

Arachnids

Arachnids, such as spiders, scorpions, mites, and ticks, are characterized by having eight legs, two body parts - the cephalothorax and the abdomen, a hard external skeleton, fang-like pincers (chelicerae), and simple eyes.

The tarantula, the largest of our native spiders, is extremely shy and docile – a gentle giant. Its bite is no worse than that of a bee sting. As with all spiders, they are out merely looking for something to eat. Tarantulas are mostly out during night hours.

Spiders are a very valuable asset and take care of thousands of insects, many of whom we would consider as pests.

Even the Black Widow spider, in its 1-2 years of life, will consume over 2,000 insects in that time. That's a lot of bugs! Black Widows are a very common spider in our area and its venom is very potent. Drop for drop it is more toxic than rattlesnake venom. It is also a very shy spider and will only bite if it feels threatened.

Trapdoor spiders and the tarantula are related to each other. The trapdoor is a reasonably large spider and will bite if provoked. As it spends most of its life inside its burrow, the chances of a bite are extremely rare.

Most spiders can bite, but mouthparts are usually so small they can't penetrate the skin.

AVOID BEING BITTEN

- Do not pick up spiders.
- Do not stick your hands in any area that you haven't inspected first.
- Learn to recognize them:
 - Black Widows have large bulbous body, long legs, and a very shiny abdomen. Females are generally twice size of males. Both females and males bite, but females are more deadly because they inject a lot more venom. Females generally hang upside down in their web so the red hourglass marking is very visible.
 - Tarantula are very easy to identify. They are a very large, black or dark brown, hairy spider.

- Desert Recluses – the Western estern is less venomous than Eastern brown recluse, but still delivers a very venomous bite. Brown recluses are small brown spiders, also called violin or fiddleback spiders because of the violin-shaped marking on their heads. They are not easy to see, particularly as they move quickly.

TREATMENT

If bitten, and you know it's a black widow or brown recluse, seek medical attention immediately - seriously venomous. There is anti-venin available, but not over-the-counter.