

Spiders

MORE THAN
2000 SPIDER
SPECIES
HAVE BEEN
DESCRIBED IN
AUSTRALIA

Without spiders, insect populations would soar. Very few are poisonous to humans. Ecologically invaluable, these fascinating arthropods merit our respect and attention.

Learn more!

Arachnids
by Ian Baecalone (CSIRO Publishing, 2009)
Green Guide to Spiders of Australia
by Terence Lindsey (New Holland, 1998)
Spiderwatch: a Guide to Australian Spiders
by Bert Brunet (Reed New Holland, 1998)
Spiders: Learning to love them
by Lynne Kelly (Allen and Unwyn, 2009)



Trapdoor (tree) spider (*Migas* spp)

Tree trapdoor spiders: Family Migidae

DESCRIPTION

Body length ranges from 23–30mm

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Coastal regions of eastern states, including Tasmania, mostly in rainforests. Also in small areas of south WA and southern SA.



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SOME ESSENTIALS

Pictured is a new undescribed species restricted to upland rainforest in far-north Queensland. An ambush predator, it constructs a shallow tunnel into the tree concealed with a trapdoor and emerges only after dark.

DID YOU KNOW?

This is an ancient group of spiders with an ancestry traceable back to Gondwanan days when the southern continents were connected. *Migas* spp are found only in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia. Other genera in the family are found in Madagascar, South Africa and Chile.

TOXICITY

Not thought to be harmful to humans.



Northern (green) jumping spider (*Mopsus mormon*)

Jumping spiders: Family Salticidae

DESCRIPTION

252 described species in Australia. Most species quite small, but sizes vary up to 18mm ♀ and 12mm ♂. Wide variety of colours and designs in tropical regions; brown and/or grey in temperate zones.

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Found throughout Australia, with the largest number of species in tropical Queensland.



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SOME ESSENTIALS

This diurnal hunter leaps on its prey grabbing it with powerful front legs. It remains anchored to the launching surface by a fine silk anchor in case it miscalculates the distance of its jump.

DID YOU KNOW?

This spider has eight eyes arranged in three rows of four, two and two, which gives it 360° vision.

TOXICITY

Harmless to humans except for *Mopsus mormon*, whose painful bite may cause slow-healing wounds and mild illness. No deaths reported.



Bird-dung spider (*Celaenia excavata*)

Bird-dung spiders: Family Araneidae

DESCRIPTION

The four described species of these bumpy, blotchy spiders are named for their extraordinary resemblance to bird droppings. Length varies from about 5-20mm.

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Numerous habitats throughout southern Australia.

SOME ESSENTIALS

These spiders are ambush predators, but one species has an extra trick. *Celaenia excavata* exude pheromones that attract male Noctuid moths. Once the moths are close enough, the spiders grab and crush them with strong, spiny forelegs, then eat them immediately.



Photo © ataglance.com.au

DID YOU KNOW?

Juvenile *C. excavata* build wheel webs to snare prey until they are old enough to produce the pheromone that attracts moths.

TOXICITY

Harmless to humans.



Brown huntsman (*Heteropoda jugulans*)

Huntsman spiders: Family Heteropodidae

DESCRIPTION

94 species described in Australia. Bodies 16mm ♂ - 20mm ♀ with leg span of up to 160mm.

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Under tree bark, in logs, crevices under rocks and often in houses on mainland Australia.



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SOME ESSENTIALS

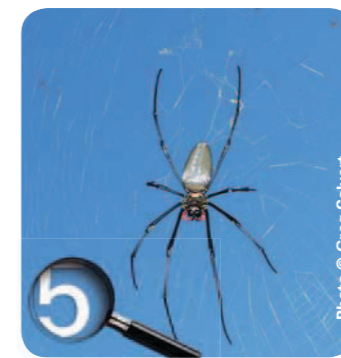
Can squeeze into narrow cracks or under bark. Fast runners, able to chase and catch prey. Do not use a silk trap of any sort.

DID YOU KNOW?

The female lays up to 200 eggs which she watches diligently, protectively and sometimes fiercely for about three weeks. Some females carry the egg sac under their bodies. Newly hatched spiderlings stay with the mother for several weeks.

TOXICITY

Can give a painful bite but mostly harmless to humans.



Golden orb spider (*Nephila maculata*)

Golden orb weaving spiders: Family Nephilidae

DESCRIPTION

Australia has at least six types of these master weavers. Body length of largest known female is 45mm; smallest male is 6mm.

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Wide variety of habitats, primarily along Australia's east coast from Victoria to Cape York, and inland.



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SOME ESSENTIALS

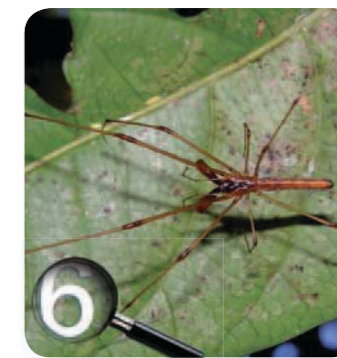
The enormous, inclined, golden wheel web can measure up to 1m in diameter, often strung between trees only a few metres off the ground. Tiny kleptoparasitic quicksilver spiders (*Argyrodes* spp) that live around the edge of the giant web often dine at the orb weaver's expense.

DID YOU KNOW?

This spider is named for the colour of its silk which is almost as strong as Kevlar. Only the females build webs. Males scavenge for leftovers.

TOXICITY

Harmless to humans.



Brown long-jawed spider (*Tetragnatha nitens*)

Four jawed or long- jawed spiders: Family Tetragnathidae

DESCRIPTION

These horizontal web weavers have long thin bodies 10mm ♂-12mm ♀ in length; long, thin chelicerae (fangs); and long, thin palps (used in mating) that resemble their long, thin legs.

FAMILY DISTRIBUTION

Damp woodlands, swamplands and sclerophyll forests along the coastlines of QLD and NSW.



Photo © ataglance.com.au

SOME ESSENTIALS

Webs usually hang over water, a good location for catching tiny insects.

DID YOU KNOW?

When mating, the ultra-cautious male interlocks his fangs with the jaws of the female, forcing them open so she cannot bite him. He then impregnates her with his long palps from a distance.

TOXICITY

Harmless to humans.