

investigation of fine details of surface features in spiders. Surface features include not only details of the external structure, but also, after suitable treatment, details of such internal structures as lung books, genitalia, gut lumen and even individual cells since haemolymph smears, for example, could be examined in this way. Such studies will obviously lead to better understanding of physiological processes and morphological arrangements which are obscure at the moment. The instrument could also play a part in the elucidation of structural detail of taxonomic importance, particularly in smaller species of spider and other arachnids such as mites or pseudoscorpions.

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References

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PLATE 2. LEGEND TO FIGS. 8 - 14.

- Fig. 8. General view of ventral surface of abdomen. x 100
 Fig. 9. Epigyne at higher power. x 300
 Fig. 10. Vulva showing details of interior structure. x 1500
 Fig. 11. Cocoon cut away to show eggs. x 85.
 Fig. 12. Egg surface at higher power showing types of projections. x 1800
 Fig. 13. Arrangement of cocoon threads. x 365.
 Fig. 14. Detailed view of a "weld" between two silk threads. x 8830.

A Spider regular in its habits!

Jacques Denis

Have you ever heard of a spider, the males of which appear only once a year, and every time at the same date? If not, please read on!

Spermophora senoculata (Dugés) is a small Pholcid which is not infrequent indoors or in outbuildings over the greater part of the Mediterranean Region; like many other species with similar distribution, beyond a wide gap from the Languedoc and Roussillon, it is established in the Vendée. Here it has been found in at least two houses in Longeville, about 2 - 5 miles from one another. The spider hides away in very concealed places and is much more secretive than its bigger and more common relation *Pholcus phalangioides* (Fuessli). I have caught only a few females in open situations such as corners of ceilings or glass windows, and several more behind furniture when this has been moved for cleaning or painting walls.

I have met with but three males. The first one was wandering on my desk on the 28th July 1962. The next year, another was found in a stone sink, also on the 28th July. The last one sat motionless in the corner of a ceiling near a female, which bore its egg-cocoon; this was in 1964, and again on the 28th July. No other specimen has ever come under my notice.

Should I conclude that the male of *Spermophora senoculata* is only to be found every year on the 28th July, at least in the Vendée; you would smile gently at this nonsense, and of course you would be right. Such a conjuncture is rather unusual, yet it is worth noting, as a lesson is implied in it. Coincidences are not often so conspicuous as this; but observations might occur which do not appear at first to be incomplete, and may seem sufficient enough for drawing a hasty conclusion which may well turn out later to be incorrect. So, odd as it is, perhaps this short account might be of some value if it has shown to a beginner the need for avoiding untimely inferences so far as biology is concerned.