

“FLYING” JORO SPIDERS Have Been Seen in Massachusetts

Maria Bartlett, September 30, 2024



The latest import from Asia arrived in Georgia in 2014 and is slowly spreading across the US. The female has a bright yellow striped body about 1” but her legs can be up to 4” resulting in an overall 8” size. Males are brown and smaller. The webs can be 3’ - 9’ wide with a golden cast and are attached to trees and other structures.

The good news is that these spiders are shy and tend to stay out of our way! They are not aggressive but even if they do bite, their venom is weak and is not of medical concern.

Females lay one cocoon egg sac in the fall containing 400-500 eggs. These are attached to trees, leaves or structures. The eggs hatch in the spring and, using silk-like strings, the babies can balloon long distances, thus the “flying” activity.

The environmental impact is unclear at this time. The spiders eat whatever insects get caught in their large webs, but it is not clear whether this will seriously impact our native insects.

Should one show up in your yard, it is suggested that you just leave it alone, unless it becomes an infestation inside your home or causes serious annoyance in your yard. If you wish to eliminate the spider, please do not use pesticides but just remove it manually.

For more information, check out these links:

Penn State Extension:

<https://extension.psu.edu/joro-spiders/>

Scientific American:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/millions-of-joro-spiders-are-moving-up-the-east-coast-heres-what-to-expect/>

PBS:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-invasive-joro-spider>

Patch:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/boston/giant-flying-spiders-have-arrived-massachusetts-report>