**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.

**Red Widow**
- Leg span is about one inch.

**Brown Widow**

**Black Widow**
- Range of recluse spiders in the United States
- Brown Recluse are not native to South Florida.
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**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!

**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.

**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.

**CENTIPEDES**

**Florida Blue Centipede**
*Scolopendra viridis*
- Centipede bites are not life-threatening.
- Symptoms appear 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**
*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.

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**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.

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**CATERPILLARS**

Caterpillars are the larval stages of butterflies and moths.

**PUSS CATERPILLAR**
- Megalopyge opercularis
- One to two inches 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 appear immediately: intense burning pain; localized welting of skin; headache; abdominal distress; rash; 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.

**ARHTHOPOD AMPHIBIAN**

**SCORPION**
- Centruroides gracilis
- 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.

**FLORIDA BARK SCORPION**
- *Centruroides gracilis*
- Adults are 2-3 inches long.
- May grow to 9 inches long and weigh 2 pounds.

**BUFO TOAD**
- *Bufo Marinus*
- Toxin is a milky fluid secreted by the large parotid glands at base of toad’s head.
- Eggs and tadpoles 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.

**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.

**Emergency Contacts:**
- Call 911
- Florida Poison Information Center Network: 800-222-1222
- Produced by the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department Media and Public Relations Bureau and Venom Response Bureau

Herminio Lorenzo, Fire Chief
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department
9300 NW 41 Street, Miami, FL 33178
786-331-5000
www.miamidade.gov/mdfr

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