

Spider super powers

Video transcript for Spider super powers video presented by Tim Cockerill

Spiders have been the stuff of myth and legend for centuries. It was once thought that a spider could never die of natural causes and that spiders could survive molten lava over 3000 degrees Celsius.

But the real life super powers of spiders are far more impressive than anything you would find in fiction.

Over 350 million years spiders have evolved an extraordinary array of predatory practices and some serious weapons in their armory to trap, poison, lure, ambush and lasso their prey.

Of the two groups of spiders, the web builders and the hunters, it's the hunters that have the most athletic skills.

Honed to make them effective and powerful predators, some tackle prey considerably bigger than themselves.

This is the original bird eating tarantula from South America. Although she normally eats insects, she's capable of tackling small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. And as her name suggests, she could take a small bird.

And much closer to home, despite its tiny body and spindly legs, this daddy long legs spider can kill and eat this formidable giant house spider.

Jumping spiders use their hydraulically powered limbs to leap 50 times their body length to pounce on prey.

The crab spider is a master of disguise, changing colour to blend in with the colour of the flower it lives on, lying in wait for unsuspecting prey.

And the incredible strength of silk, five times tougher than steel, means that web building spiders can catch prey many times larger than themselves. In fact this golden orb weaving spider has been known to catch and eat birds in its impressive web.

And Darwin's bark spider is capable of constructing the biggest webs of all, sometimes stretching across rivers.

I think it's fair to say that spiders do have some fairly super powers and the more we study them the more we reveal about these super heroes of the animal kingdom.