

**SPIDERS IN OUR AREA - DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?**

Spiders are arthropods belonging to the class Arachnida. They are clearly distinguishable from other arthropods by the number of legs. Spiders possess four pairs. They also lack the antennae characteristic of insects, crustaceans and centipedes.

Spiders are common and widespread throughout our area. They can be found in many different habitats and have adapted specialised methods of hunting their prey. Every spider has a venom used to kill their prey, and in general this venom will only cause a mild irritation or inflammation to humans.

**The Garden Spider *Eriophora biapicata***

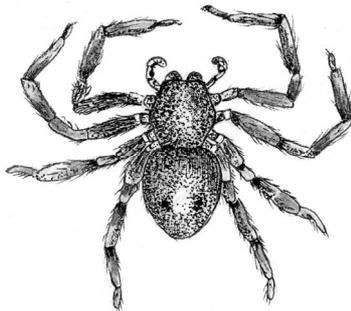
A large orb weaving spider, 1.8–2.2 cm in body length, is light to dark brown, with patches of white over the body and legs. The legs are reddish, and the entire body is covered in cream-coloured, coarse hair. They catch their prey in a web, usually constructed in the early evening. These spiders are most active during the warmer months.



Garden Spider

**Huntsman Spider *Olios diana***

A large spider, about 2 cm in body length, is fawn to pinkish in colour, and easily identified by the colour markings on the underneath of the abdomen, which consist of a black semi-circular shield with two white spots resembling the letter B. The first two pairs of legs are longer than those at the rear, and the spider often moves in a sideways direction.



Huntsman Spider

**Black House Spider *Ixeuticus robustus***

This spider, 1.2 to 2 cm in body length, has legs which are stout and blackish brown. It is commonly found around window frames, doors, in brickwork, under eaves etc. The web is irregular in shape, coarsely woven and characterised by one or two funnel shaped retreats near its centre.



Black House Spider

**Leaf-Curling Spider *Phonognatha graeffei***

This is one of the most common of our spiders and is found in heathlands, woodlands and gardens. The adult female, 8 mm, and the male, 5 mm, normally use a curled leaf in the centre of a solitary web for protection, mainly from birds. Other objects such as a shell, or a piece of paper, may be substituted for the leaf. The spider's abdomen has a creamy, yellow pattern on the upper side with reddish-brown legs.



Leaf-Curling spider

**Spiny Spider *Gasteracantha minax***

A small spider, female 9 mm, male 3 mm, which can be completely black, or black with mottled yellow and white pattern on its abdomen. It

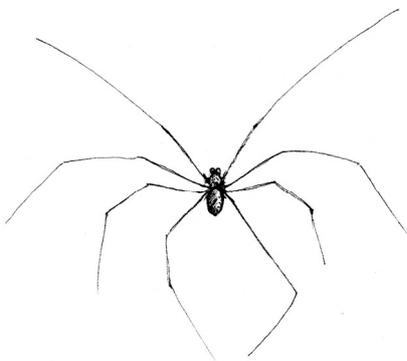


Shiny Spider

has six projecting spines on its abdomen. These spiders are often found in colonies – each spider spins its own web, which is then laced together with the others, between low bushes, to form one large structure.

**Daddy Long-legs Spider *Pholcus phalangioides***

This is a well known spider which is found in most homes. The web is a tangled sheet up to 30 cm in diameter, and is usually found in dark areas such as behind doors, in unoccupied rooms, garages and under verandah floors. The spider is easily recognised with its long legs and overall yellowish colour. Food consists of small flying insects and silverfish.



Daddy Long-legs

References: 1. Rod Preston-Mafham, 1991 *The book of spiders and scorpions*, Crescent Books New York  
2. Walker, Ken L. 1992, *Spiders commonly found in Melbourne and surrounding regions*, Royal Society of Victoria

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