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## Your guide to identifying spiders

### GARDEN CROSS SPIDER

This is the largest of the orb web spiders (meaning disc-shaped web) found in the garden. It has stripy legs and has a brownish abdomen with a cross made up of white spots.



*Araneus diadematus*

### HOUSE SPIDER

There are nine different types of house spider and their leg spans range from the size of a ginger nut to the size of a digestive biscuit. They have long, strong, brown hairy legs.



*Tegoneta dulcica*

### DADDY-LONGLEGS SPIDER

This spider has very long thin legs. It is different from a cranefly as they have wings. These spiders are usually in webs or walking on walls. They build very fine sheet webs with a mesh of fine sticky lines around it. They are famed for capturing other spiders.



*Phidippus phidippioides*

### HARVESTMAN

This is not a true spider. It is a relative with a round body all in one piece where as the daddy-longlegs spider has a long body in two parts. Unlike spiders, it has no silk glands and does not spin a web. It catches its prey by using the hooks on the ends of its legs.



*Opiliones sp.*

### MONEY SPIDER

These tiny spiders are known for their delicate sheet or hammock like webs found on the grass with the morning dew. Money spiders are light enough to take to the air on a parachute of silk. This is why they can suddenly appear on your arm, as if from nowhere. According to folklore when a money spider lands on you it can be a sign of good luck or of wealth.



*Linyphia hortensis*

### JUMPING SPIDER

This black and white Zebra jumping spider is said to have the best eyesight of any spider (or any invertebrate for that matter). These small, jerky spiders are great fun to watch as they scuttle around on walls leaping on their prey.



*Salticus scenicus*

## Spectacular spiders



“ Spiders are in many ways the most exciting creatures on earth. Right here in the UK we have spiders that'll dive underwater to catch tadpoles and even small fish, spiders that tend their young in little creches made from silken tents, little wolves that carry their spiderlings around on their backs, even cute jumping spiders that'll bounce around like they're on pogo sticks - and will even show off to you if they think you're a rival! What spiders are NOT is dangerous - I'd love a chance to convince every kid out there that spiders are wonderful before they grow up and inherit their parent's fears!!! ”

**Steve Backshall**

### Inside:

- Amazing spider facts
- Stories from your favourite wildlife presenters
- And much, much more!





There are about 650 different species of spider in the UK ranging from tiny money spider the **Minute maro** (*Maro minutus*) to the huge **Cardinal spider** (*Tegenaria parietina*) with a leg span of more than 10 centimetres. The heaviest spider in Britain is probably the **Four-spot orbweaver** (*Araneus quadratus*) which weighs up to 2.5 grams!

**Zebra jumping spiders** (*Salticus scenicus*) have excellent eyesight. If you take a close look at one, it may well turn its head and look straight back at you! They are small – the females are just 7mm long - but they are big for spiders – half of all species are tiny money spiders, less than 4 mm long!

Chameleons aren't the only animals that can change their colour. The **Flower crab spider** (*Misumena vatia*) sits on flowers to wait for prey to land nearby. It then pounces and traps its insect prey using its crab-like front legs. But the crab spider has an extra special trick up its sleeve - it can change colour to match the flower it is sitting on; crab spiders can be white, green or yellow.



Long before humans invented diving, **Water spiders** (*Argyroneta aquatica*) had evolved successful diving techniques. They trap air in fine hairs on their abdomen creating a scuba tank and build a silken diving bell underwater, that they fill with air. This enables the spiders to roam underwater hunting small animals.

**Peus's long-back spider** (*Mecopisthes peusi*) appears to have largely disappeared from its heathland habitats in the South of England, but still hangs on in North Wales and Cheshire on sand dunes and in Northern Ireland.



The female **Nursery web spider** (*Pisaura mirabilis*) creates a tent-like web for her young - a nursery web! Her spiderlings are safe inside their nursery as she stays with them to protect them from predators. The male Nursery web spider gives a silk wrapped gift to a female spider before mating. However, this isn't just a romantic gesture, it's a survival tactic! The wrapped up insect gift is given to the female to distract her while he mates with her, which

stops her from attacking him. Sometimes the male cheats and wraps up some rubbish instead!

**Wolf spiders** (*Pardosa amentata*) are so named because it was once thought that they hunted in packs. When a male Wolf spider finds a female he wishes to mate with, he will dance for her! If she isn't impressed she may attack him, but if she likes the dance, she may allow him to mate with her. His dance consists of waving his front legs and vibrating his abdomen! Wolf spiders are great mothers. The female carries her egg sac around with her to protect it. She basks in sunlit areas to help the eggs develop quicker and moistens it to stop it drying out. When the young hatch, she carries her babies around on her back for about a week and they all share food.



Do you ever find **House spiders** (*Tegenaria* species) in your bath? They do not come up the plug hole but fall in off the walls. They are most likely to be males, out looking for a female to mate with.



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Some spiders are masters of disguise. The **Sand running-spider** (*Philodromus fallax*) is flecked with black, yellow and white and lives on sand dunes from Cheshire around to Lincolnshire, when it stops moving it blends into the sand and disappears. Another endangered species is the **Lichen running-spider** (*Philodromus margaritatus*), which lives on tree trunks in Scotland and Central South England and looks like a bit of lichen.

The **Horrid ground-weaver** (*Nothopantes horridus*) may be the rarest spider in the world. It has only ever been found in two limestone quarries near Plymouth, one of which has now been developed.



“ My 2 3/4 year old daughter is now fascinated by spiders... on the walk to nursery, we have discovered an old wall with holes along its length and a number of tube web spiders living in the holes. They are fast, fascinating and unusual in that the front 3 pairs of legs face forward (other spiders have 2 pairs facing forwards and 2 backwards) and they have large, green iridescent fangs!! Not something to be scared of - more something to marvel at in the brief second that they emerge!

**Miranda Krestovnikoff**



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In East Anglia, the **Fen raft spider** (*Dolomedes plantarius*) lives in one fen on the Norfolk and Suffolk border. The Fen raft spider (is one of our largest spiders – adult females can grow to around 7cm in length (including their legs). They are also rather attractive, and have black or brown bodies with white or cream stripes. They live and hunt on the water's surface, sensing vibrations with their legs. They lie in wait amongst the wetland plants for prey to come within striking distance. Their hairy legs allow them to skate across the surface of the water to grab their prey. The spiders also use their leg hairs to sense the vibrations produced by aquatic insects and other small creatures – which they eat. Larger individuals have been known to catch larger animals such as tadpoles and small fish! When they are scared they climb down plant stems and hide underwater.

**The Cloud-living spider** (*Semljicola caliginosus*) lives on mountains in Cumbria, Yorkshire and the Scottish Highlands. This species is under threat from climate change - a few degrees rise in temperature may push the Cloud-living spider to extinction. Outside Britain it has only been found in Siberia where it was reported in 2006.



Did you know that British spiders use venom to subdue and kill their prey? There is one species with venom that can cause discomfort to humans. The **Noble false widow** (*Steatoda nobilis*) is found in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. It is thought to have arrived in the UK from the Canary Islands on imported bananas and a bad bite can result in localised swelling and nausea.



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The **Distinguished jumping spider** (*Sitticus distinguendus*) is found on just two sites in the UK, West Thurrock Marshes in Essex and Swanscombe Peninsula in Kent.

There are 37 types of jumping spider in the UK, but worldwide it is the largest spider family, containing over five thousand species. Jumping spiders have a very large front pair of eyes, and are thought to possess the best vision for an invertebrate after cephalopods (octopus

and relatives). This vision, along with an ability to jump, allows them to actively hunt their prey during the day. Their keen eyesight also plays a part in courtship, where males undertake elaborate dances to woo a female (and avoid being eaten!).

For more than 70 years, the **Ladybird spider** (*Eresus sandaliatus*) was thought to be extinct in Britain. It was rediscovered in 1980, on one last remaining site which supported only a few spiders. Each year, we take a small number of spiders from this main site, where the population is growing. The spiders are then carefully released onto new sites in the Dorset heathlands.



The male spider has spectacular colouring and it's not difficult to see why it is called the Ladybird spider! The female Ladybird spider builds a silk-lined burrow about 10cm deep in sandy soil where she lays her eggs.

**Spider Silk** is produced as a liquid protein in the spider's abdomen. At the tip of the abdomen are two or three pairs of spinnerets, these spin the silk which immediately solidifies to form threads. Spider silk is incredibly strong and elastic – it can be stretched to one third longer than its original length without breaking. Spiders use their silk for different uses, it can be used to construct webs to catch prey, to protect eggs, to wrap prey, or to weave a shelter.



Some spiders use silk to colonise new areas. On fine days in late summer or autumn tens of thousands of small money spiders climb to the tops of blades of grass or fence posts and spin strands of silk. As the wind catches the silk the spiders become airborne and drift along with the breeze. This 'ballooning' allows the spiders to travel huge distances and up to astounding heights. Weather balloons over 1000m up in the atmosphere have caught ballooning spiders!

The Guinness World Record for the largest outdoor spiders' web is held by British spiders. In October 1998, a cobweb that covered the entire 4.54 hectare (11.2 acre) playing field at Kineton High School, Warwick was discovered by Ken Thompson - the school's caretaker. It had been created by thousands of money spiders.



Did you know that the web of an average Garden spider (*Araneus diadematus*) contains up to 30 metres of silk!