

Entomologist says expect more spiders inside as weather turns cooler

This is the time of year when the Kansas State University entomology department receives a lot of calls. The question most asked: Why am I getting so many spiders in my house?

"Insects move inside the house seeking warmer temperatures," said Jeff Whitworth, assistant professor of entomology. "Just like humans, insects prefer a climate around 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Spiders are seeking those warmer environments as well as searching for food."

Tennessee medical officials have reported an increase in brown recluse bites this year. However, Whitworth says there is no indication there are more spiders this year compared to previous years. The brown recluse, most common in the central and southeast regions, is the most feared spider in the Midwest because of its hemotoxic venom. But Whitworth says the brown recluse isn't as scary as you think.

"The nice thing about the brown recluse spider, as its name implies, is it is reclusive," he said. "We have reared spiders now for approximately two to three years and we have found the brown recluse to be non-aggressive."

Whitworth; Holly Schwarting, research associate in entomology; and J.R. Ewing, master's student in entomology, are researching the most reliable method of managing brown recluse spiders. Pest control operators are divided on whether sticky traps, pesticide or a combination of the two are a better way to kill spiders in your home.

Whichever form of removal you choose to use, Whitworth says to wait until March. Brown recluse spiders become inactive from mid-October until March.