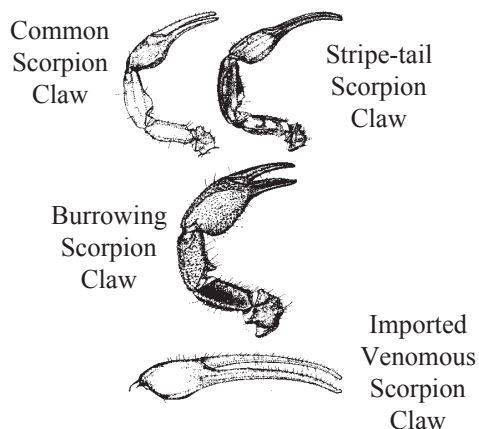
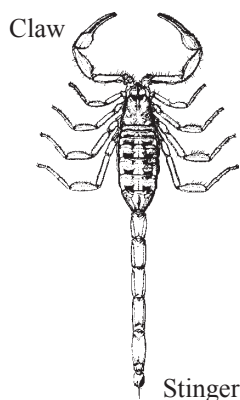


SCORPIONS IN ORANGE COUNTY



GENERAL INFORMATION

Scorpions are increasingly becoming more common around homes in foothill and canyon settings throughout Orange County. Loss of natural habitat has forced these arachnids to seek shelter near or in man-made structures. Scorpions frequently are encountered in woodpiles, crevice spaces associated with the exterior trim, and various roof coverings (tiles, shingles, etc.). Occasionally, scorpions will enter the home by gaining access through gaps in window frames and door thresholds. Around the yard, scorpions frequently utilize the spaces under decorative bark and landscape rocks, under the loose bark of ornamental trees, and beneath the floor of utility sheds.

Scorpions are easily recognized by their characteristic "crab-like" appearance with the large pincers (pedipalps) and elongated tail (abdomen) that bears a bulbous "stinger" at the tip. The life style of scorpions is rather secretive because they are active at night and move about under the cover of darkness to seek mates and hunt for prey (crickets, roaches, spiders, lizards, etc.). Scorpions native to California range in size from one to three inches and are variably colored from almost black to a pale yellow or cream. There are at least four currently recognized species of scorpions found in Orange County, including the recent importation of a very venomous species from the lower Colorado River area bordering Arizona.

The species of scorpions likely to be encountered in Orange County include:

The Burrowing Scorpion (*Anuroctonus phaiodactylus*): It is 2.5 inches in length with bulky claws, stout body, exaggerated bulbous stinger, and varies from light to dark brown in color.

The Common Scorpion (*Vaejovis spinigerus*): It is 1.5 inches in length with a somewhat flattened body and a uniform straw color.

The Stripe-tailed Scorpion (*Pauroctonus silvestrii*): It is 1.75 inches in length with a uniform straw color and distinctive raised brown stripes on the tail.

The Imported Venomous Scorpion (*Centruroides exilicauda*): It is 2.5 inches in length with light yellowish coloration, very narrow claws, and a long slender abdomen.

The sting of our local species, although sometimes painful, is not considered dangerous and usually only produces transient local swelling and subsequent itching several days later. By comparison, the sting of the imported venomous scorpion is potentially dangerous. Reaction to its sting is variable among stinging victims ranging from the annoyance of a bee sting to requiring emergency medical procedures. If stung by a scorpion, one should seek immediate medical attention and, if at all possible, capture the specimen for identification.

CONTROL

Scorpions can be difficult to control. To prevent entry into the home, make sure that all doors, windows and structural crevices are sealed to deny access. As an added precaution, remove all accumulations of waste lumber and stored household effects from places adjacent to the home. Occasionally restack firewood and surplus construction lumber. Stripping loose bark from ornamental trees and filling spaces in masonry walls and fences can provide additional exclusion measures.

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There are effective methods and chemicals available for control of scorpions. When purchasing pesticides, it is important that the label specifically includes

scorpions on it. In addition, it is important to note the active ingredient (a.i.) in the formulation that you buy. If the pesticide is ineffective after following the directions of applications *to the letter*, purchase another pesticide also labelled for scorpions, but with a different active ingredient. Arthropods may rapidly build up resistant populations to any given chemical that is used often.

In the event that pesticides are not appropriate or are ineffective in controlling the scorpions, it is recommended that you contact a professional entomologist who specializes in the control of insects, mites, and other arthropod pests. Entomologists with this expertise are employed by the local agricultural commissioner or a reputable pest control company. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores.



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