

Species of the Month Jan/Feb

Spiders, particularly the Lace Webbed Spiders *Amaurobius similis*

What to look for:

Size: Stocky spiders with a large, glossy head and velvety, oval abdomen. The abdomen is usually black with a pale splotch mark, but the extent of the colours varies. Females up to 10mm Adult males are thinner and lankier, wandering in search of females.

Distribution: Found in most parts of the UK

Months seen: All year round

Habitat: Holes in walls and fences and sometimes around window frames

Food: Flies and other small insects

Special features: This is one of two very similar species of spider - hence the name *similis*. If you find one in a house it is likely to be *Amaurobius similis*. If you find one in a garden or outdoors it is likely to be *Amaurobius fenestralis*. *Fenestralis* is usually brighter and more clearly marked but to be certain of identification the genitalia need to be checked.

Lace Webbed spiders produce a blueish coloured silk around the entrance to holes and crevices on just about every wall you look at. If you go out after dark with a torch you can often see the spiders out in the open.

Information courtesy of Ian Dawson, British Arachnological Society



Photo: Lace Webbed Spider (by Keith Varley) www.uksafari.com

Did you know?

There are around more than 670 spiders in Britain. None are fatal to humans although there are some that do have strong enough venom to deliver a pretty painful bite - especially if your body reacts badly.

Daddy Long legs aren't spiders. If you look at the body of a Daddy-longlegs with your magnifying glass, you'll see why it's not a spider. First of all, instead of its body consisting of two parts, the cephalothorax and the abdomen, as with spiders, there's just one thing. A Daddy Longlegs has its head, thorax, and abdomen all fused together. Second, instead of the spider's usual eight eyes, a Daddy Longlegs just possesses two.

To identify your spiders try out <http://www.uksafari.com/spiders.htm>



Photo: Lace Webbed Spider (by Jenni Lattin) www.uksafari.com

If you're spider isn't a lace web why not photograph it and bring to our February meeting, or upload to our Facebook page? Please let us know what you find, where, how many and when.