

## ***Steatoda* Spiders**

Family: Theridiidae

The *Steatoda* belongs to the family Theridiidae, also called the comb-footed spiders (Fig. 1). *Steatoda* is a common house spider that lives up to six years and is not known to be particularly harmful to people. Another important species of this family is the black widow spider, *Latrodectus mactans*. These spiders have two distinctive differences. *Steatoda* does not have the reddish orange hourglass shape on the ventral side of the abdomen and the shape of the abdomen is more oval and not as globose as in *Latrodectus*. It does however have an outline that resembles an hourglass on the ventral side of the abdomen. *Steatoda* is further distinguished from the widow in that it bears a light-colored crescent or band on the leading edge of the dorsal abdominal surface. Some *Steatoda* have been reported to actually prey on black widow spiders and cockroaches. A major food source is sowbugs.

### **Selected References:**

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Ebeling, Walter. 1978. *Urban Entomology*. Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California Berkeley. 694 p.

Kasten, J.B. 1972. *How to Know the Spiders*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Wm. C. Brown Co. Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa. 272 p.



**Fig. 1. A theridiid spider (*Steatoda* sp.)  
By Brett M. Johnson**