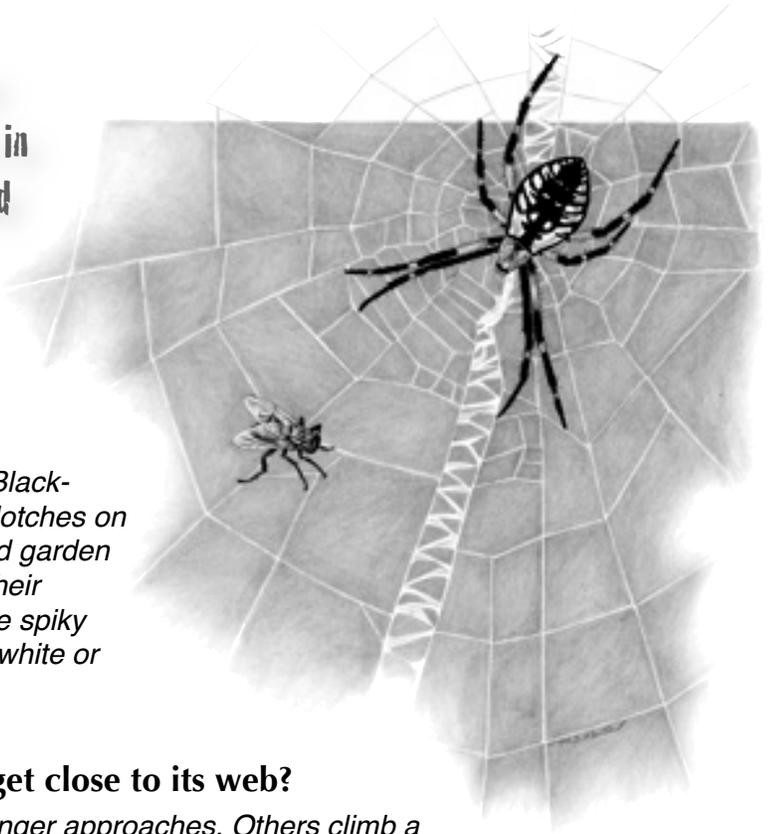


# Spider-Spotter Checklist

In early fall, orb weavers announce their presence by spinning spectacular webs in gardens and near houses. Find a web and see how many of these web-builder behaviors you can spot.



## What does the spider look like?

Missouri has many kinds of orb weavers. Black-and-yellow garden spiders have yellow splotches on their egg-shaped abdomens. White-backed garden spiders have black and yellow stripes on their abdomens. Spiny-bellied orb weavers have spiky abdomens. Triangulate orb weavers have white or yellow triangles on their abdomens.



## What does the spider do when you get close to its web?

Some spiders drop to the ground when danger approaches. Others climb a silk “escape line” to a hiding place. Garden spiders vibrate their webs when disturbed. Scientists think the bouncy movements make it hard for predators to catch the spider.



## Do you see more than one spider on the web?

Large spiders are female. Males are much smaller and often look different than the female. Most male orb weavers don’t spin webs. They visit the webs of females to find girlfriends.



## Does the web disappear at times only to reappear later?

Some orb weavers eat their webs at dawn each day, recycle the nutrients, and rebuild their webs at dusk. It takes about an hour to spin a new web. Large webs may contain 60 feet of silk!



## Do you see a white zigzag pattern of silk in the middle of the web?

This is called a stabilimentum, and scientists aren’t sure what it’s for. They think it might provide a place for the spider to hide, warn birds and other animals not to crash into the web, or attract insects.



## What happens when you gently touch the web?

Orb weavers have poor eyesight and sense their world through vibrations in their webs. They can tell a wasp (a possible predator) from a fly (lunch) just by the vibrations each makes!



## Is the whole web sticky or just some parts?

The straight “spokes” that come out from the web’s center aren’t usually sticky. The rings that spiral around are very sticky. Which parts do you think the spider walks on and which catch its prey?