

Clark County Horticulture Newsletter

From the Ground Up!

October 2023



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A Word from the Agent...

It's October people! I like this month. There's plenty to do, but it's full of joy and excitement as well. As you will see, I decided to dedicate this newsletter to the spider. I know everyone just LOVES these little creatures, especially my husband....HAAA!! So, this newsletter is for you all! All kidding aside, you might actually learn something you didn't know!

Tasks for this month. Plant garlic for harvest next year, clean out the veggie garden well to control next year's diseases, lift and divide perennials if they are in need of it, and plan to come to our 2nd annual Fall Fest!! That last one is the most important! We've added some new things to this years fest, so you will not want to miss it!! There will be activities and freebies for everyone, regardless of age! So plan to come, and I'll see you there!

Carrie Spry

Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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*Be sure to check out our
Fall Fest Flyer
in this newsletter, and
make plans to attend!*

Clark / Powell Beekeepers Association Meeting

**Monday,
October 9, 2023
6:30 pm**

**Powell County Extension
169 Maple Street; Stanton**

~ POT-LUCK MEAL ~



Cooperative Extension Service

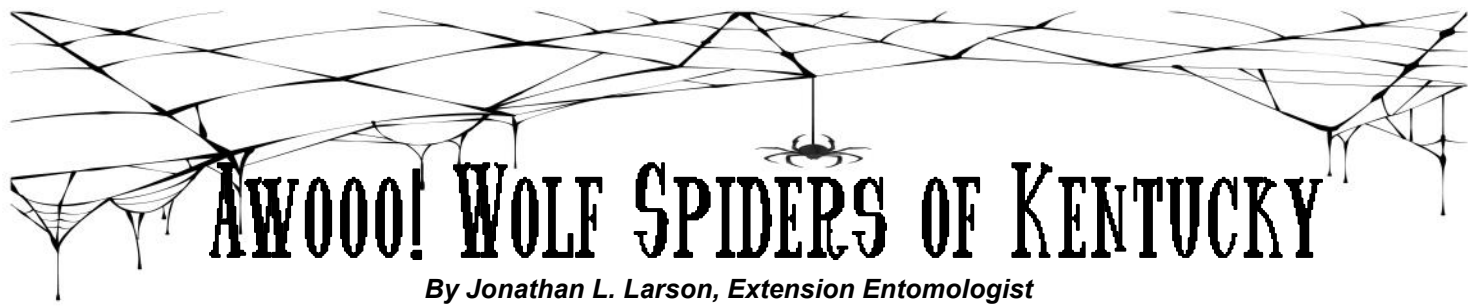
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A WOOO! WOLF SPIDERS OF KENTUCKY

By Jonathan L. Larson, Extension Entomologist

Wolf spiders get a bad rap. They are common spiders, found under logs and rocks, as well as in open areas. They are also active hunters, meaning that they don't spin a web like some of their more famous relatives. They can produce spider silk, but they use it for lining burrows or wrapping eggs sacs instead. They are large spiders; the main portion of their body is usually an inch on its own, with legs added in, they can be around 2 inches wide. The Carolina wolf spider is one of the larger spider species we see in Kentucky. Their size is useful for them to stalk and subdue large prey; prey that we often consider to be pests. Not only are they big, but they are fast too!

Some of these spider attributes make people a little uncomfortable though. Their size can be intimidating to those who prefer their spiders be fun-sized, like Halloween candy, and their speed frightens folks trying to catch them. Their coloration is also concerning to some folks. They are usually covered with dazzling arrays of bands and spots and nifty brown "fur". Some, like the tiger wolf spider in Figure 2, even have stripes of orange. Being a brown spider, though, means they will be confused for the brown recluse spider, a species that often conjures up dread. You can tell the difference by size—wolf spiders are usually much larger than a recluse; by color—wolf spiders are a darker brown than recluses, and by eye pattern—wolf spiders have eight eyes, recluses only



Figure 1: Carolina wolf spiders are large spiders with a grey-brown coloration. They have burrows in soil that house them during the day, but they emerge to hunt at night. (Photo: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Entomology Department)



Figure 2: Tiger wolf spiders are mostly brown but have bright orange patches and stripes down the back of their head. This female is also holding her egg case below her. Wolf spiders tend to carry their eggs till they hatch. (Photo: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Entomology Department)

Wolf spiders are also fairly famous for trying to enter buildings in fall. Luckily, we have very little to fear from these eight-legged predators once inside. They can bite people, but this is not very common and the sensation for most is like a bee sting. Pain may last for about 10 minutes and there might be some swelling; this can vary person to person. It's always best to treat spiders with respect and give them their space though. Wolf spiders do not want to bite you; it is a last-ditch defense tactic for them. If you don't want them inside, pest proofing keeps their food out and keeps the spiders from entering as well. Glue board traps, set

near the wall or in corners, will also catch spiders as they move around the perimeter of rooms.

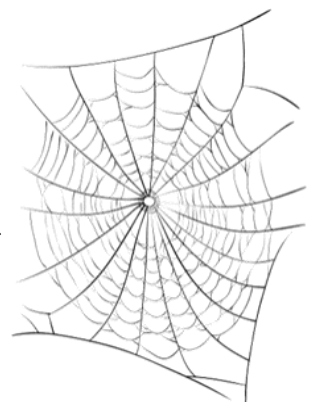
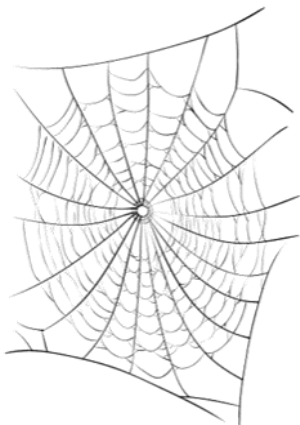
If you ever want to confirm if the spider you are seeing is a wolf spider, all you need to do is look deep in their eyes. Spider eyes are illuminating for deducing what family they belong to. Wolf spiders (Lycosidae) have two large eyes in front, with two more above them. Under the front-most large eyes will be a row of four small eyes, turned into a slight frown.



Figure 3: Pest proofing ensures that fewer things like crickets get inside, which also means fewer spiders. However if you don't like eight-legged house guests, glue board traps are a great way to passively catch spiders that do enter. (Photo: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Entomology Department)



Figure 4: This close up of a tiger wolf spider shows off the eye pattern for the wolf spider family. Two large eyes in front (with two above those) and four frowning, smaller eyes below. (Photo: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Entomology Department)



CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION FALL FESTIVAL

JOIN US AT THE CLARK COUNTY
EXTENSION OFFICE

FOR OUR **SECOND ANNUAL**
FALL FESTIVAL!

1400 FORTUNE DR.
WINCHESTER, KY

OCTOBER 7, 2023
5:00-7:00 PM

FOOD
GAMES
GIVE AWAYS
AND MORE!

 Cooperative
Extension Service



No Need to Fear Autumnal Arachnids

By Blake Newton, Entomology Extension Outreach Specialist, and Jonathan L. Larson, Entomology Extension Specialist

After the coming and going of Labor Day, it starts to feel like autumn will be here before you know it, with all the fun and delicious things it brings. Autumn also brings us more obvious spiders. This isn't some sort of attempt at creating a spooky atmosphere; it's just part of the natural progression of the season. It's also not a good reason to start spraying everything with six or more legs on and near the home. Read on to learn more about which spiders you can find this autumn and a small primer on why there might be more of them after summer vacation ends.

Why do I see more spiders in autumn?

Most of the spiders that are associated with autumn belong to the Orb Weaver Family. Unlike other spiders that make messy cobwebs or very simple webs, orb weavers make large, geometrical webs. The reason that you notice so many orb weavers in autumn is simply because of their life cycle.

Many kinds of spiders live for multiple years, with overlapping generations. Most orb weavers, though, have a single generation each year. They hatch from eggs in spring, grow throughout the summer, and mate and lay eggs in autumn. So, these species are present all summer long, but females reach their largest size and make their largest, most conspicuous webs in late summer and early autumn, drawing our attention. They use these large webs to catch large prey: big grasshoppers, moths, wasps, and anything else that they can subdue. Females need a lot of calories and protein to make their egg sacs, which often contain hundreds of eggs.

Orb weavers can be very large and intimidating, but they are not of any medical significance for most people. They can bite, but bites would be similar to a bee sting. Also like a bee sting, there would be a chance for a more serious reaction, but this is very rare with spider bites. And, like all spiders, orb weavers have no interest in biting humans unless they are grabbed or otherwise threatened.

What are the types of autumn arachnids I am likely to see?

One of the most famous orb weavers in Kentucky is the **black-and-yellow Argiope**, *Argiope aurantia*. It's also known as the "black-and-yellow garden spider," the "writing spider," or simply the "garden spider," among other monikers. This might be the largest species of spider in both mass and leg span (3 inches or more) that occurs in Kentucky (large fishing spiders, trapdoor spiders, and wolf spiders might have a word). The writing spider is common in crops, gardens, weedy meadows, and forest openings. It gets the name "writing spider" because of the bold zigzag in the web, which we call the stabilimentum. There is some debate as to the purpose of this zigzag: it may offer structural support or even camouflage for the spider, but it may also be used to alert birds to the presence of the web or even to attract certain prey.

A similar, related spider, the **banded Argiope**, *Argiope trifasciata*, also calls Kentucky home. It is a little smaller than *A. aurantia* but is otherwise very similar and found in the same habitats.

Another group of orb weavers you might find building near you is the "**spotted orb weavers**" (genus *Neoscona*). In autumn, these spiders build very large webs between shade trees and other upright objects. One species is known as the barn spider for their penchant of building on or near barns. Spotted orb weavers are notable for the bold black-and-yellow mask-like pattern on the underside of the abdomen. With a body length of nearly 1 inch and an even longer leg span, these are large spiders. They are timid, though: they quickly run to their retreat if approached.



Figure 1: The black and yellow Argiope is one of the largest species of spider in Kentucky. Their bold yellow and black coloration, ornate web, and proclivity for building near gardens all lead to us noticing them in autumn (Photo: Ronald F. Billings, Texas A&M Forest Service, Bugwood.org).

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Hikers in Kentucky are aware of a handful of additional orb weavers that commonly build large webs across trails in autumn. **Spiders in the *Micrathena* genus** are particularly notorious for this behavior. These are medium-sized spiders with distinctively spikey bodies. The **arrowhead spider** belongs to a different

genus (*Verrucosa*) but exhibits similar behavior. Like all orb weavers, these spiders are of no particular medical significance and are highly unlikely to bite, even if you run into them. Though you might be embarrassed by your reaction to trying to get the web off your face.



Figure 2: A banded Argiope spider, a close relation to the black and yellow Argiope. They are slightly smaller in size with banding on their abdomen (Photo: Dani Barchana, Bugwood.org).



Figure 3: The top and underside of a typical spotted orb weaver. The underside, with the distinct golden dots, is what gives the group their name (Photos: Jim Occi, BugPics, Bugwood.org).



Figure 4: One of the *Micrathena* species is known as the white *Micrathena* (*Micrathena mitrata*). They may be found while out hiking where they can build across trails. They do not pose a medical hazard to most people (Photo: Blake Newton, UK).



Figure 5: Two other commonly encountered *Micrathena* species are the arrowhead spider (*Verrucosa arenata*) and the arrowshaped *Micrathena* (*Micrathena sagittata*). The arrowhead spider has a triangular shape with a white triangle on its back while the arrowshaped *Micrathena* is reddish, with a yellow abdomen bearing black and red thorns (Photos: Sturgis McKeever, Georgia Southern University, Bugwood.org).

Is there a need for management?

All in all, it is best to let these spiders live when you find them. They offer free pest control of some plant feeding insects, as well as help to keep populations of mosquitoes under control. They are all quick to run away from you and are not likely to bite unless handled or agitated. There are times where they may build in

inopportune places, but they can be discouraged by repeatedly destroying their web with a broom or other cleaning object. Typically, after having their web destroyed multiple times, they will get the point and move to build somewhere else. There are even specialized brooms that can extend to reach hard to get to spots in order to try and move spiders along.



Gus'

QUICK TIPS

for OCTOBER

- 1 Make it a point to be thorough in cleaning up any diseased plants. Many diseases over-winter in plant debris. Diseased perennials and annuals should be removed from the garden in the fall. Similarly, any trees that have had disease problems should have all the leaves raked and removed from the garden to lessen the chance of infection next year.
- 2 October is prime bulb planting time. Plant tulips, daffodils, crocus and other spring favorites now for a beautiful early display.
- 3 Feeding lawns is best done in the late fall. The end of this month and all of November are great times to fertilize your turf.....if you want to.
- 4 House plants should be treated as necessary for insects before coming indoors for the winter.

Store any pots or containers that may be damaged by freezing temperatures.
- 5 October is an excellent time to plant most trees and shrubs. Make sure to plant at the proper depth. The root flare of trees (the point where the roots branch off the trunk) should be at soil level.
- 7 Needled evergreens drop their old needles in the fall. Yellowing, browning, and subsequent needle fall is normal if it is only occurring in the interior of the plant.
- 8 Many insects find their way indoors in the fall. Most are not harmful, just annoying. Your vacuum cleaner is an easy way to get rid of an occasional insect.
- 9 Make notes of your gardening successes and failures

- for reference next year. It is never too early to start planning next year's garden.
- 10 After the first hard freeze, remove non-hardy annuals and cut back perennials to near ground level. The removed plant material can be placed in the compost bin.
- 11 Clean up around fruit trees by raking leaves and removing dried fruit. This will help control several diseases and insects.
- 12 Remove and burn bagworm cases from evergreens. The cases contain eggs which will hatch in spring to produce next year's population.
- 13 Many insects can also be found in dead leaves in and around the garden and landscape. Getting rid of those dead tomato vines, bean bushes, and squash vines and fruit will lessen the chance that these pests will be able to overwinter in the garden and so will lessen the incidence of pest problems in the spring.
- 14 Don't forget to water newer trees and shrubs during fall and winter. Continue watering (in the absence of adequate rainfall) until the soil freezes. Keep the soil under your woody plants moist, not wet.
- 15 A layer of mulch applied at this time of year can have many beneficial effects in the home landscape. Mulch moderates the normal freeze/thaw cycle than can force many herbaceous perennial plants out of the ground. Mulch will also help conserve soil moisture and will serve as an insulating agent during severely cold temperatures.



Plate it up!



Fall Spiced Pumpkin Bread

½ cup all-purpose flour	2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice	½ cup honey
1¼ cup whole-wheat flour	½ teaspoon salt	2 cups pumpkin puree
1½ teaspoons baking powder	½ cup melted margarine	½ cup olive oil
1 teaspoon baking soda	½ cup sugar	2 eggs
		½ cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. **Mix** flours, baking powder, baking soda, pumpkin spice and salt; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, **whisk** together margarine, sugar, honey, pumpkin puree and olive oil. **Blend** in eggs. **Add** flour mixture. **Stir** until dry ingredients are moistened. **Spray** a 8-by-4 inch loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray. **Pour** batter into pan; **sprinkle** walnuts on top of batter. **Bake** for 1 hour. **Remove** from oven

and **cover** with foil. **Return** to oven and **bake** an additional 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. **Cool** for 10 minutes and **remove** from pan.

Yield: 16 slices

Nutritional Analysis: 220 calories, 13 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 270 mg sodium, 26 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 4 g protein.

RECIPE