

BLACK WIDOW SPIDER  
(*LATRODECTUS MACTANS* FAB.)  
DISTRIBUTION IN OHIO

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In the winter and spring of 1940 the author made a survey of the distribution of the black widow spider (*Latrodectus mactans* Fab.) in the state of Ohio from his records and from those of nearly forty collaborators—biologists and naturalists from all parts of this state.<sup>1</sup> A summary shows that specimens have been reported from thirty-two counties, although prior to this survey, specimens had been reported from but three counties.<sup>2</sup> The black widow spider is limited in its distribution in Ohio to the eastern and southern sections and is not found more than twenty-five miles beyond (i. e., to the west and north) the borders of the hilly area (the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau and the eroded Ohio River region of southwestern Ohio)—an area with fairly even black widow spider distribution, bounded in general by the Ohio River from Cincinnati to East Liverpool and beyond to Youngstown, on one hand, and by the following cities on or near the margin of the hilly region of the state, on the other, Hamilton, Chillicothe, Lancaster, Newark, Mt. Vernon, New Philadelphia, Youngstown.

The author, who is collecting spiders in eastern Ohio, has found in this area black widow spider specimens largely under small, loose rocks which have become shelved through soil erosion, on dry, bare hillsides, or under objects on well-drained, sandy soil; collaborators have reported similar experiences, the exception usually being a building where the spider has found similar conditions. As the western Ohio prairie region and the relatively level northern part of the state apparently do not have this spider, it seems logical to conclude that the black widow spider prefers the dry surroundings afforded by areas that have rapid water drainage.

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<sup>1</sup>An exhibit including map and legend was presented at the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Ohio Academy of Science in the spring of 1940.

<sup>2</sup>Barrows, W. M. 1918. A List of Ohio Spiders. O. Jr. Sci. 18, No. 8: 303.