# Kent mother’s panic as large tube web spider terrorises children in garden



Charlotte Louise, a mother from Rainham, Kent, experienced a moment of sheer panic when a large spider appeared just inches from her children while they played in the garden. The 31-year-old's immediate reaction was to scream, which sent her children fleeing in terror. “I am petrified of spiders, they make my skin crawl,” she admitted, recalling how she caught sight of the creature while adjusting a garden rug.

Upon further investigation with experts, Charlotte learned that the intruder was a tube web spider. While its bite is reported to be more painful than a wasp sting—causing significant discomfort—it is not considered toxic to humans, providing some solace amid the fright. Described as one of the largest spiders found in the UK, the tube web spider can measure up to 23 mm in body length, with its distinctive fanged mouthparts and iridescent green chelicerae making it particularly identifiable.

Charlotte’s encounter did not end there; a second spider made an appearance shortly after, triggering even more panic. “My mum then screeched so I flicked while screaming, looking like a crazy woman,” she recounted. This incident led to a flurry of activity as her family scrambled back into the house. The repeating encounters have left Charlotte on high alert during her trips to the garden, where even the slightest movement tends to set her on edge.

The tube web spider, noted for its smooth, cylindrical body, builds tubular retreats in crevices such as old walls, tree bark, and under stones. This specific habitat choice allows the spider to capture prey effectively. It employs a unique web structure with silk trip wires, which alert it to any movement by potential food sources. Experts underscore the spider's role in controlling insect populations, preying on common nuisances like flies and mosquitoes, thus maintaining an ecological balance.

Interestingly, while the pain from a tube web spider’s bite can last several hours or even days, it is not life-threatening. Such bites are comparable to those of bees and tend to occur when the spider feels threatened. Most encounters, as in Charlotte’s case, do not lead to serious harm.

Despite reassurances regarding the spider's non-lethal nature, Charlotte's fear remains palpable. She embodies the mix of fascination and fear that many people experience when confronted with spiders. “Every time I’m out in the garden putting the washing out, I feel myself looking around my feet constantly,” she shared, illustrating how one moment can exacerbate a longstanding phobia. The proximity of the spider to her children has injected an added level of anxiety for their safety in their own backyard, leaving her longing for a safer space to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

As urban environments continue to expand, increased encounters with wildlife are becoming more common. While the tube web spider is not typically seen as a threat, incidents like Charlotte’s have the potential to heighten fears and misconceptions surrounding these creatures. It serves as a reminder of the delicate balance humans must maintain with nature and the need to educate ourselves about the wildlife that shares our spaces.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/mum-venomous-spider-rainham-kent-10192494> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.uksafari.co.uk/florentina.htm> - This article provides detailed information about the Tube Web Spider (Segestria florentina), including its size, distribution, habitat, and distinctive features. It notes that females can reach up to 23mm in length, making them one of the largest spiders in the UK. The article also describes the spider's nocturnal behavior and its preference for hiding in tubular retreats during the day. Additionally, it mentions the spider's painful bite, which is more intense than a wasp sting but not toxic to humans.
3. <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/spider-webs.html> - This resource from the Natural History Museum discusses various types of spider webs, including the radial webs of the Tube Web Spider. It explains how these spiders construct tubular retreats with silk trip wires arranged like spokes of a wheel. When prey touches these trip wires, the spider is alerted and dashes out to capture it. The article also highlights the spider's nocturnal hunting habits and its preference for living in crevices in old walls.
4. <https://www.falsewidowspider.org.uk/british-biting-spiders/tube-web-spider> - This article focuses on the Tube Web Spider, detailing its appearance, web-building behavior, and distribution in the UK. It notes that females can reach up to 22mm in body length, making them one of the largest spiders found in Britain. The article describes the spider's tubular web structure and its method of capturing prey by detecting vibrations on its trip wires. It also mentions the spider's painful bite, which is similar to a bee sting but not dangerous to humans.
5. <https://glenlivet-wildlife.co.uk/insects/tube-web-spider/> - This article provides insights into the Tube Web Spider's physical attributes, web-building techniques, and ecological importance. It describes the spider's elongated and cylindrical body, with females being larger than males. The article explains the spider's unique web-building strategy, constructing tubular retreats to capture prey efficiently. It also discusses the spider's role in natural pest control by preying on flies, mosquitoes, and other pests, contributing to the overall ecological balance.
6. <https://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Green-fanged%20tube%20web%20spider/s/Segestria%20florentina> - This resource from the Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme offers detailed information about the Green-fanged Tube Web Spider (Segestria florentina). It describes the spider's distinctive features, including its iridescent green chelicerae and its preference for living in crevices in walls, tree bark, and under stones. The article explains the spider's web-building behavior, with radiating silk threads acting as trip wires to alert the spider to passing prey. It also notes the spider's painful bite, which can cause pain and swelling for several hours or days.
7. <https://www.spiderpedia.com/tube-web-spider-bite-size-poisonous/> - This article provides information about the Tube Web Spider's bite, size, and venomous nature. It notes that the spider's bite is painful, similar to a bee sting, but not dangerous to humans. The article also mentions that the venom contains neurotoxins and an insecticide. It describes the spider's size, with females reaching up to 22mm in body length, making them one of the largest spiders in the UK. The article also discusses the spider's web-building behavior and its distribution in southern Britain.