

Bug of the Month

by Jim Revell / July 2016

Bold Jumper Spider

Phidippus audax
Bold Jumping Spider

Class: Arachnida (Arachnids)
Order: Araneae (spiders)
Family: Salticidae (Jumping Spiders)
Genus: *Phidippus*
Species: *Phidippus audax* (Bold Spider)



Our “bug” comes this month by way of MG Linda Esser, our Help Desk Coordinator. She sent me a great picture of this *Phidippus audax*, commonly known as the Bold Jumper Spider. *Phidippus* is a Greek aristocratic proper name, and, *audax* (Latin) translates into “audacious” or “bold.” Another common name for the *P.audax* is the Daring Jumping Spider.

These spiders are difficult for collectors to catch due to their movements, and the fact they appear to be fearful of humans. They have very good eyesight - - a total of eight eyes in rows. Males have “eyebrows,” or two tufts of hairs over the eyes.

The spider has very hairy, short stocky legs, and the tip of each leg has two claws. In both genders, legs are black with indistinct white or gray bands. On the adult males, long and very visible tufts of white and black hairs can be seen on the front pair of legs. Bodies of the species come mostly in black with noticeable patterns of white, orange, yellow or red on the top of the abdomen. Orange is found on younger spiders. The chelicerae (jaws) have a beautifully iridescent sheen and come in different colors with a metallic green or blue hue being the most common.

The range of the spiders is wide, from Canada down the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic coasts of the US to Florida, and west to California and even Hawaii. They are also found in the Nicobar Islands.

Bold Jumper Spiders are relatively small in size, 8-19mm for females and 6-13mm for males. They overwinter as young adults, maturing in April or May. After mating, eggs are deposited in an egg sac and placed in a crevice. This crevice may be in a wall, tree trunk, rock-facing or any other type of crevice. The female will usually stand guard over the 50-200 orange-colored eggs found within the sac.

This species of hunting spider does not use a web to catch its prey, but, instead, uses its excellent, up-close vision to take prey – their prey being any arthropod, insects, other spiders – any source the spider is able to subdue. **This spider, as all spiders in general, are “good guys.”** NOTE: Your chances of being bitten by a *P.audax* (Bold Jumper Spider) is slim to none. Their apparent fear of humans and habit of hunting during daytime hours severely limits direct contact. However, if mishandled, resources available suggest you would have resulting pain, itching, swelling and redness from a bite, and the duration would last 1-2 days.

Photo References:

<http://nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/spiders/Paudax.htm>
http://media.eol.org/content/2013/03/13/13/64300_orig.jpg
(photo by Lynette Schimming; Flickr: EOL images)

Research References / Resources:

<http://ento.psu.edu/extesion/factsheets/bold-jumper>
<http://www.spiders.us/species/phidippus-audax/>
<http://bugguide.net/node/view/2006?printable=1>



Jim Revell is a Bedford Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.
Read more of his articles on the “Jims Bugs” page @ www.BedfordMasterGardeners.org