The Spinneret

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Fall 2014

WOW! It's already fall and I was just getting used to summer. Well, here's hoping summer drags its feet 'cuz I'm not done playing! Speaking of which, I hope you have taken advantage of this summer too. It's not often we get one like this.

Hey! Is that turkey I smell? - Ed.■

Eensie Weensie!?:

Tegeneria gigantia.

As summer wanes and we fall into winter, spiders of every shape and size are draping the trees and houses with gossamer.

While most are looking for a square meal at least one of these eight legged critters is gearing up for romance.

The Giant house spider is a native of Western Europe that was accidently imported to the Americas early last century and was first detected in Western Washington in the 1930's.

It has a close relative that is identical in appearance called the Hobo spider but without looking at the two under a microscope even experts can't tell them apart. However, while the Hobo spider has been implicated in causing ulcerating wounds the giant house spider remains innocent in spite of its greater size.

A mature Giant house spider can reach the size of about a 50 cent piece measured to the tips of its legs. Males tend to be a bit less robust than females because of the females egg laying organs.

This is one of only a few spiders that will chase its prey down. It weaves its web into a mat with a funnel shaped hole in one end where it will hide from predators. When a hapless insect like a large ant or beetle wanders within range the spider will sprint out and nab it, sinking its fangs into the creature and immobilizing it with venom.

They do not pursue flying insects so are seldom found living above the first floor, preferring ground level where most of their prey lives.

This spider holds the record as the world's fastest at about 1.18 mile per hour. Which may not sound like much but it makes it the cheetah of the spider world. Being a cold blooded creature it can only maintain this speed for a few feet.

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This year marks a quarter century of serving the communities of Grays Harbor.

During this time we've seen other pest services come and go but through it all the trust and support of our neighbors has seen us through good times and bad.

What started out with a 1965 Ford pick-up and 1 client has grown to 5 full time employees performing over 6000 services a year.

Today we have the distinction of being the oldest independently owned and operated pest service in Grays Harbor thanks to you.

Here's looking forward to the next 25 years!

Making the Grade:

Grade (slope): the pitch of a slope such as a hill, road or railway.

Grade level: the top of the ground.

Every structure placed on the earth is surrounded by soil. Frequently this soil is covered by asphalt, concrete or lawn but overall there is a surface that extends away from it in all directions.

Soil grade is typically the only mechanism carrying runoff from rain away from a building and yet it is one of the most overlooked aspects of construction. Many landscapes are never properly graded once the buildings foundation is lain. This frequently contributes to animal and moisture problems in structures and is completely avoidable.

Unless your home is built on a slab or stilts the foundation will consist of a wide concrete footing with a narrow stem wall, kind of like an up-side down "T", that supports the outer walls.

Generally speaking, the foundation footing should be buried 6 to 12 inches deep and soil should slope away from the foun-

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POB 2010, OCEAN SHORES, WA 98569 Phone: (360) 289-2752 or 1-800-300-2752

Eensie Weensiel? : ...continued

Still it is many times faster than the insects it consumes and fast enough to intimidate most people in close quarters.

It also has excellent eyesight but only in a range of two to three feet. This limitation can make them more intimidating to us because when disturbed they are as likely to run towards us as away.

One bad thing about being a big spider is that there are a lot of other animals that will try to eat you. One way they have adapted to this is for the females to be reclusive. They tend to set up housekeeping in an area with resources and stay put. Only coming out to hunt and mate.

From an evolutionary standpoint the male is more expendable and thus takes the risk of exposing itself to predators by seeking out females during mating season.

These intrepid Romeos are highly motivated, persistent, and capable of passing through incredibly small openings. In their efforts they often enter our homes in the fall in spite of our best efforts to keep them out.

Nonetheless encounters can be reduced by managing the landscape near our homes. Keeping leaf litter and low lying plants away from the foundation reduces food and habitat for the females. Not storing things against the exterior of our homes also helps. As does mowing and keeping low lying woodland vegetation as far from the foundation as possible.

Should you encounter one of these amorous arachnids, keep calm, and remember; most spider injuries are caused by people tripping or running into objects while trying to get away from the spider.

Much more in depth information is available at the following web sites:

http://spiders.ucr.edu/

http://www.burkemuseum.org/arachnology ■

Service Targets:

It's spider season and termites and moisture ants will be active until late October.

We are using a combination of liquid products this time of year. In areas where ants are active Termidore (fipronil) is being applied to foundations. This product is highly effective against ants but has low impact on mammals.

For spiders and other crawling insects Suspend (deltamethrin) is being applied to siding and eaves.

We do guaranty the performance of our services.

If you have problems or questions regarding your service please call promptly. ■

Making the Grade ...continued

dation sharply enough to carry away rain water and to prevent it from undermining the foundation.

This sounds simple enough but many homes still suffer from faulty grade conditions.

Foundation wall with exposed footing. (left side of photo)

If you can see the edges of the wider footing then it isn't buried deep enough to prevent animals from digging under it or to keep water from undermining it. One of the most common places for this to be overlooked is under decks.

If soil is covering the bottom of the siding it makes the siding and walls vulnerable to rot because the wood can never dry out. This may be an indication that the foundation isn't tall enough or that the soil is just too deep. There should be at least 4 inches of clearance between the wood and soil. If you can't remove the soil without exposing the base of the foundation you may need the assistance of a general contractor and a creative landscaper. You should always avoid creating a trench against the foundation that can trap water and make the problem worse.

Sometimes there just isn't enough room between houses to carry the water very far. In this case a swale or shallow depression that directs water away from the foundation to a point at the front or back of the building may be needed.

Planting beds along the foundation frequently direct water in the wrong direction. The most common fault is where a sidewalk parallels the foundation with a planting bed between. Frequently this problem is amplified by directing a downspout into bed. The only way to correct this problem is to install a catchment system or drain field to carry water past the sidewalk.

Downspouts should not deposit water at the foundation footing. They should be fitted with splash blocks or directed into a catchment system.

Many contractors will attempt to manage runoff from the roof by installing short drain fields connected to the downspouts. All the debris from the roof gets directed into the field and clogs it in just a few seasons or heavy rains can overwhelm the field and backwash into the crawlspace. It isn't always visibly obvious a field has failed unless water starts bubbling out the top or floods the crawlspace. These drain fields can't be maintained and have to be dug up to clear them.

The best catchment system I have seen to date consists of drain pipe that picks up water at the downspout and deposits it at the other, open end, into a rock bed well away from the foundation. This reduces the likelihood soil will infiltrate and clog the field. It also allows debris from the roof to be flushed out the end of the system and is easily inspected for proper function. ■