

## Spider too close for comfort

**Q.** I have an orb spider living by my front door. It's been there for almost two months and the intricate support web and "bug catching" web are great to see. However, I have a large number of people coming to my house in a few days. Can I relocate the spider to the backyard or should I put a sign there warning people not to mess with it. I know it's harmless but my guests may be frightened.

**A.** A web building spider generally constructs its web in an area and will stay in a location based on the environment. Orb spiders rely on flying insects and usually construct their webs about shoulder to head height (of an adult person). This is a good height to capture many flying insects. As a result, there needs to be items within a reasonable distance to attach and place the web. For example, if you randomly relocate the spider to the backyard in an open area, there may be nothing in reasonable distance to support a web. There needs to be at least a couple of tall shrubs or tree trunks for the spider to reconstruct a web at about shoulder to head height. It needs to be in an area with limited people movement to prevent disturbance and the accidental tearing down of the web by walking into or through it. Will it be a location with enough flying insect activity to satisfy the spider? This is unknown. If it's not the right location, the spider may move back to your front porch.

**Note:** The individual with this question made the decision to post a sign next to the web in hopes that his company would steer clear of the web and offered his garage entrance to those frightened by the spider.

Webs built by these types of spiders can be quit large and may be suspended several feet above ground. Some people become annoyed as they accidentally walk through these webs, brushing the webs from their face and arms. I'm sure the spiders become annoyed too, having to repair or rebuild their webs. Based on spider species, the web may have white zigzag bands vertically across the middle.

Despite their "scary" size, orb web spiders pose no threat to people. They're considered beneficial because they feed on a wide range of flying insects. They usually construct webs in sunny areas with little wind.

Even though they are beneficial, many people don't like spiders. If you choose to control spiders in and around your home, keep in mind it's impractical if not impossible to control all spiders.

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