

# AUSTRALIAN TARANTULA



## Description

Tarantulas have large, hairy bodies which range in colour from dark brown to pale reddish-brown and often with a silvery sheen. They have large fangs approximately 1 cm in length.

## Diet

The tarantula is a **carnivore** and eats large insects, small reptiles, frogs and occasionally small birds.

## In the wild

Tarantulas live in silk-lined burrows that vary in length from 40–100 cm. These burrows are usually permanent and are also used as a hiding place for the female's egg sac.

Tarantulas do not snare their prey in a web. They ambush their prey, using their muscular body to overpower it.

Male tarantulas perform a courtship dance, which involves tapping their abdomen on the ground and circling the female with jerky steps until she rears up, allowing him to mate.

## Threats

One of the major threats for tarantulas is the flooding of their burrows. Grazing livestock can trample the burrows.

## At Perth Zoo

The tarantula can be seen with other arthropods and insects in the Nocturnal House.

## Did you know?

Some species of tarantula make a whistling sound when threatened by rubbing spines on their palps (limb-like mating organs) against opposing spines on their jaw. This may be used as a mechanism to deter predators. One Australian species of Tarantula barks and it sounds just like a dog. Not surprisingly it's called the Barking Spider.

## Scientific Name

*Selenocosmia crassipes*

## Conservation Status

Extinct

Extinct in the Wild

Critically Endangered

Endangered

Vulnerable

Near-Threatened

Least Concern

Data Deficient

Not Evaluated



**Body Length:** 3–8 cm, with a leg span up to 16 cm

**Incubation:** 6–9 weeks

**Number of eggs:** About 50 in a sac



Distribution ■

**Distribution:** Queensland

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest

