

## SPIDERS

### WIDOWS

*Latrodectus species*

- Bites from Black Widows are potentially life-threatening. **Call 911.**
- Symptoms appear 1-2 hours after a bite, to include: sweating at bite site; chills; rigid abdomen; nausea; vomiting; and painful muscle cramps.
- Nocturnal and non-aggressive, but may bite if it feels threatened.
- Make their homes in warm, dry, and sheltered places.

Black Widow



Leg span is about one inch.



Brown Widow



Red Widow

### BROWN RECLUSE

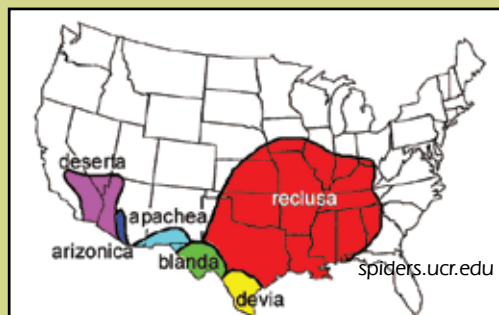
*Loxosceles reclusa*

- Bites are not usually life-threatening, but may require medical care.
- Bites may go undetected at first.
- Symptoms appear 8-12 hours after bite, to include: pain, redness at bite site; and may progress to an open wound.
- Prefer dry, dark, and quiet hiding places.



Brown Recluse

Range of recluse spiders in the United States



Brown Recluse are not native to South Florida.

## INSECTS

### HONEY BEES (European and Africanized)

*Apis mellifera*

- Multiple stings may be life-threatening and may require medical attention.
- Sting symptoms (local) are immediate: pain, swelling, redness.
- Will nest in almost any cavity or sheltered space.

### ADDITIONAL "BEE SAFE" INFORMATION

- Individual bees sting only once, then die.
- Africanized Honey Bees (AHBs) are commonly found in Florida.
- AHBs aggressively defend their hives.
- If you see a nest or swarm of bees, **STAY AWAY.**
- Call a bee removal service.
- If you are attacked, protect your face and **RUN** to shelter.
- Do not try to hide in water.
- Do not take the threat of these bees lightly!

### WASPS

*Numerous families and species*

- Not usually life-threatening, but multiple stings may require medical attention.
- Individual wasps may sting multiple times.
- Sting symptoms are immediate: pain, swelling, redness.
- Usually nest in sheltered areas; nests vary in appearance and structure.

### HORNETS

*Vespula, Dolichovespula species*

- Not usually life-threatening, but multiple stings may require medical attention.
- Individual hornets may sting multiple times.
- Sting symptoms (local) are immediate: pain, swelling, redness.
- Nest in trees, under shelter, and underground.

**For multiple stings and symptoms including difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting, chills and weakness, call 911.**



European and African bees look the same.



Adults may grow to 6 inches in length.



Hives will be defended!



Blister beetles are often brightly colored.



There are many families and species of wasps.



About 1/4 inch long



Paper wasp's nest



Hornets are also known as "Yellowjackets."

## CENTIPEDES

### FLORIDA BLUE CENTIPEDE

*Scolopendra viridis*

- Centipede bites are not life-threatening.
- Symptoms are immediate: pain, swelling at bite site (similar to a bee sting).
- Centipedes have claws adapted as fangs to grasp and bite.
- Nocturnal and prefer damp, dark hiding places.

### BLISTER BEETLES

*Family Meloidae, numerous species*

- Superficial exposure to blister beetle juice is not life-threatening.
- Ingestion of significant amounts of juice, or beetles, is highly toxic to mammals.
- Symptoms of topical exposure are blistering of skin and local discomfort.
- May be seen feeding on the floral parts of crops and garden vegetables.

### FIRE ANTS

*Solenopsis invicta*

- Symptoms are immediate: burning pain, swelling, itching.
- Pustules appear in about 24 hours and may persist up to 10 days.
- Secondary infection is common.
- Very aggressive when disturbed.
- Prefer dryer ground, but may be found in any habitat.

### FIRST AID FOR INSECT STINGS AND BITES

- Always be aware of rare, but serious, allergic reactions!
- If a stinger is left behind, do not pull out; remove by scraping with a dull edge (such as a credit card).
- Wash area with soap and water.
- Apply ice to alleviate pain and swelling.
- Call the Poison Information Center for assistance.
- **Call 911 if symptoms continue to worsen, or if patient develops swelling; redness; hives or itching away from sting/bite; difficulty breathing; weakness; tingling; infected or open sores; or lasting nausea.**

# CATERPILLARS

Caterpillars are the larval stages of butterflies and moths.

## PUSS CATERPILLAR

*Megalopyge opercularis*



Up to an inch in length, also called Asp caterpillars

## IO MOTH CATERPILLAR

*Automeris io*



One to two inches in length

## SADDLEBACK CATERPILLAR

*Aracharia stimulea*



One to two inches in length

### CATERPILLAR STINGS

- Stings generally are not life-threatening, but pain may necessitate medical care.
- Symptoms are immediate: intense burning pain; localized welting of skin; headache; abdominal distress; rashes; blisters; and sometimes numbness, chest pain, or difficulty breathing.
- Stinging is accidental when caterpillar is dislodged from foliage.
- Found on many host plants including palms, roses, oaks and citrus.

### FIRST AID FOR CATERPILLAR STINGS

- Apply tape to sting area and gently pull off to remove any remaining spines.
- Wash area with soap and water.
- Apply ice to alleviate pain and swelling.
- Call the Poison Information Center for assistance.
- **Call 911 if symptoms continue to worsen, or if patient develops swelling; redness; hives or itching away from sting; difficulty breathing; weakness; tingling; infected or open sores; or lasting nausea.**

### AVOIDING DANGEROUS CRITTERS

- Be cautious when outdoors: wear gloves and closed-toe shoes when gardening or working in the yard.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially when outdoors. It's no fun to stand on an ant nest!
- Do not put your hands or feet in places that may be hideaways for dangerous critters.
- Check your shoes before putting them on... dangerous critters may have hidden in them!
- Look and listen for persistent buzzing sounds around your home and yard; there may be honey bees nesting. If you hear them: stay away, do not disturb, and call professional pest control to remove them.
- Respect all creatures – even tiny ones can cause injury!

### “Dangerous Critters in Your Backyard”

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue offers this program intended for students and aimed at prevention, safety, and first aid for bites and stings from dangerous critters. A presentation may be scheduled by calling 786-331-5000, extension 4444, or by e-mailing [mdfrantivenom@miamidade.gov](mailto:mdfrantivenom@miamidade.gov).

### Emergency Contacts:

Call 911

Florida Poison Information Center

Network: 800-222-1222

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9300 NW 41 Street, Miami, FL 33178  
786-331-5000  
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Produced by the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department  
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Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department  
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# Dangerous Critters of Florida



## ARTHROPOD AMPHIBIAN

# SCORPION

## FLORIDA BARK SCORPION

*Centruroides gracilis*



Adults are 2-3 inches long.

- Stings are normally not life-threatening.
- Symptoms appear immediately, to include: pain and swelling at sting site (similar to a wasp sting).
- Nocturnal and prefer warm, dark, and secluded hiding places.
- Call the Poison Information Center for assistance.
- **Refer to First Aid for Insect Stings and Bites.**

# BUFO TOAD

*Bufo Marinus*



May grow to 9 inches long and weigh 2 pounds.

- Toxin is a milky fluid secreted by the large parotid glands at base of toad's head.
- Eggs and tadpoles also are poisonous.
- Toxins may be transferred by handling or ingesting a toad or secretions.
- Wash with soap and water if contact occurs.
- Bufo toads usually live near water and are most active at night.
- Pets are the most frequent victims. If a pet is poisoned, contact a veterinary clinic immediately.
- Call the Poison Information Center for assistance.
- **Call 911 if patient develops severe irritation and pain to eyes, nose and throat; nausea; vomiting; seizures; or difficulty breathing.**