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**ABOUT THE GROUP**

Welcome to the page that concentrates on promoting a knowledge of, and an interest in mainly spiders, but also other arachnids from sub-Saharan Africa, i.e., solifuges, harvestmen, pseudo-scorpions, whip spiders, scorpions, etc.

Posts of wild arachnids found anywhere in the world are accepted, but as indicated by the group name, our emphasis is on Southern Africa spiders. If you post a photo of a spider from outside of Southern Africa, you must state the country where the photo was taken.

If you want a subject identified from a photo, please tell us the geographic location where it was taken and any other details you can. Clear pictures from as many angles as possible, and especially showing the spider’s eye pattern, make it easier for us to help, but we cannot always identify a spider. If possible, the scientific and common names will be provided to you. We ask you to understand however that most spiders do not have common names, and that the use of common names may lead to confusion in many cases. We have members throughout the world, so the use of English as a modern universal language, and the use of the binomial nomenclature system (‘scientific names’) for posts is preferred.

Please note that we do not allow any pictures of suspected bites. There is unfortunately no way to identify the cause of a ‘bite’ just by looking at a wound. The best advice we can give in these circumstances is to treat the ‘bite’ symptomatically and to consult a medical practitioner if you become concerned.

If you need information on the medically significant spiders in Southern Africa, please refer to the PDF titled "Are spiders dangerous?" in the <Files> section of this group (this may be under <More> on some device displays). We recommend that you download this file for future reference. It is easier to learn to identify the few medically significant spiders, than to worry about every (most likely harmless) spider that crosses your path.

We remind you that worldwide, there are currently (as at 06/02/2021) 49 143 recognised species of spiders (in 4207 genera and 128 families). Apart from two taxa (the Uloboridae family [287 spp.] and the Holarchaea genus in the Anapidae family [2 spp.]) all produce venom. Therefore, 99.4% of recognised species produce venom, and are therefore, by definition, 'venomous'. It is important to note though, that worldwide, it is estimated that only 194 spp. of spiders are medically significant. One can then point out that 99,6% of all recognised spiders either produce no venom or produce venom that is of NO, or LITTLE consequence to humans.

Spiders have no interest in humans and are reluctant to bite. They do not feed on us (unlike ticks, mites, lice, mosquitos, horse flies, tsetse flies, etc) and generally prefer to try to escape human contact or to sham death in order to avoid confrontation. No spider will attack a human without provocation, and the rare bites that do occur, usually happen where a spider is accidentally (or purposefully) squashed or where a spider that doesn't want to be handled is molested.

Spider bite misdiagnosis - primarily by patients, but also by medical practitioners - remains a problem worldwide. A 'bite' should never be attributed to a spider unless the actual biting action was witnessed, or a squashed spider is found in the immediate vicinity of the bite. Many skin lesions are not due to bites at all, and amongst actual bites, those from spiders belong at the bottom of the list of potential suspects.

Of the small number of spiders considered to be medically significant, only a small fraction have venom which may produce tissue necrosis. Most cases of necrosis are in fact due to secondary bacterial infection caused by scratching a 'bite' site.

Spiders play an important role in limiting the numbers of insects in both agriculture and the home. One scientific paper suggests that an estimated 400–800 million tons of prey [largely insects] are annually killed by the global spider community.

Further reading (all of these may be regarded as 'authoritative sources'):

"Are Spiders Dangerous?" document in the files section of this page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/591716760879033/>)

The blogsite at <https://arthropodecology.com/2013/06/13/update-spiders-still-dont-bite/>

<https://theconversation.com/should-i-kill-spiders-in-my-home-an-entomologist-explains-why-not-to-95912>

<https://theconversation.com/dont-like-spiders-here-are-10-reasons-to-change-your-mind-126433>

<https://www.livescience.com/37974-he-surprising-cause-of-most-spider-bites.html>

<https://www.nursingcenter.com/journalarticle?Article_ID=1302545&Journal_ID=54014&Issue_ID=1302226>

<https://ednieuw.home.xs4all.nl/Spiders/Nasty-Spiders/Demystification-toxicity-spiders.htm>

<https://www.burkemuseum.org/collections-and-research/biology/arachnology-and-entomology/spider-myths/spider-myth-resources>

**RULES**

1. An applicant for membership of the group must provide such information as the administrators of the group may require from time to time when applying for membership. This may include, but is not limited to, the motivation of the applicant for wanting to join the group. Applications must also be accompanied by a declaration that the applicant has read these rules and agrees to be bound by them.
2. The administrators reserve the right to reject any application that is incomplete, or for any other lawful reason.
3. Applicants are also expected to download and read the file “Are Spiders Dangerous?” (see the <About> section) before posting to the group.
4. We are passionate about furthering a deeper understanding of spiders and other arachnids and helping people to overcome their fear of these creatures, through the acquisition of knowledge about them. We understand that the fear associated with arachnophobia is real. We do not believe however that the expression of these fears on this forum serves any purpose other than to reinforce negative perceptions and we ask you to refrain from doing so. Do not post negative remarks such as “run!” or “I just soiled myself!” etc. Any such comments and/or negative gifs/memes will be summarily deleted.
5. Posts about spiders that are not native to Southern Africa must be clearly identified as such, and the country where the photo was taken must be stated in the header to any photo.
6. We will not tolerate any advocacy of harm to spiders (whether in ‘jest’ or otherwise, i.e., remarks such as “burn down the house”, etc.) or the use of poisons to eradicate spiders. Any such comments and/or negative gifs/memes will be summarily deleted.
7. We welcome discussion and debate, but we ask that discussion be kept civil. In particular, we ask new members to respect that there are many existing members who have a wealth of knowledge, and to avoid becoming abusive if you are corrected in respect of incorrect information or comments.
8. We request that members do not ‘block’ one another as this leads to disjointed threads. Where a member feels harassed or abused, they should report this to the administrators.
9. We do not accept posts on the subject of pet/hobby tarantulas, or any captive spiders and any posts of this nature will be removed without warning.
10. Please do not guess the identification of a spider, without making it clear that it is a guess. We understand that part of the fun of learning about spiders is learning to identify them, but unless you are sure about an ID, it is suggested that you phrase your ID as “Is this XX yy?” or “Could this be XX yy?” or similar. If you disagree with such a tentative ID, but are not yourself sure of the ID, you might respond “Is it not rather AA bb?” or similar. Sooner or later, one of the experts on the group will provide a positive identification.
11. Spider bites are rarer than most people imagine. We are not able to give specific medical advice in respect of any suspected bite, and members should always consult a medical practitioner if they are concerned about a possible bite. Where we provide general medical advice, i.e., information as to what may typically be expected in the case of the bite by a particular spider to an average healthy human, then whilst that advice is given in good faith, based on the current body of available knowledge, it is provided without any liability, and any member who acts upon such advice indemnifies the group and administrators, from any claims for damages arising out of any harm which might result as a consequence of following such advice.
12. Spam posts will be removed without warning and the poster will be blocked from further posting.
13. We ask that you avoid posting gif images - particularly large gifs which add nothing more than a one- or two-word message (e.g. “Thank you”) that could just as easily have been typed. Other gifs may be misinterpreted or annoy others, and should also be avoided. If you wish to post a meme, please make sure that it is relevant and current. If the meme is dated more than a month or so in the past the chances are that it has already been posted.
14. The administrators reserve the right to warn any member in the case of an infringement of any of these rules, or to summarily, at their sole discretion, block a member from further posting. Where a member has been blocked s/he may send a personal message to any of the administrators putting forward reasons as to why her/his access to posting should be restored. The administrators shall review such reasons and thereafter either confirm or reverse (with or without conditions) their original decision. This decision shall be final and binding.
15. The administrators may change the contents of these rules at any time by posting a notice on the <Discussion> page of the group notifying the members of such change. By remaining a member of the group, a member signifies her/his agreement to be bound by any amendment to the rules.