

## black-and-yellow garden spider *Argiope aurantia*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Chelicerata

Order: Araneae

Family: Araneidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The male and female of the black-and-yellow garden spider have different appearances. The female is gray and yellow on the front part of the body (cephalothorax). Her abdomen is ovoid and rounded at the tip. The top of the abdomen has a central black stripe, and its sides have large, yellow areas separated by black stripes. The belly side of the abdomen has a black central band with yellow spots that is surrounded by a pair of long, yellow or white stripes. Her front legs are black, while all of her other legs are yellow or red close to the body and black further out. The male's cephalothorax is brown with white hairs. The top of his abdomen has an orange-brown central band bordered by white bands. All of his legs are brown. The female is three-fourths to slightly over one inch in length. The male is about one-fourth inch long.

### BEHAVIORS

The black-and-yellow garden spider may be found throughout Illinois. It builds its large, orb web in tall grasses and weeds in open areas. It is often present in flower and vegetable gardens. This spider sits in the center of the web with its head pointed toward the ground. It eats large, flying insects, like grasshoppers. Mature females can be seen from August through September. Males mature a week or two earlier than females. The female produces egg sacs from late August through September, placing them on plants near the web. Overwintering occurs in the cocoon, with young spiders emerging in April or May.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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