



Wolf Spiders

Wolf spiders are one of the most commonly encountered spiders in California. They are most often seen during the day running across the ground, and are some of the most active spiders during the daytime. These predators move swiftly from one place to the next, searching for prey in the daytime as well as at night. Their vision is excellent as is their sense of touch.

Wolf spiders are covered with a dense coat of hair, generally brown-colored with a lighter stripe or darker brown or cream markings on the body and legs. The legs are long and held away from the body. A large species in the genus *Schizolycosa* averages 1 to 2 inches from leg tip to leg tip. This spider is commonly encountered in and around homes and farms in the Sacramento Valley, particularly in the late summer and fall months.

Wolf spiders belong to the family Lycosidae (lycosa is Latin for wolf). They are so named because of their method of catching prey. These spiders do not build a web. They only use silk to create a silken pouch to hold their eggs. Instead they are active hunters, either running down their prey or pouncing on unsuspecting insects.

At rest wolf spiders hide under rocks or logs. Females generally carry their white to yellowish silken egg sac around with them attached beneath the abdomen to their spinnerets. When the spiderlings hatch from

the egg sac they climb up on the mother's back and ride around on her. At this stage the young spiders feed on prey captured by their mother. Once they are large enough to forage on their own they leave.

Wolf spiders are very effective and important predators of flies, crickets and other moderate-sized insects. Although they have a briefly painful bite there is no record of medical problems associated with these spiders in California.

