

## Folding Door Spider

**Order:** Arachnida

**Family:** Antrodiaetidae

**Genus/species:** *Antrodiaetus* species

**Description:** The folding door spider is tan to chestnut brown about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " -  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long. They have rake-like rows of spines on each jaw, or chelicera, which they use for digging. They have 3 claws on each foot. Folding door spiders have 1-4 small crescent shaped sclerites (hardened plates) on the top of the abdomen. They have 6 eyes in two groups of three.

**Habitat:** Folding door spiders excavate burrows in the ground that they line with silk. At the entrance they construct a collapsible "trap door". When active they open their trapdoor at night and wait just inside the entrance to strike at passing prey. The spider detects the prey by sensing vibrations. When mature, males abandon their burrows during rainy periods and wander in search of females.

**Life Cycle:** Most spiders live 1 to 2 years. The adult male begins courtship after his palp is filled with sperm and he has found a female. Soon after mating the male dies. After a week or more the mated female deposits her eggs in a silken sac. Weeks later, or sometimes not until the following spring, the young spiderlings emerge.

**Economic Importance & Management:** All spiders are voracious predators. Folding Door spiders feed on insects, and are considered highly beneficial because they keep the burgeoning insect populations in check.

**References:** *The Audubon Society Field Guide to NA Lorus & Marjery Milne Spiders! Usually helpful, sometimes a nuisance*, Jean Natter  
*Spiders of NA-identification manual*, D. Ubick, P. Paquin  
P.E. Cushing and V. Roth (Eds)  
*Golden Guide Spiders and their kin*, Herbert W. Levi  
Photo: Jay Patterson 1997

