

What is the best way to spot tarantulas and how late in the fall can they be spotted?

The easiest way to spot tarantulas (*Eurypelma californicum*) is to hike in relatively open areas (like along roads and near grassy fields) in early to mid autumn. Don't worry if you do not see one the first try, keep at it; you may see one until when the weather begins to turn cold and rainy.

When the male tarantula is about 10 years old he leaves his burrow and goes out looking for a mate. This is probably the best time to spot a tarantula, generally they only come out at night and do not stray very from home.

Female tarantulas that are ready to mate will have lined their burrows with silk containing pheromones the males find attractive. When the male finds a receptive female, he will mate quickly and if smart will leave quickly. If a male tarantula hangs around too long after mating, the much larger female will have him for dinner.

Female tarantulas are up to twice as large as the males and live for about 15 years longer (males about ten years, females about twenty five years).

The bite of a tarantula is no more poisonous than a bee sting and almost never kills people.

When alarmed, a tarantula will rub its hind legs over its abdomen, scraping off tiny hairs that are very irritating to the skin of predators.

Most tarantulas eat small insects or invertebrates. There is a species of tarantula that lives in South America that is large enough to eat small birds.