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Glossary of spider terms

This glossary describes the terms used in formal descriptions of spiders; where applicable these terms are used in describing other arachnids.

Contents

[Terms](#) · [A](#) · [B](#) · [C](#) · [D](#) · [E](#) · [F](#) · [G](#) · [H](#) · [I](#) · [J](#) · [K](#) · [L](#) · [M](#) · [N](#) · [O](#) · [P](#) · [Q](#) · [R](#) · [S](#) · [T](#) · [U](#) · [V](#) · [W](#) · [X](#) · [Y](#) · [Z](#)

[Abbreviations](#) · [See also](#) · [References](#) · [Bibliography](#)

Terms

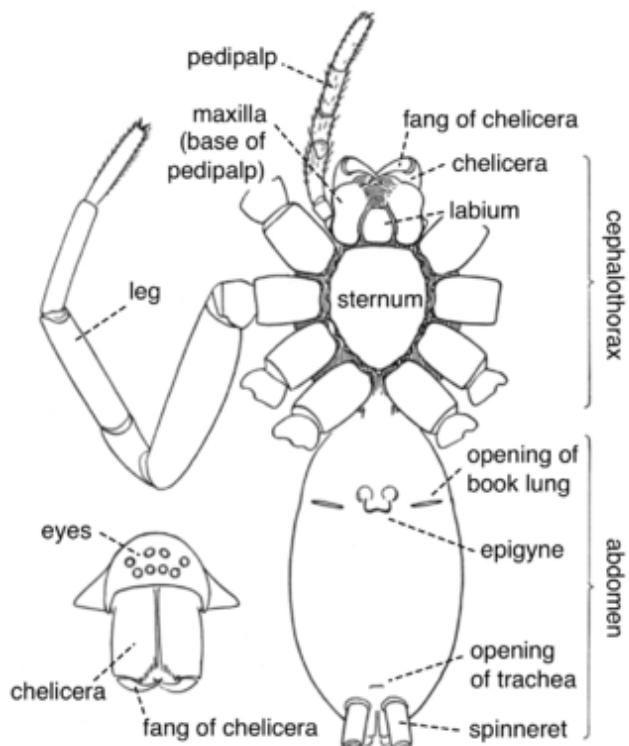
A

Abdomen or opisthosoma: One of the two main body parts (tagmata), located towards the posterior end; see also [Abdomen: Other animals](#)

Anal tubercle: A small protuberance (tubercle) above the spinnerets through which the anus opens^[1]

Apophysis (plural *apophyses*): An outgrowth or process changing the general shape of a body part, particularly the appendages; often used in describing the male pedipalp^[1]

Atrium (plural *atria*): An internal chamber at the entrance to the copulation duct in female haplogyne spiders^[1]



The underside and head of a female ecribellate entelegyne spider

B

Bidentate: Having two teeth

Book lungs: Respiratory organs on the ventral side (underside) of the abdomen, in front of the epigastric furrow, opening through narrow slits;^[2] see also Book

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C

Calamistrum (plural calamistra): Modified setae (bristles) on the metatarsus of the fourth leg of spiders with a cribellum, arranged in one or more rows or in an oval shape, used to comb silk produced by the cibellum; see also Calamistrum

Caput (plural capita): → cephalic region

Carapace: A hardened plate (sclerite) covering the upper (dorsal) portion of the cephalothorax;^[2] see also Carapace

Carpoblem: The principal tibial apophysis on the male pedipalp; also just called the tibial apophysis

Cephalic region: The front part of the cephalothorax, separated from the thoracic region by the cervical groove^[3]

Cephalothorax or prosoma: One of the two main body parts (tagmata), located towards the anterior end, composed of the head (cephalic region or caput) and the thorax (thoracic region), the two regions being separated by the cervical groove; covered by the carapace and bearing the eyes, legs, pedipalps and mouthparts^[2]

Cervical groove: A shallow U-shaped groove, separating the cephalic and thoracic regions of the carapace^[2]

Chelicera (plural chelicerae): One of two appendages at the front of the carapace, made up of basal portion, the paturon, and the fang;^[4] sometimes called the jaw; see also Chelicerae

Cheliceral furrow: A shallow groove on the basal portion of a chelicera accommodating the fang, usually having teeth on its margins^[5]

Claw → tarsal claw

Claw tuft: A dense group of hairs or bristles (setae) underneath the paired tarsal claws, usually well developed in hunting spiders^[5]

Clypeus: The area of the carapace between the anterior (frontmost) eyes and the anterior edge of the carapace^[5]

Colulus: A short protuberance in the middle of the underside of the abdomen in front of the spinnerets, considered to be a modification of the cribellum^[5]

Conductor → palpal bulb

Copulatory opening: An opening in the ventral abdomen of female spiders; in entelegyne spiders, a double opening in the epigyne through which the embolus is inserted; in haplogyne spiders, a single opening through which male palpal bulb is inserted^[5]

Coxa → segments

Cribellum: A sieve-like plate in front of the spinnerets, used in conjunction with the calamistrum; spiders with a cribellum are called **cribellate**, those without **ecribellate**;^[3] see also Cribellum

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D

Dionychous: With two claws on the tarsus of each leg;^[5] a feature of spiders in the clade Dionycha

Dorsal groove → fovea

Dorsum: The upper (dorsal) portion or surface of the body or abdomen; → ventrum

E

Ecribellate → cribellum

Embolus → palpal bulb

Endite → maxilla

Entelegyne: A spider whose female has an epigyne and separate ducts leading to spermathecae for sperm storage and to the uterus for fertilization;^[5] creating a "flow-through" system; → haplogynne

Epigastric furrow: A transverse slit towards the front (anterior) of underside of the abdomen; the front pair of book lungs open at the edge of this furrow as do the genital openings (gonopores)^[6]

Epigyne or **epigynum** (plural epigynes): A hardened plate on the underside of the female abdomen in which the copulatory openings are located; only fully developed in mature females of entelegyne spiders;^[5] see also Epigyne

F

Fang: The final hinged part of the chelicera, normally folded down into a groove in the basal part of the chelicera; venom is injected via an opening near the tip of the fang^[7]

Femur → segments

Fertilization duct: A duct in female entelegyne spiders leading from the spermathecae to the uterus^[6]

Folium: A broad leaf-like marking along the medial line of the top of the abdomen

Fovea (also called **thoracic furrow** or **dorsal groove**): A depression or pit in the centre of the carapace of a spider marking an inward projection of the exoskeleton to which stomach muscles are attached^{[8][9]}

G

Gnathocoxa → maxilla

Gonopore: The genital opening; located in the epigastric furrow; see also Gonopore

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Haematodocha → *palpal bulb*

Haplogyne: A spider whose female lacks an *epigyne* and in which the same ducts are used to transport sperm to the uterus and to the *spermathecae*;[10]
→ *entelegyne*

Heart mark: A narrow marking along the top of the *abdomen* roughly corresponding to the location of the heart



Larinioides cornutus spider showing folium on abdomen

L

Labio-sternum mound: A mound separating the *labium* from the *sternum*, found in some tarantulas, where it can be a diagnostic feature[11]

Labium (plural labia): A hardened plate (sclerite) between the *maxillae* at the front of the *sternum*;[6] see also *Arthropod mouthparts*: Labium

Labrum (plural labra): A component (the "upper lip") of the mouthparts, concealed by the *chelicerae*;[6] see also *Arthropod mouthparts*: Labrum

Lateral (applied to appendages): Viewed from above or below, the sides of the leg or *pedipalp*, i.e. the surfaces parallel to the line of sight; → *prolateral, retrolateral*

M

Main eye: one of the two anterior median eyes (AME) that have the light-detecting units (rhabdomeres) pointing towards the source; particularly enlarged in the families *Salticidae* and *Thomisidae*;^[12] → *secondary eye*

Maxilla (also called **endite** or **gnathocoxa**): Modified *coxa* of the *pedipalp*, used in feeding;^{[9][5]} not the structure called by this name in other arthropods, for which see *Maxilla* (arthropod mouthpart)

Metatarsus → *segments*

O

Opisthosoma → *abdomen*

P

Palp → *pedipalp*

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Conductor: A part of the palpal bulb that accompanies and supports the embolus^[5]

Embolus: The final part of the palpal bulb containing the end of the sperm duct, usually thin, sharp-tipped and strongly hardened (sclerotized)^[5]

Haematodocha (plural haematodochae): A membranous, inflatable part of the palpal bulb^[6]

Subtegulum: A hardened part of the palpal bulb nearer its base than the tegulum

Tegulum: The main hardened part of the palpal bulb

Paracymbium: An outgrowth of the cymbium on the male pedipalp^[15]

Patella → segments

Paturon: The basal segment of a chelicera to which the fang connects^[16]

Pedicel: The narrow connection between the cephalothorax and abdomen^[16]

Pedipalp (plural pedipalps or pedipalpi; also called just palp): The second appendage of the cephalothorax in front of the first leg; bears the palpal bulb in male spiders;^[6] → segments

Plumose setae are hairs having outgrowths or appendages on two sides, giving a feather-like appearance; the appendages vary in number, size and arrangement^[17]

Pluridentate: Having multiple teeth

Procurved: Used to describe a structure which is curved in such a way that the outer edges are in front of the central part;^[16] opposite recurved

Prolateral: Viewed from above or below, the side of a leg or pedipalp nearest the mouth, i.e. the side facing forward

Prosoma → cephalothorax



Rastellum (plural rastella): An often rake-like structure at end of the chelicera in mygalomorph spiders; used in burrowing^[16]

Receptaculum (plural receptacula) → spermatheca

Recurved: used to describe a structure which is curved in such a way that the outer edges are behind the central part;^[16] opposite procurred

Retrolateral: Viewed from above or below, the side of a leg or pedipalp furthest from the mouth, i.e. the side facing backwards

Retrolateral tibial apophysis: A backward-facing projection on the tibia of the male pedipalp

S

Scopula (plural scopulae): A brush of hairs (setae); called a claw tuft when on the end of the foot, where it improves adhesion^{[16][18]}

Scutum (plural scuta): A hardened (sclerotized) plate on the abdomen of some spiders

Secondary eye: An eye belonging to the three pairs – anterior lateral eyes (ALE), posterior median eyes (PME) and posterior lateral eyes (PLE) – that are primarily movement detectors and have the light-detecting units (rhabdomeres) pointing away from the source;^[19] → main eye

Segments or articles of the legs and pedipalps:

Coxa (plural coxae): First leg segment, between body and trochanter; the coxa of the pedipalp is heavily modified to form the maxilla or endite

Trochanter: Second leg segment, between coxa and femur

Femur (plural femora): Third leg segment, between trochanter and tibia

Patella (plural patellae): Fourth leg segment, between femur and tibia

Tibia (plural tibiae): Fifth leg segment, between patella and metatarsus

Metatarsus (plural metatarsi; also called basitarsus): Sixth leg segment, between tibia and tarsus; absent in the pedipalp

Tarsus (plural tarsi; also called telotarsus): Seventh (last) leg segment, after the metatarsus

Seta (plural setae): A bristle;^[16] spiders have a variety of hair-like structures of increasing size that are referred to as hairs,



attached;^[21] particularly on the sternum in some Mygalomorphae and on the dorsum in some Araneomorphae^[16]

Sperm duct: A duct in the male palpal bulb used to store sperm^[16]

Spermatheca (plural spermathecae; also called **receptaculum**, receptaculum seminis): A structure in the abdomen of female spiders used to store sperm after insemination and before fertilization;^[16] see also Spermatheca

Spigot: A small pointed or cylindrical structure at the tip of a spinneret from which silk emerges^[16]

Spine: A pointed, rigid structure on body and legs, usually with a basal joint;^[22] spiders have a variety of hair-like structures of increasing size that are referred to as hairs, bristles (setae) or spines^[20]

Spinneret: An appendage borne on the abdomen, typically one of six arranged in three pairs, anterior, median and posterior; silk emerges from small spigots on the spinnerets;^[22] see also Spinneret

Sternum: The lower (ventral) portion of the cephalothorax

Stridulating organ: A series of thin ridges on a hardened part of the body; rubbing this with a matching series of short, stiff bristles (setae) elsewhere on the body creates a sound^[22]

Subtegulum → palpal bulb

T

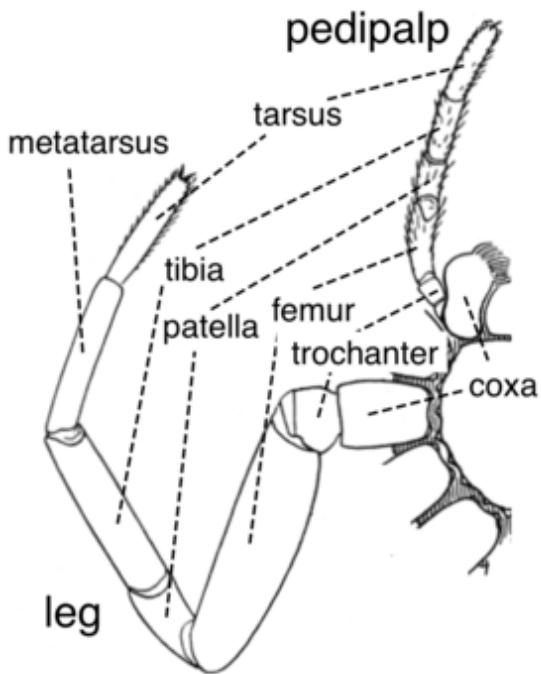
Tapetum (plural tapeta): A light-reflecting layer in a secondary eye making the eye appear pale^[22]

Tarsal claw (claw): One of a set of claws at the tip of the tarsus; there may be a single pair, often concealed in a claw tuft, or an additional third central claw, much smaller than the other two^[22]

Tarsus → segments

Tegulum → palpal bulb

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Pedipalp and leg of a female spider from the underside; the coxa of the pedipalp is heavily modified to form the maxilla

Trichobothrium (plural trichobothria): A slender hair-like structure of variable length on the legs and pedipalps, arising from a special socket; used to detect air movements, including sounds;^[23] → seta, spine

Trochanter → segments

U

Unidentate: Having a single tooth

V

Venter (or **ventrum**): The lower (ventral) portion or surface of the body or abdomen; → dorsum

Abbreviations

Some abbreviations commonly found in descriptions of spider anatomy include:

- **ALE**: anterior lateral eyes
- **ALS**: anterior lateral spinnerets
- **AME**: anterior median eyes
- **DTA**: dorsal tegular apophysis
- **DTiA**: dorsal tibial apophysis
- **LTA**: lateral tegular apophysis
- **MOQ**: median ocular quadrangle
- **PLE**: posterior lateral eyes
- **PLS**: posterior lateral spinnerets
- **PME**: posterior median eyes
- **PMS**: posterior median spinnerets
- **RCF**: retrolateral cymbial fold
- **RTA**: retrolateral tibial apophysis
- **VTA**: ventral tegular apophysis
- **VTiA**: ventral tibial apophysis

See also

- Spider anatomy
- Glossary of entomology terms
- Anatomical terms of location



2. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 14.
3. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), pp. 14–15.
4. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), pp. 15, 18.
5. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 15.
6. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 17.
7. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), p. 21.
8. [Roberts \(1995\)](#), pp. 13–14.
9. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 17–18.
10. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 16.
11. [Smith \(1990\)](#).
12. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 102–103.
13. Coddington, J.A. (1990). "Ontogeny and homology in the male palpus of orb-weaving spiders and their relatives, with comments on phylogeny (Araneoclada: Araneoidea, Deinopoidea)". *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology*. **496**: 1–52. Figs 5–8
14. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 226–227.
15. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), pp. 18–19.
16. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 18.
17. Zakharov, Boris & Ovtsharenko, Vladimir (2015), "The covering setae of ground spiders (Araneae: Gnaphosidae)" (http://www.european-arachnology.org/wdp/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AM49_34-46_Zakharov2.pdf) (PDF), *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* 49, **49**: 34–46, retrieved 2017-09-28
18. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), p. 27.
19. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 103–104.
20. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 84–101.
21. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 41, 43.
22. [Saaristo \(2010\)](#), p. 19.
23. [Foelix \(2011\)](#), pp. 89–92.

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