

## Quick Dangerous Florida Arachnid Guide

### Widow Spiders - 4 species in Florida - *Latrodectus spp*

Brown, red, N black and S black widows



A young red widow



An adult black widow

Bite: No mark. Pain like a needle stick. Muscle twitching/spasms, cramps, vomiting, sweating, headache, severe trunk pain.

Cleanse with soap & water. Cool compresses. Emergency department for observation and treatment.

### Recluse Spiders - 3 Species seen, but not established - *Loxosceles*

Brown, Chilean, and Mediterranean recluses found in Florida, but very uncommon.



Closeup of the fiddle marking and six eyes

Also called Violin or Fiddleback Spider. A brown spider no larger than a quarter, with a dark brown violin shape on its back. Has six eyes.

Bite: Red rings around black blister, appears infected. Swollen & painful. Takes a long time to heal completely. Fever, chills, nausea and vomiting, itching, brown urine.

Cleanse with soap & water. Emergency department or physician for tetanus booster or wound treatment if needed.

### Scorpions - 3 species found in Florida

Florida bark, Guiana striped, Hentz striped



Lobster-shaped brown or black body with a stinger on tail. **Florida scorpions are NOT deadly venomous.** But stings can cause pain and possible adverse allergic reactions.

Cleanse with soap & water. Apply ice.

## Quick Florida Tick Guide

### Lone Star Tick - *Amblyomma americanum*



Larvae: June-November

Nymphs: February-October

Adults: April-August (peak in July)

Diseases: Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis, STARI, Tularemia

### American Dog Tick - *Dermacentor variabilis*



Larvae: July-February

Nymphs: January-March

Adults: March-September

Diseases: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tularemia

### Black-Legged/Deer Tick - *Ixodes scapularis*



April-August: Larvae and Nymphs

September-May: Adults

Diseases: Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, Human anaplasmosis

### Gulf Coast Tick - *Amblyomma maculatum*



Nymphs: February-August

Adults: March-November

Diseases: *Rickettsia parkeri*






### Brown Dog Tick - *Rickettsia parkeri*



Diseases: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Always check for ticks ASAP before they have time to attach. Use fine point tweezers to grab it as close to the skin as possible and pull slowly. Sanitize the area and preserve the tick in something for identification later. Be alert for any signs of illness- rash, fever, headache, joint pain, flu-like symptoms. Dry clothes in a hot dryer for 15 minutes to kill ticks.

### Quick Dangerous Florida Caterpillar Guide

<p><b>Buck Moth Caterpillar</b> <i>Hemileuca maia</i></p>		<p>A large caterpillar, 1-3/4" to 2-1/4" long when mature. It is yellow-brown to purplish-black with many small white spots and a reddish head. Feeds on oak, willow and other deciduous plants.</p>
<p><b>Hag Caterpillar</b> <i>Phobetron pithecium</i></p>		<p>Light- to dark-brown with nine pairs (sometimes fewer) of variable-length, lateral processes, which bear the stinging hairs. It is found on various forest trees and ornamental shrubs. Not as common as the other species.</p>
<p><b>Io Moth Caterpillar</b> <i>Automeris io</i></p>		<p>Pale green with yellow and red stripes. Often exceeds 2" in length and is fairly stout-bodied. The nettling organs are borne on fleshy tubercles, and the spines are usually yellow with black tips. The spines are connected to poison glands. Ixora and rose are their favorite hosts.</p>
<p><b>Puss Caterpillar</b> <i>Megalopyge opercularis</i></p>		<p>A convex, stout-bodied larva, almost 1" long when mature, and completely covered with gray to brown hairs. Under the soft hairs are stiff spines that are attached to poison glands. When touched, these poisonous spines break off in the skin and cause severe pain. Most often found on oaks and citrus. In Florida there are two generations a year, one in spring and the other in fall.</p>
<p><b>Saddleback Caterpillar</b> <i>Acharia stimulea</i></p>		<p>Brown with a green back and flanks, on which there is a conspicuous brown oval central area that usually is bordered with white. The brown spot looks like a saddle, and the green area looks like a saddle blanket. It may exceed an inch in length and is stout-bodied. The primary nettling hairs are borne on the back of paired fleshy protuberances toward the front and hind ends of the body. There is also a row of smaller stinging organs on each side.</p>

**Spiny Oak-Slug  
Caterpillar**  
*Euclea delphinii*



A pale-green caterpillar about 3/4" long when mature. Favorite food plants include oak, willow and other deciduous plants.

**Tussock Moth  
Caterpillar**  
Three species  
found in Florida  
*Orgyia spp.*



Larvae are 1-1.5 inches in length. They are characterized by hair pencils of black setae that extend forward from the prespiracular verrucae of the prothorax, a dorsal hair pencil of black setae on the eighth abdominal segment, dorsal tussocks on the first four abdominal segments, and mid-dorsal glandular structures on abdominal segments six and seven. There is variation between species.

Place Scotch tape over the affected area and strip off repeatedly to remove spines. Apply ice packs to reduce the stinging sensation, and follow with a paste of baking soda and water. If the victim has a history of hay fever, asthma or allergy, or if allergic reactions develop, contact a physician immediately.

## Quick Guide to Toxic Plants in Florida

### Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*)

Throughout Florida



Grows as a shrub or vine. All parts are poisonous at all times of the year. Will always have three leaflets that can be smooth or jagged- “leaves of three, leave it be”. Often has a red node between leaves. As a vine it becomes thick and hairy. Can be confused with Virginia creeper, which will have five leaflets.

### Poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*)

South Florida



The tree has a spreading, rounded form with a short trunk and arching limbs with drooping branches. The bark varies in color from reddish brown to gray, depending on the habitat, and has oily patches of sap on the surface; older trees have scaly bark. Each leaf is comprised of three to seven oval leaflets, although five leaflets are typical. Leaves are glossy and dark green above, paler underneath, and have smooth margins. Irregular blotches of resin dot the surface of many of the leaflets. Avoid being under poison wood in rain- it can drip sap.

The distinguishing bark does not always show up!

Poisonwood grows near salt water on shorelines and in sandy dunes, tropical and coastal hammocks, and rockland pinelands.

### Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*)

North and Central Florida



Winged Sumac



Shrub or small tree, more allergenic than poison ivy. Grows in wet and shady areas. 7-13 leaflets in pairs along a red stem and have smooth edges. Can be confused with winged sumac. Winged sumac has 9-23 leaflets and winged rachis between leaflets.

**Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron pubescens*)**

North and Central Florida



Small shrub with three lobed leaflets around 6" long with fine hairs.

If contact occurs wash with cool soapy water ASAP. Warm water opens pores! Apply OTC treatments. (I like Tecnu Extreme Medicated Poison Ivy Scrub and prescription steroid ointments- any other recommendations?)

Trees in the same family- mango, cashew, and Brazilian pepper, can cause allergic reactions.