



FACT SHEET



SPIDERS

Red Back Spider

Identification: Abdomen has red or orange stripe above, hourglass shaped red or orange spot below. Females have a body about the size of a pea and slender legs. The tiny males (only about 2-3mm long) are not dangerous. Vertical, sticky, catching threads run to the ground from the tangled retreat web above. Webs are built in dry, sheltered sites.

Bite: Red Back bites occur frequently, especially in the warmer months. Bites can cause serious illness and some have caused deaths. An anti-venom is available – no deaths have occurred since it's introduction.

Funnel Web Spiders

Identification: Found in eastern Australia. There are about 40 species. Large spider (1.5-4.5cm body length) with a glossy carapace. Males often have a ventral spur or swelling midway along the second leg. Spinnerets are usually obvious at the end of the abdomen, last segment longer than wide. This spider burrows in sheltered habitats. Irregular silk trip lines radiate out from the burrow entrance. Males leave their burrows to wander in search of females during summer/autumn. Bites are most prevalent during this period.

Bite: Dangerous. Can cause serious illness or death. The male's venom can sometimes be more toxic than the female. Anti-venom is available – no deaths have occurred since it's introduction.

White Tailed Spider

Identification: Cylindrical spider (body length 1-1.5cm). Females are more robust than the males. Body colour dull, dark grey with a distinct white spot on the end of the abdomen (sometimes with pair spots towards the front). Legs are shiny and brownish. Night-active, crevice dwelling hunters found under bark, leaf litter, rocks and often in houses. They attack and eat other spiders including black house spiders.

Bite: Symptoms are usually confined to local burning pain followed by development of an itchy lump. Less commonly bites have caused localised blistering at the bitten area. There is little conclusive evidence that bites by these spiders are primary causes of extensive skin ulceration. Removal of these spiders from around the home is a sensible precaution.

Huntsman Spider

Identification: Species are widely distributed in Australia. Large, long-legged spiders (up to 15cm across), mostly grey to brown, legs are sometimes banded.

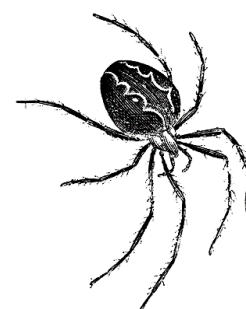
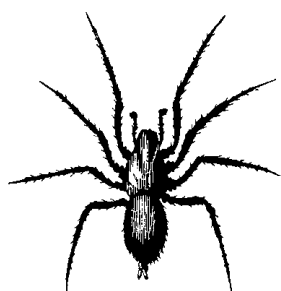
Bite: Badge and Tropical Huntsman bites can be painful and may cause headache or nausea.

Black House or Window Spider

Identification: Common in urban areas. Dark robust spiders (1-1.5cm body length). Their webs form untidy, lacy silk sheets with a funnel-like entrance(s). They are found on tree trunks, rock walls and buildings (in window frames, wall crevices and at cornices etc).

Bite: They are timid spiders. Bites are infrequent but some may be quite painful and have other transient symptoms like nausea.

Information courtesy of Australian Museum and Bayer



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