

NEWS RELEASE  
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## TARANTULAS

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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Any day now, the annual migration of the largest spiders in Mariposa, tarantulas, will begin. These large, hairy animals look especially fierce, but as with all spiders, are beneficial by consuming insect pests.

The fall movement of tarantulas is actually an annual process of males looking for females. They spend about 90 percent of their lives in web lined ground burrows. September to November, the males approach female burrows and attempt to lure her out. If she is not pleased, she may consume him. Thus, the fact that male tarantulas enjoy adulthood for about a year, while females can live 20 years or more.

As with all spiders, tarantulas have venomous fangs. However, the venom is similar to that of a bee sting. They are also reluctant to attack humans and do not have mouthparts particularly useful for this process. One might think that with eight eyes they could see well, but they actually have poor vision.

One common predator of tarantulas is a large, elongated wasp. Called tarantula hawks, these insects paralyze the tarantula by stinging it and then lay an egg on it. The paralyzed tarantula is then buried alive, later to serve as a food source for the wasp larvae.

For more information on common spiders, call the UC Cooperative Extension office in Mariposa and request leaflet #7442. This is also available at the UC website

[www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu).

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Tarantula



Tarantula Hawk

