

Funnel-web Spiders:

Atrax, *Hadronyche* & *Illawarra*

Distribution

Eastern Australia, including Tasmania, in coastal and highland forest regions – as far west as the Gulf Ranges area of South Australia. There are 35 described species. Sydney Funnel-web Spiders (*Atrax robustus*) occur from Newcastle to Nowra and west to Lithgow.

Identification and habits

Large spiders (1.5 – 4.5 cm body length), carapace glossy. Males often have a ventral spur or swelling midway along the second leg, pointed in *Atrax* blunt or absent in *Hadronyche* and *Illawarra*. Spinnerets (silk spinning organs) usually obvious at end of abdomen, last segment longer than wide. Burrows in sheltered habitats – under rocks, in rotting logs, tree holes etc., in bush and garden. Irregular silk trip lines radiate out from burrow entrance. Males leave their burrows and wander in search of females during summer/autumn. Bites are most prevalent in this period.

Bite

Dangerous. Can cause serious illness or death. Male venom sometimes more toxic than female. Antivenom is available – no deaths have occurred since its introduction.



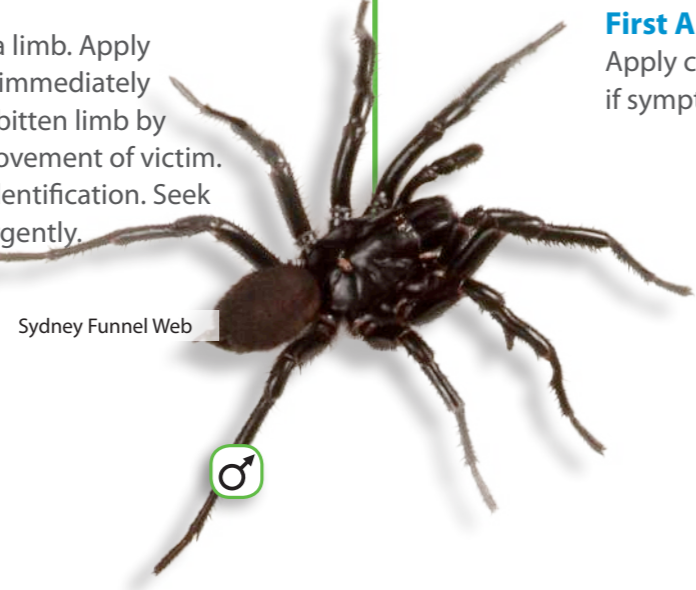
Funnel Web Spider burrow

First Aid

Bites are usually on a limb. Apply a pressure bandage immediately and immobilize the bitten limb by splinting. Restrict movement of victim. Capture spider for identification. Seek medical attention urgently.



Blue Mountains Funnel Web



Sydney Funnel Web

Huntsman Spiders

Common and Banded Huntsman Spiders: *Isopeda* and *Holconia*.

Badge Huntsman Spiders: *Neosparassus*

Tropical Huntsman Spiders: *Heteropoda*

Distribution

Isopeda and *Neosparassus* are widely distributed in Australia. *Heteropoda* is common in northern tropical areas and down the east coast as far as Sydney.

Identification and habits

Large, long-legged spiders (up to 15 cm across legs), mostly grey to brown, legs sometimes banded. *Isopeda* and *Holconia* have flattened bodies adapted for living under loose bark. Badge Huntsman Spiders have distinctive colour combinations of black, white, orange or yellow under the abdomen (the 'badge'). These spiders, and the motley brown, white and black patterned Tropical Huntsman Spiders, have less flattened bodies and are found on vegetation, bark and in leaf litter. All of these spiders sometimes enter houses.

Bite

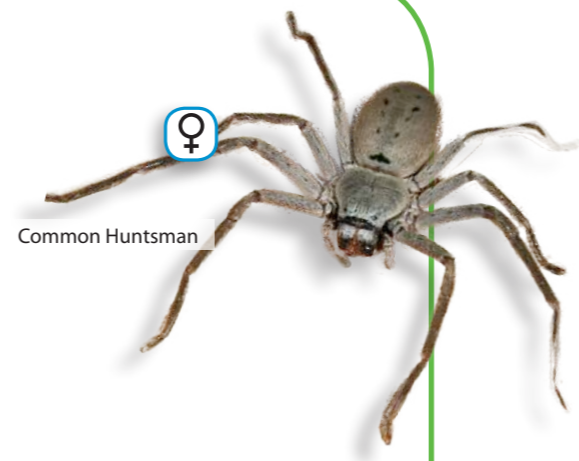
Badge and Tropical Huntsman bites can be painful and may cause transient headache or nausea.

First Aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



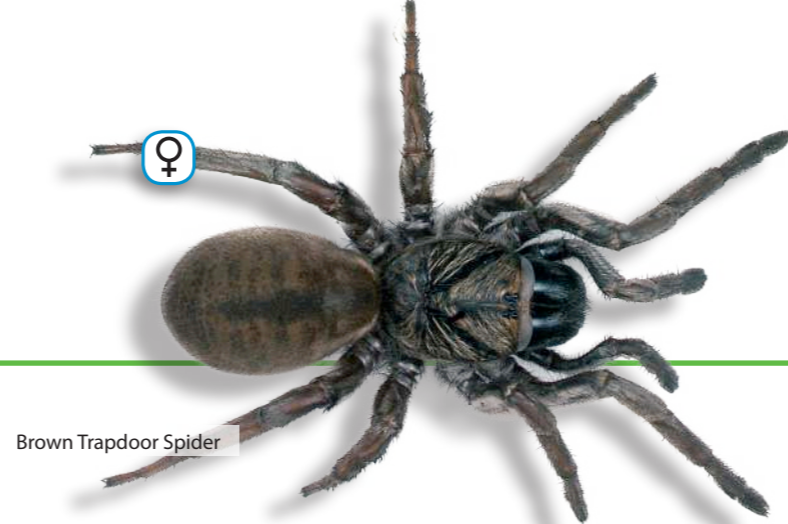
Badge Huntsman



Common Huntsman



Tropical Huntsman



Brown Trapdoor Spider



Brown Trapdoor Spider



Sigillate Trapdoor

Bite

Brown Trapdoor Spiders are often mistaken for Funnel-web Spiders but their bites are not dangerous. Sigillate Trapdoor Spider bites may be somewhat more severe but bites are uncommon.

First aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.

Trapdoor Spiders

Brown Trapdoor Spiders: *Misgolas* Sigillate Trapdoor Spiders: *Aganippe*

Distribution

Misgolas group spiders are found in eastern Australia especially in coastal and highland regions of New South Wales and Victoria and are commonly known as Brown Trapdoor Spiders. There are several species known from the Sydney region. *Aganippe* group spiders are found across southern Australia west of the Great Dividing Range and include the Adelaide Trapdoor Spider, *Aganippe* subtristis.

Identification and habits

1.5 – 3 cm body length. Spinnerets short. Males usually with a small double spur halfway along first leg. Brown Trapdoors Spiders – dull brown spiders with cover of paler gold hairs on carapace ('dusty' appearance, unlike the 'glossy' Funnel-web carapace). Abdomen often with pale transverse bars. Males with thick 'boxing glove' palps. Eyes in two compact rows. Burrows open (without trapdoor). Sigillate Trapdoor Spiders – dark brown spiders with glossy carapace and 4 – 6 hairless spots (*sigillae*) on top of abdomen. Eyes in three rows. Burrows with soil or litter trapdoors.



Trapdoor spider at burrow entrance

Black House or Window Spider: *Badumna insignis*

Distribution

Badumna insignis is widely distributed in southern and eastern Australia. *Badumna* group spiders are found all over Australia.

Identification and habits

Dark, robust spiders, 1 – 1.5 cm body length. Their webs form untidy, lacy silk sheets with funnel-like entrance(s). They are found on tree trunks, rock walls and buildings (in window frames, wall crevices, etc.). *Badumna longinquus* is a slightly smaller species with a grayish carapace and grey-brown banded legs. It often builds its web on foliage.



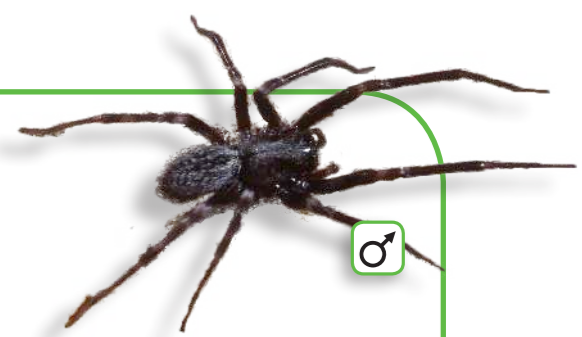
Black House Spider Web

Bite

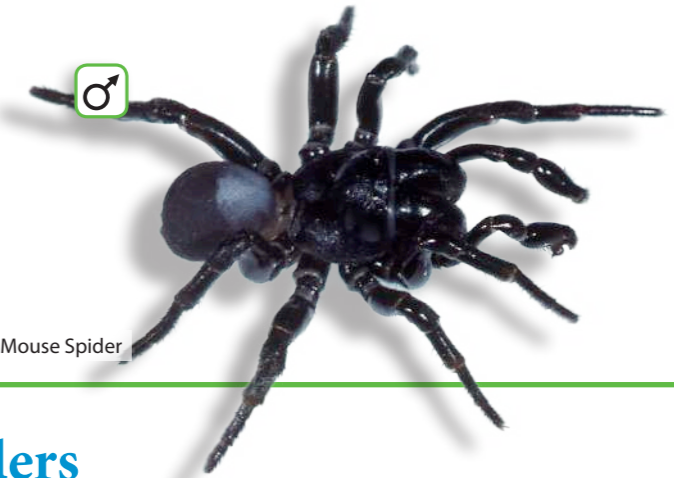
Timid spiders. Bites are infrequent but may be painful and have transient symptoms like nausea.

First Aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



♂



Eastern Mouse Spider



Red-headed Mouse Spider

Mouse Spiders

Eastern Mouse Spider: *Missulena bradleyi*

Red-headed Mouse Spider: *Missulena occatoria*

Distribution

Eastern Mouse Spiders are found in east coastal and highland regions. Red-headed Mouse Spiders across the continent, mainly west of the Great Dividing Range.

Identification and habits

Squat spiders 1 – 3 cm long. Carapace glossy; head area high and bulbous, eyes widespread across front. Spinnerets short and blunt. Males have characteristically coloured areas on their bodies. Burrows with two trapdoors. Males wander during summer/autumn, especially after rain.

Bite

Mouse Spider venom may be very toxic, but human envenomations are rare. In serious cases funnel-web spider antivenom has been used effectively.

First Aid

Treat as for Funnel-web Spider bite, especially if the victim is a child. Collect the spider for identification.



Eastern Mouse Spider

SPIDERS IN AUSTRALIA

Wolf Spiders

Lycosidae

Distribution

All parts of Australia.

Identification and habits

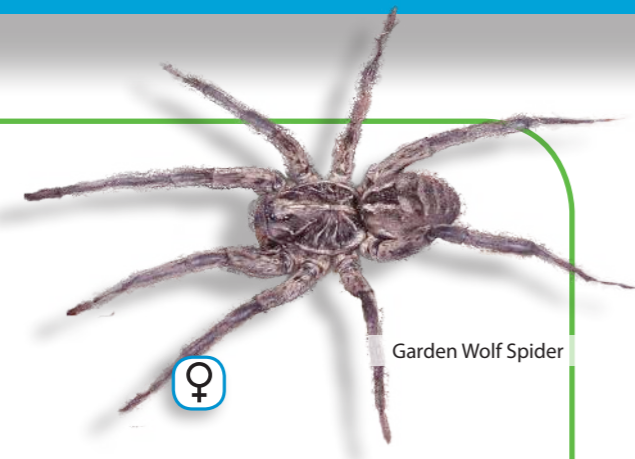
Many different species, 1 – 8 cm across legs, robust, agile, ground hunters living in leaf litter or burrows in bushland and gardens. Eight eyes, four largest arranged in a square on top of head. Body colours typically drab, most with variegated patterns in brown, grey, black and white. Underside sometimes with markings. Jaws often bear an orange spot on sides.

Bite

Symptoms usually minor – local pain or itchiness.

First aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



Garden Wolf Spider

Redback Spider: *Latrodectus hasselti*

Distribution

Found all over Australia; common in disturbed and urban areas.

Identification and habits

Abdomen with red or orange stripe above, 'hourglass' shaped red/orange spot below. Females have a body about the size of a pea and slender legs. The tiny males, only 2 – 3 mm 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, e.g., among rocks, in logs, culverts, sheds, outdoor toilets, etc.

Bite

Redback bites occur frequently, especially in the warmer months. Bites can cause serious illness and some have caused deaths. An antivenom is available – no deaths have occurred since its introduction.

First Aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain. Do not apply pressure bandage. Collect the spider for identification. Seek medical attention.



Redback Spider

White-tailed Spider: *Lampona*

Distribution

Lampona group spiders are found all over Australia; *Lampona cylindrata* and *Lampona murina* are particularly common in disturbed and urban areas.

Identification and habits

Cylindrical spiders, body colour dull, dark grey with a distinct white spot at the end of the abdomen, (sometimes with paired spots toward front), legs shiny, brownish. Nocturnal, crevice dwelling hunters found under bark, rocks, in leaf litter and often in houses. They attack and eat other spiders including Black House Spiders.

Bite

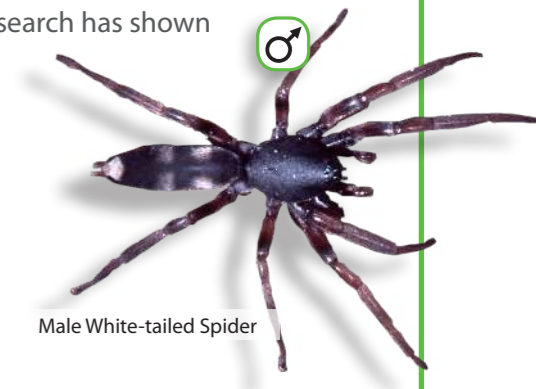
Bites are common due to the spiders wandering habits. Symptoms usually confined to local burning pain followed by development of an itchy lump. Less commonly bites have caused localized blistering. These spiders have been blamed for cases of extensive skin ulceration but recent research has shown there is no evidence for this. A sensible precaution is to remove the spiders when found in the home.

First Aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



Female White-tailed Spider



Male White-tailed Spider

Orb Weaving Spiders

Garden Orb Weavers: *Eriophora*

Banded Orb Weavers: *Argiope*

Golden Orb Weavers: *Nephila*

Distribution

Found all over Australia. Common Garden Orb Weavers include *Eriophora transmarina* and *Eriophora biapicata* from eastern and southern Australia. A common *Argiope* is *Argiope keyserlingi*, the St Andrew's Cross Spider from eastern Australia.

Identification and habits

All make suspended, sticky, wheel-shaped orb webs. The commonly seen Garden Orb Weavers are 1 – 2.5 cm in body length. Most are stout, reddish-brown or grey spiders with a leaf shaped pattern on their roughly triangular abdomens. Webs are placed in openings between trees and shrubs where insects are likely to fly. Transverse abdominal banding identifies the Banded Orb Weavers. Some, like *Argiope keyserlingi* (body 1 – 1.5 cm), have thick zig-zag bands of silk in their webs which

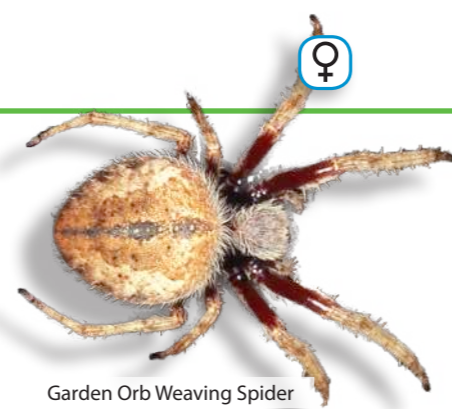
may attract insect prey by reflecting U-V light. Their webs are placed among shrubs or long grass. Golden Orb Weavers are large spiders (body 2 – 4 cm) with silvery yellow to plum coloured bodies and black, often yellow banded, legs. Their orb webs are large and may have a barrier network of threads. The silk has a golden sheen.

Bite

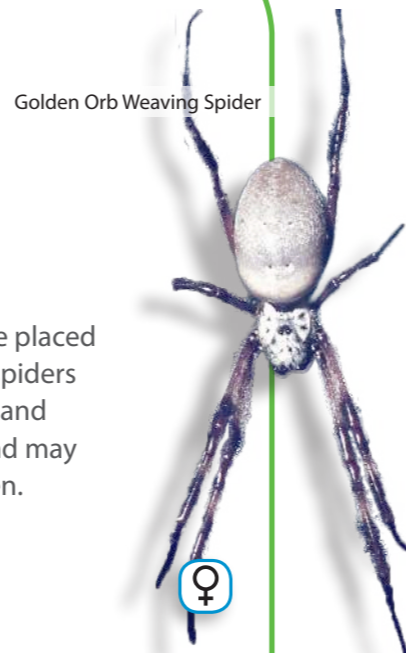
Reluctant to bite, symptoms usually negligible or slight.

First Aid

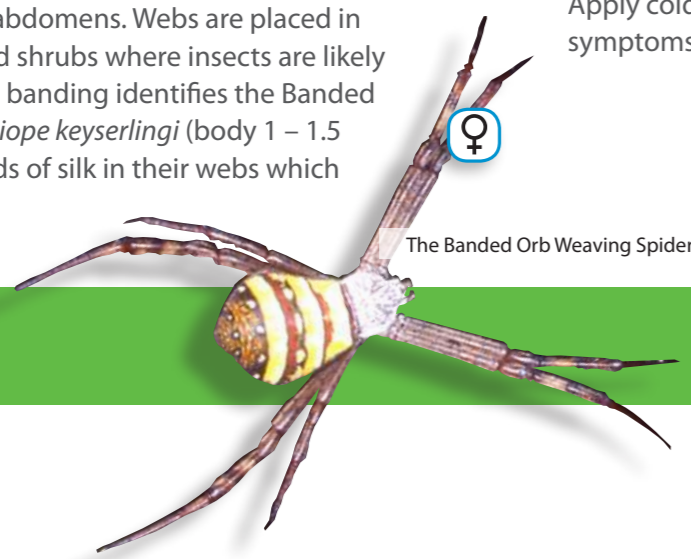
Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



Garden Orb Weaving Spider



Golden Orb Weaving Spider



The Banded Orb Weaving Spider

Sac Spiders

Slender Sac Spiders: *Cheiracanthium*

Stout Sac Spiders: *Clubiona*

Distribution

Throughout Australia in forest and grassland habitats.

Identification and habits

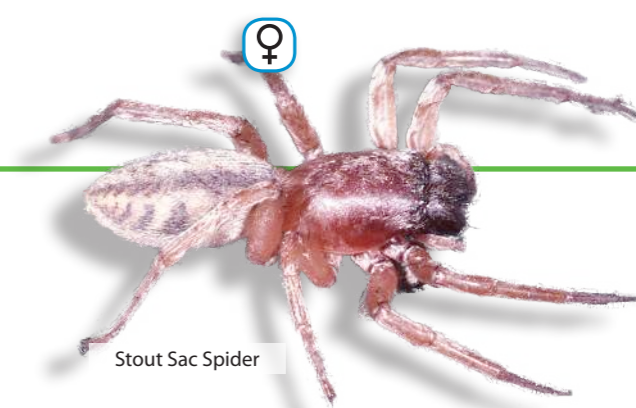
Hunting spiders, 1 – 1.5 cm body length, that make small cylindrical or ovoid silk retreat sacs. Slender Sac Spiders are common hunters on foliage in bush and garden. Males especially, have slender bodies, large jaws and long, thin legs. Most are shades of cream, brown or yellow. Their retreat sac is made of folded leaves or grass blades. They sometimes enter houses. Stout Sac Spiders have stronger legs with robust, cylindrical bodies, reddish brown to fawn in colour. They may be found on house walls and fences but are most common in bushland under bark and in leaf litter.

Bite

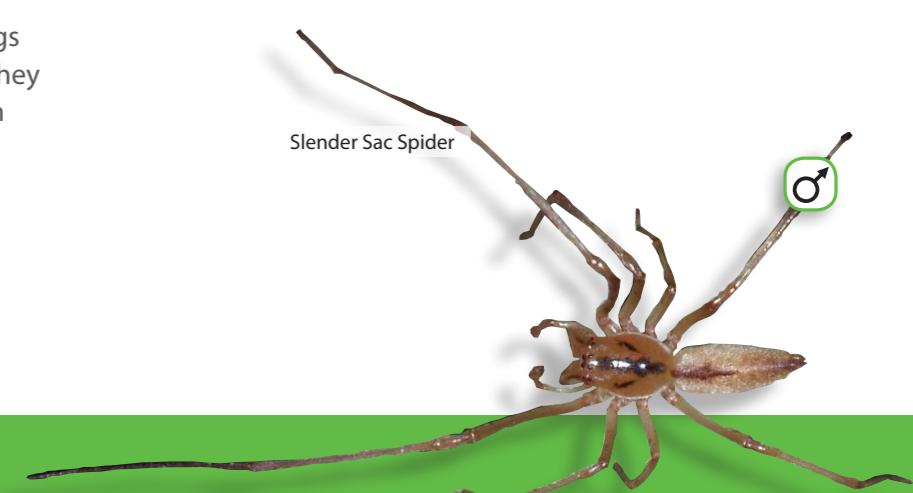
Bites are not common and symptoms are usually minor, although *Cheiracanthium* bites have caused headache, nausea and minor skin ulceration.

First Aid

Apply cold pack to relieve pain if necessary. Seek medical attention if symptoms persist.



Stout Sac Spider



Slender Sac Spider