

# Spiders

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## Funnel-web spiders



### Description

Funnel-webs are large spiders (1.5 - 4.5 cm body length) with glossy dark brown to black carapace (the protective shell on the back of the spider). The abdomen is usually dark plum to black and not patterned. The eyes of Funnel-webs are close together.

### Habitat

Funnel-web spiders are found in eastern Australia, including Tasmania. Funnel-webs burrow in moist, cool, sheltered habitats - under rocks, in and under rotting logs, crevices, rot and borer holes in rough-barked trees.

Thirty-six species, including three tree dwelling species, have been identified.

### Web type

Several strands of silk radiate from around the entrance of the burrow.

Funnel-web spiders use what are known as 'trip-wires' to catch their prey. These trip-wires are strands of silk radiating from the burrow entrance. At night, the spider sits inside the entrance with its legs touching the silken strands. When it feels the vibrations of an insect tripping the wires the spider pounces on the prey.

### Interesting facts

Funnel-web spiders have long strong fangs that strike like snakes. The venom from a funnel-web spider is only known to cause general symptoms such as headaches and nausea.

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# Mouse Spiders



## Description

Full size the mouse spider is about the size of 50 cent piece. The mouse spider has short stocky legs; black shiny head ; tiny eyes spread widely across head. All mouse spiders have a round head and jaw.

The male mouse spider has deep red carapace,(the protective shell on the back of the spider) dark blue abdomen. The legs are glossy black; abdomen slightly paler with distinct pale bluish patch on upperside towards the front.

The female mouse spider is dark brown to blackish.

## Habitat

There are eight species of mouse spiders in Australia and they are widely distributed across the mainland. They live in cool dark areas.

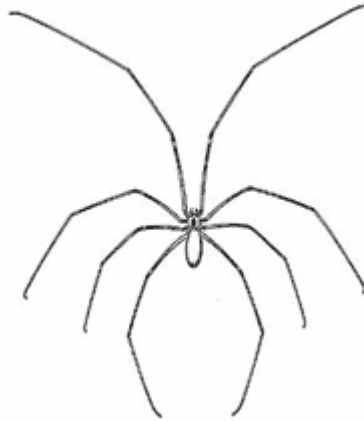
## Web type

Mouse spiders do not build webs but live in short burrows or tunnels in the ground with floppy door sticking up just above ground.

## Interesting facts

The fangs of the mouse spider strike diagonally not vertically. Mouse spider bites are not common but a few have caused serious effects in humans,

## Daddy-long legs



### Description

Both male and female have an overall body colour of pale brown to cream with darker markings on legs and cephalothorax (the first body section - head and thorax), sometimes with darker markings on abdomen. They are easily recognised by the extremely long and slender legs and relatively small body. The male body grows to about 16mm and the female to 20 mm.

### Habitat

This spider is commonly found indoors in dark areas, such as behind doors or furniture, disused rooms, etc. Old webs are often seen in the corners of ceilings. Outside it occurs in garages and sheds, under verandahs, etc. The daddy long-leg spider is usually associated with human habitation and is thought to have been introduced into this country.

### Web type

Makes a fine, tangled web, up to 30 cm in diameter, inside shelter locations.

### Interesting facts

The lifespan of daddy-long legs spiders may vary from three months to two years depending on temperature and food supply. Their food consists of small insects, spiders, silverfish, etc.

The eggs of this spider are held together in a circular bundle with a few silk threads and are carried in the mouthparts of the female until hatching

The bite of the daddy long legs spiders are harmless to humans. It can easily kill Redback and Huntsman Spiders coming into its web.

## Wolf spiders



### Description

Their colour patterns can make them difficult to see. They are brown to greyish brown and the cephalothorax (the first body section - head and thorax) often has a paler radiating pattern. The abdomen often has a ribbed pattern above and a black patch below. The wolf spider grows up to 25 mm in length.

### Habitat

Wolf spiders are found throughout Australia. They are ground-dwelling hunters. They prefer hot dry areas - gardens, bark, litter. They are common in open country and desert. Some species shelter in permanent burrows. In the garden they are often encountered by humans whilst digging or weeding.

### Web type

The wolf spider does not build a web. They live on the ground in leaf litter or burrows.

### Interesting facts

The egg sac is constructed of white papery silk and is carried around by the female attached to her spinnerets at the rear of the abdomen. Upon hatching, the spiderlings are carried around on the female's back until they can fend for themselves. This degree of parental care is unusual among spiders.

There are no records of any serious symptoms resulting from wolf spider bites in Australia. Symptoms include local pain and swelling.

When disturbed they rapidly run across the ground.

## Water spiders



### Description

The body of water spiders has various shades of brown with a flecked or mottled pattern. Some species have yellow or white and dark brown stripes on the cephalothorax (the first body section - head and thorax) and a series of white spots on the abdomen. Males are slightly smaller than females. Males grow to about 15-20 mm and females to 20-30mm.

They have hairs on the tips of their feet which enable them to walk on water but they can also dive and swim beneath the surface to catch prey. Air trapped in the hairs allow them to stay submerged for a long time.

### Habitat

Water spiders are found along the edges of swamps, marshes, creeks, ponds and other bodies of water throughout eastern Australia and Tasmania.

### Web type

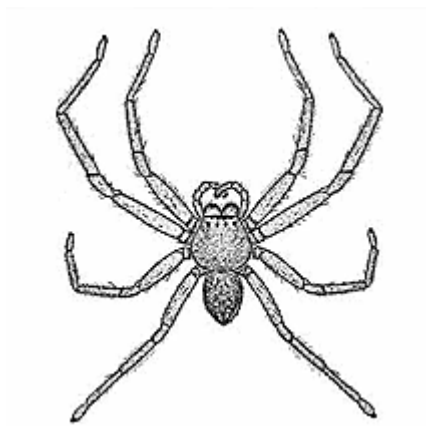
The water spiders do not build webs. They hunt for their food instead of catching food in webs. They usually feed on insects found near the water's edge or on the surface but they have been known to take tadpoles, fish and frogs.

### Interesting facts

This spider can be very aggressive if disturbed and although it is known to give a painful bite, symptoms may include local pain and swelling.

The female water spider carries her egg sac with her. However she carries it underneath her body, holding it in place with her jaws and palps (short feelers coming from the mouth). When the spiderlings are ready to hatch, the water spider builds a nursery web of silk and leaves among reeds and rocks by the water. She guards the spiderlings until they can fend for themselves.

## Huntsman spiders



### Description

The huntsman spider is a large, long-legged spider. Both the male and female huntsman are brown to grey with several pairs of darker spots on upperside of abdomen, sometimes with dark bands on legs. The body is very flattened with long legs that are pointing forward. The first two pairs of legs are longer than the second two pairs. The male grows to about 25 mm and female to about 40 mm.

It is a large species and, when alarmed, is capable of moving very rapidly often in a sideways direction.

### Habitat

This huntsman is the one most commonly found in houses, where it hunts at night on walls and ceilings. It also occasionally enters the cabins of vehicles. In the bush the huntsman spider can be found living under loose bark on trees, in crevices on rock walls and in logs, under rocks and slabs of bark on the ground, and on plants.

The huntsman spider is generally widely distributed throughout Australia.

### Web type

The huntsman does not build a web, but hunts for its food.

### Interesting facts

The huntsman spider eats insects and other invertebrates.

The egg sac of the huntsman is flat, oval and constructed of white papery silk. It is most commonly deposited beneath the bark of trees. Lifespan of the species is about two years.

This is a timid spider and bites are infrequent. Symptoms are minor, including local pain and swelling.

Bibliography:

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