The Spider Club NEWS

March 2023 Vol. 39, No. 1

"The Spider Club provides a fun, responsible, social learning experience, centred on spiders, their relatives, and on nature in general."

AUTUMN EDITION

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About the Spider Club

The Spider Club of Southern Africa is a non-profit organisation. Our aim is to encourage an interest in all arachnids and to promote this interest and the study of these animals by all suitable means.

Membership is open to anyone. People interested in joining the club may apply to any committee member for information.

Field outings, day visits, arachnid surveys and demonstrations, workshops, and exhibits are arranged from time to time. A diary of events and outings is published at the end of this newsletter.

Contact us

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at "The Spider Club of Southern Africa"

Your committee; always available and ready to help:

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Acknowledgements:

Our sincere gratitude goes to the following people for this edition of the newsletter:

- All the photographers of the photos used in this edition. Without you, these pages would be very dull.
- Astri Leroy, of course, for all her contributions, and informing me of any new content, as well as the entire SCSA Committee (Roulla, Jarrod, Henning, Desiré, Ruan, Joanie, Caren, and Jèan-Pierre) for their contributions.
- Jeanne van Aswegen, my colleague at Grammar Guardians and superior half, for proofreading the newsletter.
- Everyone on SCSA for all the interesting content.
- All the readers of this newsletter, and all the positive feedback we receive. Of course, keep the negative feedback coming, so that we can improve on this newsletter. All the readers of this newsletter, and all the positive feedback we receive. Of course, keep the negative feedback coming, so that we can improve on this newsletter.

From the Hub

Putting together this newsletter is quite a lot of work, but often very educational, because it usually requires a lot of reading, and finding out things I did not know before. People are often reluctant to accept new information, but this forms the basis of the learning process. For example, when a woman messaged me about her mother having an allergic reaction to a hermit spider's web (see page 7), I immediately wanted to dismiss it as hogwash, but then I did some reading and found that it is indeed possible in some species. In addition, I also have to stay on top of taxonomic changes, and decided to create a sub-section for it in the Snippets section.

Of course Astri usually tells me if she reads about any changes, because I often miss a few. Even after resigning as chairperson, she is still very much dedicated to the club and educating people about spiders (see page 5). Besides Astri helping me, I also depend on people making suggestions. In the previous newsletter I asked for people to send me any arachnid-related news, observations, reviews, funnies, etc. Only one person responded and asked if we could include a piece about finding spiders in urban areas (see page 22). Any other ideas are welcome, but we would prefer if people write something themselves.

While some people inevitably let me down sometimes, I'm lucky to have people who are very dedicated, such as Ruan Booysen, who not only helped me organise the second Bloemfontein Spider Walk (see page 30), but also worked hard to finish the very detailed species list in time for this issue. These species lists are very useful for SANSA (South African National Survey of Arachnida) and help us determine new records and species. We were very fortunate to have two other well-known arachnologists join us on this spider walk, namely Charles Haddad and Jan Andries Neethling.

Another reliable source of content for the newsletter is Jarrod Todd, who always takes stunning photos on the spider walks and also compiles the species lists, although the spiders are not identified in a lab and are usually released after a spider walk. Obviously none of us who love spiders really want to preserve them so that they can be properly identified, but it is a necessary process in taxonomy and yes, also ecology.

Two other people I've always come to rely on are Cecile Roux and Wessel Pretorius, who, only a few hours after the last spider walk at Kloovenburg Wine and Olive Farm, provided text and photos for the newsletter (see page 44). Sadly, this spider walk was cut short by rain. One of the people who attended this walk was Colette Stott, who is working on Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman's new field guide, which will be on the shelves in August this year. We can't wait! On that note, we would also like to congratulate Ansie on her honorary membership to the International Society of Arachnology during the 22nd International Congress of Arachnology in Uruguay.

Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Cecile could not write her usual piece about all her spider trips, but she will continue as usual in the next issue. She is a true naturalist at heart, and manages to find some truly amazing spiders. She also has by far the most spider observations on iNaturalist (currently

almost 4000, miles ahead of the second most observations of 1 442). She always says it's not about the numbers, but it does add a fun element to the process. On that note, I recently uploaded my 1000th observation, but I seriously doubt I'll ever catch up to the more active users on iNaturalist. This website is truly an amazing resource for amateur naturalist, and the more people use it, the better it gets. Sometimes, however, they get things horribly wrong, like identifying a spider as a plant (see page 55). Fortunately, iNaturalist consists of a very large community of knowledgeable people to give a proper ID.

We are running a little low on Anka's Goggastories (see page 48), and soon we will have to find something else to fill the gap. I'm sure Anka will write more stories, and will keep us informed of all her observations in our neighbouring country (and my country of birth), Namibia. Even though she is not on Facebook, she is a Spider Club member, and often updates us on anything unusual. See, for example, the stunning pictures on pages 17 and 18 that Rainer Foelix took of a wrapped prey that she sent to him.

For the first time ever in our more than three years of doing the Spider of the Month (SOTM), we had a top five consisting of only one family (surprise, surprise, it's Salticidae). This was also the first time I stooped as "low" as to use the @everyone tag, which tags all 53 000+ people on the group. This resulted in a record 700 people casting their votes; unfortunately most of these people only voted for the "cute" spiders. Nothing wrong with that, but I do like more diversity in our top five, including rare and unusual spiders instead of only the puppy-dog-eyed spiders. Fortunately we also have an "honourable mention" section in this newsletter (see page 54) where the overlooked but interesting spiders get some recognition.

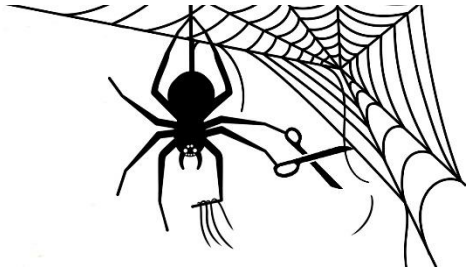
Our diary is a little empty this issue. Jarrod has some spider walks lined up, and Frans Pretorius is talking about a possible spider walk at Boegoeberg Dam in the Northern Cape during the June holiday, but unfortunately nothing is confirmed yet.

After missing our very first Yebo Gogga last year, we will be back this year (17 to 21 May), thanks to our Gauteng admins and committee members. Astri will be there on 17 and 18 May, and some of our other members will be there on 20 and 21 May. The Spider Club hopes to see some of you there!

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this issue, and please remember to provide feedback on what you think and where we can improve.

Yours truly
Rudi Steenkamp (Chairman)

Snippets



The King of Sting, Justin Schmidt, passes away

An old photo of our very own Astri Leroy with Justin Schmidt in Chicago in "19 sometimeorother", according to Astri.

We are sad to hear of the passing of Justin Orvel Schmidt, who was, among other things, widely known for creating the Schmidt Pain Index, for which he shared an Ig Nobel Prize (a parody of the real Nobel Prize) in Physiology and Entomology. His pain scale ranges from 1 to 4, where 1 (e.g., anthophorid bee) is described as "Almost pleasant, a lover just bit your earlobe a little too hard", to 4 (e.g., bullet ant), which is described as "Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch nail in your heel". His expertise was in honey bees (nutrition, chemical communication, physiology, ecology, and behaviour), but he also studied the venom of bees, ants, and wasps. He literally suffered for his work, and by his count was stung more than 1 000 times, often willingly. He was a co-author of *Insect Defenses: Adaptive Mechanisms and Strategies of Prey and Predators*, and the author of *The Sting of the Wild*, and also authored hundreds of peer-reviewed papers. He also dabbled in arachnids, and studied the mating habits of vinegaroons (Thelyphonida). He passed away on 18 February 2023 from complications related to Parkinson's Disease. He was 75 years old. Hopefully someone who knew him will write a detailed obituary that we can include in a future edition.

Astri still representing the Spider Club

Astri Leroy might have resigned as chairperson of the Spider Club, but she's certainly not done with educating people about spiders, as well as the club. On 21 January 2023, she gave a talk at SANPARKS to their Junior Honorary Rangers at their head office in Pretoria, and also took them out into the garden to look for spiders. Astri said: "The presentation was in the swanky circular boardroom where each 'delegate', i.e. kid, had a microphone to ask questions. The children were great and most of them brought their parents, so there was quite a crowd and enormous enthusiasm. The garden is mostly indigenous woodland so spider hunting worked a treat. The most exciting for the children was finding lots of brown button spiders, male and female, under the broad leaves of some kind of

dracaena. Even *Xysticus* and lycosids were greeted with shrieks of glee!"

Astri will do the same again on 13 May in Lichtenburg. It is clear that SANPARKS has taken a liking to her. Karen, the organiser of the presentation, said: "Thanks so much Astri, the kids had a ball and the parents can't commend you enough for the amazing outing. Really and truly, thanks again for enthusing the kids and their parents for Spider appreciation."

Astri also gave an hour-long talk to the British Tarantula Society, where she spoke about the Spider Club and what we do, as well as that we're the second oldest "spidery" society in the world (after the British Arachnological Society).

She will also help out at Yebo Gogga in May, manning the Spider Club's stall for two days in the week. Thank you, Astri, for all the work you continue to do for the club and for spiders!

The Spider Club on Radio Rosestad

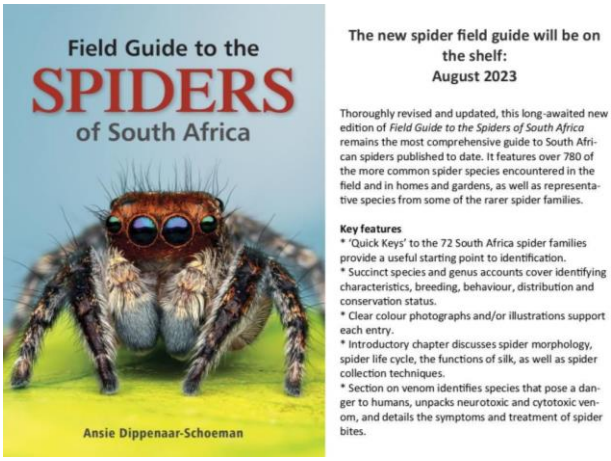
On 16 February, Rudi Steenkamp, the chairperson of the Spider Club, was interviewed on Radio Rosestad by Gerda Niemann. It was a short interview of 11 minutes, where Rudi briefly talked about how his love for spiders started, what the Spider Club is about, and more information on the Bloemfontein Spider Walk of that coming weekend. Gerda said that she would like to have a longer interview some time, as part of her show on "interesting people of Bloemfontein". The interview (in Afrikaans) can be found here: https://app-1927.iono.fm/e/1281634?lang=en&fbclid=IwAR1YBMrQo2JX-x_yUQa1uov12EN_hPdKEYS8yoLPKMoMDu7q_QfWuVH3kXw

Ansie made honorary member of ISA

During the latest International Congress of Arachnology (ICA), Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman was offered an honorary membership to the International Society of Arachnology (ISA). This makes her not only one of a handful (17) of honorary members, but also the first ever arachnologist from Africa to become an honorary member. Jason Dunlop, the ISA's secretariat, stated: "The society's council would like, in this way, to recognise your key role in the development and encouragement of African arachnology, your important status as the first female President of our society, as well as your co-authorship of extremely useful identification manuals for African spiders and spiders in general." We at the Spider Club congratulate her and are extremely proud of her. She thoroughly deserves this.

Updated field guide available in August

Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman's updated field guide will be available in August this year. It has been a very long wait, but I'm sure it will be worth it.



In memoriam

Jason Dunlop, the Secretariat of the International Society of Arachnology (ISA) recently circulated the following regarding recent deaths in the world of arachnology:

Gerald Newlands (South Africa, later Canada), was an expert on the taxonomy and distribution of southern African scorpions as part of his wider interests in medical entomology. As well as describing several new scorpion species himself, the species *Hadogenes newlandsi* was named by Lorenzo Prendini in his honour.

Manfred Moritz (Germany) was my predecessor as curator of arachnids here in the Berlin Museum. Manfred studied and worked in Greifswald, before accepting the curatorship in Berlin. He mostly worked on oribatid mites, as well as local German spiders and harvestmen, as well as writing the arachnid chapter of the *Lehrbuch der Spezielle Zoologie*. He was a very diligent curator who carefully documented much of the Berlin collection, as well as co-authoring several important type catalogues which remain extremely useful to this day in managing our material.

Hieronymous Dastych (Germany). Although he was more of an acarologist than an arachnologist, he may have been familiar to some of you as curator of the arachnid collections in the Hamburg Museum. Danilo Harms from Hamburg has asked me to pass on the following message:

"Hieronymous Dastych curated the collections of arachnids, myriapods and basal arthropods in Hamburg from 1992 until his retirement in 2012. He also continued working in the collections as a volunteer after his retirement. Dastych never focused on arachnids or myriapods, but was a well-known tardigrade expert and published almost 100 research papers on this order starting from 1969 onwards. Amongst these are some monographs such as 'The Tardigrada of Poland' (1988). He also authored (or co-authored) 14 papers on mites. Hieronymous Dastych was Polish, but lived and died in Hamburg. He was a diligent curator and kept the collections in very good order. He also fostered collection growth in the mite collections and built up one of the largest tardigrade collections in Europe."

Allergy to spider webs

A member recently sent me a private message about her mother seemingly having an allergic reaction to a hermit spider (*Nephilingis cruentata*) web. At first I wanted to dismiss her concerns as unfounded, but then I did some reading, and found some studies that might explain an adverse reaction to spider webs.

The first study[1] mentions that a close relative of *N. cruentata*, namely *Nephila antipodiana*, uses a chemical repellent (2-pyrrolidinone) to prevent ants from invading their web. This is apparently also used by other orb-web spiders whose webs are strong enough for ants to walk on, while ones with flimsier webs do not bother. A more recent study[2] found that another close relative, *Trichonephila clavipes*, uses a neurotoxin-like protein on its web, which acts as a paralytic for prey, and that could also kill them just by being in contact with the silk.

Apart from these chemicals produced by the spider, another option might be pollen grains or fungal spores caught in the web, which might cause an allergic reaction[3]. Either way, it's not something I've really given much thought to until now.

Tropical tent-web spiders considered in agricultural pest control

The cosmopolitan species, *Cyrtophora citricola* (tropical tent-web spider), is being considered as an environmentally friendly pest control method, specifically against the tomato leafminer (*Tuta absolata*), which is a major pest of tomato crops all over the world[4].

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1 Zhang, S., Koh, T.H., Seah, W.K., Lai, Y.H., Elgar, M.A. & Li, D. 2011. A novel property of spider silk: Chemical defence against ants. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 279(1734):1824-1830. https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2011.2193

2 Esteves, F.G., Dos Santos Pinto, J.R.A., Ferro, M., Sialana, F.J., Smidak, R., Rares, L.C., Nussbaumer, T., Rattei, T., Bilban, M., Bacci, M. Jr., Lubec, G. & Palma, M.S. 2020. Revealing the venomous secrets of the spider's web. *Journal of Proteome Research*, 19(8): 3044-3059.

3 Seetharam, D., Ramakrishna, R.P.H. & Narmada, D. 2017. Aeropalynological study of spider webs from University College of Science, Saifabad Campus, Hyderabad, Telangana State. *Bioinfolet*, 14(2):113-117.

4 Roberts-McEwen, T.A., Deutsch, E.K., Mowery, M.A. & Grinsted, L. 2022. Group-living spider *Cyrtophora citricola* as a potential novel biological control agent of the tomato pest *Tuta absolata*. *Insects*, 14(1):34. doi: 10.3390/insects14010034

There are, however, mixed opinions on this spider species, and in some cases they're considered an agricultural pest in especially citrus and coffee plantations in South America. I've had personal experience with this, where hundreds of *C. citricola* inhabited our lemon tree, and the tree stopped bearing fruit, presumably because pollinators couldn't pollinate the flowers. The tree, however, was unharmed. After a massive translocation effort, where more than 100 of them were moved elsewhere, the tree bore fruit again that season. *C. citricola* are semi-communal, and are often found in groups, where their massive webs often merge. These spiders don't resort to cannibalism, so these groups are highly successful in catching prey. While the reduction in the use of chemical pesticides does sound promising, more research is needed to determine the effect on beneficial insects that pollinate crops, especially considering their observed negative impact on other agricultural sectors such as citrus and coffee production.

Asian Society of Arachnology (ASA) website revamped

The ASA recently revamped their website, thanks to their new webmaster, Nicky Bay, whom many will know from his extraordinary macro photos of spiders. According to the ASA president, "the ASA Council hopes that the website will evolve to become a vibrant virtual marketplace for ideas and information, and an effervescent classroom to raise the collective standards in Asian arachnology". The website offers valuable resources, such as information on books about spiders, scientific journals and papers, as well as educational material under the "Classroom" page, where people can learn how to identify spiders, draw spiders, macro photography, etc. The new website can be found here:
https://www.asianarachnology.com/

Silk gene sequences of 446 spider species catalogued

Spider silk, being the strongest natural material known, has many benefits, among which a sustainable, biodegradable, and renewable polymer. Scientists[5] have recently measured the structural, thermal, mechanical, and hydration properties of the dragline silk of 446 spider species, which will help in the future designs of biomaterials.

AI-generated salticids

Some examples of AI-generated jumping spiders, created on the Deep Dream Generator engine by David Hill.

The recent popularity of artificial intelligence (AI) engines gave David Hill the idea to see what characteristics constitute the archetype of a jumping spider[6]. Since some insects and other prey mimic jumping spiders, and jumping spiders are less likely to prey on something that resembles another jumping spider, it's useful to know what these spiders probably see as "one of them". Some of the most common characteristics included the horizontal row of four big eyes, a dorsal "fringe", and a clypeus. See the whole range of salticid archetypes, generated by various AI engines, here: https://www.peckhamia.com/peckhamia/PECKHAMIA_288.1.pdf

[5] Arakawa, K. *et al*. 2022. 1000 spider silkomes: Linking sequences to silk physical properties. *Science Advances*, 8(41). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abo60.

[6] Hill, D.E. 2023. Archetypes of the jumping spider (Araneae: Salticidae) as derived by intelligent machines. *Peckhamia*, 288(1):1-30.

Geometric regularity studied in non-orb-weaving spiders

A recent study[7] examined the geometric elements in the webs of certain non-orb-weaving spiders to determine how the spiders create almost perfect geometrical elements. While this has been studied extensively in orb-weaving spiders, it has been overlooked in other web-building spiders, and this study is the first to examine these geometrical elements in Leptonetidae and Telemidae. It was previously suggested that the regularly spaced horizontal lines of Ochyroceratidae and Psilodercidae were created in a single sweep when the spider spreads the spigots of the spinnerets, but the study found that these horizontal lines are 10 to 20 times wider than the distance between the spigots, which contrasts this hypothesis. The researchers also state that they "found cues of viscid silk in the parallel lines of the psilodercid *Althepus* and broadened piriform gland spigots that may be responsible of its production". They further state that they "found reports of regular webs in 31 spider families, including 20 families that are not orb weavers and hypothesize that the two basic aspects of regularity (parallel lines spaced at regular intervals, and radial lines spaced at regular angles) probably appeared many times in the evolution of spiders".

TAXONOMIC CHANGES

New genus of Entypesidae in South Africa

The family Entypesidae, commonly referred to as tube-burrow or wishbone-burrow trapdoor spiders, is one new genus richer, namely *Ekapa*, after a recent revision[8]. The family Entypesidae itself is quite new, and was only created in 2020[9], among many other taxonomic changes to the Mygalomorphae. The genus *Ekapa* contains one species, namely *E. curvipes*, which was moved from *Hermacha. Ekapa* is the isiXhosa name for Cape Town, which is the type locality.

99 new *Pseudopoda* species described

The huntsman genus *Pseudopoda* (Sparassidae), which was described by Peter Jäger (2000) was recently revised, and 99 new species were described. This revision[10] is available as open access. These spiders can be found in East, South, and Southeast Asia, and with a total of 147 species now form the third largest genus of huntsman spiders, after *Heteropoda* (189 species) and *Olios* (166 species).

New genus and 13 new jumping spider species from northern Vietnam

A new salticid genus (*Zabka*) was recently described[11] from northern Vietnam, together with 12 new species in the genera *Chinattus*, *Eupoa*, *Indopadilla*, *Synagelides*, and *Yaginumaella*. The new genus is named in honour of Marek Michał Żabka, a Polish arachnologist who is responsible for describing 100 salticid species from Vietnam, 51 of which were new to science.

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7 Ramírez, M.J., Wolff, J.O., Jäger, P., Pavlek, M., Pérez-González, A., Magalhaes, I. & Michalik, P. 2023. Geometric regularity in webs of non-orb-weaving spiders. *Ecology and Evolution*, 13(3):39839. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.9839

8 Ríos-Tamayo, D., Lyle, R. & Sole, C.L. 2023. Ekapa, a new genus of mygalomorph spiders (Araneae, Entypesidae) from South Africa. *African Invertebrates*, 64(1):1-12.

9 Opatova, V., Hamilton, C.A., Hedin, M., De Oca, L.M., Král, J. & Bond, J.E. 2020 Phylogenetic systematics and evolution of the spider infraorder Mygalomorphae using genomic scale data. *Systematic* Biology, 69(4):671-707. https://doi.org/10.1093/sysbio/syz064

10 Zhang, H., Zhu, Y., Zhong, Y., Jäger, P. & Lieu, J. 2023. A taxonomic revision of the spider genus Pseudopoda Jäger, 2000 (Araneae: Sparassidae) from East, South and Souteast Asia. *Megataxa*, 9(1):1-304.

11 Wang, C., Li, S. & Pham, D-S. 2023. Thirteen species of jumping spiders from northern Vietnam (Araneae, Salticidae). *ZooKeys*, 1148:119-165.

Iran moves from one *Dysdera* sp. to 15

The genus *Dysdera* (Dysderidae) was recently revised in Iran, and 14 new species were described[12]. Iran previously had only three dysderid species, namely *Dysdera pocoki*, *Dysderella transcaspica*, and *Harpactea parthica*. In addition, two fossil genera (*Mistura* and *Segistriites*) were also examined, and *Segistriites* was transferred to the family Segestriidae.

New species of giant trapdoor spider found in Australia

Euoplos dignitas. Photo: Queensland Museum

Researchers[13] at the Queensland Museum of Australia recently described a rare new species of trapdoor spider in the family Idiopidae. This big trapdoor spider is approximately 50 mm in body length (excluding the legs), and was named *Euoplos dignitas*. This species is found only in the Queensland Brigalow Belt. According to a conservation assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List, this spider is most likely endangered. The genus *Euoplos* now contains 25 species, all found only in Australia.

19 new species of Australian flatties

The genus *Karaops* (family Selenopidae) is found only in Australia, and they are now 19 species richer, after a recent revision[14]. This brings the total of *Karaops* species to 54, all described by Sarah Crews.

[12] Zamani, A., Marusik, Y.M. & Szűts, T. 2023. A survey of the spider genus *Dysdera* Latreille, 1804 (Araneae, Dysderidae) in Iran, with fourteen new species and notes on two fossil genera. *ZooKeys*, 1146:43-86.

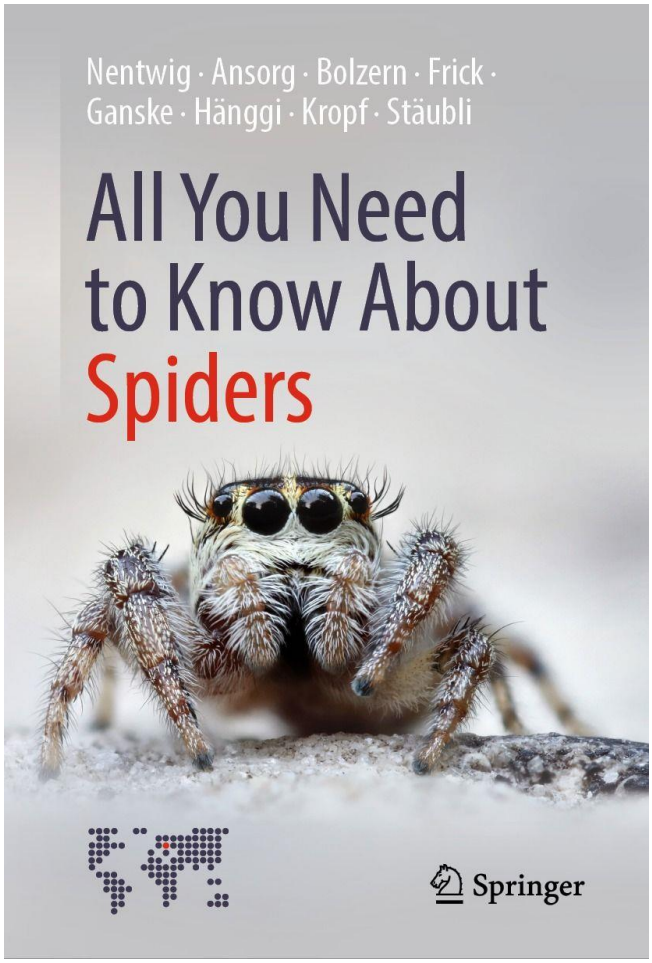
[13] Rix, M.D., Wilson, J.D. & Oliver, P.M. 2023. A new species of endangered giant trapdoor spider (Mygalomorphae: Idiopidae: *Euoplos*) from the Brigalow Belt of inland Queensland, Australia. *The Journal of Arachnology*, 51(1):27-36, https://doi.org/10.1636/JoA-S-21-056

[14] Crews, S.C. 2023. But wait, there's more! Descriptions of new species and undescribed sexes of flattie spiders (Araneae, Selenopidae) from Australia. *ZooKeys*, 1150(1-2):1-189.

Book Review

All You Need to Know About Spiders

By Caren Neal



Cover photo: *Macaroeris nidicolens* (Salticidae). ©Michael Schäfer

Authors: Wolfgang Nentwig, Jutta Ansorg, Angelo Bolzern, Holger Frick, Anne-Sarah Ganske, Ambros Hänggi, Christian Kropf, Anna Stäubli

Price: R420 (ebook), R490 (hardcover)

Pages: 245

ISBN: 978-3-030-90881-2

What an interesting and enjoyable book to read. This book provides us with so much knowledge and covers the basics of spiders and their fascinating little world. It is informative and a lot less tedious to read than some of the other spider books I've read. This is definitely not a spider identification book and doesn't cover a lot of species. Rather, it covers the basics of spider anatomy; how spiders see, hear, smell, taste, and feel, how they move, how they mate, how they make silk, etc.

This book may not appeal to the more experienced and knowledgeable spider enthusiast. The content is more basic and covers the subject matter in the broader sense, but is perfect for beginners and answers all the questions we all have when first starting to learn about spiders. In fact, the book covers most, if not all, the most commonly asked questions on the Facebook spider groups, such as how to tell the sex of a spider and the basics of their eye arrangements.

This book also covers the basics of the sac spider bite (*Cheiracanthium* sp.). Their stance is that the sac spiders bite shows no signs of necrosis. There is a chapter about spiders in and around our homes, and how we can attract them to our gardens.

All in all, I would recommend this book to anyone who is still learning and would like to know more about our eight-legged friends. My children have definitely been enjoying it too. There is so much they didn't know before.

Observations

Prey records

Here are a few interesting prey records posted on Facebook recently.

Latrodectus geometricus records

Charmaine King posted a video of a brown button spider (Latrodectus geometricus) with a snail, which was still alive. She said:

"A few months ago we filmed this button with her snail dinner. She'd actually hauled it up from the ground to the ceiling! Was fascinating to watch. Central Drakensberg."

Button/widow spiders often lay "ground traps", which are threads of silk stuck to the ground under high tension. When a ground-dwelling prey triggers one of those threads, the tension in the thread is released, often lifting the prey off the ground.

This is just a screenshot of the video. See the video here: https://web.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/posts/5744188065618054/

Due to their very strong silk and strong neurotoxic venom, *Latrodectus* spp. can also take down larger things than a snail, such as this unfortunate mouse. Caz Johnson took a video and some photos of this mouse struggling to free itself. He does mention that he used rat poison, so suspects the mouse may already have been a little weak. The video, however, shows the mouse struggling quite a bit. See the full post here: https://web.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/permalink/5842149522488574

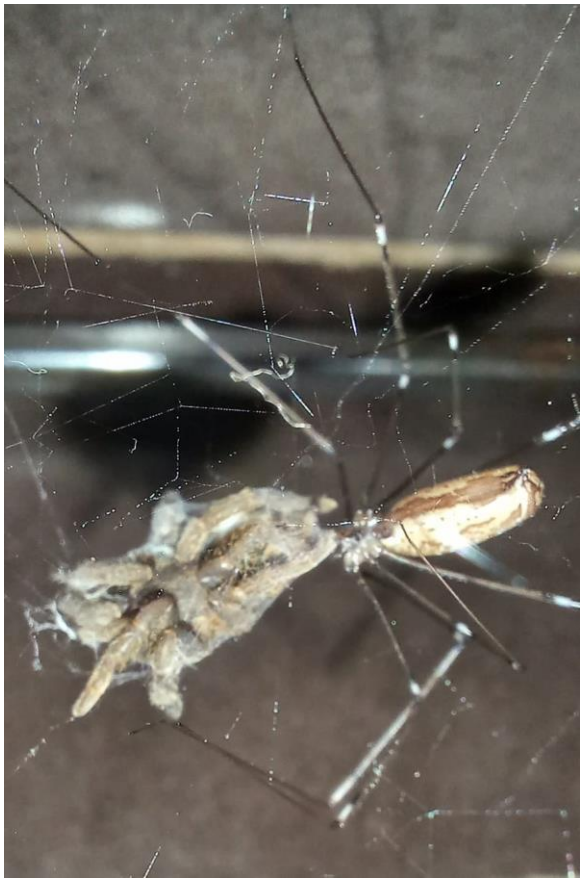
And here is an *L. geometricus* that took down a Cape creeper scorpion (*Opisthacanthus capensis*), photographed by Lizanne Geldenhuys in Knysna, and *L. geometricus* with a gecko, photographed by Sue Dates-Fuller in Barberton.

Latrodectus species aren't always the predator, but sometimes the prey. Here is a tailed comb-footed spider (*Rhomphaea* sp.) feeding on a mature male *L. geometricus*, photographed by Cecile Roux in Paarl. *Rhomphaea* spp. are araneophagous, and will often wander into another spider's web, and throw a triangular net over them. Sometimes they remain in their own webs, and catch spiders that stray onto its web. Since both these spiders are cobweb spiders in the family Theridiidae, it is not clear who the "trespasser" was, but it is more likely that the Rhomphaea entered the *L. geometricus* web.

Other prey records

Latrodectus spp. aren't the only spiders that can take down a mouse, but in this case the hermit spider (*Nephilingis cruentata*), posted on a WhatsApp group by someone called "Malan" apparently from Mozambique, probably just got lucky when this spectacled dormouse (*Graphiurus ocularis*) took a wrong turn, or fell into the web.

Marcél Labuschagne posted this spitting spider (*Scytodes* sp.) that invaded another spider's web and caught it. The prey is suspected to be an Australian grey house spider (*Badumna longinqua*). It is quite unusual because spitting spiders "spit" a sticky liquid at their prey, which traps the prey to the substrate, which is almost always a flat surface, and not a web, which has a very small surface area.



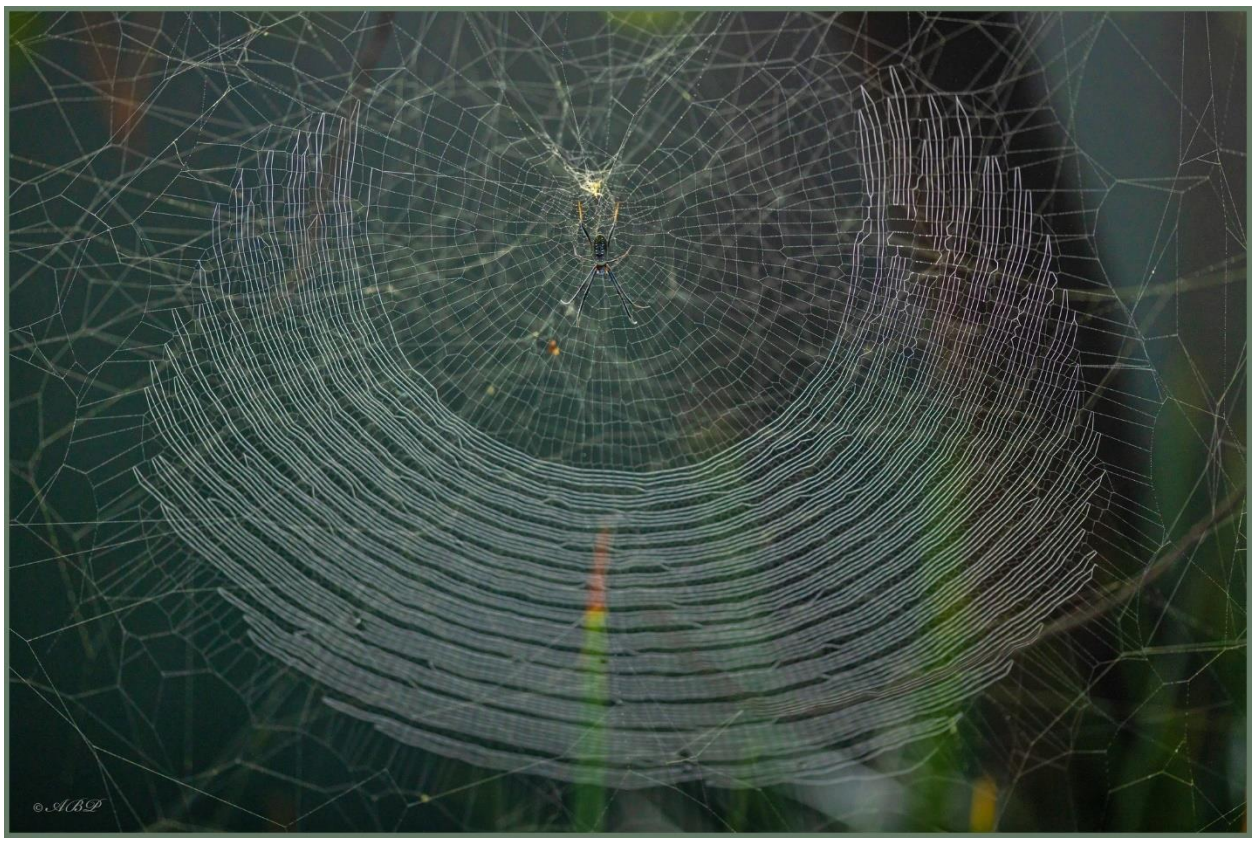
Even the daintiest spiders can take down much bigger prey, such as this common daddy longlegs (*Smeringopus* sp.) feeding on a small baboon spider (Harpactirinae), photographed by Melissa Robbertze in Witbank, or this false house button spider (*Theridion* sp.) feeding on a gecko, photographed by Zelda Roberts.

And lastly, not an unexpected prey record, but still worthy of sharing. This is a fishing nursery-web spider (*Nilus* sp.; Pisauridae) feeding on a dragonfly. These spiders are mostly found on or near water, where they hunt aquatic animals like small fish and tadpoles, often by sitting at the edge of the water with their legs feeling for any ripples in the water. Sometimes, however, they will catch prey on the water surface, such as in this case, where a dragonfly fell prey. Photographed by Reinier Terblanche in Umdoni Park, KZN.

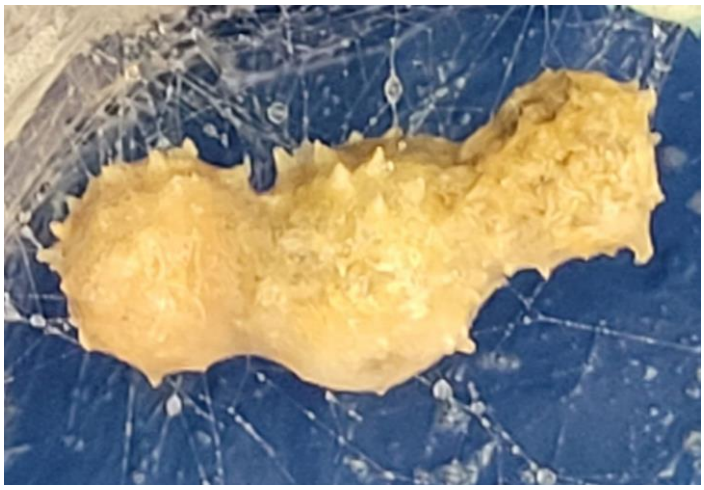
Other observations

Left: A grass lynx spider (*Oxyopes* sp.; Oxyopidae), photographed by George Wilson in Maun, Botswana. **Middle:** An unusual variation of a brown button spider (*Latrodectus geometricus*), photographed by Joey Badenhorst in Pretoria. **Right:** Mandela's orb-web spider (*Singafrotypa mandela*), photographed by Deoné Röhrbeck in Leeupoort Holiday Resort.

Left: A nematode worm (family Mermithidae) exiting a hairy field spider (*Neoscona* sp.). Photographed by Denise Weyer. **Right:** A tailless whip scorpion (*Damon* sp.) busy moulting. Apparently it ate the exuvia afterwards. Attempts to find out who the photographer is were unsuccessful.



A black-legged golden orb weaver (*Trichonephila fenestrata*) with some very interesting stabilimenta in her web. While stabilimenta are not unheard of in this species, we don't often see such a stunning photo of them. Photographed by Angus Burns in Newcastle, KZN.



A rather unusual yellow variation of a brown button spider (*Latrodectus geometricus*) and her even more unusual string of egg sacs. Not sure what caused the sacs to be "fused" like this, or if she laid them all in one go. Photographed by Dionè Moolman.

Anka Eichhoff from Namibia found these food parcels wrapped by a tropical tent-web spider (*Cyrtophora citricola*).

She also sent the photos to Prof. Yael Lubin, an Israeli arachnologist, who asked Anka to send it to Rainier Foelix to photograph under a scanning electron microscope (SEM):

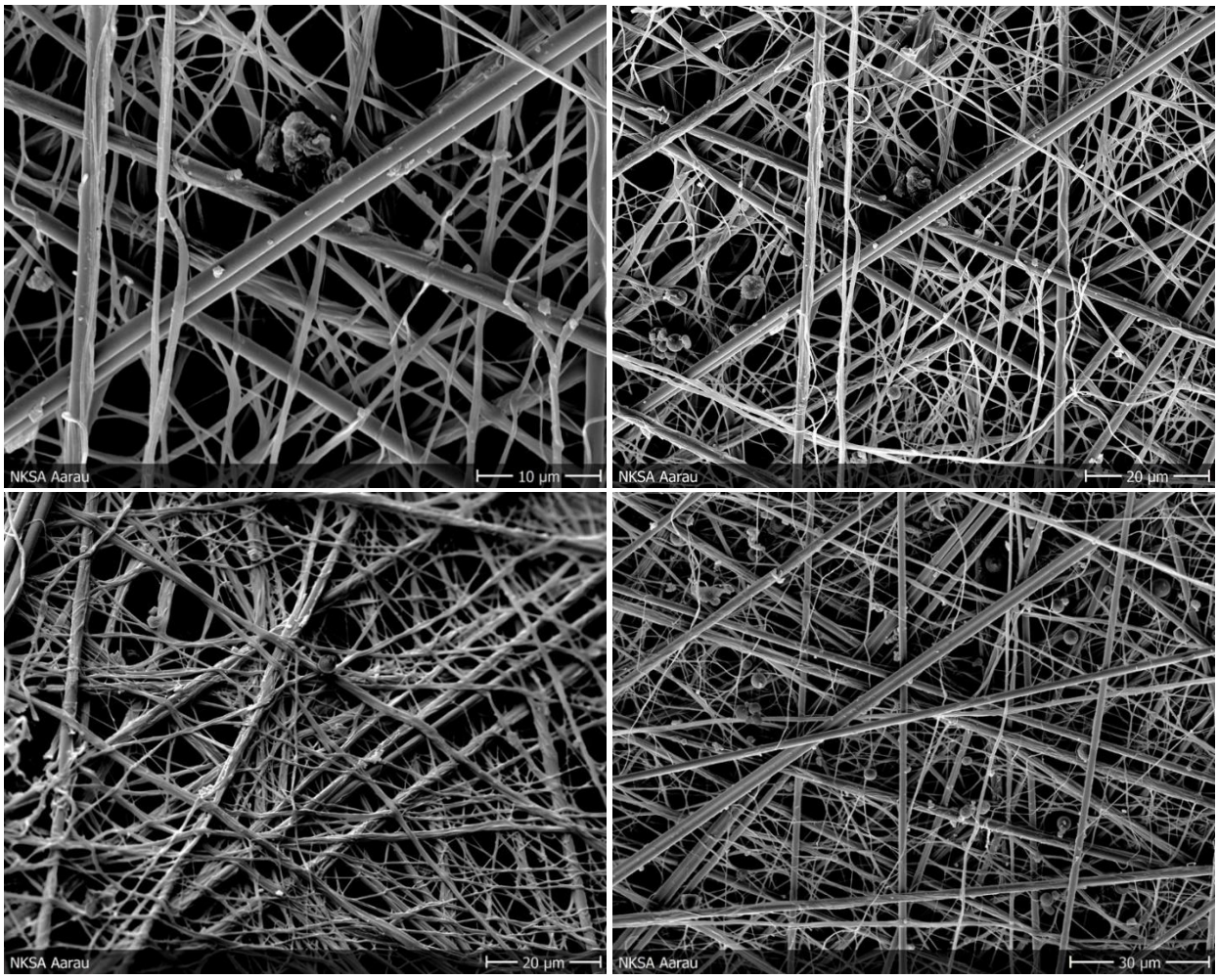
Hi Anka,

These are quite amazing. The wrapping appears to be very regular. By crisscrossing the threads, I imagine that the threads are held more tightly than if it were in a single direction. Think forming a ball of string – it's the same. This may be particularly important when wrapping a moth because of the loose scales.

Did you keep these prey items? If so, I wonder if you could send them to Rainer Foelix in Switzerland to photograph with SEM.

Yael

These were some of Rainer's results:



Photos of *Cyrtophora citricola* silk used to wrap prey, taken by Rainer Foelix with an SEM.

Photo by Rainer Foelix.

Rainer sent Anka the following text (translated from German):

I took SEM photographs of a wrapped fruit chafer, exactly on the middle of the back, where various binding threads cross. These threads are not only diagonal, but also vertical and horizontal threads that cross perpendicularly. These photos range from 100 x to 1 000 x magnification. As you can see, there are various threads with different diameters as well as a branching network between the straight threads. It is rather complicated. The small spiky balls between the threads are fungal spores that settled there later.

Anka, who compared the wrapping to that of an Egyptian mummy, asked the following questions:

Why is so much energy used just to wrap the prey? The silk is not recycled, and is not used again. How does the spider manage to spin so much silk in such a short time, and why does it have to be so dense?

Left: A fruit chafer beetle wrapped by *Cyrtophora citricola*.

Tone Killick, from the UK, posted this stunning photo on Facebook:

"Perfect example of a spider showing maternal care. These *Amaurobius similis* spiderlings are feeding on trophic eggs which their mother is producing." - Tone Killick.

Sac spider bites

A case of 24 confirmed *Cheiracanthium* bites

by Benjamin Carbuccia

Hi everyone,

I try to regularly keep a record of every confirmed long-legged sac spider (*Cheiracanthium* sp.) bite posted on the spider groups, and compile them in a file for future research. It's something I hadn't done in quite a long time, so I hadn't yet realised just how many bite records we have now, and how far this project has already gone.

I think a little update is due.

So far, including the records gathered by Rudi Steenkamp and Astri Leroy prior to the creation of this group, we have 22 confirmed bite cases, of which 20 are backed by a photo of the offending spider.

The thing with spider bite studies is, the more cases you have, the more accurately you can spot trends and recurring elements. Now, 22 is not even close to what would be considered "a big sample", but it's enough to start distinguishing some features. So far, these are our most interesting observations:

- In 21 cases out of 22, the bite caused immediate, sharp pain. The intensity of that pain varies, from one report to another, from moderate to very intense, but it generally abates quite quickly. The one person who did not report immediate pain was bitten in his sleep and the pain, if any, was not intense enough to wake him up. However, in three other instances of people bitten while sleeping, the pain was intense enough to wake them up. Immediate initial pain is therefore a pretty consistent feature of sac spider bites, which goes directly against the "painless bite which becomes necrotic" narrative.

- With the 22 cases gathered so far, we still have no case of skin necrosis. Of course, this doesn't mean it never happens, but it's enough to demonstrate that it is definitely not a COMMON or TYPICAL outcome of sac spider bites.
- Fang marks were only visible in six cases out of 22. "Two holes" are NOT a reliable feature for identifying sac spider bites, or any spider bite.
- Although, in four instances, people were bitten in their sleep (and three out of four were immediately woken up by the bite), most of the bites occurred during the day, when a resting spider was accidentally touched.
- Male spiders cause just as many bites as females. So far, our sample does not show any marked difference in severity between bites by males and females. Bites where the pain was described as "intense" were mostly caused by males (5 vs 2). Systemic symptoms were reported in four cases, of which two were caused by female spiders and two by males. However, this doesn't mean anything, as our sample is still too small to draw firm conclusions about that aspect.
- The most common symptoms caused by long-legged sac spider bites are pain, local swelling, and redness. In four cases, systemic symptoms, such as dizziness, drowsiness, headache, mild fever, and numbness in the bitten limb, were observed. Symptoms typically resolved entirely in less than three days (15 cases out of 22). These features are consistent with those observed with other species of *Cheiracanthium* in other parts of the world.
- Finally, there's a strange feature that pops up from time to time, something fairly rare but common enough to be intriguing: in six (possibly seven, but it's unclear in that seventh case) cases out of the 22, some symptoms reappeared at Days 7 to 9 post-bite, after they had previously completely resolved. The bites, at that time, started itching again, and in some cases, even showed signs of mild inflammation. Two of these cases might be explained by early signs of secondary infection, but in the others, the bite just itched and the symptoms then disappeared for good. This is very strange and hard to explain, and we definitely need to pay closer attention to it in the future.

I want to address a big thank you to everyone who has participated in gathering these accounts, and an even bigger one to all of you who have shared your unfortunate bite experiences with us. This evidence we're gathering is precious, and, although I don't wish anyone to receive a painful spider bite, please continue reporting verified bites to us; it's important.

ADDENDUM:

We've received two new reports of confirmed bites since then (moving the count up to 24), with atypical symptoms. The first one, a bite from a confirmed female *Cheiracanthium furculatum* (identified by Ruan Booysen) was reportedly almost painless, and the only observed symptom was slight swelling around the bite, which quickly resolved. Given the extremely light and transient symptoms, this could have been a dry bite.

In a second case, a bite induced intense pain and swelling for one to two days, and residual pain (when pressure was applied to it) lasted for about a week. Interestingly, two weeks after resolution of all the symptoms, some inflammation reappeared, and a small eschar (about 5 mm) developed, which eventually healed without further complications. Based on the timeline of the symptoms, that reaction is likely to be a result of secondary infection.

These two new cases are very different from the rest of the sample, and outline the need for more records of verified bites. If you experienced a bite from a long-legged sac spider (*Cheiracathium* sp.), please reach out to us. However, please note that only bites where the spider was witnessed in the act of biting, and/or was found in the immediate vicinity of the bite, qualify as verified bite cases. Lesions

diagnosed as a "sac spider bite" by a medical professional are not regarded as verified bites, as a diagnosis is only as good as the evidence it is based on, and recent research clearly shows that the only evidence allowing the identification of a lesion as a spider bite is seeing the spider itself. Misdiagnosis of unrelated skin lesions as "spider bites" by medical professionals is unfortunately a common and widespread problem, sometimes with very serious consequences.

The criteria for a confirmed bite, according to Vetter and Isbister (2008)[15] and Isbister and White (2004)[16] are as follows:

- Evidence of a bite (a spider must be seen [or felt] inflicting the bite);
- Clinical effects associated with a spider bite must be seen during or soon after the bite;
- The spider must be collected [or photographed] at the time of the bite; and
- The identification of the spider must be made by a qualified arachnologist (or spider expert, in the case of photographic evidence).

If you have a verified bite to report and a photo of the spider that bit you, please send a detailed report to this address: nopelanddiscovery@gmail.com or post it on this dedicated Facebook group: SAK SPINNEKOP BYT/SAC SPIDER BITE: https://www.facebook.com/groups/477435633519829

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Facebook group, *South African Spiders of Medical Importance*, was recently changed to *SPIDER BITE: Information and Research of Southern Africa*, which is dedicated to collecting information on confirmed spider bites. The group can be found here:

https://web.facebook.com/groups/971186209633219/

Travis McEnery also posted a video on YouTube that is definitely worth watching, titled *The Spiders in Your House: The Yellow Sac Spider*. It can be watched here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U29F4mE7okk

The following is another case in point that demonstrates how doctors often blame spiders for any skin lesion. This was posted on our Facebook group by Ricci Heyns:

Firstly - this is NOT a spider bite.

I was having lunch at work under the trees and felt something land on me. I felt a bite/sting and out of pure reaction put my hand to the bite site and came away with some sort of insect with red and black wings. By Sunday I had an inflamed, red bite site, swollen lymph glands, localized muscle soreness and the headache from hell.

Why am I posting here? Because my doctor (whom I love and would normally absolutely trust) said "spider bite" when I didn't immediately tell the story of how I got the wound. (I did tell her in the end, don't worry.)

I then got curious and took it to another doctor in the area. "Spider bite" was the definitive diagnosis.

Moral of the story – doctors tend to misdiagnose, and spiders seem to be the scapegoats most of the time. I was lucky to know what bit/stung me. 99.9% of the time, spiders are NOT to blame.

[15] Vetter, R.S. & Isbister, G.K. 2008. Medical aspects of spider bites. *Annual Review of Entomology*, 53(1):409-429. Available from: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.ento.53.103106.093503

[16] Isbister, G.K. & White, J. 2004. Clinical consequences of spider bites: Recent advances in our understanding. *Toxicon*, 43(5):477–492.

Urban spider hunting

Tips on finding spiders in an urban/suburban environment

by Rudi Steenkamp

Some spiders commonly found in and around houses. **Top, from left to right (fltr):** *Latrodectus geometricus*, *Uloborus plumipes*, *Menemerus* sp., *Ariadna* sp. **Middle, fltr:** *Philodromus* sp., *Scytodes elizabethae*, *Smeringopus* sp., *Theridion* sp. **Bottom, fltr:** *Oecobius putus*, *Anyphops* sp., *Cheiracanthium furculatum*, *Palystes superciliosus*. Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

One of our members requested that we include a piece on how and where to find spiders (to photograph) in an urban setting. I'm probably not the best qualified to write about this, since we've been living in a peri-urban setting ever since my spider journey started. However, there are some basic tips that apply to both settings, most notably to find spiders in your house.

For those living in an urban area without the luxury of a garden, this is the only place you'll find spiders. Fortunately, there are many synanthropic species that will settle in or around your house. Some of them are as follows:

- Brown button spiders (*Latrodectus geometricus*; Theridiidae), which can be found in corners of ceilings and window sills, under furniture, etc. The best time to search for them is at night, when they come out from their retreat. If you're lucky, you might also find a black button spider in your house, but they prefer the outdoors. Those found in houses will be found closer to the ground.
- False house button spiders (*Theridion* spp.; Theridiidae) can be found in similar settings. In our house, they're mostly found near or under window sills.
- Dwarf round-headed spiders (*Oecobius* spp.; Oecobiidae) love to spin their small disk-shaped webs in the corners of walls. As these webs gather dust, they often resemble dust bunnies. These very small spiders can be found under the web, where they wait for prey (mostly ants) to trigger one of the signal threads.
- Daddy longlegs (DLLs) spiders (Pholcidae), especially the common DLLs (*Smeringopus* spp.), are very common in dark areas such as in cupboards, garages, sheds, etc. Check to see if you can find one with an egg sac, which makes quite a good photo opportunity.

- House funnel-web spiders (*Tegenaria* spp.; Agelenidae) are an introduced cosmopolitan species often found in and around houses, especially in the Western Cape. These spiders spin funnel webs close to the ground, often among rubble and in corners. They have to be coaxed out of the web in order to photograph them.
- House sac spiders (*Cheiracanthium furculatum*) can often be found under their sac-like retreat, where they often hide until they come out at night to hunt.
- Flatties (Selenopidae) are common in many houses and are usually found on flat surfaces like walls. In Afrikaans they are sometimes called "portretspinnekoppe" (portrait spiders) due to their tendency to hide behind paintings. They are incredibly fast, but will often sit still enough to photograph with ease.
- Spitting spiders (*Scytodes* spp.; Scytodidae). We often find these spiders in our house, especially on walls, even though they prefer to live under rocks, logs, and leaf litter. They are very placid spiders, and are very cooperative for photo shoots.
- False violin spiders (*Izithunzi* spp.; Drymusidae) are almost solely confined to the Western Cape, where they can be found in dark areas, such as in cupboards.
- Running spiders (*Philodromus* spp.; Philodromidae) are also common, in our house at least. They often sit high on walls, near the ceiling.
- Jumping spiders (Salticidae): Some species often frequent houses, such as some *Menemerus* spp., which are common on walls (hence one of their common names, wall jumping spider) or *Hasarius adansoni*, which is aptly called Adanson's house jumper.
- Tube-web spiders (*Ariadna* spp.; Segestriidae) can be found in their tube webs, which they sometimes build in crevices in walls. This is another spider that needs to be coaxed out in order to photograph them.
- Rain spiders (*Palystes* spp.; Sparassidae) are well known in many houses, especially because they're quite big and hard to miss. They are nocturnal and come out to hunt at night. The most common species is *Palystes superciliosus*, and they especially love the indoors.
- Feather-legged spiders (*Uloborus plumipes*; Uloboridae) are at the moment the most common spider in our house. They are all on or near our ceiling, where they sit with their front legs together and resemble a piece of grass or a seed.

If you are lucky enough to have a garden, your spidering options increase significantly. Many spiders can be found under rocks, logs, pots, etc. Simply lift everything you can, and you'll eventually find some spiders. There are too many spiders to mention here, but you'd often find hackled mesh-web spiders (Phyxelididae), spitting spiders (Scytodidae), velvet spiders (Eresidae), false button spiders (*Steatoda* spp.).


Using a container makes it easier to look through leaf litter.

Also look on trees and under bark, where you will sometimes find flatties (Selenopidae), tree velvet spiders (*Gandanameno* spp.; Eresidae), and long-spinnered bark spiders (*Hersilia* spp.; Hersiliidae). The velvet spiders you'll find on trees with rough bark, while the long-spinnered bark spiders will more often be on trees with smooth bark.

Another very promising area to look for spiders in your garden is under leaf litter. You can just scratch around the leaves (preferably not too dry), where you'll find all sorts of ground-dwelling spiders, such as wolf spiders (Lycosidae), flat-bellied ground spiders (Gnaphosidae), dark sac spiders (Corinnidae), etc. To increase your chances, invest in a big sieve (I use a shopping basket). The holes must be big enough to let spiders fall

through, but small enough to let the bigger leaves stay behind. Grab a handful of leaves, as well as some humus below, and sift the contents onto a white sheet. You'll easily see the spiders on the white sheet, which also provides a plain backdrop for your photos.

If you have lots of trees, bushes, shrubs, etc., you might want to invest in a sweepnet (which you might be able to purchase at some entomology departments at universities). Hold the opening of the net under a branch or bush, and hit it with a stick. The spiders (and many insects) will fall into the net. This is called "beating" and it's a good method of collecting, but the finds are mostly limited to plant-dwelling spiders, and some web dwellers that hide on vegetation. The type of spiders also often depends on the type of vegetation.

An example of "beating". Photo: Norman Larsen.

Many spiders come out only at night, and some of them, such as wolf spiders (Lycosidae) and nursery-web spiders (Pisauridae), are very easy to find if you use a headlamp or hold a torch on your forehead between your eyes. You will easily see their eyes reflecting the light from a distance. The eyes reflecting in plants are probably nursery-web spiders, while those on the ground are most likely wolf spiders.

If you live in an urban area with no gardens, just buildings, you'll have to do some walking to find a piece of nature. It doesn't even have to be a park or big field. Henning Boshoff suggests looking out for small open fields, vacant lots, and even the grassy islands next to roads. Even trees and plants on the sidewalk will house some spiders.

Regarding photographing these spiders, it's not always possible to photograph them in their natural setting, such as when they were collected via beating. Also, sometimes they just won't cooperate, and keep on hiding or running away. In these cases, when I can collect the spider, I use a little "studio", which is basically a blue kitty litter tray filled with some rocks, pieces of bark, twigs, leaves, etc. I'll let the spider walk around and wait until it sits still, then photograph it. It's not ideal, but much easier than to chase a spider around the garden that simply does not want to pose for photos.

Spider Walks

Johannesburg (Gauteng):

Linksfield Ridge – 22 January 2023

Attendees braving a scorching hot day at Linksfield Ridge in Johannesburg. Photo: Lance van der Westhuizen.

Unfortunately we don't have a write-up for this walk, so I took two comments from our Facebook group. This is what Thys Mulder posted:

"Had an awesome day with beautiful people doing what we love! Spending time in nature appreciating all the small critters! Thank you Jarrod Michael Todd, Garrie Gazza Wright, Caren Neal Leigh Northfield, Roulla Janse van Rensburg, Henning Boshoff and everyone else from the The Spider Club of Southern Africa for another well-organised outing!

And thank you to my special friend Stacey Elliott for joining me today! Loved every single moment!

Like Garrie said, nothing recharge you better than a day out in nature with special friends!

Looking forward to seeing you guys soon again for the next walk! 😊" - Thys Mulder

Considering that it was a very hot day in the sun, and because lots of climbing was involved, many people had a bit of a hard time, like Lorinda Stoltz:

"This Ouma's legs are lekker sore this morning after the steep climb yesterday, but hey, I made it to the top LOL! Thank you for a lovely albeit BLAZING HOT day out, hope to see you all next time!" - Lorinda Stoltz.

Attendees looking for spiders on Linksfield Ridge in Johannesburg. Photos: Shawn Krebs.

Species list

Compiled by Jarrod Todd

Family	Genus	Species
Agelenidae	Undetermined	sp.
Araneidae	*Neoscona*	spp.
Cheiracanthiidae	*Cheiracanthium*	sp.
Clubionidae	*Clubiona*	sp.
Entypesidae	Undetermined	sp.
Linyphiidae	*Microlinyphia*	*sterilis*
Lycosidae	*Hogna*	sp.
Lycosidae	*Proevippa*	sp.
Philodromiidae	*Philodromus*	sp.
Philodromiidae	*Tibellus*	sp.
Salticidae	*Heliophanus*	spp.
Theridiidae	*Enoplognatha*	sp.
Theridiidae	*Steatoda*	*lawrencei*
Thomisidae	*Runcinia*	*erythrina*
Thomisidae	*Thomisus*	*blandus*

Photos

1&2. Long-jawed comb-footed spider (*Enoplognatha* sp.; Theridiidae); **3.** Pugnacious burrowing scorpion (*Opistophthalmus pugnax*; Scorpionidae) with babies on her back; **4&5.** Black-and-white hammock-web spider (*Microlinyphia sterilis*; Linyphiidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

6&7. Tube-burrow trapdoor spider (Entypesidae); **8.** Wolf spider (*Evippomma* sp.; Lycosidae); **9-11.** Sun jumping spiders (*Heliophanus* spp.; Salticidae); **12-14.** Runcinia grass crab spiders (*Runcinia* cf. *erythrina*; Thomisidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

15. Masked flower crab spider (*Thomisus blandus*; Thomisidae); **16-18.** Long-legged sac spider (*Cheiracanthium* sp.; Cheiracanthiidae); **19.** Hairy field spider (Neoscona sp.; Araneidae); **20.** Grass running spider (*Tibellus* sp.; Philodromidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

Bloemfontein (Free State):

Bloemendal Estate – 18 February 2023

by Annette Swart

Thirty-four attendees of Bloemfontein's second spider walk, including three local arachnologists: Charles Haddad, Jan Andries Neethling, and Ruan Booysen. Photo: Rudi Steenkamp.

Adults crawling on all fours between long grass, children beating around the bush (with nets). All of these were common sightings the day of the spider walk, and all had one purpose… looking for spiders. And what a fruitful day it was.

Before we set out, Rudi Steenkamp introduced us to the experts in the fields of spiders and other arachnids, who were Ruan Booysen, Charles Haddad, and Jan Andries Neethling, as well as Emmartia Maartens, who arranged the fantastic venue for the day.

Rudi taught us how to use the spider nets, and handed out containers (obviously all with caps and lids) and explained how to coax the spiders and other insects into the jars and bottles without harming them.

When we hit the trails, everyone immediately started looking for creepy crawlies. We turned over stones, hit branches with sticks (hoping to catch falling spiders) and swept the long grass with nets. Some of us were literally on all fours between the long grass, looking for spiders – and we were successful as well. Some scenes reminded me of Jurassic Park – it was a real excursion.

When you think of spiders, you often picture them in visibly spun webs, crawling on the ground, or burrowing under stones, but the truth is far from it. One spider nest was literally in between the blades of a tall grass bush, and Rudi managed to capture both the spider, as well as gather the nest, for further study.

At one point Jan Andries arrived and stated that he had caught two scorpions. One was the lesser thicktail scorpion (*Uroplectes carinatus*) and the other one was a robust burrowing scorpion (*Opistophthalmus carinatus*). The burrower scorpion was too large for the container that he had with him, so he kept it – alive – in his wallet. Fortunately I had a large container, but it was still barely large enough to fit the huge scorpion.


A lesser thicktail scorpion (*Uroplectes carinatus*) **(left)**, and a robust burrowing scorpion (*Opistophthalmus carinatus*) **(right).**

At the end of the day, quite a variety of spiders were caught. One of my favourites was the green grass crab spider (*Oxytate* sp.; Thomisidae).

Among the arachnids that my daughter managed to find were a small solifuge and a Transvaal sun jumping spider (*Heliopthanus transvaalicus*; Salticidae). They were pretty, but not as pretty as the *Achaearanea* sp. (Theridiidae), which was discovered on her jacket after the walk.

A solifuge; an arachnid that goes by many common names.

After the long morning in the beautiful weather, we had some hot dogs, cool drinks, and sat down to discusB the morning.

Overall it was a great day, and I would really recommend anyone to attend a spider walk, whether you are knowledgeable, not so much, or even a bit scared of them (as I am). It really is a great adventure and there are lots to learn out there.

I would also like to donate larger containers to the organisers for future use by people like me ☺

Species list

Compiled by Ruan Booysen

Order	Family	Genus	Species	Taxon author	M	F	J	A
Araneae	Amaurobiidae	*Pseudauximus*	sp. Indet				5	0
Araneae	Araneidae	*Argiope*	*lobata*	(Pallas, 1772)	1			1
Araneae	Araneidae	*Argiope*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Araneidae	*Hypsosinga*	*lithyphantoides*	Caporiacco, 1947	1			1
Araneae	Araneidae	*Kilima*	*decens*	(Blackwall, 1866)	1		2	1
Araneae	Araneidae	*Neoscona*	*subfusca*	(C.L. Koch, 1837)	5	4	4	9
Araneae	Cheiracanthiidae	*Cheiracanthium*	*furculatum*	Karsch, 1879		1	5	1
Araneae	Clubionidae	*Clubiona*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Corinnidae	*Castianeira*	sp. 1		1			1
Araneae	Corinnidae	*Copuetta*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Gnaphosidae	*Camillina*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Gnaphosidae	*Xerophaeus*	*vickermani*	Tucker, 1923		1		1
Araneae	Gnaphosidae	*Zelotes*	*frenchi*	Tucker, 1923	2	1	8	3
Araneae	Idiopidae	Genus indet					1	0
Araneae	Linyphiidae	*Limoneta*	*sirimoni*	(Bosmans, 1979)	1	1	1	2
Araneae	Linyphiidae	*Microlinyphia*	*sterilis*	(Pavesi, 1883)	2	3	2	5
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Allocosa*	sp. 1			2		2
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Allocosa*	cf. *nebulosa*	(Roewer, 1959)		1		1
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Arctosa*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Lycosidae	cf. *Schizocosa*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Hogna*	*zuluana*	Roewer, 1959			3	0
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Pardosa*	*crassipalpis*	Purcell, 1903		2	1	2
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Pardosa*	sp. 1			1		1
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Proevippa*	sp. Indet				10	0
Araneae	Lycosidae	*Trochosa*?	sp. 1			1		1
Araneae	Oonopidae	*Opopaea*	*mattica*	Simon, 1893		1		1
Araneae	Oxyopidae	*Oxyopes*	*jacksoni*	Lessert, 1915		5		5
Araneae	Oxyopidae	*Oxyopes*	*russoi*	Caporiacco, 1940		1		1
Araneae	Philodromidae	*Philodromus*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Philodromidae	*Thanatus*	*vulgaris*	Simon, 1870		2	1	2
Araneae	Philodromidae	*Tibellus*	cf. *hollidayi*	Lawrence, 1952			1	0
Araneae	Pholcidae	*Quamtana*	*hectori*	Huber, 2003	1			1
Araneae	Pholcidae	*Smeringopus*	*natalensis*	Lawrence, 1947	1	2	4	3
Araneae	Phyxelididae	*Vidole*	*sothoana*	Griswold, 1990			10	0

Order	Family	Genus	Species	Taxon author	M	F	J	A
Araneae	Pisauridae	*Rothus*	*aethiopicus*	(Pavesi, 1883)			6	0
Araneae	Prodidomidae	*Theuma*	*capensis*	Purcell, 1907	1		1	1
Araneae	Salticidae	*Heliophanus*	*transvaalicus*	Simon, 1901	1	3		4
Araneae	Salticidae	*Icius*	*insolidus*	(Wesołowska, 1999)	1		3	1
Araneae	Salticidae	*Nigorella*	*hirsuta*	Wesołowska, 2009	1	2	1	3
Araneae	Salticidae	*Thyene*	*thyenioides*	(Lessert, 1925)	1			1
Araneae	Scytodidae	*Scytodes*	*elizabethae*	Purcell, 1904	3	6	2	9
Araneae	Segestriidae	*Ariadna*	sp. 1			1		1
Araneae	Selenopidae	*Anyphops*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Sparassidae	*Palystes*	*superciliosus*	L. Koch, 1875			2	0
Araneae	Sparassidae	*Pseudomicrommata*	cf. *vittigera*	(Simon, 1897)		1		1
Araneae	Tetragnathidae	*Leucauge*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Tetragnathidae	*Tetragnatha*	sp. Indet				1	0
Araneae	Theraphosidae	*Harpactira*	cf. *hamiltoni*				1	0
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Achaearaneae*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Enoplognatha*	sp. Indet				3	0
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Euryopis*	sp. 1			1		1
Araneae	Theridiidae	Genus indet					1	0
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Latrodectus*	*geometricus*	C. L. Koch, 1841			3	0
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Steatoda*	*capensis*	Hann, 1990		1	2	1
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Theridion*	*purcelli*	O.P.-Cambridge, 1904		1	2	1
Araneae	Theridiidae	*Theridion*	sp. 1			1	1	1
Araneae	Thomisidae	*Hewittia*	*gracilis*	Lessert, 1928			1	0
Araneae	Thomisidae	*Misumenops*	*rubrodecoratus*	Millot, 1942		1	3	1
Araneae	Thomisidae	*Oxytate*	sp. 1			1		1
Araneae	Thomisidae	*Runcinia*	sp. Indet				7	0
Araneae	Thomisidae	*Tmarus*	*cameliformis*	Millot, 1942		1		1
Araneae	Trachelidae	*Afroceto*	*africana*	(Simon, 1910)	1			1
Araneae	Trachelidae	*Poachelas*	sp. Indet				2	0
Araneae	Trachelidae	*Trachelas*	sp. 1		1			1
Araneae	Uloboridae	*Uloborus*	*plumipes*	Lucas, 1846	1	1		2
Scorpiones	Buthidae	*Uroplectes*	*carinatus*	(Pocock, 1890)	1			1
Scorpiones	Scorpionidae	*Opistophthalmus*	*carinatus*	(Peters, 1861)		1		1
Solifugae	Solpugidae	cf. *Zeira*	sp. Indet				1	
Trombidiformes	Erythraeidae	Genus indet					1	0
Sub-totals					**28**	**51**	**117**	**79**
Total individuals								**196**
Orders								**4**
Families								**31**
Genera								**64**
Species								**69**

M = Male. F = Female. J = Juveniles. A = Adults

Photos

Theridiidae: **1.** Brown button spider (*Latrodectus geometricus*), **2.** Ant-eating theridiid (*Euryopis* sp.), **3.** Stone-nest theridiid (*Achaearanea* sp.). Thomisidae: **4.** Rosy-banded crab spider (*Misumenops rubrodecoratus*), **5.** Green grass crab spider (*Oxytate* sp.), **6.** Runcinia grass crab spider (*Runcinia* sp.). Oxyopidae: **7&8**. Grass lynx spiders (*Oxyopes russoi* & *Oxyopes jacksoni*). Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

Salticidae: **9&10.** *Heliophanus transvaalicus*; **11.** *Nigorella hirsuta*; **12.** *Icius* sp.; **13-15.** *Heliophanus* sp.; **16&17.** *Baryphas ahenus*; **18-20.** *Thyene thyenioides*. Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

Sparassidae: **21.** Common rain spider (*Palystes superciliosus*); **22.** Grass huntsman (*Pseudomicrommata* sp.). Lycosidae: **23.** *Hogna* cf. *zuluana*; **24.** *Proevippa* sp.; **25.** *Pardosa* sp. **26.** Front-eyed trapdoor spider (Idiopidae); **27.** baboon spider; **28.** ground sac spider (*Poachelas* sp.). Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

29-31. Lobed garden orb-web spider (*Argiope lobata*; Araneidae); **32.** Flattie (*Anyphops* sp.; Selenopidae). Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

33&34. Cape pale ground spider (*Theuma capensis*; Prodidomidae); **35.** Port Elizabeth spitting spider (*Scytodes elizabethae*; Scytodidae); **36.** Running spider (*Philodromus* sp.; Philodromidae); **37.** Long-jawed water orb-web spider (*Tetragnatha* sp.; Tetragnathidae); **38.** Mesh-web spider (*Pseudauximus* sp.; Amaurobiidae); **39.** Hector's spotted daddy longlegs spider (*Quamtana hectori*; Pholcidae). Photos: Rudi Steenkamp.

Modderfontein (Gauteng):

Modderfontein Nature Reserve – 5 March 2023

by Vanessa Homann

Attendees during the orientation before the walk commenced. Photo: Garrie Wright.

My very first spider walk

I love "creepy crawlies". And of all creepy-crawlies, I especially love spiders. I hold the opinion that feeling my Chaco Golden Knee walk on me is akin to tangibly feeling "God".

Around middle last year it occurred to me that adults "should have" interests outside of work, family, and exercise. I cynically wondered if there were any groups that I could find for my interest. I turned to Google and typed in "spider groups South Africa", and much to my pleasant surprise I came across the website for The Spider Club of Southern Africa. I immediately signed up for the emails but didn't know what to expect or how often events took place.

Sadly, I was not in the same city as the first three walks that were shared with me, so when I received the email about the Modderfontein walk, it was penned in my diary with lightning speed!

On the big day I was very nervous – what if there were only three people? What if they were "clique-y"? What if we didn't find any spiders? All of my nerves were laid to rest on meeting Jarrod and Bianca, who greeted me very warmly. As people began arriving, I figured we would easily be a group of 30 or more. The people were friendly, and I knew I was in like-minded company when we started finding spiders and I was in a group who collectively got excited!


Jarrod showing the attendees the ropes. Photos: Bianca Hindmarch.

In my experience, most humans don't have much time for spiders; and my fascination and desire to watch them and spend a lot of time with them is often odd for others. Being in a group who shared the same admiration felt like I had stumbled upon something truly magical. I so valued being able to take my time observing each incredible creature we found – being able to delight in their individual colours, eyes, legs, body shape, and feel. I also felt totally at ease being able to ask as many questions as I liked, with Jarrod listening and answering, always as interested and enthusiastic.

I learned that carrying eggs is called "gravid"; that one can identify a female by a spot underneath their abdomen called an epigyne; and that button spiders aren't as aggressive as I've been led to believe! Also, how orb-web spiders get their initial strand of web from where they are to a tree often quite a distance away, in order to begin the process of spinning a tree-spanning web. Oh, and that crab spiders are ambush hunters! So much learning!

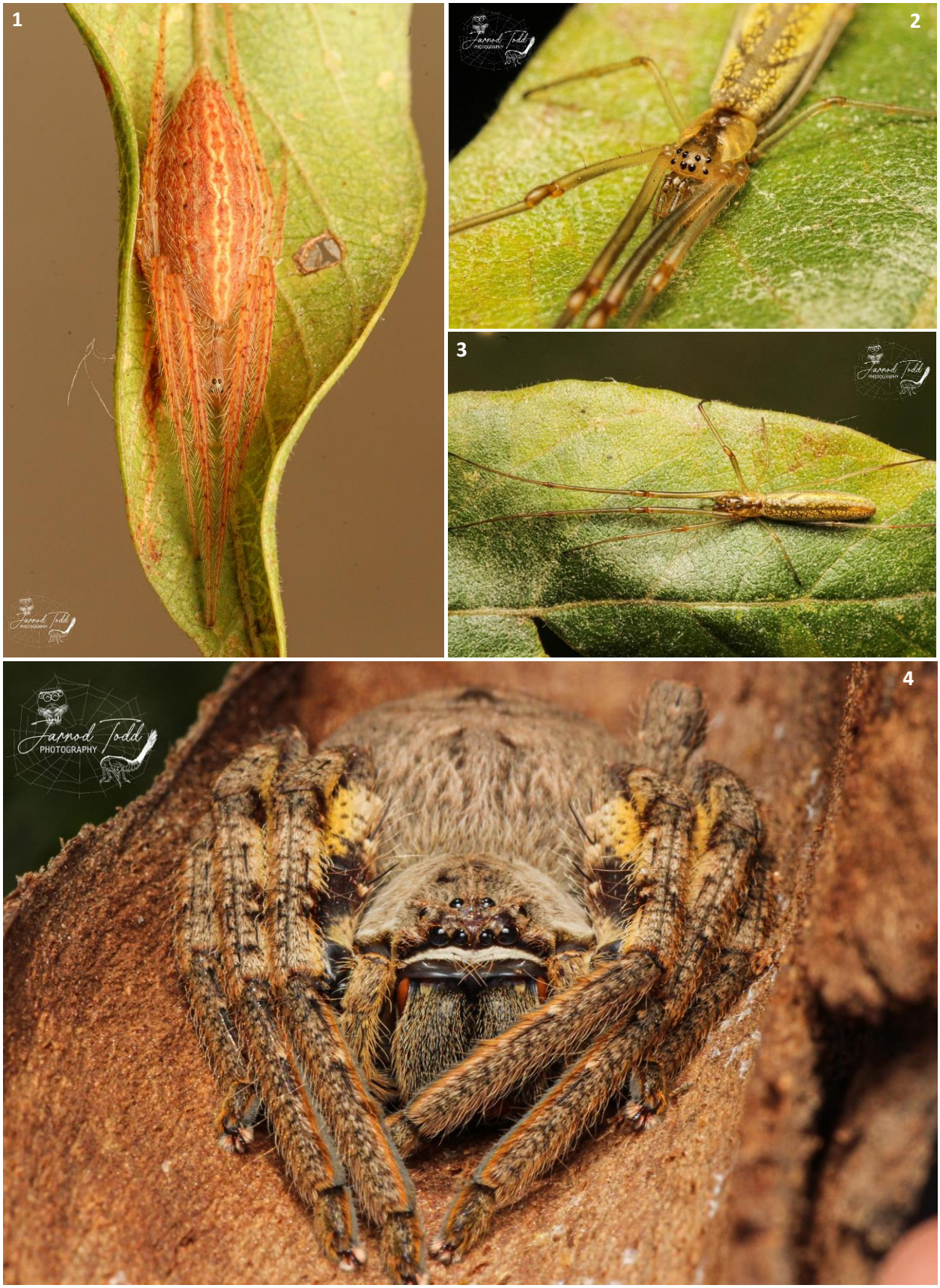
My favourite part of the experience was being able to gently stroke the abdomen of the rain spider we found; seeing her "moustache", and looking into her perfect eyes. I hope she could sense my reverence. All in all, my first spider walk left me happy, with a stimulated mind and a peace-filled soul. I can't wait for the next one!

Species list

Compiled by Jarrod Todd

Family	Genus	Species
Araneidae	*Mahembea*	*hewitti*
Araneidae	*Neoscona*	sp.
Linyphiidae	*Ostearius*	*melanopygius*
Lycosidae	*Foveosa*	cf. *foveolata*
Lycosidae	*Hogna*	sp.
Oxyopidae	*Oxyopes*	sp.
Philodromidae	*Philodromus*	sp.
Philodromidae	*Thanatus*	sp.
Phyxelididae	Undeterminded	sp.
Pisauridae	*Rothus*	sp.
Salticidae	*Heliophanus*	*transvaalicus*
Salticidae	*Nigorella*	*hirsuta*
Salticidae	*Pellenes*	*bulawayoensis*
Salticidae	*Thyene*	*thyenioides*
Salticidae	*Tusitala*	sp.
Sparassidae	*Palystes*	*superciliosus*
Tetragnathidae	*Leucauge*	*festiva*
Tetragnathidae	*Tetragnatha*	sp.
Tetragnathidae	*Tetragnatha*	*veriformis*
Theridiidae	*Latrodectus*	*geometricus*
Theridiidae	*Steatoda*	sp.
Thomisidae	*Misumenops*	*rubrodecoratus*
Thomisidae	*Thomisus*	*blandus*
Thomisidae	*Thomisus*	cf. *stenningi*
Thomisidae	*Xysticus*	sp.
Uloboridae	*Uloborus*	sp.

Photos



1. Hewitt's grass orb-web spider (*Mahembea hewitti*; Araneidae); **2&3.** Long-jawed water orb-web spider (*Tetragnatha veriformis*; Tetragnathidae); **4.** Common rain spider (*Palystes superciliosus*; Sparassidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

5&6. Masked silver marsh spider (*Leucauge festiva*; Tetragnathidae); **7&8.** Flower crab spider (*Thomisus* cf. *stenningi*; Thomisidae); **9.** Rosy-banded crab spider (*Misumenops rubrodecoratus*; Thomisidae); **10&11.** Long-bodied thyene jumping spider (*Thyene thyenioides*; Salticidae); **12.** Running spider (*Thanatus* sp.; Philodromidae); **13.** Brown button spider (*Latrodectus geometricus*; Theridiidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

14&15. Masked flower crab spider (*Thomisus blandus*; Thomisidae); **16.** Long-jawed water orb-web spider (*Tetragnatha* sp.; Tetragnathidae); **17&18.** Zimbabwe pellenes jumping spider (*Pellenes bulawayoensis*; Salticidae); **19.** Tusitala jumping spider (*Tusitala* sp.; Salticidae); **20.** Transvaal sun jumping spider (*Heliophanus transvaalicus*; Salticidae). Photos: Jarrod Todd.

Riebeeck Kasteel (Western Cape):

Kloovenburg Wine & Olive Estate – 18 March 2023

"All the lovely people who joined. Otis, black shirt left; Christy Stott, front left, red jacket; Colette Stott, middle white shirt; Deon Friis at the back with blue jacket; Jaco Joubert resting his body in front; Fiona Hellerman, blue shirt, left back; Cecile Roux giving me a tight huddle; me with my ever-present hat, right. Photo by my wife, Janet Pretorius" (Wessel Pretorius).

This spider walk just whetted the appetite for spider finds, and wetted us to the skin! We must have refreshed Yr.no a 100 times this week, and by the morning it didn't look too bad, but the rain had a mind of its own! We lasted two hours, but then it became too hard to search for spiders and taking photos became almost impossible. The amazing thing is that under these difficult circumstances we still managed to find quite a few beauties. The worsening weather caused us to be a bit hurried and restless, so we missed a lot, but it was overall a lovely short walk! Always good to meet fellow nature lovers, and we all learned from one another. Thanks so much to everyone who came, and thank you Wessel and Janet for the admin and organising. I am itching to go back – imagine what we will find under more ideal circumstances! We are really grateful for the privilege to walk on private land. I will thank Pieter du Toit of Kloovenburg again, and we will be back!

- Cecile Roux -

That was a lovely outing, I've learnt a lot from it, in terms of local Arachnids - Thank you, hope to join you again next time..!

- Jaco Joubert -

Cecile and Wessel looking through the contents of some fynbos beats. Photo: Janet Pretorius.

Rain was not going to deter me from my first spider walk in Riebeek Kasteel. I was excited! I had no idea most Cape spiders were so tiny. Thanks to you all, I saw lots that I'd never have spotted myself. Thanks everyone for sharing your findings and knowledge with me. I learned a lot. And thanks for being so friendly and welcoming. It was great to be with fellow nature lovers exploring the wonder of wild spaces in a careful and gentle way. So glad I made the trip and look forward to the next one.

- Colette Stott -

The day began with anticipation and excitement for the nine of us as we set out to explore the Renosterveld shrubs against the slopes of Kasteelberg, unsure of what the unpredictable weather would bring. We moved slowly down the path moving up the mountain gorge, tapping the contents on branches into containers and kneeling down to take photos. Most of the spiders we found were incredibly small. One of the highlights was discovering a tiny hammerhead crab spider, which I refer to as "Sid" spiders due to their resemblance to the sloth character from Ice Age. The spider, a *Pherecydes* sp., was a marvel to behold. As the weather started to turn, a few sought shelter under a line of trees up the path, while us stragglers continued until too much water filled our containers to take photos. Under the trees some discovered incredible fungi that would burst open in spores whenever a waterdrop fell on them, creating a puff of smoke-like effect. Two of us ventured up a dried-up stream, and upon returning to the path, we stumbled upon a magnificent arid rain spider, *Parapalystes* sp., under a piece of bark falling from a tree. Despite our amazing discoveries, the rain continued to fall heavily, soaking us to the bone. Realising that the weather was only getting worse, we reluctantly decided to call it a day. Nevertheless, our adventure had been one to remember, and we left with a sense of awe and wonder at the incredible creatures that we had encountered on our journey.

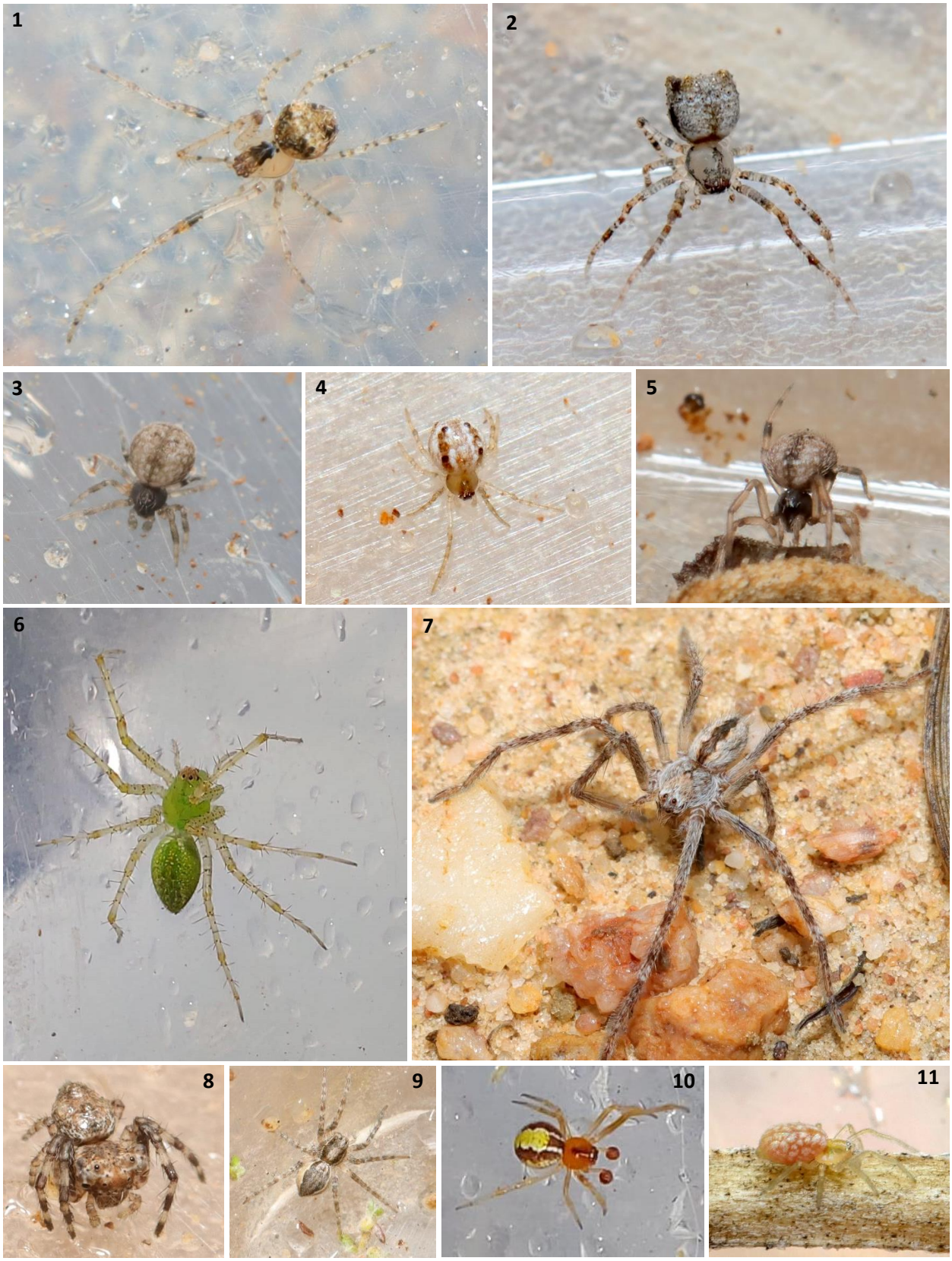
- Wessel Pretorius -

Species list

Compiled by Wessel Pretorius

Family	Species
Amaurobiidae	*Chresiona* sp.
Clubionidae	*Clubiona* sp.
Dictynidae	*Unknown*
Eresidae	*Dresserus* sp.
Gnaphosidae	Unknown
Gnaphosidae	*Zelotes* sp.
Lycosidae	Unknown
Oxyopidae	*Oxyopes* sp.
Oxyopidae	*Peucetia* sp.
Mimetidae	*Mimetus/Anansi* sp.
Mimetidae	*Ero* sp.
Phyxelididae	Unknown
Pisauridae	Unknown
Philodromidae	*Philodromus* sp.
Philodromidae	*Thanatus* sp.
Philodromidae	*Tibellus* sp.
Pholcidae	*Smeringopus* sp.
Salticidae	*Baryphas ahenus*
Salticidae	*Evarcha* sp.
Salticidae	*Thyene inflata*
Salticidae	*Thyene thyenioides*
Sparassidae	Unknown (golden huntsman)
Sparassidae	*Parapalystes* sp.
Theridiidae	Unknown
Theridiidae	*Theridion* sp.
Theridiosomatidae/Theridiidae	Unknown
Thomisidae	*Diaea cf. puncta*
Thomisidae	*Heriaes* sp.
Thomisidae	*Pherecydes* sp.
Trachelidae	Unknown
Uloboridae	*Uloborus plumipes*
Buthidae	*Uroplectes lineatus*

Photos



1. Pirate spider (*Mimetus* or *Anansi* sp.; Mimetidae); **2.** Pirate spider (*Ero* sp.; Mimetidae); **3.** Theridiosomatidae or Theridiidae; **4&5.** Unknown Theridiidae; **6.** Green lynx spider (*Peucetia* sp.; Oxyopidae); **7.** Unknown huntsman (Sparassidae); **8.** Hammerhead crab spider (*Pherecydes* sp.; Thomisidae); **9.** Nursery-web spider (cf. *Afropisaura*; Pisauridae); **10.** False house button spider (*Theridion* sp.; Theridiidae); **11.** Grass mesh-web spider (Dictynidae). Photos by Cecile Roux, except **6 & 10** by Wessel Pretorius.

Anka se Goggastories

deur Anka Eichhoff

Die volgende stuk is direk vanaf Anka Eichhoff se blog. Om haar stories te lees, besoek haar webwerf by https://www.kyffhauser.co.za/Goggastories.htm

Reuse-Dwaal-Krapspinnekop soos bv. *Olios correvoni nigrifrons*

↙Kyk, as dit met JOU gebeur, ……en dit **kan**, want hierdie baie groot spinnekoppe dwaal rond, het nie 'n vaste tuiste nie en is snags op pad om kos te soek, dan …

Bedags sit hulle in 'n donker skuiling, dikwels tussen twee blare in 'n boom wat saamgevoeg is met sydrade of ook onder 'n klip of tussen growwe ou boombasstukke.

Ek kry hulle dikwels in droë opgerolde blare in die lemoenbome. As jy die rolletjie oopmaak, spring die spinnekop skielik uit ('n mens skrik nogal) en bly doodstil op die grond sit; sy kleurpatroon versmelt so met die grond, dat jy die spinnekop skaars raaks

'n Ander gewilde skuilplek is in ou neste van sosiale versamelnes-spinnekoppe. Daarin maak hulle vir hulself 'n snoesige kamertjie, uitgelê met 'n lagie sy; dalk oorwinter hulle ook daarin (het hulle in laat winter daar gekry).

Soos jy op die toiletrol bo kan sien, is hierdie soort spinnekoppe GROOT met ‘n liggaamslengte van tot 2 cm en ‘n deursnee (met uitgestrekte bene) van tot 5 cm. Die agt bene sit sywaarts teen die lyf (soos by ‘n krap). Hulle is vinnig op pad, want hulle is jagters (in Engels Huntsman spiders), en veral in die lente en somermaande kan jy hulle snags buite op die grond of op plante sien.. Dwaal krapspinnekoppe gebruik nie ‘n vangweb nie.

As hulle bedreig voel, tel hulle die eerste of selfs die eerste twee paar bene in ‘n aggressiewe houding hoog op. Hulle kleur is gewoonlik strooigeel/-bruin. Waar die agterlyf teen die kopborsstuk raak, sien ons op die bokant van die abdomen in die middel die hartvlek (onder hierdie vlek sit die hart van die spinnekop). Die oë is blinkswart en in twee reguit rye van vier ogies elk gerangskik. Die spinnekoppe se gif is vir mense nie gevaarlik nie.

Soos alle spinnekoppe vervel hulle van tyd tot tyd en ‘n mens kom soms op so ‘n “ou broek” af (hierdie ene lê op brak by ‘n pan…dis nie sneeu nie).

In die somer word die eiers gelê en in ‘n kokon gepak en tussen blare mooi weggesteek, waar dit veilig is. Die kleintjies kom gewoonlik in die lente uit en vertoef in die nes tot hulle groot genoeg is om dit te verlaat en op hulle eie aan te gaan.

Olios spinnekoppe behoort aan die groot familie van *Sparassidae.* Hulle kom in die warmer dele van die wêreld voor en kan tot in woestyne klaarkom ten spyte van die hitte en die droogte. Hiervoor is hulle goed aangepas, bv. deur middel van hare op bene, pote en kaaktasters. Die bekendste *Sparassid* van Namibië is die **Dancing White Lady** van die

duine in die Namib en die **Golden Wheel Spider,** wat sy bene styf optrek teen die lyf en dan so op 'n knop getrek die duine afrol.

Ander *Olios* spesies:

Hierdie twee *Olios* spesies het ek ook in ou neste van fluweelspinnekoppe (*Stegodyphus dumicola)* gekry. Hierdie neste sit gewoonlik in doringbosse op die punt van takke.

Om **versigtig** te wees met spinnekoppe is **goed.** Om

Inligtingsbronne:

GOGGAgids (Ansie D.Schoeman, Erik Holm)

Spiders of the Kalahari (Ansie D.-Schoeman, Almie van den Berg)

Southern African Spiders (Martin R.Filmer)

Filmer's Spiders (Martin Filmer revised by Norman Larsen)

Toktok Talkie (Joh R. Henschel)

Teks en fotos: Anka Eichhoff

September 2020

Spider of the Month

Here are the spiders of the month for January, February, and March. Members on our Facebook group nominate photos throughout the month, and at the beginning of each month, vote in a poll.

January

(1) Green jumping spider (*Asemonea* sp.; Salticidae), Daniel Rautenbach. **(2)** Dandy jumping spider (*Portia schultzi*; Salticidae), Andrea Sander. **(3)** Hairy field spider (*Neoscona* sp.; Araneidae), Cecile Roux. **(4)** Orange jumping spider (*Cyrba* sp.; Salticidae), Karin Mitton. **(5)** Horned bark spider (*Caerostris sexcuspidata*; Araneidae), Jarrod Todd.

February

(1) Green thyenula jumping spider (*Thyenula juvenca*; Salticidae), Joey de Villiers. **(2)** Feather-setae crab spider (*Trichopagis manicata*; Thomisidae), Suncana Bradley. **(3)** Veisella jumping spider (*Veisella durbani*; Salticidae), Robert Wienand. **(4)** Spiny-backed orb-web spider (*Afracantha camerunensis*; Araneidae), Desiré Pelser. **(5)** Kite spider (*Gasteracantha versicolor*; Araneidae), Miguel da Fonseca.

March

A first all-salticid top five: (1) Durban spotted homalattus jumping spider (*Homalattus punctatus*.; Salticidae), Robert Wienand. **(2)** Icius jumping spider (*Icius* sp.; Salticidae), Jarrod Todd. **(3)** Icius jumping spider (*Icius* sp.; Salticidae), Jacky Poley du Plessis. **(4)** Ant-mimic jumping spider (*Myrmarachne* sp.; Salticidae), Dewan Snyman. **(5)** Zimbabwe pellenes jumping spider (*Pelenes buluwayoensis*; Salticidae), Cecile Roux.

Honourable Mention

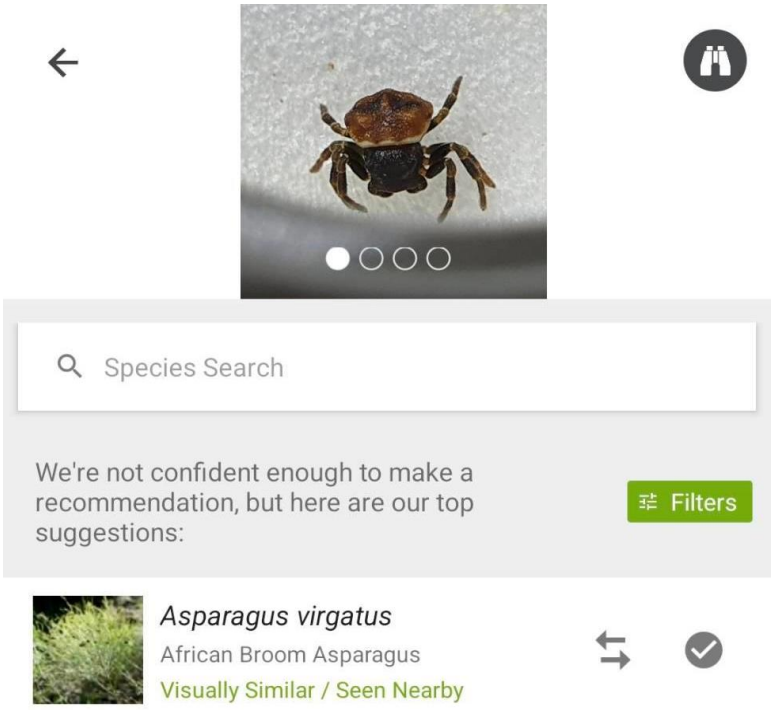
These are a few spiders that didn't win Spider of the Month, but that deserve to be showcased.

1. Mushroom comb-footed spider (*Phoroncidia* sp.; Theridiidae), Jarrod Todd. **2.** Ant-eating zodariid (*Cycynethus* sp.; Zodariidae), Desiré Pelser. **3.** Grass jumping spider (*Festucula* sp.; Salticidae), Jarrod Todd. **4.** Masked crab spider (*Synema mandibulare*; Thomisidae), Hannes Claassens. **5.** Bomis crab spider (*Parabomis* sp.; Thomisidae), Odette Curtis-Scott. **6.** Kima ant-mimic jumping spider (*Kima* cf. *africana*; Salticidae). **7.** Orb-web spider (cf. Araneus sp.; Araneidae), Robert Wienand. **8.** Mirror spider (*Thwaitesia* sp.; Theridiidae), Jonathan Whitaker. **9.** Spiny-back orb weaver (*Afracantha camerunensis*; Araneidae), Desiré Pelser. **10.** Silver ant-eating comb-footed spider (*Euryopis* cf. *funebris*; Theridiidae), Rudi Steenkamp. **11.** Front-eyed trapdoor spider (Idiopidae), Rudi Steenkamp. **12.** White-tarsus holopelus crab spider (*Holopelus* cf. *albibarbis*; Thomisidae), Rudi Steenkamp.

On a Lighter Note

Like news bulletins on television, we like to conclude the newsletter on a lighter note.

That's a spider, not asparagus!



The recognition software on iNaturalist is quite impressive, and is getting better the more photos people upload. They often get it right to genus level, or at least family level, but sometimes they just get it completely wrong.

Debbie Taylor uploaded this photo of a bomis crab spider (*Parabomis* sp.; Thomisidae), and iNaturalist said the closest recommendation they can make is *Asparagus virgatus*.

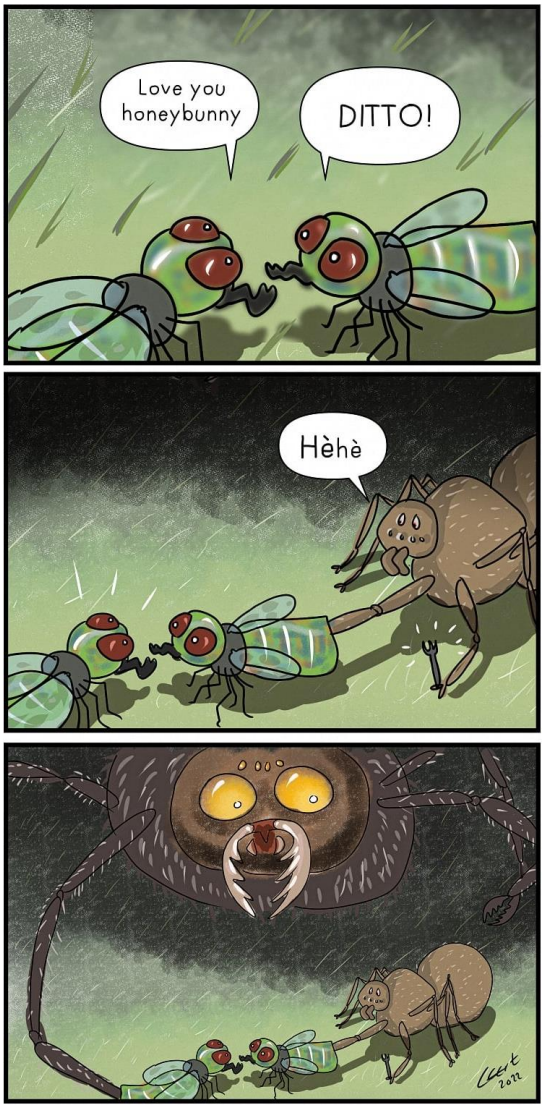
Not sure what went wrong there for them to not even get the kingdom right.

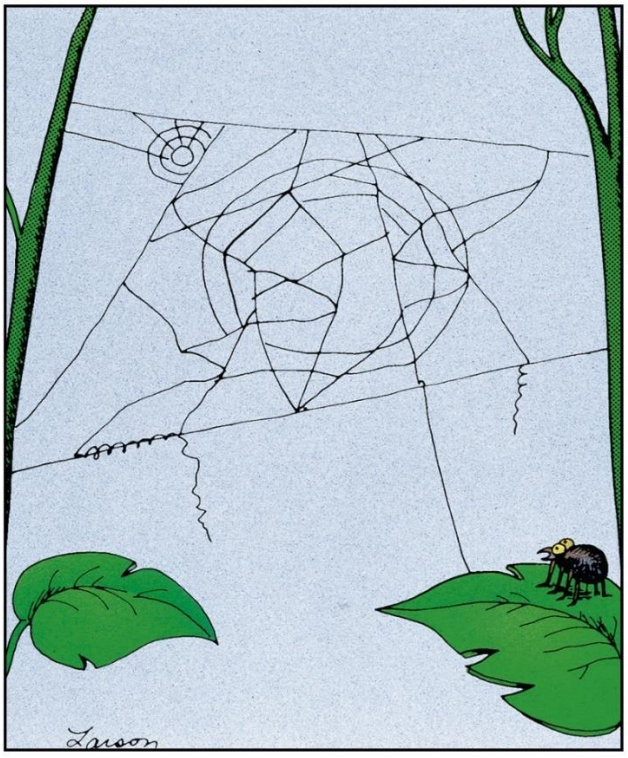
Spider tattoos

Our very own Henning Boshoff recently got this tattoo of a photo that Jarrod Todd took of an inland black button spider (*Latrodectus renivulvatus*). Beneath it are two other tattoos spotted on social media recently.

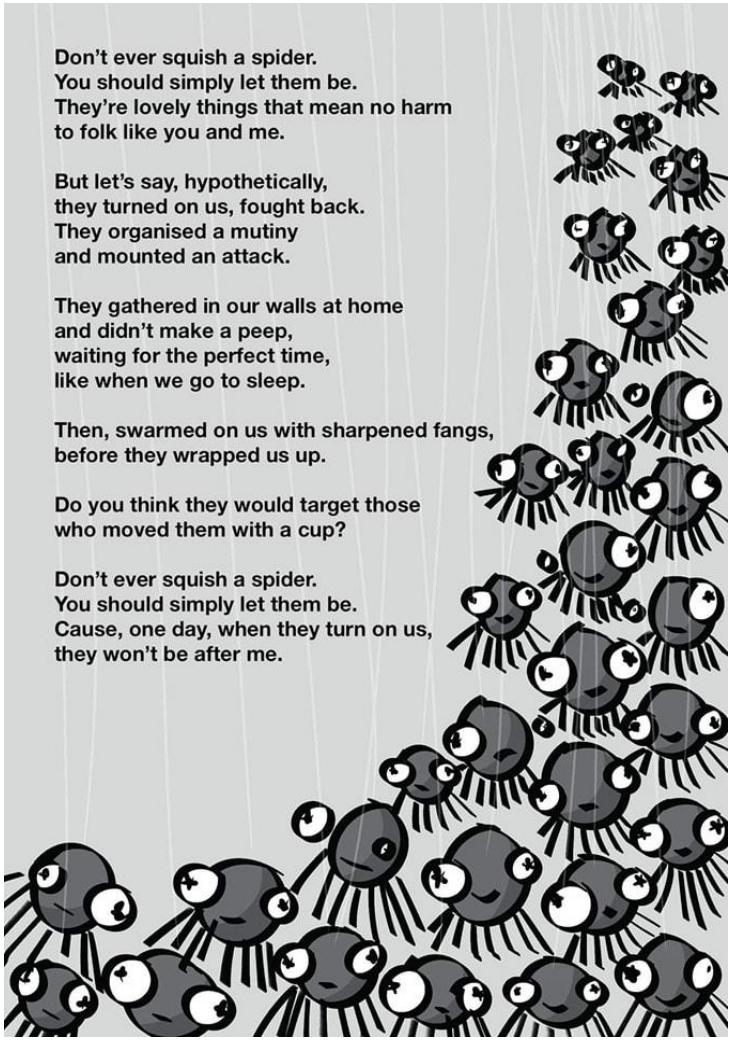
Posted by Kim Dv Tattoo.

Posted by Boe Richman.



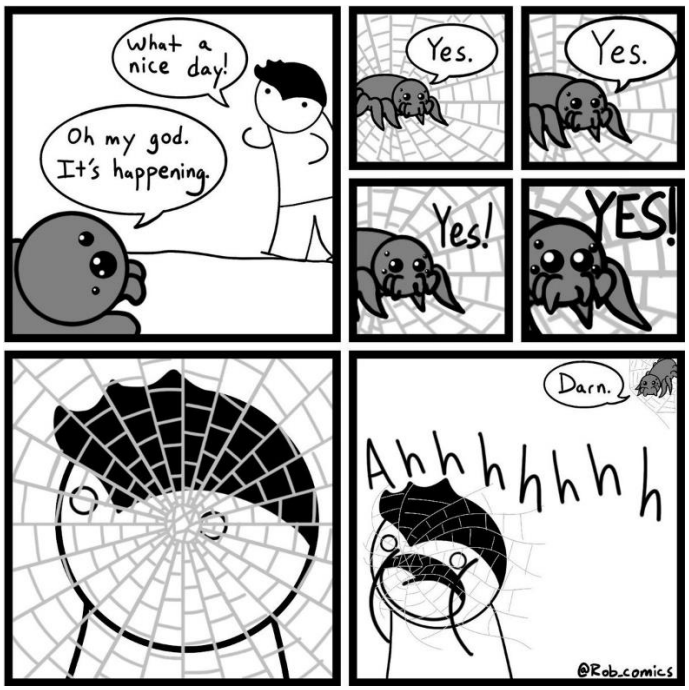


"Whoa! ... That *can't* be right!"


Don't ever squish a spider.
You should simply let them be.
They're lovely things that mean no harm
to folk like you and me.
But let's say, hypothetically,
they turned on us, fought back.
They organised a mutiny
and mounted an attack.
They gathered in our walls at home
and didn't make a peep,
waiting for the perfect time,
like when we go to sleep.
Then, swarmed on us with sharpened fangs,
before they wrapped us up.
Do you think they would target those
who moved them with a cup?
Don't ever squish a spider.
You should simply let them be.
Cause, one day, when they turn on us,
they won't be after me.


Uhh, ma'am..
GET AWAY! I have a boyfriend!
Very well.
RANDOMIS.COM


OH GROSS IT TOUCHED ME!
EXCUSE ME! HOW DARE YOU TREAT ME LIKE THIS?
DO YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO RAISE 200 KIDS IN YOUR SOCK DRAWER?
AFTERDEATHCOMICS
"SPIDER-FREE"
AFTERDEATHCOMICS
MY SOCK DRAWER?
AND I FEED THEM ALL TOO!
YOU KNOW WHAT? IF YOU CAN'T APPRECIATE ME, I'M GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE!
THE SPIDER QUEEN'S GONE!
HURRAH!


What a nice day!
Oh my god. It's happening.
Yes.
Yes.
Yes!
YES!
Darn.
Ahhhhhhh
@Rob.comics

Upcoming Events

DIARY 2023 www.spiderclub.co.za

Please keep an eye on our Facebook group (https://web.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/) or on our website (https://www.spiderclub.co.za/events/category/events/). Alternatively, register as a member of The Spider Club of Southern Africa (https://www.spiderclub.co.za/register/) to receive email notifications about any confirmed events.

MAY
17-21

YEBO GOGGA
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

"Beating the Heat"
The Faculty of Science and School of Animal, Plant & Environmental Sciences of the University of the Witwatersrand inviteS you to the Yebo Gogga exhibition in 2023. We hope to share our passion for science and biology with your learners as we explore how living things cope with heat and the role of heat in science and society.

The Spider Club of Southern Africa will have a stall at Yebo Gogga on 17 to 21 May.

We charge for attendance at field and certain other events: ***R100 per adult and R20 per child 11 years and under, cash only, with the option of paying R200 PER NUCLEAR FAMILY for annual subscription. Members who paid the subscription fee do not have to pay at events.*** *Some venues will also require an entrance fee that must be paid by each individual. For field trips we will supply vials, magnifiers, plastic pill bottles, and some other basic collecting equipment, but please bring your own if you have as well as any reference books, a picnic lunch, adequate water, a hat, and good walking shoes.* ***Book on info@spiderclub.co.za or 067 833 2191 or on our Facebook page****. When booking, please give us your cell phone number and we will set up a WhatsApp group for the event.*

Join our community on Facebook to meet like-minded people and stay updated on upcoming events https://www.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/

Watch this space!
Keep your eyes on your e-mail and our Facebook page as other events may be organised, sometimes at quite short notice. We will attempt to give you fair warning.