

Daddy Long Legs

Common Name: Harvestman

Common Family Name: Daddy long legs

Other Names: Daddy long legs



Origin: Many species of these spider relatives are native to North America.

Biology: Harvestmen are the “true” daddy long legs, and they are not true spiders. Whereas spiders have a distinctly separated abdomen, the harvestman has a short abdomen that is broadly joined with the cephalothorax, giving the impression that there is a single, large body section. It has long, thin legs and is a hunter, usually feeding on other small arthropods, both living and dead, such as insects and aphids. They often occur in large numbers around structures and may invade the building. Moisture is an attraction, as these arachnids require water on a regular basis. Harvestmen cannot bite or sting, they possess no venom, and they do not create silk.

Identification: Adults vary in size, depending on species, with a body length up to about 1/2 inch and a leg span up to around 2 inches. They are dark brown with long legs and prominent palps. The head, thorax, and abdomen are all joined closely together to form a single body area, which is held elevated as the animal walks.

Characteristics Important in Control: The harvestmen are harmless and beneficial, but their presence in large numbers can be undesirable. Eliminating harborage sites outdoors, such as piles of lumber, firewood, or yard debris, will reduce the numbers that live near a structure. The individual harvestman indoors should be physically eliminated, by removal or vacuuming. An exterior treatment with a residual pyrethroid insecticide will be effective in intercepting them prior to their entry to a structure.