

# **Dangerous Spiders around Lake Gaston**

**Tony Moran  
LGA Director**

# Fear of Snakes – Ophidiophobia

## Fear of Spiders - Arachnophobia

- Almost all spiders are venomous. Danger to humans is determined by the toxicity of the venom and the delivery capabilities. Black Widow's venom is more toxic than a rattlesnake but has much smaller fangs. Interestingly, like all spiders, they inject a digestive enzyme into the victim causing it to liquify, so they literally drink their meal. Like perhaps many in this room may do.

Today we will be discussing the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spiders but first I would like to touch on another spider common to the lake area. That being the brown wolf spider.



Largest of the species is found in North Carolina, many times in the house, especially in the early Spring. Not normally aggressive unless handled. Bite can be a problem if one is allergic to the venom



Before going on, has anyone been ever bitten by a black widow or brown recluse?

Two types of black widows overlap in our area. Both are similar in nature with the exception that the red hourglass on the abdomen of the northern variety is separated.



Black Widows can be found in dark areas both in and outside the house which would include wood piles, decks, rocks, cement blocks and crawl spaces. Web is crisscrossed with the egg sack in an upper corner. Usually timed, she can be very protective of her eggs which can produce up to 400 young. Webs are very rarely over 12 inches from the ground. However, it is important to remember that this spider spends quite a bit of its time not in a web.

# Bite

- Bite can be very painful and is usually felt after 15 minutes. Area can become inflamed and infected. As a neurotoxin venom, one can expect a tingling sensation and swelling particularly in the facial region as well shortness of breath, dizziness, and nausea. Area should be cleaned with soap and water and medical assistance may be required if symptoms persist.
- Though most people are bitten when coming in contact with the web, more and more Americans are being bitten when handling grapes at home or the market. Webs are formed on grape arbors and the spiders are coming in from Central and South America such as Chile. Be careful when sampling at the store and carefully transfer grapes to another container after washing. Locally, Allen Pumpkin Farm reports that Black Widows can be found under large pumpkins.

# Black Widow damage





# Brown Recluse

Normally found outside the home in dark structures such as storage sheds but again can be found in crawl spaces.



Note violin marking and shape. Not as territorial and has been known to cluster on the inside of doors. Not aggressive and usually bites when pressed by a body part. One may or may not feel the bite. In addition to the symptoms of a Black Widow bite there is also the likelihood of tissue damage because its venom is also necrotic.



Care should be taken when utilizing clothes, cushions or sleeping bags stored outside the home. They like cardboard boxes so it is best to replace with closed plastic containers.

Because of the serious consequences of a bite from a Brown Recluse, medical care should be sought and perhaps a call to Poison Control Center 800-222-1222

# Prevention

- Keep out of harms way
- Wear appropriate protective clothing
- Dust suspected areas with Drione or Delta dusts. Even Lime may act as a barrier. General spider sprays can be effective but special care must be taken to prevent ingestion or even skin contact.
- QUESTIONS



