

HOBO SPIDERS



(Tegenaria Agrestis)
Funnel Web Weavers

The Hobo spider is a Western European spider that was introduced into the Pacific Northwest earlier this century. The Hobo Spider has been confirmed in southeastern Idaho since 1983 and the established population and range has increased each year.

The Hobo Spider is a member of the funnel-web spider family “Agelenidae” which is a long legged and swift running spider. They are moderately large ranging 13 to 20mm in body length (1/2 to 1”) and with their long legs appear to be about the size of a dollar coin. The Hobo’s abdomen has a distinctive dark herringbone and broken crisscross-like markings on a grayish brown background. The Sternum has a light colored center with a dark margin border. Their legs have no rings and are a brownish-yellow in color.

Hobo Spiders are most commonly encountered from July through October and are nocturnal by nature. During this time the mature males are wandering looking for mates. Cooler fall temperatures cause them to seek shelter inside of garages and homes. The hobo has a 2-year life cycle; the female lays eggs during the fall in September/October and then dies. The male spider dies earlier, about the end of September or early October. The eggs over-winter and hatch in early spring and the immature spiders develop during the year reaching maturity the following summer (August).

Hobo Spiders prefer outdoor habitats that include holes, cracks or recesses to support their funnel-like webs. Some common outdoor habitats include window wells, holes in concrete or soil, around foundations (especially those with adjacent tall grasses), under large rocks, boards (decks) and other debris. Indoors the hobo is normally found in the basement or ground floor level of dwellings. The primary reason for this is because they are poor climbers. However, they can climb well enough on bedding and other rough surfaces. Nesting areas are outdoors and not normally indoors and while the Hobo Spider is an outdoor spider it does wander and can enter houses, garages, etc. and then can be in spaces between boxes or other items in storage, under baseboard heaters, behind furniture and in closets. The male Hobo Spider does not weave nesting webs but is capable of spinning a web-like resting place.

Control methods for the Hobo Spider include habitat elimination, eliminating visible spiders with a fly swatter or vacuum, avoidance of risk and chemical pesticides.

Measures to **eliminate habitat** indoors include frequent cleaning behind furniture, in closets, and in undisturbed areas to remove spiders and their webs. Keeping window screens in good repair and in place and keeping all doors to the outside closed when not in use will help keep the spiders from getting inside. Outdoor controls include repairing any cracks or crevices in home foundation, removing tall grasses from around the home foundation, garage or storage sheds and removing yard debris such as old boards and wood piles.

Avoidance of risk requires an awareness of the situation and using protective clothing while working in potential habitats. Keep beds and bedding 6 inches from the wall and floor. Store clothing, bedding and other items above the floor level and keep clothing and towels off the floor. Control measures such as these may keep hobo spiders from being trapped in them and reduces the risk of being bitten.

Chemical control with pesticides can be used in addition to the above methods. Effective applications of Cyfluthrin or Permethrin insecticides on foundations of house or other buildings can be made and must be used in accordance with label instruction.

Trapping the spiders can also be a very effective method of control. Simply place sticky spider traps in the areas where the hobo spiders are seen. Traps should also be placed near doorways leading outside.

Most bites from Hobo Spiders are reported to be painless, somewhat like a pinprick. Within 15 minutes after being bitten a burning sensation may occur at the bite site and an immediate reddening around the bite begins as the bite area enlarges. Within 15-36 hours blisters may form around the bite. These blisters break within a day leaving an open ulceration that usually scabs over and heals in one to several months. About 50% of those persons bitten and envenomed by a Hobo Spider will develop systemic symptoms in addition to the local effects that include severe headaches, visual disturbances and disorientation, and joint pain within 36 hours of the bite. In these cases immediate medical attention should be sought. However, it is recommended in any case where a Hobo Spider has bitten you, that you save the spider if possible and seek medical attention.

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