

Dysdera crocata

System: Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Arthropoda	Arachnida	Araneae	Dysderidae

Common name European garden spider (English), woodlouse spider (English), sow-bug killer (English), woodlouse hunter (English), slater-eating spider (English)

Synonym *Dysdera crocata*

Similar species *Loxosceles reclusa*

Summary *Dysdera crocata* has been introduced and may be established in parts of St Helena, however, its biostatus is not known for certain and as it is has not been monitored. *D. crocata* is a known Mediterranean-originating invasive in California, USA. It is unknown what affect it may be having on endemic invertebrates that inhabit similar niches.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)

Species Description

Dysdera crocata is up to 2 cm long with a bright reddish brown carapace (Ashmole & Ashmole 2004). The body length is reported as 1.1cm for the male and 1.4cm for the female (Australian Museum 2003). It has six eyes in a tight group, reddish-orange legs, a pale cream to pinkish-tan abdomen and a brown cephalothorax (head + thorax) (University of Nebraska-Lincoln 2008). The chelicerae (fangs) are long and divergent, probably as an adaptation to its diet of woodlice (Ashmole & Ashmole 2004). This medium-sized spider has three pair of legs directed forward and one pair back (University of Nebraska-Lincoln 2008).

Dysdera can be distinguished from young miturgids of the genus *Tecutia* (which also have reddish coloration and large fangs) by the six eyes (*Tecutia* species have eight widely spaced eyes). There is a possibility of confusion of young individuals with young prodidomids, which may be elongate and sometimes appear to have only 6 eyes (Ashmole & Ashmole 2004).

Notes

Dysdera crocata is often incorrectly spelled as *Dysdera crocata* C.L Koch 1839.

The bite of *D. crocata* is not considered dangerous but the large jaws can give a painful bite and may cause local redness and swelling (Australia Museum 2003).

Habitat Description

Dysdera crocata is usually found under wood or bark (University of California Berkeley Undated). *D. crocata* prefers to hide in sheltered, damp, ground habitats such as those provided by logs, rocks and rubbish, and is sometimes found in urban gardens under old bricks or paving (Australian Museum 2003).

Reproduction

Dysdera crocata does not make a web, instead building a silken sac-like retreat in which it rests, moults and lays eggs. The female will seal herself into her retreat with her eggs until they hatch and the spiderlings are ready to disperse (Australian Museum 2003).

Nutrition

Dysdera crocata hunts woodlice, members of the terrestrial crustacean order Isoptera which includes pillbugs and sowbugs; it is an active hunting spider feeding at night (University of Nebraska-Lincoln 2008).

Principal source:

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Review:

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ALIEN RANGE

[4] AUSTRALIA

[1] SPAIN

[5] SAINT HELENA

[1] UNITED STATES

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