Common Household Spiders
Key Points – Household Spiders in Fort Collins

• Many of the spiders found in homes are transients, that do not reproduce in buildings.
• The only potentially dangerous species is the western widow.
• Better identification of spiders can calm many concerns of clients.
• Selective use of insecticides, trapping, and vacuuming are the primary controls for spiders.
Most Common Spiders in Homes

Funnelweb Spiders

Family Agelenidae, three common genera
Funnel-weaver Spiders

Family Agelenidae
Funnel weaver webs
Male funnel weaver spiders have grossly enlarged pedipalps (*not fangs!!*)
Spider Mating – Transfer of Sperm Via Pedipalps
Most funnel weavers found in homes are incidental transients, wandering indoors in late summer/early fall.

*Agelenopsis* species

*Hololena* species
Some funnel weaver spiders can reproduce indoors

*Tegenaria domestica*

Barn funnel weaver/domestic house spider

*Tegenaria agrestis*

Hobo spider
The Wood Louse (Roly-Poly) Hunter

Family Dysderidae

*Dysdera crocata*
Longlegged Sac Spiders/Yellow Sac Spiders

Family Miturgidae
Jumping Spiders

Family Salticidae
Jumping spiders have the best visual acuity of any terrestrial arthropod.
Wolf Spiders

Lycosidae Family
Giant Wolf Spiders  *Hogna* species
Burrowing Wolf Spiders
*Geolycosa* species
Western Widow
\textit{(Latrodectus hesperus)}
There are many kinds of widow spiders (*Latrodectus* spp.) in the world:

- Black widow (*L. mactans*)
- Western widow (*L. hesperus*)
- Australian redback spider
- Malmignatte (Europe)…. 
Western Widow (*Latrodectus hesperus*)
Widow spiders show strong sexual dimorphism
Male Widow spiders are much smaller than females.

Coloration may vary, but the pattern on the underside is similar.

Males, of course, have greatly enlarged pedipalps.
Widow spider life stages
Some symptoms of widow spider bites

- Pinprick, may not be noticed
- General sense of malaise, impending doom
- Muscle tightening, particularly of abdominal muscles
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Most deaths due to effects on blood pressure
*Steatoda* spp. are sometimes mistaken for widow spiders
Combfooted/Cobweb Spiders
Family Theridiidae
Venomous Species of Spiders Around The World

Cytotoxic Venoms

Mediterranean recluse *Loxosceles rufescens*
Brown Spiders (*Loxosceles* spp.)

Includes the brown recluse/fiddleback spider, *Loxosceles reclusa*
Some features:

“Fiddleback pattern” on cephalothorax

Uniform coloration on the legs
Three pairs of eyes
Confirmed *Loxosceles* Records from Colorado

- Five records of *L. rufescens* (Mediterranean recluse) - Denver, Bent, Larimer, Las Animas Counties
- Four records of *L. reclusa* (Boulder, Otero, Prowers)
- One record of *L. apachea* (Larimer)
Funnel weaver spiders (Agelenidae family) are very, very, very, very, very, very commonly mistaken for brown recluse throughout Colorado.
Clockwise, Top Left: Funnel weaver spider, solpugid/sunspider, wolf spider, brown spider (lower left)
Some Symptoms of Brown Recluse Bite

- Often - pain at time of bite
  - Typically persists for 30 minutes or so

- Often reddened area or white halo at bite site

- Very uncommonly – ulceration and slow healing

- Very uncommonly – systemic effects that include nausea, fever, cramping
Factors affecting Severity of Bites from Brown Recluse

- Individual immune response
- Amount of venom introduced during bite
- Secondary involvement of wound-infecting bacteria
Misdiagnosis (overdiagnosis) of brown recluse bites as a cause for most any slow healing wound of unknown origin is probably, by far, the most common misdiagnosis US medical doctors make regarding arthropods.

“Yep, that is DEFINITELY a Brown Recluse bite”
Conditions That Can Be Confused With or Have Been Misdiagnosed As Recluse Spider Bites

**Bacterial**
- *Staphylococcus* infection
- *Streptococcus* infection
- Cutaneous anthrax

**Viral**
- Infected herpes simplex
- Chronic herpes simplex
- Varicella zoster (shingles)

**Fungal**
- Sporotrichosis

**Lymphoproliferative disorders**
- Lymphoma
- Lymphomatoid papulosis

**Vascular disorders**
- Focal vasculitis
- Purpura fulminans

**Reaction to drugs**
- Warfarin poisoning

**Arthropod-induced**
- Lyme disease
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- *Ornithodoros coriaceus* bite (soft tick)
- Insect bites (flea, mite, biting fly)

**Misc. / multiple causative agents**
- Pyoderma gangrenosum
- Pressure ulcers
The Most Common Source of Slow Healing Wounds in the US!

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)

aka, “flesh eating bacteria”, “false spider bite diagnosis”
MRSA Infections

aka, “flesh eating bacteria”, “false spider bite diagnosis”
The Myth of the Toxic “Hobo Spider”

_Tegeneria agrestis_ – aka “hobo spider”

- The most common household spider in most of Europe
- Introduced into US; now common in Fort Collins
- An original report suggested it might bite and cause slow healing wounds

This report has been completely refuted and discredited
Myth of the “Hobo Spider” Toxicity

• Published account in late 1980s appeared to link spider with necrotizing bites
  – Results of original paper have never been replicated
  – *Original paper is considered to be thoroughly discredited and without merit*

• Spider in Europe never associated with biting problems

• No difference in toxins between US and European spiders

• Necrotizing wounds thought to have been due to non-spider causes (MRSA, etc.)
USA SPIDER CHART

DEADLY & DANGEROUS

SPIDER BITE FIRST AID

- Keep patient calm
- Apply ice to decrease pain and swelling
- Use anti-inflammatories for pain relief
- Contact your doctor

NOTICE: MALE SPIDERS HAVE A SMALLER ABDOMEN, LONGER LEGS & SWOLLEN PALPS (FOR REPRODUCTION)

TOXIC (POISONOUS) — PAINFUL BITE

- Female MOUSE SPIDER
- Male MOUSE SPIDER
- Black HOUSE SPIDER
- WOLF SPIDER

WARNING: MOST OF THESE SPIDERS CAN BE DANGEROUS TO PEOPLE WITH ALLERGIES OR HYPER SENSITIVITIES

THE "LOW RISK" SPIDERS

- Female TRAP-DOOR
- Male TRAP-DOOR
- Garden ORBS-WEAVING
- Saint ANDREW’S CROSS
- Huntsman

SPIDERS CAN BE BENEFICIAL IN THE CONTROL OF MOSQUITOES & FLIES • BUT IF THEY PRESENT A DANGER • CALL PUMAPEST

Don’t believe everything you see!!!!
Spider Control in the Home
Regular vacuuming and movement of furniture kills and disrupts the activities of household spiders.
Spider Traps
Caulking can prevent egress into the home by spiders that develop outdoors.
Insecticides applied indoors should only be used as spot treatments at points where spiders are expected to rest and establish webs.
Persistent insecticides applied to potential entry points can prevent egress into the home by spiders that develop outdoors.
Sunspiders
(a.k.a. windscorpions, solpugids)

Class Arachnida
Order Solifugae
The infamous “Camel Spider” photograph circulating on the Web