

Argiope argentata



Silver garden spider

Scientific classification

Domain: Eukaryota
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Arthropoda
Subphylum: Chelicerata
Class: Arachnida
Order: Araneae
Infraorder: Araneomorphae
Family: Araneidae
Genus: Argiope
Species: *A. argentata*

Binomial Name

Argiope argentata

(Fabricius, 1775)

Argiope argentata, commonly known as the silver argiope or silver garden spider due to the silvery color of its cephalothorax, is a member of the orb-weaver spider family Araneidae. This species resides in arid and warm environments in North America, Central America, the Caribbean and widely across South America.⁵⁶

Diet

Argiope argentata eats butterflies and moths, both of which require a long bite upon first encounter. This is contrary to other insects that are immediately wrapped in silk.⁵⁷ It also preys upon mosquitoes, grasshoppers, and flies.⁵⁸

Behaviour

Argiope argentata engages in grooming behavior post prey capture. The duration and intensity of this grooming behavior has a specific connection to the type of prey that was captured.⁵⁹

The act of defecation occurs most frequently after biting the prey or feeding on it, and is a very calculated process. *A. argentata* consciously widens the space between its abdomen and its web before defecating, to ensure that the web itself is not soiled.⁵⁹

Argiope argentata is found to receive its water supply from the web's surface. The web is able to capture and hold droplets of water for *A. argentata* to drink. It appears that this is the supplier of water for the spider, regardless of the presence and degree of other environmental conditions. For example, the spider is not reliant on the humidity of the air or the water content of the prey.⁵⁹

Human bites

Argiope argentata are relatively harmless to human beings. If thoroughly and intentionally provoked, these spiders might bite out of self defense. Their venom is not toxic to humans and rarely causes any sort of adverse reactions. In fact, the bites of *Argiope argentata* are relatively comparable to a bee sting - with only minor redness and occasional swelling resulting.⁵⁶