

# The Buglife Spider Hunt - Spider Spotting Guide



Please note down the total number of each type of spider you saw over the weekend



## House spider (*Tegenaria* sp.)

### Where does it live?

In houses and sheds

### What does it look like?

This is the classic large hairy house spider. They have long, strong, brown hairy legs. 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 build thick sheet webs in corners where they capture a variety of invertebrates.



## Daddy-longlegs spider (*Pholcus phalangioides*)

### Where does it live?

In houses and sheds

### What does it look like?

This spider has very long and very thin legs. It is different from a crane fly (or Daddy-longlegs) as they have wings, and harvestmen as their bodies are round and in one piece whereas the Daddy longlegs spider has a long body in two parts. 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 catch a range of flying insects in their webs and are also famed for capturing other spiders, including the much larger House spiders



## True window lace-weaver (*Amaurobius similis*)

### Where does it live?

Around windows of houses and on sheds, fences and walls (usually outside). They live in holes during the day and the entrance of the hole is surrounded by a bluish, lacy, tangled web.

### What does it look like?

This is a dark, velvety spider with a pale brown mark in the middle of the abdomen (the rear section of the spider's body). A large female would still fit on a ten pence piece.

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Has a sticky web which traps passing invertebrates

Apparently commonest in central England, there seem to be fewer records from coastal towns - is this an accurate picture?



## Common false-widow spider

(*Steatoda bipunctata*)

### Where does it live?

Around windows of houses and on sheds and fences – usually outside, but sometimes inside.

### What does it look like?

This spider hides during the day, it is black and shiny. The abdomen is about the size of a smallish pea and has a pale line around the front and often another along the middle of the back. Its web is a faint tangle of threads. There are two other closely related false-widow spiders, but they are larger and tend to have bigger webs built in larger spaces.



Rare in the Scottish Borders, North Devon, non coastal Wales between Swansea and Snowdonia, the Fens and Northern Ireland

## Garden cross spider (*Araneus diadematus*)

### Where does it live?

Gardens

### What does it look like?

This is the largest of the orb weaver spiders found in the garden. It has stripy legs and has a brownish abdomen with a cross made up of white spots. A large Garden cross spider body (not including legs) is about the size of a five pence coin.

The spider builds a large orb-web, sometimes stretched between bushes (it does this by attaching threads, walking down to the ground, back up the other bush and then pulling the line tight!) with which it catches flying insects.



Rare in areas of the following: The Fens, west Norfolk, The Pennines, non coastal Wales between Swansea and Snowdonia, North Cornwall, Western Scotland other than the coast from Dumfries around to Ayrshire

## Common zebra jumping-spider (*Salticus scenicus*)

### Where does it live?

On walls and fences, usually outside, but sometimes inside.

### What does it look like?

Jumping spiders do not build webs but run and jump around on their thick set legs. They have two very large middle eyes and fantastic eyesight. They range in size, but the biggest ones would fit on a penny. There are several species in and around houses, most are brownish and uncommon, but the Common zebra jumping-spider is black and white and stripy!

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This spider is rare. Most records are from the South coast and it has only been found as far north as Scunthorpe.

## Large false-widow (*Steatoda grossa*)

### Where does it live?

In sheds, lofts and garages and in empty dustbins, flowerpots, etc.

### What does it look like?

This is a large black and shiny spider that looks like a black widow (but without the red colour). The spider is usually black or occasionally has a pattern of white spots along the top of the abdomen. The spider's body (not including the legs) can reach the size of a one pence coin.



This spider is uncommon, but spreading. It was once restricted to the Isle of Wight and Southampton areas, it has in recent years spread to other cities, including London.

## Noble false-widow (*Steatoda nobilis*)

### Where does it live?

In sheds, lofts and garages and in empty dustbins, flowerpots, etc.

### What does it look like?

This is a large black and shiny spider that resembles black widow spiders. There is no red on the underside of the abdomen, which if fully expanded can be the size of a penny, but there is a distinctively shaped cream and pink mark like the top half of a wine bottle on top of the abdomen.

This is the only spider in the UK known to cause any harm to humans. A bad reaction resulting from a bite will include localised swelling and nausea



A very uncommon spider, most records are in the South East, but there are single records in Carlisle, Lancaster and North Wales.

## Spitting spider (*Scytodes thoracica*)

### Where does it live?

In houses

### What does it look like?

A bizarre looking small spider with a fine pattern of black spots on a cream brown background, the head is domed and slopes down to the front edge. This small spider would easily fit on a one pence coin.

This is a stalking predator that can spot its prey from a distance. It creeps up to its victim until it is within about 15cm at which point it spits out two sticky threads that glue the insect to the surface that it is sitting on. The spider can then move in for the kill at leisure.

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Once very rare on the South coast of England it has become much commoner in recent years and has spread North into London and there are even single records from Norfolk, Peterborough and Derbyshire.



## Wasp spider (*Argiope bruennichi*)

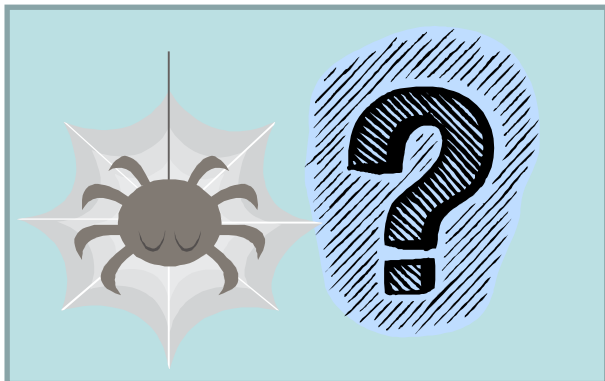
Where does it live?

Gardens

What does it look like?

The biggest orbweaver in Britain its yellow and black stripy abdomen is unmistakable.

The spider builds a large orb-web, sometimes stretched between bushes with which it catches flying insects. The web has two broad bands of white silk in it, it is thought that this may help hide the spider sitting in the middle of the web or alternatively warn off birds from flying into the web and destroying the spiders hard work.



## Other Spiders

How long did you spend actively looking for spiders?

### Top Spider Hunting Tips

- Start your Hunt on Friday evening and finish on Sunday evening (25-27 Sep. or 2-4 Oct.).
- Log the number of spiders you see in and around your home of each type. If you have them, this includes your garden/yard, sheds and other outhouses, garages
- Some spiders will be very obvious and some you will need to seek out as best you can.
- Look in dark corners, under furniture, and in cracks and crevices.
- Many spiders will only come out at night so try to do some of your searching when it is getting dark!
- Don't worry – you only need to spend a little time over the weekend actually looking for spiders. Most of the time you'll just notice them as you go about your usual business!

*Note: If you are lucky enough to spot any rarer spiders or in areas that spider hasn't been seen before, please try to take a digital photo of this if you can. We may need to get in touch for further details and a photo would be very helpful to confirm the type of spider you've seen!*

Enter your results online at [www.buglife.org.uk](http://www.buglife.org.uk) by **Monday 12 October**