

An Introduction to the Spiders of Chicago Wilderness, USA

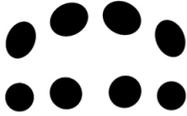
Common Spiders of the Chicago Region

The Field Museum – Division of Environment, Culture, and Conservation

Produced by: Jane and John Balaban, North Branch Restoration Project; Rebecca Schillo, Conservation Ecologist, The Field Museum; Lynette Schimming, BugGuide.net.
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GNAPHOSIDAE GROUND SPIDERS

Cylindrical spinnerets are a key field marking for this large nocturnal family of mostly black or brown spiders.



62 *Herpyllus ecclesiasticus*
♀ Eastern Parson Spider



63 *Sergiolus capulatus*
♀ Ground Spider

ATYPIDAE PURSEWEB SPIDERS

Purseweb spiders are rarely seen because they often live in burrows, but males of species like *S. niger* can be found in early summer when they go searching for their mates.

Easily recognized by their eyes and shape, they make tubular webs, wait inside for prey, and reach through with huge jaws to pull it inside.



64 *Sphodros niger*
♂ Black purseweb spider

POTENTIALLY HARMFUL SPIDERS

Spiders of the Chicago Region are beneficial arthropods, helping to keep populations of various insect pests under control. Essentially all are harmless to humans, except for people with rare allergies. The insecticides used to control spiders are more dangerous to human health than the spiders themselves. Most medical cases of “spider bite” are actually mis-identifications.

This guide includes two spiders known to affect humans. The Northern Black Widow (Theridiidae, pg2) lives in the Chicago Region but is seldom encountered. The Brown Recluse (Sicariidae) does not live here, though that may change with ongoing climate disruption.



65 *Latrodectus variolus*
Northern Black Widow

SICARIIDAE *Loxosceles reclusa* Brown Recluse

The six-eyed recluse spiders are easily recognized by their unique eye arrangement. They are also known for the violin pattern seen on the spider’s carapace. They live in central Illinois and south.



66 *Loxosceles reclusa*
Brown Recluse

SPIDER WEBS

The shape and structure of the webs made by some spiders can serve as a quick guide to the spider’s family.

Some characteristic webs are found here and presented throughout this guide (1, 18, 26, 29, 30).



67 Orb Weaver Web



68 Sheet Web



69 Funnel Web



70 Filmy Dome Web

OTHER SILK USES

Not all spiders use webs to capture their prey (e.g. wandering spiders). But all spiders have silk glands and will use silk to build themselves protective retreats in a leaf or in a corner of a room, as draglines, or to construct their egg sacs. The female wraps her eggs in silk for protection. See images 22, 25, 27, 36, 42, 72, 73.



71 Spider Retreat



72 Spider Egg Sac



73 Spider Egg Sac



74 Spiderlings