

Two scorpion species call Mississippi home

By Bonnie A. Coblentz
MSU Extension Service

While scorpions frequently live in hot and dry areas, at least two scorpion species are at home in Mississippi's often cold and wet climate.

Jerome Goddard, medical entomologist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, identified the scorpions: *Vaejovis carolinianus*, commonly called the Southern Devil Scorpion or unstriped scorpion, found only in northeast Mississippi; and *Centruroides vittatus*, known as the striped scorpion, found sporadically

in central and southern parts of the state.

"The *Vaejovis* scorpion is primarily found in Tishomingo County," Goddard said. "*Vittatus* is more widely distributed, with some spotty records of it being found around Jackson and the Gulf Coast."

As with scorpions out West, Mississippi scorpions can be found outdoors under rocks or fallen wood. They also find indoor homes where debris is allowed to accumulate.

"Scorpions are arachnids, and they eat insects and oth-

er small invertebrates," Goddard said. "Some scorpions can even attack small vertebrates like tiny lizards."

Similar to a wasp sting, the scorpion's venom is painful but not dangerous unless a person has an allergic reaction to it.

Blake Layton, Extension entomologist, said a mature adult Southern Devil Scorpion is about 1.5 inches long. Its sting is for defense and to kill prey.

"Females give birth to live young, which ride on their backs for the first few weeks before striking out on their

own," Layton said. The best way to control scorpions is to keep them out of the house and away from inhabited areas.

"Make your buildings bug-proof, which means installing door sweeps and weather stripping, caulking cracks, sealing around plumbing and electrical entries, and repairing torn or missing screens," Layton said. "Next, clean outdoor debris, and, to the extent possible, eliminate places scorpions may use for shelter."

Scorpion shelter includes piles of rocks, stacks of lumber or firewood, dead limbs and logs, as well as other debris.

"It is a good idea to do these two steps in this order: bug-proofing and then debris cleanup. Otherwise, you could have a bunch of displaced scorpions looking for a home before you get all the potential entry points sealed," Layton said.

Scorpions are difficult to control with insecticides, but outdoor perimeter sprays that include pyrethroid insecticides can be helpful. It is best to hire a professional to deal with heavy infestations.

Goddard said glue boards and sticky traps are good options for catching scorpions indoors.

"When I had family in Iuka, I very often saw scorpions stuck to glue boards set indoors for pest control," Goddard said.



The Southern Devil Scorpion is found in northeast Mississippi, primarily in the Tishomingo County area. Its sting is painful but not dangerous.

(Photo by MSU Extension Service/Blake Layton)

Enter To **WIN**
\$3,000



Newspaper sponsored shopping survey. No purchase necessary.

Enter to win now, go to:
www.pulsepoll.com

THURSDAYS
DECEMBER 6 & 20
5 P.M. TO 7 P.M.

AFTER HOURS SHOPPING

Draw for your Jingle Bell to get **20-50 percent off your purchase!**







447 Hwy 12E • Kosciusko • 662-289-3741

Got these cards?
Get more.




Get more benefits than you're currently getting from Original Medicare with a **UnitedHealthcare Dual Complete® (HMO SNP)** plan. It combines your doctor, hospital and prescription drug coverage into one plan — for a **\$0 plan premium**.

-  **Dental Coverage**
\$2,500 annually; covers exams, x-rays, cleanings, dentures, fillings, crowns, extractions and more.
-  **Health Products Benefit**
Up to \$900 annually in credits to buy things you may need.
-  **Personal Emergency Response System**
Get connected to a trained operator quickly in any emergency situation 24 hours a day at no extra cost.
-  **Vision Coverage**
Annual exam and \$250 credit every year for eyewear.

Call today to enroll or get answers to your questions.

1-844-829-9208, TTY 711

UHCommunityPlan.com/MS

 **UnitedHealthcare®**
Community Plan