



Island Cats Mews

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The Hobo Spider: He Ain't No Charlotte

Now's the time for spiders to start searching for warmer breeding grounds, and your home will do quite nicely for the randy Hobo Spider. Chances are, right now a male Hobo Spider is singing Barry White's "Let's Get in On" while making his way into your home in hot pursuit of a mate. Hobos are a very common poisonous species in the Northwest, and we don't want them near your curious kitty.

The Hobo (*Tegeneria agrestis*), also called the "aggressive house spider," is a European species that entered North America via the Port of Seattle between 1920 and 1930. The Hobo is most easily identified by its brown color with a lighter V-like pattern on the abdomen and large sacs near its face. The female is startlingly large, while the male is smaller but has larger sacs. Hobos usually range between 1/2-inch to 1 3/4-inch in body length and have long spindly legs.

Hobos are considered aggressive because of their willingness to attack. They weave funnel webs to catch insects, making flat, non-sticky webs often found near a home's foundation or landscaping elements. Its inability to move on sticky or smooth, vertical surfaces is the ultimate weakness of the Hobo spider. He falls prey to other spiders' sticky webs and can't get out of sinks and bathtubs after crawling in.

"The single most effective deterrent against Hobo Spiders is the presence of competing spider species... Pesticides are not recommended for Hobos"

For years, numerous reports of Hobo spider bites in the Northwest have been incorrectly



blamed on the more infamous Brown Recluse spider because they have identical bite symptoms.

The Brown Recluse however, doesn't live naturally west of Nebraska. Hobos make two kinds of bites. About half are "dry," where no venom is injected and the victim develops only minor redness. A "wet" or venomous bite is not always painful, but a small, hard area typically appears within 30 minutes, surrounded by an expanding red welt that may reach several inches in diameter. Blisters form within 15-35 hours, which eventually crust over and

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Special Points of Interest:

- Holiday Beastie Bands & toys are on their way! Perfect for stuffing those stockings!
- MEOW Calendars are in! Every year MEOW sells their calendars for a \$10.00 donation. If you would like a calendar please visit our hospital with cash or check made payable directly to MEOW. 100% of the proceeds go to MEOW's non-profit organization to rescue kitties with a no-kill policy. Their motto: "Adoption is for life" To this day, MEOW has rescued 15,000 cats in need and is celebrating their 10th anniversary. Congratulations MEOW!

Holiday Hazards Are Problematic for Both Indoor & Outdoor Kitties

While black cats can be unsafe outside in October, all of the holidays can pose a number of safety issues for indoor as well as outdoor cats :

- ◇ Hang any stringed & lighted decorations high. Keep electrical cords free from access to avoid electrocution or burns of the mouth.
- ◇ Store candy wrappers or twist-ties away, as they tempt cats to play with them. They can lodge in your cat's intestines and require surgical removal.
- ◇ Monitor candles. Cats often like to play with them causing injury to themselves, as well as creating a fire hazard.

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*High quality care and
compassion in a feline friendly
environment*

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All About Island Cats

Island Cats Veterinary Hospital is a full-service veterinary hospital, exclusively for feline patients. Our state-of-the-art facility has been serving cats and their people since 1996. Island Cats is located in the heart of the Mercer Island Business District.

Our services range from routine wellness exams and preventative dentistry, to chronic condition diagnosis and treatment, as well as complex surgeries. We have a quiet, feline-only boarding facility, and a nutrition center. We also offer behavior counseling for our patients who have developed inappropriate behaviors that can threaten to break our special human-animal bond. We support your cat's health by offering comprehensive care in a comfortable setting using an advanced team approach to medicine.

Hobo Spider (continued from pg.1)

the tissue beneath dies (becomes necrotic).

A bite victim may also experience headaches, nausea, vomiting, and flu-like symptoms. No deaths have been reported.

Some articles state that cats are predators of Hobo Spiders. While many kitties love a good bug to chase, we do not recommend cats for Hobo control. If you suspect your kitty has been bitten by a Hobo, please seek immediate veterinary care.

The single most effective deterrent against Hobo spiders is the presence of competing spider species. The most preferred method of Hobo control is to eliminate suitable habitats and allow the orb weaver spiders (your typical spiders) to do their job.

Pesticides are NOT recommended for Hobo control. Hobos are a highly mobile species and resistant to most pesticides, but other spider species are not. While the Hobos pack up and find better air quality, you'll effectively kill all of their predators. Non-pesticide (sticky) spider traps, found at most local hardware stores work best. Place the traps on the floor near doors, vents, first floor windows, and stairs.

If you have questions about Hobo Spiders, please check www.hobospider.org, a site with extensive information about Hobo Spiders (ignore the line that says cats are good Hobo predators! They've never had to repair a necrotic jaw before...).

Holiday Hazards (continued from pg1)

- ◇ Make sure your cat is inside during festive events, and give your kitty a quiet, safe room to be enclosed in so as not to cause excessive or fearful hiding. Loud noises such as parties or fireworks, can spook your cat into running away, or hiding for unsafe periods of time.
- ◇ Poinsettias are well-known to cause illness in cats. The most common symptom of ingestion is vomiting and tummy upset. Although irritating and should be avoided, they are not nearly as serious as lilies. All parts of all lilies are very toxic to cats. If you suspect your cat has ingested a part of a lily, please call Island Cats right away. If it is a weekend, holiday, or after regular business hours, you should call a 24-hour veterinary emergency hospital. Their phone numbers are listed on our voicemail at all times.
- ◇ Tinsel, popcorn strings, holiday ribbon, and any string-like object longer than 2 inches can be ingested by your kitty and get lodged in their intestines. Foreign body removal requires surgery under anesthesia. Please keep all string-like toys/objects up and away from your cat's reach.