

**ENTOMOLOGY**  
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# Spiders

Most spiders that occur in the United States are harmless to humans; fatalities from wasps and bees far outnumber those from spiders. Few spiders will bite even when coaxed, and bites of most spiders have no harmful effect. Spiders are very shy and usually remain hidden in undisturbed areas. Many are active only at night. All spiders are beneficial since they feed on insects, destroying many injurious or bothersome pests. The only spiders capable of surviving in Minnesota that may be dangerous to humans are the brown recluse and the northern widow.

**CONTROL**

Spider control is difficult and often unnecessary, but if control is desired, sanitation is the first step. Remove brick, wood, or piles of rubble and other hiding places from the yard, especially near the house. Dispose of unneeded clothing, papers, boxes, and other litter in the basement. Clean up webbing and remove and destroy egg sacs and spiders. Large persistent spider populations in a home may indicate the presence of insects which serve as food for the spiders. Eliminating insects which serve as food will also reduce the spider population.

A recommended chemical may be sprayed or painted indoors in spider-infested areas. It also may be sprayed around the foundation of the house to help prevent spiders from entering.

Recommended Chemicals

½ percent diazinon	Ready-to-use household aerosol or 4 tablespoons 25 percent liquid concentrate per gallon of water.
1½ percent malathion	2 tablespoons 50-57 percent liquid concentrate per quart of water.
1 percent propoxur (Baygon)	Ready-to-use aerosol.

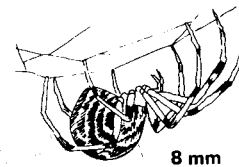
**SPIDERS COMMONLY FOUND IN HOMES**

**Jumping spiders** are dark brown or black furry spiders which are active during the day and like sunshine. They are often found on windows and screens. Their movements are quick and they leap on their prey, often leaping distances many times their length. Jumping spiders can see very well, often over 8 inches.



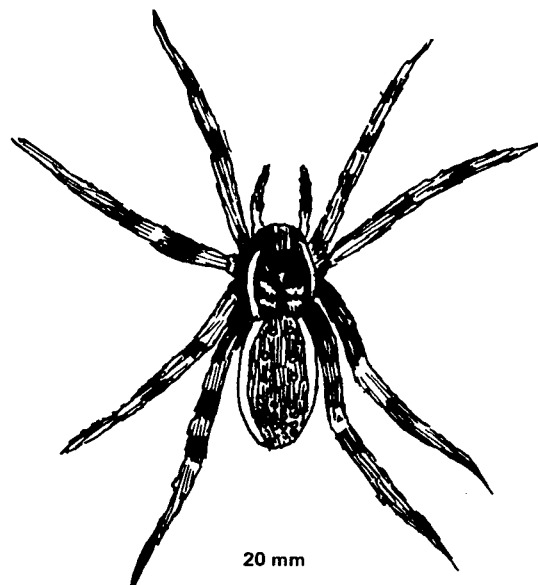
6 mm

**Cobweb or house spiders** frequently make irregular cobwebs in corners and angles in the home. Sticky outside threads of the web entangle insects that come in contact with them, and these threads may pull the insect inside the web as they contract. The spider then wraps its prey in silk, bites it, and sucks it dry.



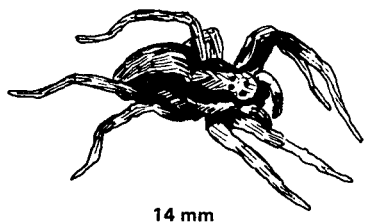
8 mm

**Fishing spiders** are the largest spiders in Minnesota, often with a leg span of 3 inches. They normally live near lakes and streams but are occasionally found in the home. Fishing spiders can run over the surface of water and can dive and stay submerged if chased. They prey on insects and, rarely, tadpoles and small fish.



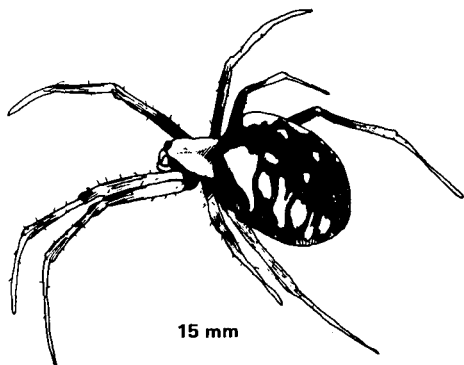
20 mm

**Wolf spiders** are very common outdoors and are occasionally found inside. They are hunting spiders which actively seek out their prey and are capable of running very fast. They are active during the day and at night during warm periods. Many wolf spiders have a stripe or pattern the length of the first and sometimes second body segment which can be mistaken for the fiddle or violin on the brown recluse spider. The violin-colored area on the brown recluse is very distinct and unmistakable. Wolf spiders are easy to rear and make good pets.



14 mm

**Orb weavers or garden spiders** make large, round, classic spider webs. They are very common outdoors around houses and outbuildings and in gardens and fields. The web is used to capture prey since the spider has poor eyesight and is helpless away from the web. Many orb weavers are brightly colored or have oddly shaped abdomens.



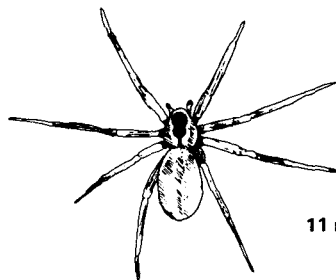
15 mm

#### POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SPIDERS

The **brown recluse spider** is widely distributed in the central and southern United States, but has not been found in Minnesota. In its range, it is very common outdoors under rocks and loose bark, and frequents homes and farm buildings.

The adult brown recluse or "fiddleback spider" has a legspan about the size of a half dollar. The color varies from light tan to chocolate brown. The spider's nickname is derived from a distinctive dark violin-shaped mark on the front half of its back.

The brown recluse is not aggressive and prefers to hide in dark corners. It will bite occasionally if handled or if trapped in clothing. If a bite occurs, get medical attention.

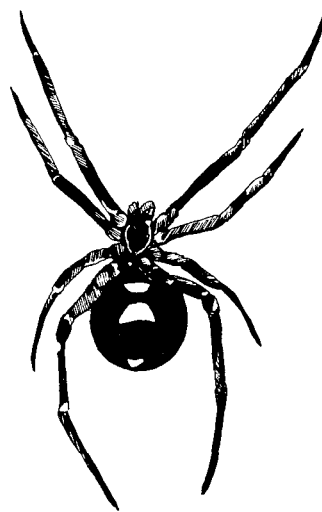


11 mm

The **northern widow**, a close relative of the black widow, is occasionally found in Minnesota. The females spin irregular tangled webs in dark, secluded places. Piles of rubble, outdoor sheds or garages, crawl spaces, and basements are common web locations.

The northern widow is easily identified by its shiny black body with red markings on the underside of the abdomen. The non-poisonous males are much smaller with yellow and red bands and spots on the abdomen.

The female northern widow is shy and active only at night. She does not leave her web and is helpless away from it. She requires extreme provocation before biting but may bite when trapped in clothing or when her web is disturbed. The bite deserves prompt medical attention.



12-16 mm

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