

Many of you come from or have been living in southern countries with spiders that may be dangerously poisonous to humans. It is therefore understandable, when you ask the question, if there are such threats in Germany, too.

We can soothe your fears!

There are no spiders living in Germany, that bite humans or are otherwise harmful!

If you have spiders in your home this is no reason to be worried! You can simply take them outside or even "live with them". Spiders feeling comfortable in your rooms are proof for a good air quality in your house (i.e. free of toxic substances or other substances, which might be detrimental to your health).

Maybe you are interested in some facts about these little and very useful animals.

BIOLOGY

Spider is a common name for about 34,000 species having eight walking legs. They have lived on earth for more than 400 million years. Spiders commonly spin silk for various uses. Most of them are terrestrial, which means that they live in forests, grassland, on rocks, in human houses or even in the desert; a few have adapted to freshwater life. Spiders occur worldwide. There are almost 1000 different species living in Germany and Central Europe.

The *body* of the spiders is divided into a thorax and an abdomen, separated by a narrow stalk. The thorax (breast) ordinarily bears four pairs of eyes, several appendages with fangs, feelers and palpal organs as well as four pairs of legs. The spinnerets, used in making silk, are located on the abdomen.

HOW DO SPIDERS LIVE?

Spiders are carnivores and feed *on* living prey. They either catch their prey consisting of all kinds of insects by means of a silky net or directly with their fangs. Spiders can only take up liquid food and must digest their prey outside the body. They crush prey with the pedipalps and can inject a venom. There are no spiders living in Germany which can break human skin!

Spiders use *silk* to form *draglines*, to spin a thread that enables young and small spiders to be carried by the wind, to make *nests or cocoons* and last but not least to make insect traps called *spiderwebs*.

Spiders have separate *sexes*. The male spins a little web, deposits sperm in it and transfers it to the female by means of his palpal organ. Courtship behavior is often complicated. Male spiders are sometimes much smaller than the females.