

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.

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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 (tubercule) above the spinnerets through which the anus opens^[1]

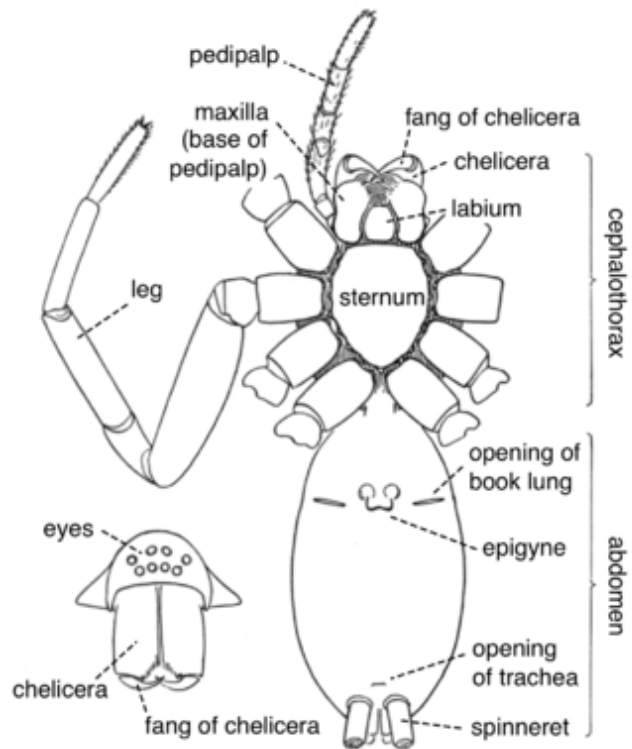
Apophysis (plural apophyses): An outgrowth or process changing the general shape of a body part, particularly the appendages; often used in describing the male pedipalp^[1]

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

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



The underside and head of a female ecribellate entelegyne spider

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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 cribellum; 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; → haplogyne

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*

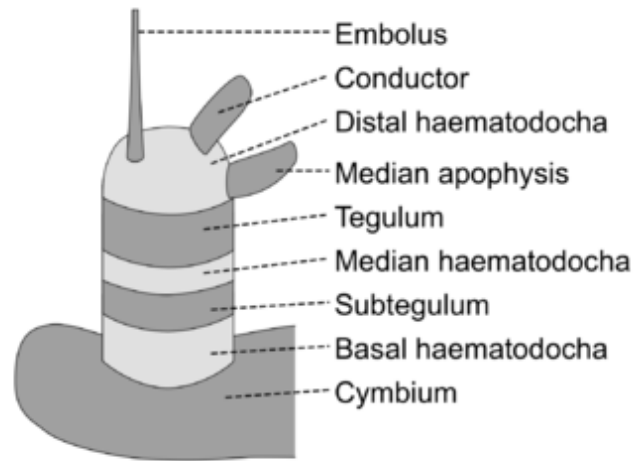
Plumose setae are hairs having outgrowths or appendages on two sides, giving a feather-like appearance; the appendages vary in number, size and arrangement^[17]

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*



Highly simplified and stylized diagram of the main parts of an inflated palpal bulb, based loosely on Coddington (1990)^[13]

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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 *procurved*

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,

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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 **receptulacum**, *receptulacum 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*

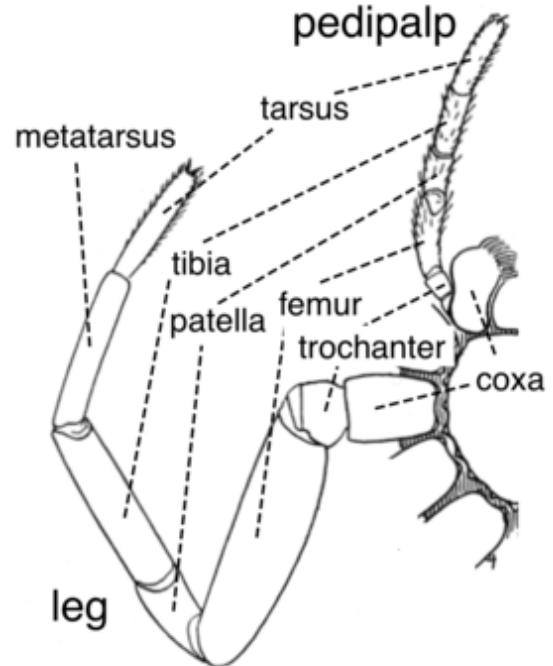
T

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*



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

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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

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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 (Araneoclad: 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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