

UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

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Fall Brings Spider Indoors

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We are seeing spiders outdoors at this time on our plants and on turf. These are not a problem to our yards and landscape plants, they actually help our plants by feeding on the pest insects that would otherwise feed on our landscape plants. If the webs bother you, you can remove them, but you should try to leave the spider alone as this is a great alternative to insecticides.

Cooler fall weather often means spiders start moving into our homes. There are many kinds of spiders we find in the house, but here is a look at a few common spiders that alarm homeowners.



Wolf Spider

The most common spider that people bring into my office to be identified is the wolf spider. These are one of the largest species of spiders that we will find in Nebraska. They are quite hairy and often times will have 2 white or lighter brown colored stripes down the back of the spider. There are some wolf spiders that can be the size of a half dollar or more, legs and all. These spiders are not poisonous, but they can bite. Most often, a wolf spider will not bite us, but if they do the reaction is usually similar to a large mosquito bite.

Commonly, when people bring in a wolf spider, they want it identified to make sure it isn't a brown recluse.

Brown Recluse Spider

Brown recluse spiders are becoming more common in southeastern Nebraska. These spiders are about the size of a quarter, legs and all. They are a brown color with a darker brown fiddle shape on their back. They can cause a bad reaction in some people, but not all people are equally sensitive to the bites.



If you have brown recluse spiders in your home or office, take the time to look around things that have been stored before you move them. Most of the time, if a person is bitten it is because they accidentally trap the spider between themselves and either an article of clothing or a box. The best way to ensure you do not get bitten is to shake out items when you take them out of storage. Shake shoes and boots that were stored over the winter, wash clothing that was stored over the winter or over the summer, and watch where you put your hands when you pull boxes out of storage.

Jumping Spider

Jumping spiders are quite small, hairy, stocky, and jump when you move toward them. They are most common outdoors because they prefer day hunting and sunlight, but they can move inside. If found inside, they will probably be found around windows or other areas where there is a lot of sunlight.

Spider Management

The best way to control a spider population indoors is through habitat modification, meaning to seal up all cracks and crevices in your home foundation and around windows and doors to ensure that the spiders don't move into your home. You can also use the indoor/outdoor barrier sprays to spray around the foundation of your home and around the windows and doors to try to stop the spiders before they come inside.