

## The Redback Spider – Facts for Students

Australia has a wide variety of fascinating and unique fauna. Here is some interesting information about the redback spider.

The redback spider can be found throughout Australia, generally in drier habitats under logs and rocks, but also in built-up areas around buildings, outdoor furniture, or under anything left lying around outside.

Adult females are the most commonly seen, and can be identified by their smooth black body and wide red stripe on the abdomen. Males are rarely seen and have a small brown body and red and white markings.

Redback spiders feed mainly on insects that find their way into their webs, but they also eat small lizards, and even larger prey such as mice can fall victim to their bite. Small male redback spiders are often eaten by the female after they mate.

While they are not aggressive in nature, their bite is very poisonous and painful, and can be fatal for young children and the elderly. Common bite symptoms include sweating, muscular weakness, stiffness, tremors and lack of coordination. It is important to seek medical attention if you believe you have been bitten by a redback spider.

