



## Unwanted Houseguests

**F**all is right around the corner, and it's time to ready your home against overwintering pests who seek harborage from the cold by nesting in wall voids of homes and other structures.

- **Inspect your home, inside and out.** Start by inspecting for cracks and crevices along window and door frames, building corners, etc.
- **Look high and low.** Grab a ladder to view attic vents and soffits. Any light or air currents penetrating the inside of the attic need to be sealed or screened. An extendable mirror is a great tool for viewing hard-to-see places.
- **Check around all utility boxes, pipes, and wires.** Any "hole" on the outside of a building

is susceptible to pest entry, especially those larger than the width of a pencil.

- **Silicone caulk or sealants** work great for closing up minor gaps, especially around AC lines. Do not use expandable foam because it can degrade over time and it is easy for mice and other rodents to gnaw right through it.
- **Hardware mesh**, like the kind used on door and window screens, can be nailed or stapled in place behind vent openings or covers to prevent pest entry.

We can help you with preventative treatments. Call us for an appointment today!

## Spider 101

**A** spider is a spider, but have you ever wondered about those spiders you see skittering across the kitchen counter or bathroom floor? Whatever happened to spiders staying on their webs? The simple answer is that there are two general types of spiders that we encounter in and around homes – web builders and hunters.

**Web builders** spin intricate webs in well-protected and low-breeze areas to catch insects to prey upon. These spiders tend to look a bit delicate with long legs, and usually sit very still on their webs for hours at a time.

- **Cobweb spiders** are often encountered inside and outside homes, and build irregular webs. The black widow is probably the most well known species of cobweb spiders because the females are known to have a dangerous bite. The female is normally shy, but becomes aggressive when protecting her eggs. Webs are built in undisturbed areas, so make it a habit to move things around, air out the basement or attic, and allow some light in.
- **Cellar spiders** are most common in dark and damp places such as cellars, basements, and crawlspaces. They are often found curled on or hanging down



Black widow spider



Cellar spider



Jumping spider

## Spider 101 (continued from page 1)



Funnel web spider



Wolf spider



Crab spider

from their extensive webs in dark corners, and are often mistaken for daddy-long-legs when seen running away.

- **Funnel web spiders** construct webs that look a lot like funnels, as their name suggests. They hide at the narrow end of the funnel and venture out when they feel the vibrations of an insect crossing onto the web, hoping to catch its next meal.
- The webs created by **orb weaver spiders** are the familiar circular and flat webs you often see in bushes. Orb weavers vary in size and can get to be about 1 inch long depending upon the species, but they are not considered to be dangerous though some can bite if handled or threatened.

**Hunters** actively search for their prey, and oftentimes frighten people when they are seen on the prowl due to their larger size and bulky appearance. They build webs generally for resting purposes.

- **Wolf spiders** are fast runners, and often confused with tarantulas because they are hairy, large, and dark brownish in color. They generally live outside but may venture inside basements or ground-level floors in search of prey. Though they are not aggressive, they may bite if handled.
- **Jumping spiders** can jump many times their own length at a moment's notice to capture prey or avoid a threat. They have great vision, and appear to have two very large eyes and six smaller ones. Most species are brightly colored, though some are black with spots of orange or red and thus mistaken for black widows. They usually hunt during the day and live outdoors, but may become established indoors around windows and entry doors due to the availability of prey.
- **Crab spiders** have a flattened body, and hold their legs at right angles to their sides to form a crablike appearance. Many of the species have horns or other ornaments on the abdomen to ward off potential predators. Crab spiders that inhabit trees or hunt on the ground are usually gray, brown, or black in color while those that frequent flowers are bright red, yellow, orange, white, and/or green. ■

# Keeping Spiders at Bay

Spider sightings seem more common during the fall as more people rummage through basements, attics, and garages to store away remnants of summer activities and retrieve decorations for upcoming holidays. If you find yourself “attacked” by one too many spider webs, consider the following recommendations.

## Regular sanitation routines should include:

- Removing trash, old boxes, old clothing, wood piles, rock piles, and other unwanted items out of and/or away from the house. Spiders prefer dark and undisturbed areas, especially if moisture accumulates.
- Store items off the floor and away from walls in basements, crawl spaces, attics, and garages, and reduce clutter. A good rule of thumb is to keep a 2-foot walking space between walls and stored items – air and light easily pass through making it unfavorable for spiders, and you can easily access stored items.
- Remove heavy vegetation and leaf litter around the foundation. Shade-cover from overhanging branches and bushes are great, but create cool environments that are high in moisture, which promote spider activity.

## Exclude spiders from entering the home by:

- Installing tight-fitting screens on windows and doors, as well as weather stripping and door sweeps. Replace torn screens as soon as possible.
- Seal or caulk cracks and crevices where spiders can enter the house (around utility entry points and around window frames).
- Equip vents in soffits, foundations, and roof gables with tight-fitting fine screens.
- Install yellow or sodium vapor light bulbs outdoors since these tend to attract fewer insects for spiders to eat.

## Non-chemical control methods include:

- Capture the spider and release it outdoors. Place a cup over the spider, slide a piece of paper underneath the cup to trap it, and carry it outside to set the spider free.
- Dust and vacuum thoroughly to remove spiders, webs, and egg sacs. Brooms are great for reaching webs in difficult locations, especially outdoors or in the basement.
- Step on it or use a fly swatter!



## SPOOKY SPIDER SNACKS

### Ingredients:

- 1 pack of round crackers
- 1 jar of peanut butter
- Thin pretzel sticks
- Raisins
- Butter knife

### Directions:

- Spread a small amount of peanut butter on one side of the cracker, using a butter knife.
- Break 4 pieces of pretzel sticks in half for “spider legs,” and place them on the peanut butter side.
- Spread a small amount of peanut butter on one side of another cracker, and place it on top of the pretzel legs to make a “sandwich.” Gently squeeze the two crackers together so the legs don’t fall out!
- Put a small dot of peanut butter on two raisins, and place on top of cracker for googly spider eyes and enjoy!



# SPIDERBITES



The brown recluse spider (above) is easily identified by the dark violin-shaped marking on the top of its thorax.



**M**ost spiders live outdoors, do not pose any health risks to people, and are generally helpful by keeping insect populations in check. However, all spiders have venom and use it to subdue their prey and to pre-digest their prey's bodily contents. Though all spiders have voluntary control of how much venom they inject during a bite, only a few species live near or inside human's homes, bite people, or have venom which can cause harm to people. If a spider bite is suspected, especially from a black widow or brown recluse, swelling and redness in the bitten area will occur. Clean the wound with soap and water, and use a cold pack on the site to alleviate the pain and swelling. Fevers, nausea, and abdominal pain may occur, in which case the bite victim should seek medical help. It is best to catch the spider that bit if at all possible for proper identification.

## The Black Widow

The Black Widow spider (pictured above) is probably the most recognized spider of all. The females are about one half inch long, with a spherical black abdomen marked with a red or orange hourglass. The males look completely different – about half the size of the female, brownish with variable red spots and white lines. The pain from a black widow bite is usually immediate, with maximum pain during the first one to three hours, and gradual subsidence after 12 to 48 hours. Major symptoms include fevers and increased blood pressure, and one should seek medical attention.

## The Brown Recluse

The Brown Recluse spider is the other medically important spider in the continental U.S. It is easily identified by the dark violin-shaped marking on the top of its thorax. Note on the map provided of the Brown Recluse's range, limited to most southern and central states. Brown recluse bites may not be felt right away, but a stinging pain may be felt up to eight hours after the occurrence. A small blister usually forms around the bitten area, and the dead tissue gradually sloughs away over a two week period. In severe cases, medical attention will be necessary in treating the dead skin tissue.

