

# This week on the Llano Estacado

August 31 to September 4, 2009



Although West Texans call these ferocious looking creatures names like vinegaroon, child of the earth, windscorpions, or sunspiders, their real name is Solpugid. Despite the big jaws, they do not bite humans. In fact, they are wonderful companions in the house, for they eat spiders and scorpions! When picked up, they run around to the underside of the hand, for they naturally seek the darkest area available.

When outside, solpugids burrow in the ground. In the night time, they scurry about on open ground. Their long forelegs have chemical sensors to identify their prey. Depending on the species, 20 to 100 eggs are laid. In some species the mother remains with the eggs until they hatch. The young go through four instars, and their larval form is the same as the adult. They are poorly studied by scientists.

**Challenge for teachers and students;** It appears that September is the month for mating and egg laying here in West Texas. Capture one and put it in a small aquarium or bug box, put several inches of sand in the container, feed the creature and see if it lays eggs. If so, please photograph the eggs (and the creature feeding) and email the photos to [bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org](mailto:bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org)