



# A Field Guide to Spiders of Australia

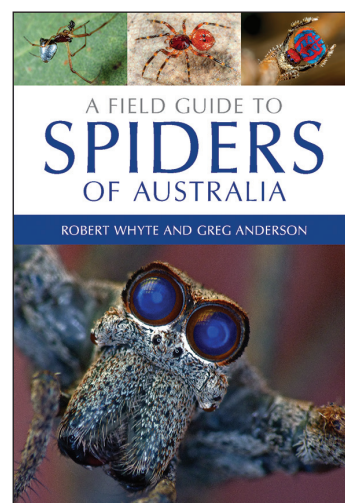
Robert Whyte, Greg Anderson

The most comprehensive account of Australian spiders ever published.

Australians have a love-hate relationship with spiders. Some spiders, such as the Redback and the Sydney Funnelweb, inspire fear. Yet Peacock Spiders, with their colourful fan-spreading courtship dances, have won rapturous appreciation worldwide.

*A Field Guide to Spiders of Australia* uses photographs of living animals to help people identify many of the spiders they encounter. Featuring over 1300 colour photographs, it is the most comprehensive account of Australian spiders ever published. With more than two-thirds of Australian spiders yet to be scientifically described, this book sets the scene for future explorations of our extraordinary Australian fauna.

This field guide will be enjoyed by naturalists and anyone with an interest in learning more about Australia's incredible arachnids.



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**How to use this book**

After an initial skim through, it's likely most people will take this book off the shelf when they have a spider they want to identify. After a while, you may know which part of the book to go to, whether it be to identify a newly ground-dwelling mygalomorph spider or a delicate hunter on foliage. The pages of your favourite prey might become dog-eared, too stained or otherwise splattered. If so the book is proving its worth.

The information with each photograph will tell you where the animal lives.

*Agalops aculeator* (dark-flegging) St Andrew's Cross Spider (Colubridae) Colubridae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

*Opusis* sp. Lymn Spider on Verbena Station 107 Opusis sp. Colubridae Colubridae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

**Araneomorphae**

Araneomorphae have evolved a variety of silks for different purposes, including a type of strong silk they can anchor as a safety line, letting them move safely above the ground. Draglines and other special silks can be combined to create complex webs to catch flying prey. (Araneomorphae don't have this variety of silks; they are vulnerable if they climb above the ground and limited to simple filmy webs or spiracles near their burrows.)

Some araneomorphae live on the ground, but many live in grasses, shrubs and trees where they create webs or hunt freely to catch prey. The advantage of living in vegetation is significant, considering the number of insects and other invertebrates also living in this habitat.

Araneomorphae represent more than 90 per cent of all spider species. They have found many ways to catch prey, utilizing a variety of web architectures, or hunting by ambush, or by chasing their prey, or using simple filmy webs or spiracles near their burrows.

Some araneomorphae live on the ground, but many live in grasses, shrubs and trees where they create webs or hunt freely to catch prey.

*Hoplocephalus* (Colubridae) Colubridae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

*Opposites* (Araneomorphae) Araneomorphae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

**Where did they come from and how did they get here?**

Biogeography is a hot topic in spider studies. These days, as it is for many areas of biology and other disciplines, there's a lot of interest in what they are and how they got here.

How many Australian spiders are shared with nearby continents? How many are endemic (found nowhere else)? How many have been introduced to other continents and become established there? How different are araneomorph spider species in different continents? Are they closer relatives or are they cases of convergent evolution where different lineages arrive at the same successful adaptations?

One trouble with these questions, when applying them to tropical Australia, is that we don't yet know how many spiders we have or what they are.

It takes every time a major survey is done in unexplored tropical or arid Australia we come up with more endemics than before. This is an encouraging, but scary, trend.

It is going to take a long time to know what we have and how many species are shared with our neighbours. On the bright side, we see new discoveries every day.

*Colobus* (Araneomorphae) Araneomorphae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

*Colobus* (Araneomorphae) Araneomorphae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

**SALTICIDE JUMPING SPIDERS**

*Stiphodon* (Salticidae) Salticidae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

*Stiphodon* (Salticidae) Salticidae. This spider can be identified with certainty because it is juvenile. Only adults have all the features necessary for confident identification. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

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## FEATURES

- Covering all known Australian spider families and heavily illustrated with over 1300 colour photographs
- Stunning macro-photography reveals the fascinating minute details not discernible to the naked eye
- Highly accurate and vetted by experts, it contains the most up-to-date taxonomy information

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Robert Whyte** is an honorary researcher in arachnology at the Queensland Museum, having developed an interest in spiders with the encouragement of arachnologist Robert Raven. He has participated in five Bush Blitz biodiversity expeditions in remote parts of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland. He is an accomplished editor, author, journalist and photographer.

**Greg Anderson** is a biomedical research scientist and heads the Chronic Disorders Program at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Brisbane. He has been interested in spiders since his early life in Newcastle and has travelled extensively around Australia and other parts of the world studying and photographing spiders.

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