

IV. Species recorded from most of Canada and found in most of the United States:

*H. laevigata*

*S. grosslineata*

The remaining three species, *D. hybrida*, *S. dolabra* and *C. expleta*, are difficult to comment upon regarding their distribution because of the lack of data.

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#### References

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### THE BLACK WIDOW SPIDER, *LATRODECTES MACTANS* FABR., IN VANCOUVER

Spiders of many shapes and sizes are sent in to the Department of Zoology throughout the year by fearful citizens with enquiries as to their propensity for killing human beings: I have always told them that no deadly poisonous spider occurs in Vancouver or in the wet coastal region.

In the mid 1950s a dead specimen in very poor condition was sent in which resembled a Black Widow except that the abdomen was conspicuously marked with pale bands, very much like those of a typical male *L. mactans*, in contrast to all those females I have seen in the dry belt, those from Davis, California and those from Victoria, whose abdomens were totally black.

In December, 1959 when checking the low crawl space under a small house in east Vancouver for termite damage, I found 2 sprawling webs of coarse silk and 2 mature female spiders which were undoubtedly *mactans*, with pale linear markings on the dorsum of the abdomen: they ran into holes from which I failed to retrieve them.

In January, 1960 I was assessing termite damage in the basement of a

large house on Granville Street south and found a female *mactans* with pale markings in a typical coarse web, between the edge of a carpet and the wall, just under the edge of a Hollywood bed on which 3 small children and a dog were accustomed to play; nearby was a male in its much smaller web; both were in a position where they could easily have been squashed by a child. Both were captured and brought to the laboratory; the female soon ate the male and in time became coal black except for one small pale spot on the dorsum of the abdomen.

Hitherto I have always given the distribution of the Black Widow in British Columbia as the dry belt of the Interior and the drier sections of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Nanaimo, and on the dry Gulf Islands; this distribution will have to be revised to include at least Vancouver in the lower mainland. If it increases in Vancouver it will constitute a definite hazard and the public will have to be alerted to watch out for it.

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