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Daddy-long-legs Spider, *Pholcus phalangi*

Daddy-long-legs Spider

Scientific name: *Pholcus phalangioides*

Author(s)

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Daddy Long Legs Spider, *Pholcus phalangioides* Image: R.Mascord

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Fast Facts



Classification

Species	<i>phalangioides</i>
Genus	<i>Pholcus</i>
Family	Pholcidae
Order	Araneae
Class	Arachnida
Phylum	Arthropoda
Kingdom	Animalia

**Number of Species**

12

**Size Range**

9 mm

**Habitats**

peridomestic

**Life history mode**

sedentary

**Feeding Habits**

arthropod-feeder, carnivorous, insectivorous, predator

Introduction

The cosmopolitan Daddy-long-legs Spider belongs to a group known as the tangle-web spiders.

Identification

Daddy-long-legs spiders are easily recognised by their extremely long, skinny legs and small body. They are cream to pale brown. Some species have darker markings on their legs and abdomen.

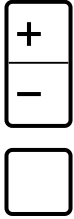
Habitat

Daddy-long-legs Spiders are found in most urban areas, in particular houses. They make a thin, tangled web in sheltered positions where they are unlikely to be disturbed, such as under furniture, behind doors, in the corner of the ceilings, in sheds, in garages and under decks. Its successful use of these human-made structures has made it one of the most common spiders in

Australia. If the Daddy-long-legs Spider is disturbed in the web it responds by setting up a a very fast, spinning motion, becoming a blur to anyone watching..

Distribution

The Daddy-long-legs Spider, *Pholcus phalangioides*, is found throughout Australia. It is a cosmopolitan species that originates from Europe and was introduced accidentally into Australia.



Feeding and diet

The Daddy-long-legs Spider feeds on insects and other spiders.

Danger to humans

There is a persistent belief that the Daddy-long-legs Spider has the most toxic venom of all spiders. However, there is no scientific evidence to back this up. The myth probably grew from

observations that the Daddy-long-legs Spider will kill and eat a Redback Spider. However, the venom is not actually that potent, even for insects.

It had been thought that the fangs of this spider were incapable of piercing human skin. Recently, however, it was shown that the tiny fangs (about 0.25 mm) were actually capable of piercing human skin in a test done on the US television show, *Mythbusters*

<http://mythbustersresults.com/episode13>, but the stinging sensation produced was very short-lived. Most reputable sources, including the University of California, Riverside <http://spiders.ucr.edu/daddylonglegs.html>, still say that this species would never be considered as harmful to humans. However, in the unlikely event of a bite from this species, a positive identification of the spider by an expert should be made and medical attention sought if any reaction persists for more than a short time.

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