

American Brown Recluse Spider



Class	Order	Family	Species
Arachnida	Araneae	Loxoscelidae	<i>Loxosceles spp.</i>

Range

To date they have not extended their range into northern California. In the U.S. they can be found in the central and southern states from Wisconsin to Texas and from the Carolinas to Colorado. Very few have been found in California (*L. laeta*), due to importation.

Habitat

Species within this genus occur both in temperate and tropical regions.

Niche

They construct small irregular webs under logs, stones, etc., but also go indoors where they hide in dark corners or under furniture. They become limited to houses as one travels north.

Diet

Nature: prey upon arthropods caught in their webs and also actively hunt out prey (including other spiders). Because of their strong venom, they are able to feed on arthropods larger than themselves. **Captivity:** 1 cricket per week

Reproduction

Growth: gradual, molts several times
Egg: hatch about 45 days after they are laid
Immature: babies emerge from the eggs after their first molt and are 5-6mm in length
Adult: the female stays with the egg sac until the babies emerge. Adults may live for several years.

Physical Characteristics

Mouthparts: fangs are perpendicular to body line. Duct from a poison gland opens from the base of each fang. The mouth and jaws are on the underside of the head.
Legs: 8 long, skinny legs
Egg: their eggs are laid in clusters and covered with silk to form an egg sac
Immature: white at first, gaining color with each molt

Adult

Size: 11-20mm in length
Body: their head section (cephalothorax) is flat and has six eyes. Female has shorter legs and a stouter body than the male
Color: light olive to dark brown in color. Their most distinguishing mark is the chocolate brown to black violin shape on the top of their head and is where they get their other common names - violin spider or fiddler spider.

Social Organization

None that is known of but up to a dozen are often found in close proximity. Where there are a lot of brown recluses there is often no other species of spider.

Related Species

Common Names: Brown spider, violin spider, brown recluse spider,
Related Species: fiddler spider
Loxosceles reclusa (midwestern states)
Loxosceles arizonica (western U.S.)
Loxosceles deserta (western U.S. & southern California)
Loxosceles laeta (southern California, eastern U.S. & South America)
Loxosceles unicolor
Loxosceles rufescens

Special Adaptations

Venom: These spiders are not aggressive towards people and relatively few bites have been reported. They are well adapted to living in human habitations and so some contract is unavoidable in areas of the country where they occur. Bites have been known to occur when putting on clothes or using a towel in which a spider is hiding. Symptoms vary from no effect at all to a minimum amount of skin loss to coma and blood poisoning. The venom has a necrotic effect and may result in the destruction of cells in the vicinity of the wound, causing a black gangrenous spot, over which a crust forms. The crust falls off causing the wound to become larger and deeper. Lesions vary in size from a small spot to six inches or more in diameter and may not heal for several months.

Sources

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