

Beneficial Species Profile



Photo credit: Josh Shoemaker

Common Name: Trashline orbweavers

Scientific Name: *Cyclosa* sp.

Order and Family: Araneae: Araneidae

Size and Appearance:

These small spiders usually have an abdomen that is visibly longer than it is wide. They have various color patterns of black, brown, and white. They produce an orb web with a line of debris accumulated vertically. This “trashline” includes the nondigestible remains of prey, old shed skins and some plant debris. It is thought that this helps to camouflage the spider. They sometimes vibrate the web aggressively, probably as a defensive mechanism. Five different species are known to exist in the US.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		Egg cases are attached to nearby leaves or twigs.
Larva/Nymph	Smaller than adults	Immatures look like small adults.
Adult	Relatively smaller orbweaver	<i>C. berlandi</i> Females: 4.3 – 6.5 mm / Males: 2.8 – 3.9 mm May have some yellowish coloring on body. <i>C. caroli</i> Females: 3.5 – 8.2 mm / Males: 2.5 – 4.2 mm

		<p>Females have a long, slender abdomen.</p> <p>Trashline orbweaver, <i>C. conica</i> Females: 3.6 – 7.9 mm / Males: 3.5 – 4.9 mm Lacks humps on the abdomen.</p> <p>Humped trashline orbweaver, <i>C. turbinata</i> Females: 3.3 – 5.2 mm / Males: 2.1 – 3.2 mm Has two humps on the abdomen (some other species have these as well).</p> <p><i>C. walckenaeri</i> Females: 4.0 – 7.6 mm / Males: 2.7 – 4.8 mm</p>
Pupa (if applicable)		N/A

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Spiders digest their prey outside the body. This is done by regurgitating digestive fluid into the prey. The dissolved tissue of the prey is then sucked up through the mouth. Some spiders, including trashline orbweavers, use their chelicerae to mash prey as they eat, making the leftovers unrecognizable. Trashline orbweavers will use these remains in their web.

Host/s:

These spiders feed on insects that become trapped in their web. Spiders in the family Araneidae have relatively poor vision and use vibration to sense their prey. Trashline orbweavers have been documented to adjust their approach to prey based on web-borne information.

Description of Benefits:

Trashline orbweavers feed mainly on small insects, including aphids, small flies, leafhoppers and thrips. They generally construct their webs among shrubs and plants, but have been observed in tree cavities and other areas.

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