

Spiders in the Garden are Good!

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Spiders - either you hate them or you don't mind them; I rarely find someone who likes them, however.

I love spiders when they are in the garden doing their job – feeding on other insects. I don't really mind them when they are in the house, just a little squish with the foot takes care of them.

You might consider putting spiders back outside if you find them in the house, but it may not work. If they are spiders that normally reside inside, they won't survive the outdoors. If it's one of the outdoor spiders that creeps in, they will survive.

I hate, however, when I am hiking through the woods and I walk into a spider web and the silky strings are sticking to my eyelashes! I always try to have someone taller than me lead the way down the path to prevent this from happening.

Spiders are good guys, feeding primarily on insects in the garden.

While it might look like an invasion with all of the webs in the shrubs, lawns, and other plants, it's actually part of their normal cycle.

Spiders are around in the spring; they are just so small that you don't see them or their webs.

They feed (and are fed upon) during the summer and as they near late summer and fall, they begin to spin webs in order to reproduce and lay eggs for next season.

Spiders are killed by a hard frost thus they are furiously gearing up for egg laying at this time. The eggs are protected during the winter and they hatch in the spring.

The most common spiders that we have around here are grouped into the orb, sheetweb, and funnel weavers.

The orb weavers are the ones that create the webs that are "picture-worthy." These are the webs the radial threads that, when covered with dew, are pretty spectacular, especially if backlit by the sun.

The black and yellow garden spider is the most common orb weaver and is easily spotted. They feed on whatever happens to come across the web.

It's pretty cool to catch one in the process of wrapping its prey with silk.

The sheetweb weavers construct their webs in a variety of ways depending on the species but they are all "sheets" of silk. They are usually on top of vegetation such as grass or shrubs and are flat or slightly curved.

The spiders hide around the edges and wait until prey happens along.

The funnel weavers are similar to the sheetweb weavers except you will find a funnel-like structure somewhere near the middle of the sheet.

The funnel weaver spiders hang out in the funnel and scrambles out to catch prey that lands on the silk mass and drags it back into the funnel.

If you are in the category of spider-hater, you are probably tempted to destroy these webs. However, try to resist, knowing that these guys prefer outside and maybe only once in a while happen to get indoors.

They will do a great job in cleaning up the insect pests around the yard.



Orb weaver web with early morning dew.



The web of a funnel weaver.