



Tarantula Walks

THE RESERVE
AT
RANCHO MISSION VIEJO

LEARN ABOUT TARANTULAS!

Every fall, Reserve staff join forces with guest leader Lee Shoemaker for an exciting evening focused on tarantulas, spiders and their arthropod cousins. In 2011, the annual tarantula walk will take place on September 17.

Despite their fierce appearance (think of all that “hair”!) almost all 900 species of tarantulas are gentle creatures and non-poisonous to humans. We’ll be on the lookout for sexually mature male *Aphonopelma* tarantulas which are native to Orange County. At the end of every summer, these males set out in search of receptive females.

Guest host Lee Shoemaker will also lure nocturnal insects with blacklights, which employ an ultra-violet frequency spectrum these creatures find irresistible.

Join us to get up close and personal with these fascinating, beautiful, and misunderstood animals!

RESERVATIONS & ADMISSION

Reservations required for all Reserve events. Admission is \$10/ adult, \$5/child and FREE for Reserve supporters. **Children under the age of 8 are not admitted.** You will receive directions to *The Reserve* with your reservation confirmation.

Get a discount by becoming a supporter of *The Reserve* online at “www.theconservancy.org”. Or join onsite by filling out an application and paying support dues of \$25/individual or \$45/family.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Please arrive promptly, as *The Reserve* is located on private land behind a locked gate. Latecomers will be unable to get in!

Upon arrival, you will sign in, pay an event fee—exact change or a check made out to “RMVLT” is appreciated—and park temporarily.

Every adult attendee must sign a **release waiver**. The 2-sided form contains space for 2 signatures for a two adult (same address) household, and names of 3 children under the age of 18.

Processing waivers on-site is time-consuming, so it is helpful if you **have paperwork & payment ready to hand us as you drive in.**

Download the waiver from:

<http://theconservancy.org/downloads/ReleaseWaiver.pdf>

When all patrons have arrived, staff will shut the gate, and everyone will drive their vehicles to the Tarantula Walk location.

The evening begins with an introductory Powerpoint talk, after which patrons take a short hike along the road and an unpaved path (ground can be uneven), looking for tarantulas and other nighttime arthropods.

When hikes are over, you will caravan back to the entrance gate with Reserve staff.

WHAT TO WEAR & BRING

- Wear **closed-toe shoes**—sneakers, light hiking boots, or walking shoes. **No sandals or flip-flops.**

- **Dress in layers** as temperatures drop when the sun sets.

- For protection against scratchy plants & small biting critters, wear **long-pants**; light colors are best.

- A **flashlight** may be needed towards the end of the evening.

- *The Reserve* has a porta-potty located a short distance from the walk introduction area.

- *The Reserve* does not provide food, water or trash receptacles.

The Reserve at Rancho Mission Viejo—a growing habitat reserve located on historic *Rancho Mission Viejo*—is managed by the non-profit ***Rancho Mission Viejo Land Trust***, a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is “to preserve and enhance Reserve lands for ecological, educational, charitable, conservation, open space, scientific, and recreational uses.” Through our public access and education programs, visitors can experience the natural beauty of South Orange County.

Visit “theconservancy.org”, email <staff@rmvreserve.org> or call 949-489-9778 to learn more.

Fun Facts about Spiders & Tarantulas

1. Scientists have identified nearly 40,00 different species of spiders, but believe as many as 100,000 additional species actually exist.
2. Two million spiders can be living in an area the size of a football field.
3. All the spiders in the world placed on a giant scale would weigh more than all the people in the world!
4. A jumping spider can jump 40 times its own length!
5. All spiders make silk, but most species—including tarantulas—do not spin webs.
6. Spiders, insects, crustaceans (crabs & lobsters), centipedes and millipedes are all **arthropods**, animals with hard exoskeletons and jointed legs.
7. Arthropods with **fangs**—which biologists call **chelicera**—include spiders, scorpions, and horseshoe crabs.
8. Spiders are **arachnids**, a subgroup of chelicerates (arthropods with fangs), which lack antennae and have eight legs. Other familiar arachnids include scorpions, harvestmen, ticks, and mites.
9. The word "arachnid" originated with the traditional myth of **Arachne**, a woman whose boasts that her weaving was the most beautiful in Greece angered the goddess Athena. As punishment, Athena turned Arachne into a spider who could weave only webs.
10. Fear of spiders is called **arachnophobia**.
11. *Arachnophobia*, a movie about South American spiders invading a suburban American community, was largely "acted" by real spiders!
12. Spider blood—called **hemolymph**—is pale blue. In humans, *hemoglobin* carries respiratory oxygen; it contains iron which makes our blood appear red. In spiders, **hemocyanin** performs the same function, but contains only bluish copper.
13. Spiders taste with their feet! They use special chemoreceptor taste "hairs" mostly located on the feet and lower portions of their palps and first pair of legs. (Palps are the "pseudo-legs" exhibited by spiders in place of antennae.)
14. Females of some large spider species, like tarantulas, can live up to 30 years.
15. Male spiders, usually smaller than females, typically live much shorter lives. If a mating male makes the wrong move, he could become the female spider's dinner!
16. Spiders are critical to the food web. Besides consuming millions of insects, they are a source of food for birds, fish, and small mammals. Some species even pollinate plants!