There are literally thousands of species of insects capable of stinging. Fortunately, most of these insects are not dangerous. Call 1-800-222-1222 for treatment advice. If serious symptoms develop, including flushing, swelling of the face, shortness of breath or persistent pain seek medical attention immediately.

The following insects are common to Florida:

### Fire Ant
- Reddish brown in color, 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch long.
- Mounds range from 8 to 36 inches high with a diameter up to 4 feet.
- Aggressive when disturbed. Bites can cause severe itching and pain. Apply a baking soda paste to the affected area to relieve symptoms.
- Blister appears within 24 hours and become infected easily. Symptoms may be mild to severe.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen.

### Saddleback Caterpillar
- Mostly brown with a light green back with a brown spot ("saddle"), the saddleback has spines arranged in groups on its body.

### Io Caterpillar
- Two inches long, pale green with yellow spines and red-yellow stripe.
- The io is a stinging caterpillar with tufts of hollow spine-like hairs connected to venom cells.

### Honey/Bumble Bee
- The black and yellow honey or bumble bee is important for its role in pollinization of fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.
- Its stinger is barbed (like a fishing hook). The muscles around the venom sac of the stinger continue to work for up to 20 minutes after the stinger has become detached from the insect’s body. It is important to remove stingers as soon as possible.

### Wasp
- Brown with long legs, the wasp builds its nest under eaves of a building.
- Is capable of stinging multiple times when disturbed.

### Hornet/ Yellow Jacket
- Black with yellow-white markings on face, chest and end of abdomen.
- Hornets and yellow jackets live in colonies in nests usually attached to underside of a tree limb or eaves of a house. Some species nest in the ground.
- Can be aggressive and may sting multiple times.

### Giant Water Bug
- Large, flat brownish-black bug up to four inches long, it both swims and flies after prey.
- Grasps victim with strong front legs and, like the assassin bug, it injects a tissue-dissolving venom that causes extreme pain and inflammation below the bite. Seek medical attention if you experience redness, swelling or an increase in pain.

### Assassin (or Kissing) Bug
- Can be black and white or bright orange.
- The "sucking" mouthpiece is a slender tube through which venom is injected into the skin.
- Swelling and redness may be associated.
- Seek medical attention if this occurs.

### Centipede
- Six to eight inches long with a flat, elongated, segmented body. It has a pair of legs attached to each body segment.
- Poisonous front claws behind the head grasp and kill prey.
- Sting causes pain and sensitivity similar to that of a bee.
- Seek immediate medical treatment if allergic reactions develop.

### Florida Scorpion
- Two to three inches long with a tail that curves over its head when in the attack position.
- Prefers dark corners in places like garages, closets, decayed wood and under rocks.
- Painful, severe burning and, like the assassin bug, injects a tissue-dissolving venom that causes extreme pain and inflammation below the bite. Seek medical attention if you experience redness, swelling or an increase in pain.

### Blister Beetle
- Water bug
- Ranges from black to gray, striped to brightly colored.
- When disturbed, it excretes juices that cause the skin to blister like a burn.
- If symptoms do not resolve, seek medical attention.

### BEES, WASPS & HORNETS

- Avoid waving arms or disturbing their nests. Stingers need to be removed with care so the poison sac attached to the stinger is not crushed. Use a piece of cardboard or other blunt-edged device to gently scrape the stinger away. Call 1-800-222-1222 for treatment advice.

### CENTIPEDES

- Avoid waving arms or disturbing their nests. Stingers need to be removed with care so the poison sac attached to the stinger is not crushed. Use a piece of cardboard or other blunt-edged device to gently scrape the stinger away. Call 1-800-222-1222 for treatment advice.

### VINEGAROON

- Often mistaken for a scorpion due to its similar color, the vinegaroon does not have a stinger on its tail.
- When provoked it will spray a vinegary substance that can be irritating to the eyes.
- If sprayed, flush eyes gently with running water to relieve pain.
- If pain persists, seek medical attention.

### PUFF CATERPILLAR

- The most common poisonous Florida caterpillar, the puss caterpillar is about one inch long. It is a white-tan color with spine-like hairs covering its body.

### RUDBERGIA SPINE

- The black and yellow honey or bumble bee is important for its role in pollinization of fruit trees, vegetables and flowers.
- Its stinger is barbed (like a fishing hook). The muscles around the venom sac of the stinger continue to work for up to 20 minutes after the stinger has become detached from the insect’s body. It is important to remove stingers as soon as possible.

### AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES

- Appearance and venom are similar to domestic honey bees.
- They are aggressive and attack in swarms.
- If attacked by bees, RUN to the nearest shelter (house, car, building, etc.) as fast as you can.
- Bees usually only attack to defend their home.

### SADDLEBACK CATERPILLAR

- The most common poisonous Florida caterpillar, the puss caterpillar is about one inch long. It is a white-tan color with spine-like hairs covering its body.

### FIRE ANT

- Reddish brown in color, 1/8 to 1/4 of an inch long.
- Mounds range from 8 to 36 inches high with a diameter up to 4 feet.
- Aggressive when disturbed. Bites can cause severe itching and pain. Apply a baking soda paste to the affected area to relieve symptoms.
- Blister appears within 24 hours and become infected easily. Symptoms may be mild to severe.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen.

### CENTIPEDES

- Avoid waving arms or disturbing their nests. Stingers need to be removed with care so the poison sac attached to the stinger is not crushed. Use a piece of cardboard or other blunt-edged device to gently scrape the stinger away. Call 1-800-222-1222 for treatment advice.
About the Florida Poison Information Center Network

Florida Poison Information Center Network (FPICN) includes centers in Miami, Tampa and Jacksonville. All three centers are accessible 24 hours a day/7 days a week by calling toll-free 1-800-222-1222. Calls are answered by specially trained nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and on-call toxicologists who have computerized access to the latest in-depth poison management guidelines. FPICN also conducts various educational programs for the general public or health care providers. To schedule a program or request poison prevention materials, contact the poison center in your area using one of the administrative telephone numbers listed below.

FPICN is funded by the Department of Health, Children’s Medical Services, State of Florida.

• FPIC/Miami is affiliated with the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics and Jackson Health Systems.
  Administrative line: (305) 585-5250

• FPIC/Tampa is based at Tampa General Hospital and is affiliated with the University of South Florida College of Medicine.
  Administrative line: (813) 844-7044

• FPIC/Jacksonville is a cooperative effort between the University of Florida College of Medicine / UF Health Science Center and Shands Jacksonville Medical Center.
  Administrative line: (904) 244-4465

FPICN is funded by the Florida Department of Health, Children’s Medical Services. This publication is supported by funds received through grant #2H4B MC 00013-04-00 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. Photographs on this brochure were provided by the University of Florida, Entomology/Nematology Department.

Spiders

Approximately 20,000 species of spiders live in the U.S. Almost all are capable of biting but very few can penetrate human skin. Bites can be painful and may cause redness, swelling and infection. In Florida, only the black widow and the brown recluse are considered potentially dangerous. Call 1-800-222-1222 for treatment advice.

Black Widow
• Smooth, shiny black or brown body with red hourglass on underbelly.
• Prefers dark, quiet places like garages, meter boxes, and furniture.
• Bite may or may not be painful initially. Pain begins in one to three hours and may last up to 48 hours.
• Symptoms include abdominal pain, dizziness, headache, sweating, cramps, weakness and difficulty breathing. Seek medical attention!

Brown Recluse
(Brown Recluse spiders are NOT native to Florida.)
• Yellow-orange to brown in color and can grow up to the size of a quarter. Has violin shaped marking on its head.
• Hides in bathroom closets, over door frames and in corners.
• Bite feels like a sting followed by intense pain. Wound looks like a blister and may take on a “bull’s eye” appearance. Eventually the wound may develop into a large ulcerated area.
• Symptoms develop within 36 hours. Seek medical attention!