

## **The World's most venomous spiders.**

**Transcript for “The world's most venomous spiders” an audio slideshow presented by Dr Tim Cockerill.**

Although all spiders have fangs, and almost all are venomous, most species in the UK are harmless to humans, and there has never been a death attributable to a spider bite recorded in the British Isles.

Occasionally, more venomous spiders arrive in the UK with transported goods, but the spiders are not adapted to live in the UK, so they tend not to survive.

One exception is the relatively harmless species of false widow spider that came into the UK with a shipment of bananas from the Canary Islands. Since then, it has successfully colonised southern counties of Britain for over 100 years. But despite press reports, even this species is not a cause for concern in the UK.

Elsewhere there are far more deadly visitors to peoples' homes, especially in Australia and the Americas.

The Sydney funnel web spider and the Australian redback are commonly encountered around human dwellings.

Although the red back has caused the highest number of spider related deaths globally, there hasn't been such a death in Australia since 1981. This is due to the discovery of effective anti-venoms.

Even so, a bite from the funnel-web spider can cause a number of frightening symptoms in as little as 10 or 15 minutes.

The USA boasts a number of venomous spiders encountered by humans, among them hobo spiders, sac spiders, the western black widow and the brown recluse spider.

The innocuous recluse has a nasty bite, and its venom can cause severe skin and tissue damage.

If you live in Central and Southern America you wouldn't want the highly aggressive, Brazilian wandering spider to find its way into your home.

Not the biggest of spiders, but it's noted in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's most venomous. That said, of the 7, 000 reported cases, only 10 people have died from a bite.

So compared to other countries, where there are real concerns about spiders living among us, we are fortunate in the UK to share our homes with a harmless, but effective army of pest controllers, helping to protect us from disease.