



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



FYN TOPIC: Spinybacked Orbweaver Spider

Question: What are the spider webs under my pool cage? How did they get there? I see cocoons that have formed on the inside of the screens? What are they? Why can't I get rid of these spiders?
Edward C. Cape Coral

Answer: This is the Spiny Orb Weaver Spider or Spinybacked Orbweaver. Despite this spider's bright colors and small (4-8 ml) crab-like body, it's usually a temporary nuisance. The original spider may have been brought inside on potted plants. Spiny orb weavers are one of many beneficial spiders we have in Florida. It is not poisonous. However, once inside this spider goes through many generations.

The cocoons on your screens are probably the orbweaver's egg sacs from which many, tiny spiderlings will eventually emerge. Remove these as soon as you see them. Spiderlings take up residence right under the uppermost screens of the cage. They hang from a single web strand that isn't easily seen. The adult spider prefers creating its large circular web lower to the ground. This web is flat and very ornate like Charlotte's web. The adult spider rests in the center surrounded by 30 or more circular web spirals used to catch tiny insects.

Transplant as many of the adult spiders as you can back onto shrubbery in your yard. If the web is present without the spider, it may still be there connected to the web on a trapline. This spider prefers to flee rather than bite when disturbed.

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Orbweaver egg sacs



Spinybacked Orbweaver Spider

Photos: Lyle Buss, EDIS UF

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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