

False Black Widow Spiders

Factsheet

Body size

Female to 15mm; male to 10mm.

Appearance

Rotund, brown with pale markings. Apart from colour, differs from *Latrodectus* (black widow spiders) in having teeth on the chelicerae. Only female (photo) bites.

Habitat, range and season

Buildings and fences. Originally a native of the Canary Islands and Madeira; now established in the southern and eastern coastal region of England and inland in Surrey.

First recorded in the UK

1879. Not considered to be established until the 1980's (Jones, 1987).

Many spiders of the genus *Steatoda* are often mistaken for widow spiders (*Latrodectus*), and are known as **false black widows**; however ***Steatoda* are significantly less harmful to humans**. *Steatoda* are shaped similarly to widow spiders, with round, bulbous abdomens. However, not all *Steatoda* species resemble widows – many have distinct coloring, and are significantly smaller than *Latrodectus* specimens. Some species of *Steatoda* actually will prey on widows, as well as other spiders which are considered hazardous to humans.



Useful links:

- <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/news/2012/february/noble-false-widow-spider-marches-north-in-the-uk105179.html>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steatoda>