their funnel shape and thick webbing. At nighttime with a flashlight and the formula II Ortho House and Garden Insect spray, I have sprayed the webs several times, every other night. Chemicals shuch as Diaznon and Malthion are recommended for outdoor use, but my local garden store suggested the formula II because of its quick dissipation and is not highly toxic to animal life (i.e. me, pets, children). Ortho formula III insect and the stronger chemicals are NOT to be used around any garden areas where they may come in contact with food products. By finding the spiders and directly spraying them with the formula II, most say there is a very good success rate - this seems true as the webs have been in a state of disrepair for several days and I have not seen any spiders in my hunting.

EXTERMINATION:

I also agree that there is a real concern in actively hunting these beasts. The only reason I undertook this task myself was that most exterminators I talked to were quite honest in saying that the Ortho formula II would be the same or close to what they would use for the garden areas. They did also offer to do a thorough inspection in and around the house for a resonable fee (and also provide a full estimate). I have a relatively new home and have seen no signs of them around the house (lack of grown-up shrubs & habbitat) nor inside the house. YET...

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Date: Sat, 21 May 94 20:08 MDT
From: Galatia
Newsgroups: rec.gardens
Subject: Re: Black Widows...

Hello. I can help you a bit with the brown recluse question, and with the wasp sting question.

Brown recluse spiders are also known as fiddler spiders. They look like fat daddy-longlegs, with a distinctive violin shape on their heads. Their bite is horrifying: the caustic venom eats away the flesh and if untreated, it's possible for it to eat to the bone. I had seen such a bite on the forearm of a man -- it was the diameter of a quarter and had exposed the muscle immediately overlying the ulna. It was 90 minutes old.

Fortunately, the buggers are pretty mellow. They mosey along and are thus easy to smash, and they usually bite only if provoked. They like coolish dampish places like garages and sheds, and they seem to like each other's company, so usually where you find one, there are several more nearby. The only treatment I know of is to get the person to the emergency ward right away, as they usually have a neutralizing anti-toxin. If you hear of any at-home first aid for this spider's bite, please email it to me.

For wasp and bee stings, etc, my husband has found the "old wives tale" of putting a cut onion on the wound to be true. Reading several books on the matter, I think I know why. Onion releases sulfur, which is antiseptic and anodyne, thus calming the inflammation and pain. It also seems to slow the toxin. For bee stings, the usual advice is to scrape away the stinger and venom sac with a credit card, never fingers or tweezers, since the sac can be easily squeezed. For wasp, hornet and

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yellowjacket stings all you can do is try to ease the pain. Aloe vera gel seems to help here also.

With all bees, once you get stung, get the hell out of there! A stinging bee, wasp, etc puts out a scent that calls the rest of the hive to war. Since wasps, yellowjackets and hornets have much vicious natures than honey bees (and much more dangerous venom), getting out of town is even more important.

Keeping wasps, yellowjackets and hornets away from picnics and such is relatively easy once you understand that they're carnivorous. Set a piece of meat or fish away from the picnic site for them and they'll generally converge on that and leave you alone. In terms of temper, honeybees require a fair bit of provocation to sting, wasps somewhat less, yellowjackets get irate if you swat at them, and I've found that the less said about hornets, the better ;) Bumble bee workers don't have stingers (and aren't generally inclined to use them anyways), but the drones do and they resemble wasps both in manner and appearance.

Never mess with queens of any kind :)

The only colours that most bees-etc seem to disdain are white and beige. Anything else might grab attention and no one seems to be able to say for sure which colours attract the most. Perfumes attract bees-etc, but they dont seem to like coriander (Tom's of Maine deodorant gets another star) I'm not certain how they feel about lavender or cedar, but at least they keep mosquitos away.

Not much help, Im afraid, but thats what I know about them.. I haven't been stung.

Oh, and a note about brown widows. They look like small brown black widows with an indistinct hourglass. Their bites are less dangerous, but no less painful, and they like the same sort of habitat as the black widows. I've also heard that there are white widows, particularly in the Kelowna area and Okanagan valley. They look exactly like black widows, being silvery white, and their bite is often fatal to the adult human.

Never tell an arachnophobe "Its just a spider, it cant hurt you" ;)

-== Ennien

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Date: Mon, 23 May 1994 09:23:00 -0400

From: "david

Newsgroups: sci.med

From: dale

Subject: Re: Please send me the brown recluse bite notes

Organization: Unisys Corporation SLC

Date: Wed, 7 Jul 1993 15:58:02 GMT

Lines: 259

I tried to mail this to you, but as it has been doing to everyone these days - it bounced back. So, here is the original posting - I just happened to have it on file.

Dale

BROWN RECLUSE - THE ENTIRE STORY

[Memorial Day Weekend] Friday, May 28th, 1993. An amusing side to this story is the fact that the reason I ever went into the basement closet was to find a book to use as reference material for an article I was going to post to another group on this network! Well, anyway, I knew it had to be in a box in a closet under the stairs we use for storage. There are also a bunch of old coats and clothes hanging on a rack. The boxes I was going through were underneath this rack of clothes and I moved them with my body as I bent over to look for this book. I can't remember, but I either had no shirt on at all, or a short sleaved shirt. It was warm here in Utah that weekend. We live in Bountiful, Utah, approximately 15 miles north of Salt Lake City, along the

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mountainside called the 'east bench.' Prior to this time, I had never heard of the brown recluse in my life. Growing up, we were only told of the black widow. You see them around once in a while, but generally they just stay in a corner by themselves and you only rarely hear of someone getting bit. Anyway, I had got in the closet about 8-9PM.

Saturday, May 29th, 1993, 11:32 AM (Sounds like Dragnet don't it?) I had finished mowing the lawn and came in and took my shirt off to cool down. I was sitting in front of the TV and I was just rubbing my hands along my arms when I felt puffy skin on my right arm, near the shoulder. I looked and saw an area about the size of a quarter that appeared as though it was burned! It shocked me because I couldn't figure out what could have happened. My immediate thought was that I did it just minutes before while I was outside, but I couldn't possibly see how. The skin was wrinkled and thin. It appeared to have 'pus' under it so I grabbed a kleenex and just hardly touched it. The skin came away easily and a yellowish-brown fluid discharged. I'd never seen anything like this. At this point it looked harmless, like a blister or floor-burn. The area left after the skin came off was just light red or pink and seemed as though it would heal-up and be gone in a day or so. I didn't put anything on it or even give it much thought the rest of the day. By 8PM the area had increased to about the size of a half-dollar and looked bad. I had taken a shower and was getting ready to go out when I looked at it. It was weeping clear, light-yellow fluid and the skin had strange spots and was appearing to turn to a dark red color. I showed it to my Dad and he thought 'it looks like impetigo.' My mother didn't think so, she said then that 'it looks like you've been bit by something.' I decided to put 'Gentian Violet' on it.

(Now, this was a mistake in the fact that the dark violet color hinders diagnosis because color is an important part of identifying problems on the skin. Doing this did cause a slight delay in diagnosis. However, of all

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the things I tried, viz., Hydrogen Peroxide, Burn Cream, Hydrocortisone, and Neomycin, it was the Gentian Violet that seemed to work the best. If I were bitten again, and knew I was bitten, I would use Gentian Violet for at least the first 6-7 days. Anyway, back to the story...)

Sunday, May 30th, 1993, 7:45 AM. Get out of bed and --- YEECH! What have I got on my arm? It was weeping something fierce and there were 3 spots on the sheets where it had weeped yellow fluid but they were also stained blue from the damn Gentian Violet which drained out along with the fluid. Now, I had a thin piece of gauze taped over the wound, but it had drained to the point that it had become saturated and oozed through to the sheets. That's how much it was leaking. Gross. I shower and before I had put more stuff on it that day I noticed that our neighbor, a Pediatrician, was walking by the house. As I picked-up the morning paper I asked him to take a quick look at the ulcer on my arm to see if he had any idea what it was. (I'm sure doctor's are constantly asked about things by neighbors, but no more so I guess than I'm asked about computers). He looked at it and said, "You need to have this looked at, today if you can." Today? It's Sunday on Memorial Day Weekend - What's the sense of urgency? "That might be a brown recluse bite and I would really have it seen today." he said, and added, "Don't put any more of that violet crap on it." It kind of shook me up that he had a sense of 'do it now' to his voice. At 11 AM I went to the Bountiful "Instacare" (An 'always open' chain of medical clinics in the Salt Lake City area). The doctor said she was sending me to Salt Lake City LDS Hospital Emergency room right away. That she felt it was indeed a spider bite, but needed it confirmed and the clinic couldn't handle 'surgery' there if it was required. This really scared me to death. Especially when she told me about some people needing 'amputation' in extreme cases, etc. Went to ER and the doc there wasn't sure because of the 'violet shit' I put on it. (Those are the words he used).

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So, I got a painful shot of antibiotics in the rear. (Don't know what or how much unfortunately. I usually ask about everything I'm getting but in this one case I forgot). I was started on Prednisone (20mg - 4/day for 4 days, 3/day for 4 days, 2/day for 4 days, then 1/day for 4 days), and basically told to see my personal physician on Tuesday. Topically, I was to put bacitracin on twice daily when I changed the 2 x 2 guaze.

Monday, May 31st, pain begins. I have diarrhea, stomach cramps, hot/cold flashes but didn't even once consider it was in any way related to my possible spider bite. I went to the store and bought several cans of Ortho Indoor Insecticide, making sure that the brown recluse was listed on the back of the can. Apparently, lindane is a necessary ingredient to kill them. I went to the basement and sprayed like crazy. We have no children nor pets so I really went wild. No one sleeps down there either. I had been asked the previous day by the doctors if I had been in any attics or dark closets,etc. At first I had said no. It didn't even hit me until sometime later when I remembered going into the closet for that book. That was the only 'dark unfrequented' room I had been in in the last several days. I gave the closet under the stairs a double-dose. Then I closed the doors to all of the basement rooms and made sure the windows were shut. I left it that way for hours, then went it and sprayed again. I wasn't messing around.

Tuesday, Jun 1st, I see my doctor in the morning. I was lucky to get in - there had just been a cancelation and apparently he was booked solid from the long weekend. By now, most of the violet stain had disappeared. It was the size of a dollar and looked terrible. I hurt terribly and didn't feel well. He didn't know what it was but wanted me to see a dermatologist in the same building. He set up the appointment himself as he didn't want me waiting more than a day at most to get in to someone. The appt. was for Wednesday. He told me to stop putting ANYTHING on it. Just leave it completely alone

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except for the guaze to soak up the drainage. He wanted the dermatologist to be able to see it without it having been affected by anything. At this point, the pain wasn't bad enough that I needed anything and I didn't even ask. When I got home that night, my Dad and I carefully removed everything from the closet under the stairs. We found 2 dead spiders. One was a small common black house spider, the other was strange. We had never quite seen a spider like this in Utah. It's legs were smooth and light brown. It's body was definitely brown and the fangs on its head were huge. On the cephalothorax was a little brown 'line' that on inspection with a magnifying glass looked like a small upsidetown violin. Bingo. The violin spider. It was so damn tiny! "Oh, come on.", my Dad said, "How could this little thing do that to your arm?" I doubted that it did also. My Dad thought about it, then said, "Hmmmm. It's so small it makes me wonder if there isn't others around here. Maybe this is just a baby one." The entire breadth of it was no more than the size of a nickel.

Wednesday, June 2nd, the dermatologist just happened to be from North Carolina and had treated 2 bites in the past. As soon as she removed the gauze she said, "Yup. Brown recluse." The wound was disgusting. It was huge and had a light brown/clear center with a dark/purpleish-red ring around it, then another thin ring of red skin. She called it a 'bulls-eye' and it did in fact resemble the eye of a bull. Pain was getting bad. I didn't like to do anything that put any torsion on the skin of my right arm at all. Even having a shirt on which rubbed the gauze hurt. When you put your hand lightly over the gauze you could feel 'warmth' from the wound - it was hot. Well, she wanted me to change the bandage twice daily and apply bacitracin again. Whenever I applied it, the wound would 'bubble' up with little pustules and drain crud out of it. This was not a fun wound. I showed the doctor the spider in the bottle and she said, "Well, I'm almost 100% sure that's was bit you. From your description of what happened, the fact you found a brown recluse,

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and the bull's eye wound, I just feel sure about it." She recommended a professional spraying and agreed that the fact that it was small may indicate there may be more. We called Orkin that day. I went back to my personal internal medicine physician and got a prescription for Mepergan Fortis (Demerol for pain, Phenegran ingredient for the frustrating itching).

I saw the dermatologist and my regular physician each Wednesday for the next 3 weeks. I watched with dismay as the wound increased in size and swelling began in my right arm. After about 2 weeks, it began to 'separate' into 2 circles. At first they were hooked together like a figure eight (8), but gradually they separated into 2 distinct circles (00) about the size of a half-dollar each. Pain would wax and wain. The wound looked awful, after 2 1/2 weeks it turned a honey-brown color and looked disgusting. The purple part came off and I had 2 nice 'holes' in my arm, the pieces that came off were almost 'corroded' looking, not like a scab or skin or anything else, but like tissue that was destroyed. It was kind of scary. Each day you think, "This has got to be as bad as it's going to get, I'll be improving soon." But it goes on and on. And you can't hardly believe that it's expanding. I took good care of the wound and changed the bandages and took my medication religiously. Finally, the color of it concerned the dermatologist. The honey/color suggested to her that staph might be in it. On Tuesday, June 22nd, she had me go in for a biopsy and possible surgery. Here's the posting I made to the news when I returned to work 2 days later:

GAK! I'm back!

Well, for those interested, here's what happened...

Biopsy confirmed presence of staph infection and deep areas of

necrosis so they laid-on surgery for 11:30 AM.

Went in and stripped. Was given Valsed (not sure how much) and 150 mg Demerol. 20 minutes later I felt wonderful and scared to death. They put iodine on the arm (felt cold), then told me the numbing injection would be painful. Boy they weren't kidding. One nurse actually held me down on the table with both hands on my chest. Apparently it is an involuntary reaction to 'jump' and I did. The doc said, "OK you're going to feel the needle." And I certainly did, but it didn't hurt anything like the Xylocaine (or was it Marcaine?) going in. Good Grief that hurt like nobody's business.

Well after just a few seconds the pain went away. They used a 'burning needle' to cut away and I remember seeing smoke drift up towards the ceiling. I was starting to enter la-la land and my memory gets foggy here. I do remember a LOT of honey-colored crap being taken out. I felt them 'tugging' and heard 'noises' but felt nothing. Anyway, the doc told my Dad that he was 'surprised' at how much tissue was involved and just 'macerated.' Dad said I had a 'hole' in my arm that was pretty deep. Approximately 6-inches long roughly the shape of a banana or diamond. It was sewn up and it <HURTS>. I don't even use my arm to try to open a door as it invokes pain. I drive with my left hand. To sit here and use the computer - I push the keyboard to the back of the desk and rest my arms on the desk so that no muscles are needed to support my arm.

The docs say, "Now, if we were to remove tissue from your left arm it would heal nicely. But this area here in your right arm is *not normal tissue* and it also has staph in it. Therefore, I'm on Cephalexin (250mg 4/day), Prednisone again (same dosage regimen as before), Dapsone (which required blood tests and crap), and my old friend that has helped me combat the pain: Mepergan Fortis.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, if you have these things in your area I implore you to call Orkin. We spent \$125 for inside and outside spraying by them and they found 2 more down behind a deep freezer we have in a darkened room not frequented. I don't know how much all of this is going to cost me but I'm sure it won't be cheap. The surgery I had will probably reach \$2000.00.

Well, Today is June 28, 1993, 32 days since I was bitten and 6 days after surgery. Finally, finally on Sunday I could tell I was not only feeling better, but my arm is getting better. I can see absolute signs of healing going on. I'm sure now, that this thing will be healed up soon. I'll have a scar, but it will be a long thin one, instead of 2 huge round ones. The skins is red around the scar and there is a kind of scab there but I'm not worried about it anymore. I'm getting good use now out of my arm (it doesn't hurt nearly as bad - I can even open a door now) and I'm well on my way to recovery. I've only taken 1 pain pill all day and I wonder if I'll need one tonight. Thanks for all of your concern and thoughtful letters. If anything else happens - except for normal healing - I'll let you know!

Dale

Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: Re: spiders,
Date: 15 Jun 1994 16:32:47 GMT

>I found a big black widow spider near the house this weekend,
>which I promptly had my partner kill.
>If I've found one, does that mean there are probably more?

>> She was probably guarding an eggsack. Did you look for one?

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>What does one do for a bite?

You are going to be soooooo sorry for about 3 days. BW's poison is a neuro-toxin and gets into the muscles. You are going to be sore. Really sore. If you are healthy you won't die, but for 3 days you're gonna wish you did! :-)

To get fully accurate information, call your local hospital or Poison Control Center, let them know THIS IS *>NOT<* I REPEAT *>NOT<* AN EMERGENCY, and talk to one of the people there.

If you have any other poisonous creatures in your area you might ask for "what to do" if you engage one of them.

[story mode ON]

When I moved to Valley Center (up in the mountains of San Diego) I called Poison Control to talk about rattle snakes and BWs and Tarantulas. While talking about the rattlers the PC guy told me that 90% of all rattle snake bites (they get) are on the hand, and 100% of the victims have a "high" blood-alcohol content. Seems that alot of people see these things and say "wow - what a great BELT that would make!" :-)

They strike with lightening speed. A mongoose can take on a Cobra, but wouldn't stand a chance against a rattler.

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Tony I have a fox fur coat: It's beautiful! - It's warm, it's soft, it's cuddly. If you stroke it - it gets playful
San Diego , Ca and nips at you. You see, it's being worn by the original QSL? QRU? QRZ? owner - which is the way it should be. - tony j. podrasky

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Subject: Re: spiders,
Date: Wed, 15 Jun 1994 17:28:58 GMT

>I found a big black widow spider near the house this weekend,
>which I prompty had my partner kill.

Good for you. Kill everyone of the little blighters you see.

>Does anyone know:

>If I've found one, does that mean there are probebly more?

Most likely.

>What does one do for a bite?

The results of a personal experience with a particular type of spider
has prompted me to kill all but 2 or 3 varieties- REGARDLESS of how
"beneficial" they are supposed to be.

I was bitten on the inside of my knee by a brown recluse aka fiddleback.

The fiddleback has 6 toxins to the black widow's 1. I was bitten
about 6:30 in the morning but thought little of it. By 9am there was
a purplish bruise the size of a goose egg around the bite.

That night I could nnot get to sleep as the toxin cut off blood flow to the
area of the bite. The result of the ordeal was 3 surgeries, severe pain,
and a cancelled trip to OZ. There is a chunk the size of a hamburger
missing from my leg now.

Wendy, kill all the spiders you see in and around your house. Toxic
or not the little bastards deserve it.

--

The advance of civilization is nothing

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but an exercise in limiting privacy.
-Pelorat

Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: Re: spiders
Date: 16 Jun 1994 00:48:52 GMT

writes: (of black widows)

> They are in fact very shy spiders, and do eat lots of other
> pests...

Alas, some are extroverts. Remember the Gary Larson "web across the kiddie slide" comic captioned "If we pull this off, we'll eat like kings!"? I had a megalomaniac widow (small, either juvenile or male--though I guess adult males are fairly rare...) spin a web across the front doorway one night, a couple of years ago. Fortunately the part of the web I walked through was not the part he was sitting on.

Newsgroups: misc.rural,sci.med
Subject: Re: spiders,
Date: Fri, 17 Jun 94 13:57:58 EDT
Organization: The University of Kentucky

>Can anyone offer up explanations to my questions [below]?

> hi dale;
> I read the account of your tangle with a brown recluse.

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> I don't doubt you, but I find it unbelievable that one little
> bite continues to attack "you" for days afterwards. I mean,
> I got bit by a red ant. It stung for quite a while, and by
> night time was damn irritating. A six-pack of Coors refocused
> my mind, and the next morning it was all forgotten about.
>
> Do you know what is in the toxin that allows it to continuously
> attack your body?
>
> Why isn't it "neutralized" in a day or two?

I'm not sure why it is so unbelievabe that the effects of a bite by the most dangerous spider in North America could last more than a couple of days... The venom secreted by the Brown Recluse (*Loxosceles reclusa*) contains a number of toxic peptides that act as enzymes to degrade the tissue it comes into contact with, often resulting in necrosis locally and occasionally in more severe systemic effects. It is capable of inducing death, usually in children, and kills a few people in the US each year. Gee, I can't remember the last time I heard of a red ant causing such problems. Maybe for a Brown Recluse, a CASE of Coors will do the trick...

JD VanHoose

Newsgroups: sci.agriculture
Subject: Need an expert on Brown Recluse Spider
Date: 2 Dec 1994 04:10:05 GMT
Organization: DSC/Voicenet - BBS/Unix Shells/SLIP/NEWS - (215)443-7390

I am looking for an expert for use in litigation. The case concerns allegations that a brown recluse spider in a box of bananas bit someone causing injury. Any information concerning the habitat, behavior, toxicity, etc. of the brown recluse spider would be appreciated.

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Newsgroups: sci.agriculture
Subject: Re: Need an expert on Brown Recluse Spider
Date: 5 Dec 1994 00:20:11 -0500
Organization: America Online, Inc. (1-800-827-6364)

In article
(Melvin) writes:

>I am looking for an expert for use in litigation.
[text deleted]

I am no expert, but I do see them here in South Carolina now and then; not as often as black widow spiders, though. They like to keep in hidden, out of the way places, and banana boxes would be ideal habitat. How could anyone prove however, where the spider came from, whether it was imported with the bananas, or entered afterwards, etc. Seems to me to be a kind of "act of God," that you couldn't hold against anyone.

They are extremely toxic, and I fear them more than snakes. A neighbor was bitten by one in a box, in a warehouse. He spent a month in the hospital, and came within a hair of losing his arm. Nine months later there was still swelling and an open, draining, hole at the site of the bite.

I am a commercial beekeeper, and I find them in empty bee boxes, though, as I said, the less toxic black widow is far more common. Sometimes I see three or four black widows in a day. I've seen only a dozen or so brown recluse in the past ten years.

Newsgroups: sci.agriculture

Date: Tue, 06 Dec 1994 02:29:18 GMT

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Subject: Re: Need an expert on Brown Recluse Spider

>>I am looking for an expert for use in litigation. [text deleted]

> They are extremely toxic, and I fear them more than snakes. A neighbor
[text deleted]

>

My father was bitten on the instep by one in Tampa. He spent 3 weeks in the hospital, nearly died, almost lost his foot and had the same type of draining wound as Pollinator's friend. He concurs that they are the nastiest of the nasties.

Joe

Article: 2447 of sci.agriculture

Newsgroups: sci.agriculture

Path:

bigblue.oit.unc.edu!concert!news.duke.edu!news.mathworks.com!newshost.marcam.com!zip.eecs.umich.edu!newsxfer.itt.u
mich.edu!gatech!howland.reston.ans.net!vixen.cso.uiuc.edu!news.uoregon.edu!netnews.nwnet.net!serval.net.wsu.edu!ws
uvm1.csc.wsu.edu!MYHR

E

Subject: Re: Need an expert on Brown Recluse Spider

Organization: Washington State University

Date: Sat, 10 Dec 1994 01:55:26 GMT

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Lines: 60

>
> >I am looking for an expert for use in litigation. The case
>concerns allegations that a brown recluse spider in a box of bananas bit
>someone causing injury. Any information concerning the habitat,
>behavior, toxicity, etc. of the brown recluse spider would be appreciated.
>

I am not a recluse person, but depending on what REALLY bit the person, I
can help somewhat.

1. Most people think the recluse exists were IT DOES NOT. Here in the
Pacific Northwest, I always hear "Yeah I just saw one." NO THEY DID NOT!

2. I have constructed a flyer for our local grocery stores re toxic spiders
that have been coming in a lot more frequently from Ecuador: Giant crab
spiders, and wandering spider - I have 2 specimens from our local stores
that are from banana boxes (from Ecuador). They are genus *Phoneutria*,
species unknown. Note that *Phoneutria nigriventer* is THE MOST TOXIC
beastie in S. America. This banana spider problem has increased a lot
the past couple of years.

3. I work on the aggressive house spider, *Tegenaria agrestis*. It's bites
cause necrotic lesions similar to the recluse. Distribution is PNW, MT, UT.
You may have seen an article in Good Housekeeping/Reader's Digest last yr.
It said "Recluse bit the lady" Well, after the article came out there was
mass panic and people sending in spiders for ID. Guess what...many *T. agrestis*
Not a single recluse.

4. Unless the spider who did the biting is actually caught in the act, you'll
have a tough case. Most people do not know what bit them-don't even feel the
bites or see the spider. Then, "Oh, I have a big hole in my leg...."

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Didn't catch the originator of this message, but can send a few snail-mail items if he/she wants. I have done no expert witnessing, but my late employer did so for a couple of *T. agrestis* lawsuits.

Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: Re: Black Widows
Date: 14 Feb 1995 11:13:12 -0700

>Hi everybody,
>We live in the country and have in this location for 5 years. My problem
>is that each winter we get black widows in our garage. The first couple
>of years we had 10 to 15 of them that I killed. Recently I kill about 4
>to 5 a winter. The problem doesn't exist in the summer. I hate these
>pests and am concerned about a family member getting bit. Does anyone
>know how prevent them from coming in. Thanks, ahead of time.
>
>

In the fall, around august/september, I place pieces of plywood around my yard, flat down on the ground.

After about 2 to 4 weeks, flip the boards over and kill all of the adolescent widows that have taken up residence. Be aware that the widows will not be black, but a mottled brown color. They do not turn black until adulthood.

Having been bitten by a widow, I can heartily agree with your decision to kill them off.

scurrier

--

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Obtain some Banty hens. They will search them out for food. Good luck.

>
> > According to the doctor, my husband has received a nasty bite from a brown
> > recluse spider. The only info we have been able to find indicates that skin
> > cells begin to die at the point of injection of toxin and continues to grow.
> > The doctor will measure growth within a week to determine if surgery is
> > required to remove the lump that has resulted.
> >
> > Any information about the spider, bite symptoms, treatments would be
> > greatly appreciated.
>

There are several things you should know regarding "necrotic spider bites."

- 1) This is a "grab-bag" designation for conditions where there is an open sore of unknown origin and the root cause is not obvious. In nearly all such cases, no spider was seen and the MD has no basis for asserting that any spider was involved, let alone what **species** of spider is responsible. Approximately 80% of "spider bite cases" referred to specialists prove to derive from other causes such as fungus infections, insect bites, poison ivy, etc.
- 2) the Brown Recluse Spider (Latin name *Loxosceles reclusa*) occurs in the south central USA, basically from Louisiana north through Kansas, west to Nebraska and east as far as the Florida panhandle. There have been isolated findings outside this area but nearly all genuine bite cases are within the area noted. Unfortunately, few MDs are aware of this fact;

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when they find a "necrotic spider bite" they automatically blame it on the only spider they've ever heard of. Outside its primary area of distribution, essentially 100% of "brown recluse spider bite" cases are cases of *mis-diagnosis* by the MD.

3) The local symptoms of recluse bite (as well as of several other spider species) result from a hemotoxin that damages capillaries, cutting off blood supply to an area of tissue and causing that tissue to die. The venom acts very rapidly although the effects may not be complete for weeks. Thus, no subsequent treatment can reverse the tissue destruction. Antibiotics do not help, except in preventing secondary infections. In the vast majority of cases, the bite-caused necrosis will heal in 4-6 weeks. A few unlucky victims have a protracted response, lose a larger amount of tissue, and require corrective surgery. Bites of this type are almost never fatal.

4) Spiders found in the USA whose bites are clinically significant include at least the following (there are probably a few others not yet discovered):

Eastern Black Widow, *Latrodectus mactans*

Northern Widow, *Latrodectus variolus*

Western Black Widow, *Latrodectus hesperus* (only widow west of Texas)

Brown Recluse, *Loxosceles reclusa* (south central USA)

Chilean Recluse, *Loxosceles laeta* (So. Calif. cities)

Several other recluse species which rarely contact humans

Hobo Spider, *Tegenaria agrestis* (Pacific Northwest, bites generally mis-diagnosed as brown recluse with resulting incorrect treatment)

(no common name) *Cheiracanthium mildei* (northern U.S. cities)

Most of these are unknown to reference books, which are typically 20 years behind the primary literature, at least where spiders are concerned.

Sorry for the lengthy response, but you've got me onto my hobby horse (and the subject of a large percentage of the public phone calls I receive).

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----- Rod >

The brown recluse spider is a specific member of the spider genus *Loxosceles*- *Loxosceles reclusa*. It ranges from eastern New Mexico to northern Georgia and from Texas to Illinois, with occasional records (no doubt transported) from most of the continental United States. The venom of the members of this genus is tissue-destroying and the bite usually results in a lesion from the size of a nickel to a quarter. Occasional the venom is transported to the liver or other internal organs and systematic poisoning results. The usual danger is from infection of the open wound, which takes a long time to heal. Early treatment with cortizone is often helpful, if the victim is not allergic to steroids. Several other species of *Loxosceles* are found in the United States, mostly in the Southwest. These include *L. deserta* (California, Arizona), *L. apachea* (New Mexico and West Texas), *L. blanda* (Pecos River Valley New Mexico and Texas), *L. arizonica* (Arizona), and *L. devia* (Texas). Two other species have been introduced, including the more dangerous South American *L. laeta* (Cambridge, Mass. <apparently eradicated> and California).

As people move into wilder areas in the west they will be encountering the local species more and more. The brown recluse is well adapted to living in the dry environment of people's houses and will build webs (rather fungus-like productions) in drawers and in any clutter left around for any length of time,

David
New Mexico State University

Concerning the spider bite which was asked about by Mary Bowen, there is a method of treating spider and also snake bites which I believe was developed here in Ada, Ok. by a Dr. Osborne. I have never had the treatment, but have

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talked with several people who have and they all say it works great. I also understand that it has been used in hundreds of cases, and I believe that it always works.

The method involves the use of a "stun gun" on the area. After the patient receives the electrical shock, then the area heals up rather quickly. It probably depends on how long you waited before receiving the treatment. That is all I know, but if your doctor is unable to find out about the treatment, please let me know and I will try to get you the name and phone number of a doctor who can tell you about it. Dr Osborne has now died (not from a spider bite), and I'm not sure who is the local doctor who knows about it, but feel sure I could track one down.

Good Luck,
Jim

Research by Darwin K. Vest, Washington State University, has shown that *Tegenaria agrestis* (a.k.a. Hobo Spider) bites can cause necrotic lesions identical to those of *Loxosceles reclusa*, the Brown Recluse. There are many reports of "Brown Recluse Spider bites" every year in Washington State - despite the fact that the only specimen ever collected in that state was from a trailer from Kansas in 1978.

T. agrestis is a European member of the Funnel web spider family first reported in the northwest U.S. in 1936. By the mid-sixties the spider had become established in several larger cities of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. It is now a prevalent species in basements and in window wells of houses in many parts of Washington.

Cheers,
Dave

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\

As an antidote to spider-bite correspondence, read "Redback" by Howard Jacobson. Hardback was first published ca. 1986 and I think it's now available in paperback. Wicked stuff!

PLEASE NOTE that all UK telephone codes except for those of five cities will need a "1" prefix (as above) from 16 April 1995. Prefixed codes work NOW. Codes for Sheffield, Leeds, Nottingham, Leicester and Bristol will be changed completely.

Melissa

Subject: Re: Brown Recluse Spider

> Aren't the brown recluse and the black widow the only two
> poisonous spiders found in the United States?

They are the only ones capable of causing serious or life-threatening damage. Some other species can probably give you a painful bite. Strictly speaking, practically all spiders are venomous (poisonous means toxic to eat, venomous means capable of injecting toxins), in that they have a venom apparatus. However, most either aren't able to penetrate human skin, or have very weak venom which has no effect on humans.

Wolfgang Wuster

Thought for the day:

If you see a light at the end of the tunnel, it is probably a train.

> Aren't the brown recluse and the black widow the only two poisonous

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> spiders found in the United States?

It depends on what you mean by poisonous. There are lots of spiders out there that can raise a big mean nasty welt. I personally consider that poisonous. The Black Widow and Brown Recluse do have the nastiest poisons, though. Of course, they pale in comparison to the funnel web spider in Australia.

-Alan

The above commentary, which does not *even* represent the opinion of the American Mathematical Society, is sold by weight, not by volume. Some settling of the contents may have occurred during shipping.

>Which newsgroup did this thread originate on, anyway??

I think you should know the origin of this post: here on s.b.e.l.

>1) This is a "grab-bag" designation for conditions where there is an open
>sore of unknown origin and the root cause is not obvious. In nearly all
>such cases, no spider was seen and the MD has no basis for asserting that
>any spider was involved, let alone what *species* of spider is
>responsible. Approximately 80% of "spider bite cases" referred to
>specialists prove to derive from other causes such as fungus infections,
>insect bites, poison ivy, etc.

This may in fact be true to some extent, but I think you should go to Silverton, Colorado. Before you, arm yourself with sufficient antivenom to cover any incident that might occur. A friend of mine, John Petros (ex-President of the Pacific Railroad Society), was bitten by a spider

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whose bite caused symptoms **very similar** to those you described, apparently while standing in the vicinity of the town's train station platform. His doctor not knowing what was going on, he decided to investigate himself. It was then that he found spiders under the edge of the platform. I believe these were subsequently identified as *Loxosceles reclusa*. Incidentally, *L reclusa* has been identified from the edge of the San Gabriel Mountains in Sierra Madre, California (Los Angeles County, northeast of Los Angeles). Whether this has since been revised or not I do not know.

--

Pierre

>
> > All spiders in the U.S. contain venom, and, therefore, are venomous. More
> than 13 species are able to produce human toxicity after a bite.
>
>
> > Aren't the brown recluse and the black widow the only two
> > poisonous spiders found in the United States?
>

It's a matter of interpretation, really; spiders paralyze and digest their prey by injecting a combination of enzymes and other nasty organics into them. Any spider bite, for this reason, will be painful; it's full of antigens and chemical irritants, just like a bee sting. (Bee venom is different from spider venoms, but a spider bite hurts, and causes a local reaction, for the same reason.)

Some spiders, like the black widow (*Latrodectus mactans*) and the brown recluse (*Loxosceles* sp., and I forget which sp.) can deliver venoms which are especially toxic to humans. Deaths are rare, but the experience

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of being bitten by one of these spiders would be thoroughly unpleasant to a human.

For what it's worth, the leading cause of arthropod-inflicted human deaths in the U.S. is anaphylaxis (severe generalized allergic reaction) as the result of stings by bees and wasps. Spiders aren't in the same league, nor are insect-borne diseases like eastern equine encephalitis.

Julie

>> > All spiders in the U.S. contain venom, and, therefore, are venomous. More

Not all spiders have venom. Some don't (rare tho). I can't say where these non-venomous spiders are tho (US vs rest of world).

>
>
>It's a matter of interpretation, really; spiders paralyze and digest their prey by injecting a combination of enzymes and other nasty organics into them. Any spider bite, for this reason, will be painful; it's full of antigens and chemical irritants, just like a bee sting. (Bee venom is different from spider venoms, but a spider bite hurts, and causes a local reaction, for the same reason.)

>
>
No, spider bites do not especially hurt. I deal with MANY people who have been bitten by toxic spiders (in most cases the hobo spider, *Tegenaria agrestis*, which causes nasty necrotic lesions, NW US, Utah). The most any ever felt was a pin-prick, which is what one would expect from the physical action of the fangs. That's why so many people get nasty lesions from this spider...they figure, oh, didn't hurt, it doesn't matter, or they are bitten in bed, and never felt the bite. By the time it necroses, it's too late to treat!

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The part of the venom that causes pain is VERY expensive for a species to produce. Yellowjackets, bees, others use it just about only for defense from larger predators raiding their honey/larva stock. They rarely, if ever, use the sting/venom for prey capture. Sometimes against other conspecifics/pred. insects. Spiders just don't have enough to defend for them to invest in a pain-causing venom constituent. (Tho I will not say that all spiders don't have painful bites...always exceptions, but prob. very rare).

Later symptoms resulting from spider bites can be quite painful, especially those spiders that have neurotoxic venoms like the black widow.

Spiders know to cause problems (so many aren't studied, so who really knows?)
(in U.S.)

black and brown widows - *Latrodectus* spp.

recluse spiders (var. species) - *Loxosceles* spp.

Cheiracanthium spp. (inclusum, mildei) - golden house spider, golden sac spider
(sometimes *Chiracanthium* spp spelling)

hobo spider (use to be aggressive house spider) - *Tegenaria agrestis*

Tarantulas - not venom, but hairs on body can cause anaphylactic shock

(*Phoneutria* spp. - occas. found on bananas from S. America in U.S. grocery stores, not know to be native, but is dangerous).

ANY OTHERS??

Liz

> I believe there is a very deadly spider in Australia, one that will attack
> people (and other animals, too), especially in its mating season. I forget
> the name, but the Smithsonian had a special exhibit on spiders this last
> year and made special mention of this nasty character.

Please excuse the ignorance of an amateur, but I believe you're referring to the Sydney funnelweb, the most

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dangerous spider in the world, and one of a number of megalomorph (?) spiders of the genus *Atrax* (?).

They're quite common - I found a large female under a stump while looking for xylovorous caterpillars last Saturday - and can survive underwater in swimming pools for several days

Alternatively there's the redback (closely related to the black widow and a similarly dangerous New Zealand spider), any number of trapdoors and bird-eaters, the white-tailed spider that causes necrotic lesions, the mouse spider, similar to the funnelweb

but which prefers the house, large huntsmans also known as triantelopes or "tarantulas" and probably a few others that likewise probably wouldn't kill you, or even cause much pain, but which are large and hairy enough to send people into screaming hysteri

c

s (the stars in Arachnophobia were an Australian species....) Most of these will reside in gumboots and bite off your leg if you're not careful.

>

--

Daniel

Shaffer's Law - the length of the thread is proportional to the distance from the topic

>

> I believe there is a very deadly spider in Australia, one that will attack
> people (and other animals, too), especially in its mating season. I forget
> the name, but the Smithsonian had a special exhibit on spiders this last
> year and made special mention of this nasty character.

It's the Sydney funnel-web, and it's reputed to be quite deadly to humans and other primates. I don't know its scientific name. Males supposedly become aggressive during mating season, and are likely to enter houses.

I've heard they're not particularly dangerous to other animals; they'll bite your curious cat or dog, but the bite won't be fatal to a non-primate.

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Thanks to everyone who clarified my comment about spider bites;
indeed, they do not always hurt, at least not right away. Some of the
spider venoms which cause tissue damage take a while to take effect.
The spiders which have bitten me, however, hurt me as much as a bee sting,
and the effect was immediate.

Julie

-- Matthew P.

hurt. I deal with MANY people who have
> : been bitten by toxic spiders (in most cases the hobo spider, *Tegenaria*
> :
st cases the hobo spider, *Tegenaria*
> : *agrestis*, which causes nasty necrotic lesions, NW US, Utah). The most
sions, NW US, Utah). The most any
> : ever felt was a pin-prick, which is what one would expect fro
one would expect from the
> : p
people get nasty lesions
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doesn't matter, or they
> : are bitten in bed, and never felt the bite. By the time it necroses, it's
> : too la
time it necroses, it's
> : too late to treat!
>
> I know of only one spider that has a painf
der that has a painful bite...the sun spider of
> England. It is not poisonous, though.

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I can't write your report for you over the 'net, but I can refer you to the best references (assuming you have access to a university-level library or at least a good interlibrary loan department).

The basic reference on black widow biology is:

Kaston, B.J. 1970. Comparative biology of American black widow spiders. *Transactions of the San Diego Society of Natural History*, 16(3): 33-82.

Kaston's reclassification of the American black widows into 3 distinct species made most things written about them before this obsolete. Many reference books, encyclopedias, etc. STILL haven't caught onto this, and it's 25 years later!! Kaston also gives about all the info about black widow biology that you can find out in a lab.

For their place in the food web, see:

Exline, Harriet, and Melville H. Hatch. 1934. Note on the food of the black widow spider. *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 42: 449-450.

Pratt, Robert Y. and Melville H. Hatch. 1938. The food of the black widow spider on Whidbey Island, Washington. *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 46: 191-193.

Basically, black widows are generalist predators on ground crawling insects etc. but specialize to some extent on darkling (tenebrionid) beetles.

Hope this helps.

Rod

On 29 Mar 1995, Mark wrote:

> I am doing a report on spiders, the black widow actually...
> i will be studying its place on the food web, fecundity, carrying capacity,

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> its biome and much more...
> If anyone has any info on the black widow, or spiders in general
> please e mail me at
>
>
>
> thank you....your help is appreciated
>

"David writes:

<snip>
>mildly toxic venom. There may be others, but I would not panic. Even
>black widows, which we have by the billions in the Southwest, cause only
>a handful of bites over a year. You are much more likely to be struck
>by lightning, or even more likely to be in an auto accident, than to be
>bitten by any spider!

Yes, not too many bites occur. I do note that *Tegenaria agrestis* is much more likely to encounter humans than some of these other spiders though. They are very abundant in their range, and we get some people with 1-2 dozen males entering their homes in the fall looking for females. While giving talks in the PNW on the spider, usually 1-2 people come up and say "hey, that's what bit me last year." Usually it's the horror cases that cause general panic among the public. You should see the photos on my desk of some poor lady's leg...a 1/4 inch deep hole ca 1.5 x 2 inches in diameter. This is from Washington, suspected *T. agrestis*, remote possibility of recluse as her mom came back from Florida the previous day.

Liz