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SPIDERS BE GONE

We will get calls at the Extension Office on spider control from time to time and recently a call came in with too many spiders in a baby's room near or on the baby in a crib. With weeds, we use Weed-B-Gon, so with spiders use Spider-Be-Gone? But it isn't that easy, thus the call.

The movie, "Arachnophobia," did not do much to dispel fears about these eight-legged creatures. There are about 2,000 kinds of spiders in the United States. The black widow and brown recluse spiders are the main two of concern in Nebraska and because their venom contains potent toxins, they can cause medical problems for us. It can be important to save the spider for identification purposes if you are bitten by them.

Spiders are very shy creatures. Most people get bitten because they are cleaning an area that has not been cleaned for a long time and they disturb a spider's web or nest. Spiders are often blamed for many more bites than they actually commit. In general, most spider bites will not harm most people except for slight discomfort for a limited time after being bitten. A few individuals may be hypersensitive to the bites of a particular species, but this allergic reaction won't be known until after the person gets bitten.

A consistent presence of spiders in structures may be a sign of an insect infestation because spiders cannot survive long without food. Reducing insect infestations will also decrease spiders. Habitat modification is the most important tactic for good spider control. Whether indoors or outdoors, most spiders have a preference for undisturbed areas. Be sure to dust and vacuum frequently around windows, corners of rooms, shelves, under furniture, and behind mirrors and pictures. If you see sac spider capsules, remove them. It is a good idea to wear gloves when cleaning. Because most spiders enter houses through small cracks and crevices, sealing entry points with caulk will be the most permanent solution to spiders wandering inside.

If you are concerned about spiders inside your home, place sticky glue boards in the rooms where you are seeing spiders, especially along the outside wall, behind or under furniture and in closets, and secluded areas. If you are not sure what kind of spider you have, samples can be taken to our office. If I can't identify them, I know who can.

By using glue boards in various places in closets and along walls, it can tell you if you have an infestation of brown recluse spiders or not. The brown recluse is a hunter, emerging from its hiding place at night in search of small insects for food. Favorite hiding places are in seldom-used clothing hanging in dark closets, in boxes of magazines, papers and other stored items, on the underside of furniture, in cracks and spaces around baseboards, around window and door facings, and in dark cellars and garages. If you do find recluses, sometimes called the "fiddleback", work with a licensed pest control company--one who has experience treating structures for brown recluse infestations, and even then, it is not an easy situation. I know first hand because we have brown recluse spiders at our office place.



For accidentally invading spiders (these are the most frequent spider situations in homes), we recommend that efforts be made to seal cracks and crevices as the most permanent solution. This keeps insects out of your home and when there's no food, there's no pest. An excellent website to see spider photos and learn more about controlling them is at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/enviro/pest/factsheets/006-94.htm>

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