

— BIODIVERSITY — on your Farm

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has set a challenge for farmers to record some of the amazing biodiversity found on your farm during the year. We have 40 species for you to record.

Are you up for the challenge?

Species: Garden Spider (Cross or Cross orb-weaver spider)

Scientific Name: *Aranus diadematus*

Irish name: Damhán garrí

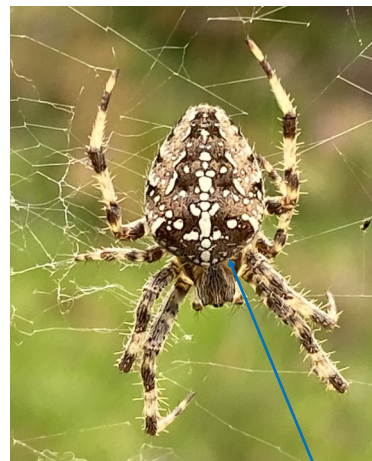
Group

1 of around 390 spiders species in Ireland, they are a member of the arachnid family.

Spiders (order *Araneae*) are the most familiar of arachnids. The orb-web spiders (*Agopidae*) is a large family that spin circular webs.

How common on farms

Biodiversity surveys were carried out across 40 farms within the National Biodiversity Data Centre's 'Protecting Farmland Pollinators' EIP project (<https://biodiversityireland.ie/projects/protecting-farmland-pollinators/>). The 40 farms were chosen to reflect farms of differing types and intensity levels. The Garden Spider was present on some of the 40 farms.



Garden spider (female). Note: Reddish brown in colour, with a white cross on their back and spin.

Identification Tips

- Distinct and beautifully marked spiders.
- They are a grey-brown or reddish-brown, variable in colour, with a white cross, made up of pale spots and streaks, on their back and spine.
- Build a large complex spiral shaped web which can measure up to 40cm across.
- They have striped legs and the females (around 20mm in length) are twice the size of the males.

Biodiversity Tip No. 29

Retain or create field margins, native hedgerows, buffer strips and non-farmed areas.

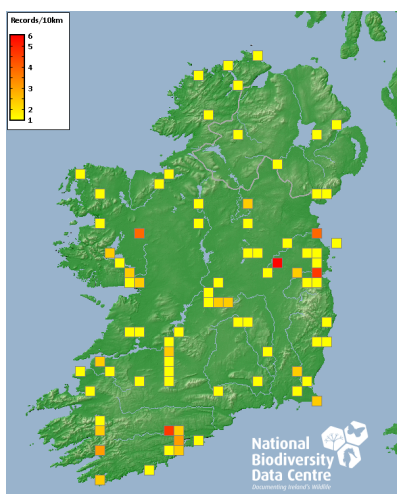
They provide good habitat for spiders and other wildlife.



@ Ruth Wilson

Distribution

Widespread and fairly common, probably under recorded.



Source: The Garden Spider records as viewed on Biodiversity Maps, 2023.

Conservation Status

A revised checklist of the spiders of Great Britain and Ireland was published in 2019. The Garden Spider *Araneus diadematus* was not highlighted as a species of conservation concern.

The report was produced by the British Arachnological Society [Arachnology](https://britishspiders.org.uk/) (britishspiders.org.uk/)

Management Tips

Food for Common Spider:

- Increase habitat for other flying insects, that spiders will prey on.

On the farm:

- Retain or create field margins, native hedgerows, traditional orchards, meadows and pastures, and non-farmed areas around the farm.
- Reduce the use of pesticides.

In the orchard and garden:

- You could pledge you garden for pollinators [Pledge your-Garden-for-Pollinators WEB.pdf](#)
- Manage your orchard for pollinators, find out more orchards here [AIPP-Farmland-Orchards-2023-WEB.pdf \(pollinators.ie\)](#)

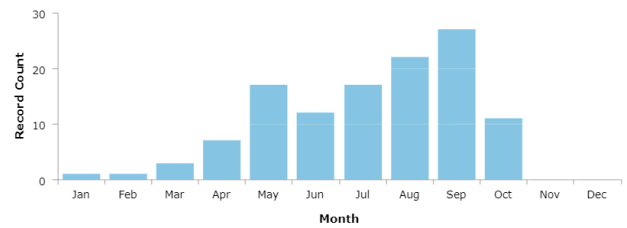


In the spring, keep an eye out for bundles of tiny yellow spiderlings.

When?

Can be seen all year round, but are more visible between June and November.

Records per month across all datasets



National Biodiversity Data Centre, Ireland, Common Spider, *Araneus diadematus* image, accessed September 2023,

Where on the farm?

It is most common in woodland, hedgerows, field margins and as the name suggests, in the garden.

Value

- Spiders prey on a huge number of invertebrates, including many pest species, during their lifecycle and in turn they themselves are a source of food for everything from birds and bats to lizards and frogs.



Garden Spider.

Further Info

Noticeable in late summer and autumn when numbers peak and large webs are made more visible by dew. Webs can be spun every day, with the old webs being consumed to save energy.

The females are large and often full of eggs in the autumn. After laying her eggs the female will die, leaving the eggs and newly hatched spiders to overwinter.

Spending most of their time in the middle of their web. When an insect hits the web, the vibration is detected in the spiders legs. They wrap their prey in silk and give it a venomous bit, consumed later.

Following mating, the female often eats the male. The female lays a large number of eggs in the autumn and protects the bundle with silk cocoon. She will die a few weeks later.

The young spiders emerge in spring and will disperse after their first moult.

Similar species

It is not similar to any other spider on the island of Ireland.

Affected by a change in climate?

They depend on flying insects for food. The number of flying insects may be affected by a change in climate.

Need some help with identification?

Just drop us a line, we'll be happy to help:

pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie

Useful Links

Try our course on identifying Ireland's spiders:

Spiders of Ireland:

[Spiders of Ireland \(biodiversityireland.ie\)](http://spidersofireland.biodiversityireland.ie)

Spiders can be quite difficult to identify. See the useful links to find out more. Post on an online forum e.g. Facebook has a lot of dedicated identification groups, where experts help identify your sightings e.g. [Insects/Invertebrates of Ireland](#)

Record here

Your records will help us build a picture of farmland biodiversity in Ireland. If you're happy with your identification, you can submit your record.

- On the National Biodiversity Data Centre website:

<https://records.biodiversityireland.ie/record/biodiversity-on-your-farm#7/53.455/-8.016>

The Farmland Pollinator Officer post is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as one of its contributions to assisting implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
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An Roinn Tithíochta,
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Department of Housing,
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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
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An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta
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