



## Spider diversity of Kerala University Campus, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

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**ABSTRACT:** A study of spider diversity of Kerala University Campus, conducted for a period of four months revealed a total of 116 species of spiders belonging to 20 families. Among the families, Salticidae was found as the most common family and among the species *Hersilia savignyi* and *Hippasa agelenoides* were found as the most common species. *Plexipus petersi*, *Plexipus pykulli*, *Xysticus minutes* and *Tibellus elongates* were also noted as the commonly found spider species.

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**KEYWORDS:** Spider species, biodiversity, Salticidae

### INTRODUCTION

Spiders make up the order Araneae in the class Arachnida. There are currently over 39,000 described species placed in 3,642 genera and 111 families. Major contributions to Indian Arachnology were made by Pocock (1895, 1899a, 1899b, 1900a, 1900b and 1901) and Tikader (1977, 1980, 1982 and 1987) who were responsible for bringing spider studies to the notice of other researchers. India's described spider fauna consists of about 1600 species, perhaps as little as half of the total spider fauna. World-wide, more than 40,000 species of spiders have been described (Uniyal *et al.*, 2011). Although more than 1,400 species have been described from India (and with many more still to be documented), the study on the taxonomy, biology and ecology of Indian spiders remain miserably inadequate. This has largely been due to lack of expertise in this field and the absence of sufficient

literature (Sebastian and Peter, 2009). The present study of spider diversity was conducted in the Kerala University Campus, Kariavattom, laden with enchanting greenery covering about 350 acres of land.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Study Site

Kerala University Campus, Kariavattom (8°32', 8°34'N and 76°52', 76°54' E) is situated about 10 km north of Thiruvananthapuram City, houses the various teaching departments under the University of Kerala. The campus covering about 350 acres of land is located on either side of the National Highway (NH 66). The elevation of the study area is about 57m MSL. The annual temperature variation ranges from 22°C to 34°C. For the purpose of the study the entire campus has been surveyed, by dividing the area into two sites. Site 1 is the

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