

California Tarantula



www.ojaipest.com

Class	Order	Family	Species
Arachnida	Araneae	Theraphosidae	<i>Aphonopelma sp.</i>

Range

Southwest U.S.; 20-30 species of tarantula in North America

Habitat

Warmer climates, grasslands, chaparral.

Niche

Nocturnal predators of small arthropods; live in burrows in the ground.

Diet

Nature: small arthropods
Captivity: one cricket per week

Source

(22) (23)

Reproduction

Growth: gradual
Egg: placed in a silken egg case by female: 100 or more eggs can be laid at one time
Immature: can molt 4 times a year when young
Adult: Reach adulthood when 8-12 years old; mating time is in the fall
Lifespan: Females can live up to 25 years

Physical Characteristics

Adult & Juvenile

Mouthparts : chelicerate; fangs parallel to the body line
Wings: 4 pair
Legs: none
Antennae: none

Egg: laid in a silk sac-like case
Adult: Male & females similar looking until sexually mature; females molt once a year throughout their adult life span; males molt into adulthood, then die six months or so later. Tarantulas are our largest spiders reaching 5 or more inches
Color: Black, gray, brown
Burrows: Can be dug or can use abandoned rodent holes; lined with silk produced by the spinnerets at the rear of the abdomen.

Natural Enemies

One of the many predators of tarantulas is the "tarantula hawk" which is really a large wasp in the genus *Pepsis*. Female *Pepsis* wasps paralyze tarantulas with their sting, and drag it back to their burrows. The wasp then lays a single egg on the spider. When the egg hatches, the wasp larva consumes the tarantula.

Special Adaptations

Interaction with Humans: The California tarantula is a very docile animal. Tarantulas are not poisonous to humans though all spiders have venom that is effective on small arthropods for subduing their prey. They often develop a bald spot on the back of their abdomen. This is caused by the spider kicking off its hairs for defense. the hairs have uticating qualities and irritate sensitive tissue. These hairs when kicked off may be used to discourage the pursuit of a predator. **Feeding behavior:** like other spiders, they begin the digestion process outside the body, injecting their prey with venom & enzymes that begins breaking it down into ingestible fluids.

Social Organization

Solitary



SaveNature.Org