Spiders

(Wolf Spiders – Family *Lycosidae*, and Other House Spiders)

Wolf spider (adult male)

Female wolf spider carrying her young

Brown recluse (rare here)

Identification – Spiders aren't insects. They're arachnids, with eight legs and two body parts. Of the ones customers send us pictures of most, **wolf spiders** are the big ones. They're brown to gray and hairy, with stripes down the back and banded legs. They don't spin webs; they hunt, which is why you see them running across the basement or garage floor. Females carry their egg sac attached to the tip of the body, and then the babies on their back. Wolf spiders are common and pretty harmless. **House spiders** are the cobweb builders in corners, windows and basements. **Jumping spiders** are small, often black, and they hop; they're harmless and usually ride in on clothing or plants. **Sac spiders** are small and pale, and while they're not dangerous, they can bite and cause itching.

Is it a brown recluse? – Almost certainly not. Recluses are almost always misidentified, and they're fairly rare here, especially in homes. A recluse is a plain tan to brown spider with a dark violin shape behind the eyes, no stripes or bands on the legs, and six eyes in three pairs, which you need magnification to see. Black widows, which are shiny black with a red hourglass underneath, do live here, mostly outside in woodpiles, sheds and under decks.

Do they bite? – Spiders can bite, but they rarely do. Wolf spiders bite only if handled, and they aren't medically important. Lots of spiders usually just means there are plenty of insects for them to eat.

What we find – Most spider calls come between May and October, and wolf spiders also wander in when fall starts. We catch a bunch on glue boards in basements and utility rooms. Tiny spiders indoors sometimes come in on houseplants from the garden center. Expect to see *more* spiders right after the first few services, because we've knocked down webs and disrupted their happy habitat. We usually see a huge drop by the end of the first year.

What works – **What works is brushing down webs and vacuuming.** Insecticides rarely work on spiders unless you spray them directly. On our regular service, we brush down webs outside, treat around the outside of the house to cut down the insects they feed on, and place glue boards in the utility room and garage.

What you can do – Spiders are mostly a housekeeping issue. Vacuum up webs and spiders indoors, and brush down webs outside whenever they form, because when webs keep getting knocked down, spiders move on. You can also move a glue board from the utility room or garage to wherever you're seeing them. Keep leaf clutter away from the house, hose down the deck now and then, and turn off porch lights you don't need. Lights draw insects, and spiders build where the food is.

When to call Dynamic – If you think you've found a brown recluse or a black widow, bag the spider and we'll check it under the scope. If you're not sure what kind of spider it is, send us a photo with a coin next to it for size, and we'll identify it for you.