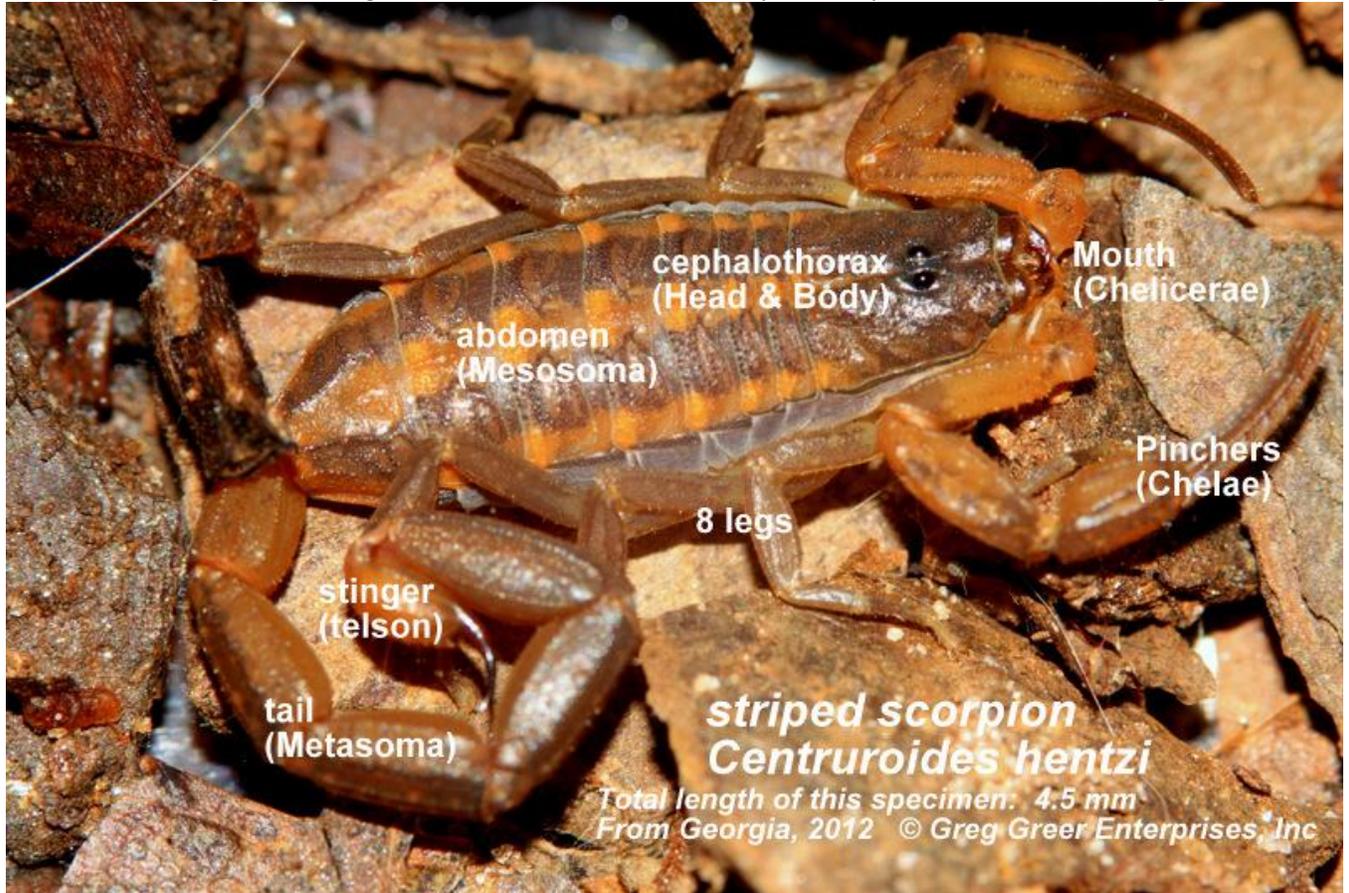


Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's): Scorpions of Georgia

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1. What is a scorpion?

A scorpion is an arthropod in the Order: Scorpiones , Class: Arachnida. Arachnids include spiders, ticks and scorpions. Scorpions have a cephalothorax (head body combination) and eight legs. They have two pinchers at the front and a fairly long tail that terminates in a stinger at the end of the tail. Georgia's native scorpions cannot harm you with their pinchers but if close enough to be pinched means a person is also close enough to be stung as the tail can move forward beyond the pinchers in order to sting.



The body parts of a scorpion

2. How do scorpions sting?

Scorpions sting with the stinger that is located at the tip of the tail. The tail may be held flat to the ground or floor behind and off to one side or it may be raised vertically over the scorpions back. In this position the scorpion is ready to sting. The stinger can be thrust forward a little beyond the front of the scorpions pinchers.



This is high magnification of a scorpion stinger at the tip of the tail

3. How many different kinds of scorpions live in Georgia?

In Georgia, there are two native species of scorpions. The Southern Devil Scorpion, *Vaejovis carolinianus* and the Striped Scorpion, *Centruroides hentzi*. Please note! Scorpions are also known to hitchhike from one region to another via numerous means, including but not limited to: Stow-a-ways in household goods during moving, in potted plants from the horticulture industry and even in mesquite wood transported from the SW United States to Bar-B-Q establishments in other regions of the country. While this is uncommon, non-native scorpions have been documented in Georgia



The striped scorpion on the left and southern devil scorpion on the right.

4. How dangerous are the scorpions native to Georgia?

Typically they are not considered dangerous but the sting of both species native to Georgia result in considerable discomfort. Usually a burning pain at the site of the sting that may last anywhere from just a few minutes to 15 minutes. The pain usually subsides fairly quickly, however not soon enough for anyone stung. Occasionally a sting may result in the sting site being extremely “itchy” for a period of a few days to a week. As with any sting from a venomous creature, some people may be very sensitive and thus an allergic reaction is always a possibility. Please see “Very Important!” note at the bottom of the FAQ’s

5. If I find a scorpion in my house will I find more?

There is no way to answer this question. Many people may find a scorpion in their house and never find another. Others have communicated to me that they have lived in their home for many, many years and have never seen a scorpion until.....last night! Other people have told me they find scorpions regularly in their homes or cabins. These people tend to be more “nonchalant” about scorpions where as first time observers usually are in quite a panic to suddenly find a scorpion in their home.

6. How are scorpions getting into my house?

Scorpions can enter a house via extremely small entry points. Often they may simply enter under an exterior door whose weather stripping is in need of replacement or if the threshold may have settled at one end thus providing a gap under one end of the door. Other entry points are often through plumbing holes where pipes enter the home under sinks. These areas are usually dark as they are under cabinets and scorpions like the dark. Spray foam is a good method of sealing around pipes that may have gaps

around them. Another entry point can also be through light fixtures in ceilings, especially from attic spaces. During the fall and winter, scorpions may be brought into the house on or inside of firewood. Wood stacked beside a fire place for later burning can be the vehicle that brings a scorpion into the home.

7. Will scorpions lay eggs in my house?

Scorpions do not lay eggs! Gravid (pregnant) females give birth to live young. The young are quite small at birth and they are white. They ride on the mothers back for a period of about 2 weeks, at which time they molt (shed their exoskeleton) and then leave the female. Baby scorpions are very fragile little creatures and the temperature and humidity has to be just right for them otherwise they perish. In the home, if they cannot find a suitable place of high humidity, they desiccate (dry out) and die.



A female striped scorpion with young on her back.

8. What is the easiest way to find scorpions inside my house?

Black lights are a wonderful tool for locating scorpions in the dark. Scorpions under black light fluoresce and appear a bright greenish color. Black lights can be obtained from many sporting goods stores and just a small flashlight type will work just fine in the home. Turn off all of the lights in your home and wait an hour or so or set your alarm for the middle of the night and without turning on any lights, get your black light and start by shining it around the baseboards of your house. Scorpions often prowl the perimeter of a room.....but not always and also check closet floors; under sinks etc.....Any scorpion will glow when the black light is shined on them. We use this same method in the field when hunting scorpions at night.



9. Why do scorpions find their way into my bathtub and / or sinks?

Bathtubs and sinks are a deathtrap for scorpions as once they fall into these fixtures they cannot climb up the smooth tub or sink surfaces to escape. People who own cabins often find dead scorpions in their sinks or bathtubs when they first open their cabins in the spring. The scorpion or scorpions may have fallen into those traps during the time of year when the cabin is closed up for the winter.

10. I have found a very light brown scorpion but it appears dead?

Chances are, you have found a molt also known as a shed exoskeleton. Scorpions molt as they grow and the molt looks just like the live scorpion only bigger and lighter in color. Everything on the live scorpion is also on the molt including: the pinchers and the tail, complete with the pointed stinger. The molt cannot harm you but do make certain what you are observing is indeed a molt. The molts are very light weight and it doesn't take much breath to move one if you blow on it. A live scorpion will usually lay its tail flat and move extremely quickly to a hiding place. It is always best not touch any scorpions or parts of scorpions except with objects other than your bare hands.



The molted exoskeleton of a scorpion appears just like a live scorpion but the molt is actually larger than the live scorpion. Hence, people finding an exoskeleton frequently believe they have found a very large dead scorpion.

11. Are my pets (dogs and cats) in danger from scorpion sting?

I have discussed this with a friend who is a veterinarian and he has not seen dogs or cats that have been brought to him experiencing a problem from scorpion sting. This does not mean it does not or cannot happen, but it most likely is not a significant problem. Dogs and cats are usually much tougher than us “wimpy” humans.

VERY IMPORTANT! Please note that while our native scorpions are not considered dangerous, it is important to recognize signs and / or symptoms from bites and stings that may result in an emergency medical situation, such as an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions may occur as a result of any bite or sting on persons that may or may not have any previous noted allergic reactions in the past. When in doubt, call 911 and request immediate assistance. In addition, I am not a physician but I do have extensive knowledge in working with arachnids and I receive a few stings every year from both scorpion species native to Georgia.