

GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE

Golden Orb Spider (*Nephila species*)

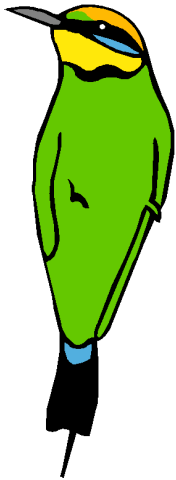
Can you find a Golden Orb Spider on your block?

Golden Orb Spiders build semi-permanent webs which they occupy continuously, sitting head-down at the central hub.



Male Golden Orb Spider *Nephila* sp
Photograph By Erin Moon

The golden refraction from the strands of the web are the source of the name for this group of spiders. The web is approximately 1m in diameter and it is asymmetrical with the hub off-centre, closer to the top of the web. Mature males can be less than 10% of the size of a mature female. Once prey is caught, the spider cautiously approaches, wraps it in silk to immobilise it and kills it with a bite, probably injecting venom and digestive enzymes. The prey is then moved to the hub of the web where it is either consumed or added to the food store. *Nephila* are active in prey capture both day and night and will take a wide variety of insects ranging from beetles, bees, flies, crickets, wasps and cicadas. Comparison of the prey of *Nephila* species shows that they are an opportunistic predator and will eat anything that lands in the web. Orb spiders are reluctant to bite humans.



Conserving habitats not only protects the spiders but also the whole ecosystem of which they are a part. Habitat conservation is an essential element of maintaining sustainable ecosystems.

Reference: http://www.amonline.net.au/factSheets/orb_weaving_spiders.htm
http://www.conservationinstitute.org/pcn/invertebrates/golden_orb_web_spiders.htm

Low, W. A., 2007. Pers. comm. Low Ecological Services P/L.

Garden for Wildlife in collaboration with DKA COOLmob and the NT Government held a workshop during National Water Wise Week, which demonstrated techniques for irrigation, appropriate mulching, grey water system installation and water conservation. Thanks to everyone who attended the workshop and for digging irrigation lines. Stay tuned for a garden tour of the property once the local native vegetation has been planted in autumn! Thanks to Wayne Tregear for providing valuable information about appropriate irrigation methods and for assisting with the irrigation setup and thanks to Jason Flavell for installing the grey water system and for explaining the different systems that can be used in the NT. A BIG thanks to Deb and Peter for opening up their property for the morning!

BATS BATS BATS!



In early December, Land for Wildlife and the Field Naturalist Club will be holding a Bat workshop. In Central Australia, approximately 14 different species of bats have been recorded. There will be a power point presentation about the bats of Central Australia, identification methods and behaviours will be discussed as well as a walk with bat detection equipment. Please email me if you are interested in coming along to this

workshop so that I can prepare for the evening.

I will let you know of the details soon!

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