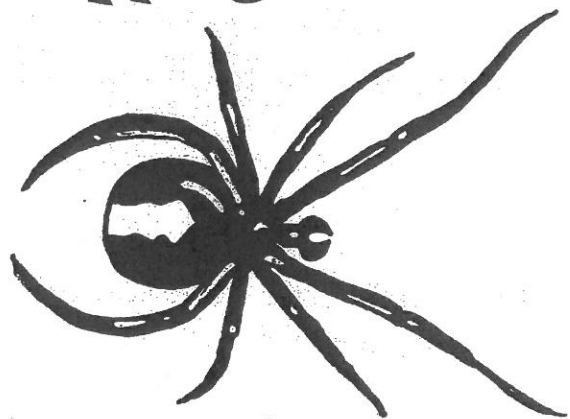


Reading to save a life

The red-back spider is small, normally black with a red stripe on its back.



It is found

- throughout most parts of Australia
- in dark unused spots, eg under eaves, in old tyres, in garden sheds, under rocks.

It is not an aggressive spider, but if it feels threatened in its environment, it will bite and make you very sick.

Prevention

- Clean out its habitat.
- Use gloves when handling old tyres, cleaning out sheds, or carrying out other tasks likely to involve contact with the red-back spider.

Signs and symptoms if someone is bitten

- a sharp sting may be felt
- pain at the site of the bite, which then spreads
- nausea
- dizziness and sometimes faintness
- muscle weakness or spasm
- sweating, sometimes profuse
- swelling and localised sweating around the bite
- rapid pulse.

The first aider should

- remove the casualty from any further danger
- speak calmly to the casualty
- apply a cold pack or compress over the area
- seek medical aid.

Answer the questions below to see how well you've understood the information on the previous page.

- 1 Name three places where red-back spiders would like to live. (Use the places mentioned in the article or out of your own experience.)

- 2 The article tells us to 'clean out their habitats' to prevent red back spiders making their homes in your garden. How would you do that safely?

- 3 With the help of your dictionary, explain the meanings of these terms. (If the term has two words in it, eg muscle spasm, look up the meaning of the word you don't understand, eg spasm, before working out your answer.)

a nausea _____

b muscle spasm _____

c rapid pulse _____

d profuse sweating _____

e a casualty _____

- 4 List three signs or symptoms a casualty might have if bitten by a red-back spider? _____

- 5 If you were the first aider:

a what sorts of things would you say to keep the casualty calm?

b what treatment would you apply to the bite?

c how would you seek medical aid if the incident happened at someone's home? _____