



# A Field Guide to Spiders of Australia

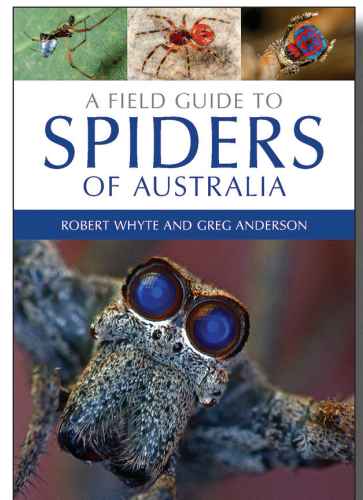
Robert Whyte, Greg Anderson

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 its habitat the specimen was found and in what type of habitat, one or two significant facts and the approximate maximum size of females and males.

In many cases spiders encountered in the main sections of this book will be fairly easy to find, commonly noted, reasonably large and often attractive. There is a separate section for spiders in little-known families which might be hard to find, remote cave or extremely small.

*Argiope coccinea* (dark) hugging St Andrew's Cross Spider's Golden Orb-weaver. 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

*Oxyopes* sp. Lymn Spider on Verbena Station 107 Spider's Golden Orb-weaver. 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 trip-lines 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 their silks, or by jumping great distances. Silk safety lines prevent them falling out of the hunting zone. If they miss the target, they may live in grasses, shrubs and trees where they create webs or hunt freely.

North Island Golden Orb-weaver mating pair. North 200 metres on Mt. Saddle. The spiders are equipped on a strong silk line made from one of several kinds of silks made by araneomorphae. This variety of silks is one characteristic setting araneomorphae apart from the mygalomorphs. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

Opposite: *Atypa complex* (Horned Arly). © Shutterstock. CD-ROM: *Araneomorphae* is a class of araneomorphae. It is the group of making web spiders and related to the because it is a web and web production. © 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 are many questions, when they arise, about how many spiders we have or what they are.

It seems every time a major survey is done in unexplored tropical or arid Australia we come up with more endemics than before. This is an interesting, but not new, trend.

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

The 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.

How many Australian spiders are shared with nearby countries? How many are newly discovered? How many are endemics (found nowhere else)? How many have been found in other countries and become naturalised there? How different are araneomorph spider species in different countries? Are they close relatives or are they cases of convergent evolution where different lineages arrive at the same successful adaptations?

*Camponotus* *medialis* (Medit.) Spiny Orb-weaver © Sebastian Schmidt *Araneomorphae* *Araneomorphae*. Typical of species from nearby places. (This specimen may well appear on our northern coastlines.)

**SALTICIDE SWAMPING SPIDERS**

Araneomorphae represent Salticidae Spiders making up over 10% of all spider species. The Redback Spider (*Lamprolepis* sp.) was the first of all the spider species to be described in the 18th century group, with many others being found next. *Araneomorphae* is a highly diverse group for Salticidae. The male's courtship display is similar to that of the male *Araneomorphae*. © S. Whyte & G. Anderson

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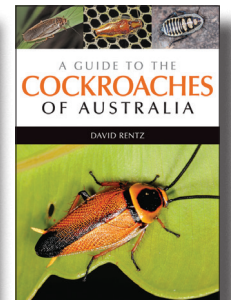
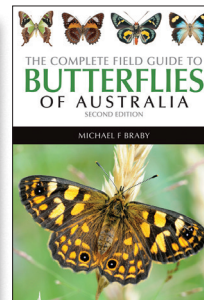
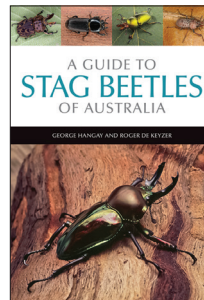
- Covering all known Australian spider families and heavily illustrated with over 1300 colour photographs
- Stunning macro-photography reveals the fascinating minute details not discernible to the naked eye
- Highly accurate and vetted by experts, it contains the most up-to-date taxonomy information

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**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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