



COMMON SPIDERS

There are many species of spiders. They are placed in “groups.” Common groups include wolf, jumping, and tarantula spiders.

Spiders have two body parts and eight legs. All spiders have venom that kills their prey. People have varying reactions to spider bites depending upon their susceptibility to the poison. In Illinois, the brown recluse and black widow spiders are most harmful. Refer to our fact sheets on these two spiders for more information.

Identification

Wolf spiders are ½ inch to 2 inches long, hairy, and usually brown to gray, with various markings or lines. They look for a warm place to over-winter in the fall. They are found around doors, windows, house plants, basements, and garages. They roam at night to hunt for food. They do not spin a web. The wolf spider is shy and runs away when disturbed.



Wolf Spider

Wolf spider mothers carry large egg sacs. When the young spiderlings hatch, they climb on their mother’s back and ride until partially grown.

The jumping spider is small to medium in size. It has a stout body and short legs. This spider has a distinctive eye pattern, composed of three or four pairs, with the largest pair in the center. Its body is hairy and often brightly colored or iridescent.



Jumping Spiders

Jumping spiders forage for prey in the daytime on windows, walls, or other areas where insect prey is drawn. They slowly approach prey and when it is close, they make a sudden leap on it. Before jumping, they attach a silken thread or safety line for climbing back if they miss their target.

The tarantula is the largest spider in Illinois. Its body is 2 inches long with a leg span of 6 inches. This spider is brown and black, stout-bodied, and covered with hollow, needle-like, barbed hairs,



Tarantula

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Douglas B. Jones, University of Illinois Extension Specialist, Integrated Pest Management, jonesd@illinois.edu

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especially on the abdomen. Some people develop hypersensitivity reactions to body hairs.

Tarantulas are active from June to October (commonly seen in June and September). They feed on live animals they can catch including crickets, beetles, and grasshoppers.

Females are mostly nocturnal and hide in the ground during the day. Males look for females and can be seen in the day. Females may live for 15 to 20 years. The bite of our Illinois tarantula is no more harmful than a bee sting.

Pesticides

Spiders are difficult to treat with pesticides. If you can apply a pesticide directly to a spider, it will probably be killed. But spraying the floor, cabinets, and other objects is not usually very effective because spiders do not clean themselves, thus making it difficult for the pesticide to find its way onto the insect's body.

House Maintenance



Spiders are predators and search for food (insects). Report webbing and dead insects to your pest management service, if you have one. Check plants before bringing them inside for the winter. Prevent spiders from entering your home and other buildings. Use weather stripping and caulk to seal cracks and other openings.

Vacuum webbing and egg sacs (balls of webbing). Keep areas organized. Store supplies away from walls for easy inspections.