

*Providing Leadership in Environmental Entomology*

Department of Entomology, Soils, and Plant Sciences • 114 Long Hall • Clemson, SC 29634-0315 • Phone: 864-656-3111  
email: dpento@clemson.edu

## Jumping Spiders

Ever see something out of the corner of your eye moving quickly, and then look to find a tiny spider running, jumping, or climbing a wall? Spiders are extremely common and fascinating animals found all around the world. They are found in just about any place imaginable: backyards, homes, gardens, and even cars. They range in shapes and sizes, and may be brightly colored.



**Common jumping spider - note large eyes**

*photo courtesy Ohio State Univ.*

One of the most common and beautiful spiders found in the home and garden are the jumping spiders. They make up one of the largest groups of spiders with more than 300 species in the United States. A common jumping spider found in South Carolina is the daring or bold jumping spider. It has three white to red dots on the abdomen. Also, the zebra jumping spider is commonly found indoors. It has white stripes with a blackish-brown background.

Jumping spiders are small, 1/10 - 1/4 inches in length, with stout bodies. They are easily identified by their eye arrangement. They have eight eyes in a single row with an extremely



**Zebra Jumping Spider** *photo courtesy Univ. Florida*

enlarged pair of eyes in the front. These spiders have the distinction of having the best eyesight of all the spiders in the world. Jumping spiders were given their name because of their incredible ability to jump long distances. They are estimated to jump 10 times their body length. This ability to jump and having excellent eyesight allows them to be active predators in the wild.

Jumping spiders hunt during the day both indoors and outdoors, and eat many pests associated with our homes and gardens such as houseflies, beetles, stinkbugs, and armyworms, just to name a few.

Female jumping spiders protect their eggs in an egg sac. They produce several egg sacs with 80 to 100 eggs in each. Spiderlings emerge from the egg sac within a few months and begin to disperse.

Jumping spiders can wander into households when hunting prey or may be brought indoors by humans. It is common for a jumping spider to look directly at you with its large front pair of eyes.

However, these spiders are not harmful, and once detected they usually flee.

The best way to rid your house of jumping spiders is not with a can of insect spray, but to remove them. Use a glass or dish to pick the spiders up and discard them outside. Exclusion is the best way to prevent jumping spiders from entering your home. Keep windows and doors closed and screened, and sealed with weather stripping. Also, keep your home free of pests to discourage spiders from entering.

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Prepared by Michael Vickers, Graduate Assistant, Patricia A. Zungoli, Extension Entomologist/Professor, and Eric P. Benson, Extension Entomologist/Associate Professor, Department of Entomology, Soils, and Plant Sciences, Clemson University.

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