

orchard spider *Leucauge venusta*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Chelicerata

Order: Araneae

Family: Tetragnathidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

This spider has green legs. Its cephalothorax is brown with a dark line on the dorsal side. The abdomen is silver-white, long and narrow. The abdomen is marked with some colored spots, dark lines and may have yellow patches of color. The dark abdominal lines may show some green coloration. One of the lines makes a ring on the abdomen. There is usually an orange spot in the shape of an hourglass on the bottom of the abdomen. As one of the long-jawed orbweavers, it has long basal chelicerae and fangs. The front pair of legs is the longest, and the third pair of legs is short. The female is about one-tenth to three-tenths inch in total body length. The male is smaller at one-tenth to two-tenths inch total body length.

BEHAVIORS

The orchard spider builds its web in shrubs and low tree branches in woodlands and may also live in urban areas. The web usually has threads in a mass below the orb. Unlike many of the other spiders in this family, orchard spiders' web is often oriented away from horizontal. Adults are active in spring and summer. It feeds on insects and other small invertebrates that become trapped in the web.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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