

Insect Fact Sheet

Cave Spider

The Cave Spider is one of our largest spiders. They are named after their liking for living in places of total darkness, such as caves, railway tunnels and cellars etc, but they are not that common. Although the adult Cave Spider does not like light, their young are attracted to it. Once hatched from the eggs, the young Cave Spiders (known as spiderlings) go towards any light and so are able to find and colonise new places to live.

Life cycle stages

Spiders do not go through the three completely different stages of development that butterflies, moths and most insects do. Female spiders lay a large number of eggs and cover them in silk. Once the eggs hatch, the spiderlings remain safely within the eggsac until they have shed their skin once.

Shedding their skins every few weeks, allows spiders the chance to grow larger, each time they shed their old skin (called moulting) until they become full grown. Once out of the eggsac, the spiderlings will move away from where they were born and find another place to live.

The UK has only two species of Cave Spider. Both species are large and generally dark brown in colour.

Eggsac



Spiderling



Adult



Cave Spiders live on a diet of insects, which they catch in a circular web. For such a large spider, the web is quite small. Most of their diet consists of Woodlice, Pillbugs and small insects that like dark, damp places.