

Flora & Fauna in Spain

Scorpions

There are between 1,500 and 2,000 species of scorpions throughout the world. The most common scorpion in Spain is the Mediterranean scorpion (*Buthus occitanus*, escorpión amarillo or just alacrán) and although its North African cousin is more dangerous, it will still give you an extremely nasty sting. You might want to think about wearing boots and thick socks if you plan to walk in dry rocky areas or wear gloves if you do some gardening as they are by no means rare.



The European black scorpion is also present in Spain, preferring more northerly and wetter areas. Its sting is short-lived.

Scorpions are related to tarantulas, as they are part of the same family of creatures, the Arachnids. The Arachnid family consists entirely of insects with eight legs.

Most people wrongly believe that all scorpions are very dangerous and that if you are stung by one then you will die. This is completely untrue, many scorpions are no more dangerous to humans than bees or wasps.

All scorpions are nocturnal (only moving at night), when they hunt for other insects. They feed on similar prey as tarantulas, eating mainly insects, though some of the larger scorpions will take mice and small reptiles. Scorpions will eat each other if there is no other food.

When they catch an insect in their claws they will inject venom into their prey, this paralyses the insect so they can eat it at their leisure.

Scorpions, like many mammals are viviparous (give birth to live young), the young scorpions ride on the females back and are white until after their first moult. They then take on the patterns and/or colours of their parents.

All scorpions and tarantulas moult, moulting is a process of growing. They are slow growing creatures taking around five years to mature into adults.

What To Do If Stung

The first thing to do if stung by a scorpion is not to panic, very few deaths actually occur from such stings. Do not cut the area that was stung, do not try to make it bleed, both of these actions will only make things worse. Do not drink anything, especially alcohol. Wrap a bandage firmly over the area of the sting, and restrict the movement of the area that was stung. This will keep the venom localised for many hours. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.