

AUTUMN 2025

Flower crab spider (Misumena vatia) by Lucy Amelia Smith

Join us for a spider hunt!
on Sunday 14th September

Bristol Spider Group invites you to a
Spider hunt!
at Windmill Hill City Farm
on Sunday 14th September 2025
10.30-12

Let's see what awesome
arachnids we can find (and
release again)

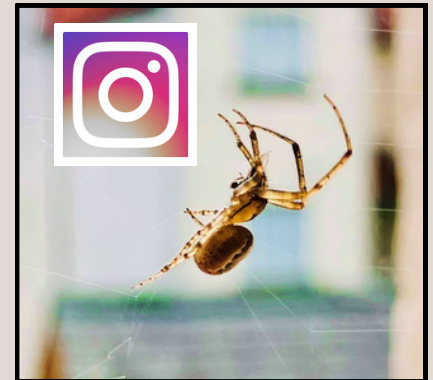
- All ages welcome
- Meet in the cafe from
10am for a 10.30 start



web: small-world.blog/bristol-spider-group
instagram: [@bristolspidergroup](https://www.instagram.com/bristolspidergroup)
email: bristolspiders@gmail.com

Let us know if you're coming by emailing
bristolspiders@gmail.com

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Instagram!

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bristolspiders@gmail.com

*Image: Missing sector
orbweaver (Zygiella x-
notata)*

AUTUMN 2025

Spider spotting

by Nicola Wilks

On a drizzly Saturday over Easter weekend, around 30 people gathered at Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol for a workshop co-organised by the Bristol Spider Group, to learn about Bristol's spiders and how we can spot them.

Before we set off on our spider hunt, we heard from local arachnologist Michael Davis. He told us that there are around 680 species of spider in the UK, and that you can find spiders in every kind of habitat. He showed us an array of simple tools we could use to collect them. Equipped with pooters, nets, trays, bug pots and a formidable modified leaf-blower, we set out across this beautiful, nature-rich site to see who we could find.



Many ivy-covered trees surround the cemetery. Simply shaking a patch of ivy, as Michael had demonstrated, released half a dozen different spiders into a tray. One was a beautiful velvety ground spider (Gnaphosidae) in the genus *Drassodes*. As the name suggests, these spiders hunt their insect prey on the ground. Although some spider species can be identified with the naked eye, in order to identify the precise species of *Drassodes*, we learned, you would need a microscope. Another swish through the ivy and we discovered a beautiful little red spider, a type of comb-footed spider called a *Parasteatoda*.

We were joined on our spider adventure by other knowledgeable members of the British Arachnological Association (BAS). Francis from BAS demonstrated a method of tempting a laceweb spider out into the open. Vibrating an electric toothbrush against the delicate tripwires of a web, spun around a crack in a wooden shed, brought the large, dark brown inhabitant running out. The laceweb (*Amaurobius*) attacked the head of the toothbrush for a few seconds, before realising a trick had been played and retreating.

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Spider spotting (*continued*)

Other finds included a small, fast-moving ant mimic spider (*Phurolithus festivus*).



The modified leaf blower had a net attached to the mouth to suck up and collect tiny creatures from the undergrowth. After running it through a patch of nettles and along a woodpile, we emptied the contents into a tray to reveal several spiders as well as springtails and woodlice. All were carefully released back into their habitats. Michael had also brought a few spiders collected that morning in his own garden and shed. These included a beautiful, large and glossy noble false widow (*Steatoda nobilis*) and a close relative, a cupboard spider (*Steatoda grossa*), as well as a very large cellar spider (*Pholcus phalangioides*).



It's great to know that these simple methods of collecting spiders can be so effective, and that with a bit of knowledge, many spiders can be identified simply by looking at them in the field.

Find out more:

- [Britain's Spiders: A field guide](#), is excellent for detail, and the [Field Studies Council's foldout guide](#) is a helpful quick guide to some of the most common species.
- The [British Arachnological Society](#) is a charity dedicated to advancing understanding and appreciation of spiders and other arachnids.
- The [Bristol Spider Group](#) is a group of amateur spider enthusiasts. Drop us a message if you'd like to join and find out about future events like this one: bristolspiders@gmail.com
- [Arnos Vale](#) is a 45-acre nature-rich cemetery site in Bristol which organises a range of events.