

Tara Peckham & Peckham, 1886

Taxonomy

Tara has three Australian species: *Tara anomala*, *T. gratiosa* and *T. parvula*. There are many other undescribed species found across Australia (Whyte unpubl.) The genus is part of an Australasian clade (Maddison et al 2008) that includes the Australian genera *Abracadabrella*, *Apricia*, *Clynotis*, *Holoplatys*, *Huntiglennia*, *Ocrisiona*, *Opisthoncus*, *Paraplatoides*, *Pungalina*, *Trite* and *Zebraplatys* (Maddison 2015). Further information on the genus and described species can be found in Richardson and Žabka (2017) and Whyte and Anderson (2017).

Description

Species presently placed in *Tara* vary significantly in morphology, making the description ambiguous for many characters. *Tara* spp. are medium-sized spiders, ranging in body length from 3 to 7 mm. The head, viewed from above, can be rectangular with rounded sides, mildly pear-shaped or roughly triangular. It is widest either behind or in front of the posterior lateral eyes. The cephalothorax is high, peaking at the posterior median eyes or it can be low and flat. Chelicerae have a many-cusped (plurident) retromarginal tooth on a distinct base or a two-cusped (fissident) retromarginal tooth. There are two to four promarginal teeth. The abdomen is ovate to elongate-ovate. In the male the first pair of legs is longer and heavier than the others. The fourth pair is longest in the female. The spines on the tibia and tarsus of the first pair of legs are well developed.

The male's palp has an embolus arising on the distal edge of the tegulum, varying from very short to medium in length. The tegulum is roughly rectangular, without a proximal lobe. The palpal tibia has a single, short to medium-length, tapering, sharp retro-lateral tibial apophysis.

The female epigyne has a single, barely-discernible atrium. Copulatory openings are usually located on the lateral edges of the atrium. The insemination ducts lead posteriorly in a lateral curve to join anterior edges of roundish spermathecae. These open into large, variously-shaped diverticulae either lateral to or between the spermathecae.

Biology

Tara has been collected in litter and on foliage in habitats ranging from open woodland and heathland through riparian zones to rainforest.

Distribution

Tara has been collected throughout the higher rainfall areas of mainland Australia and Tasmania. *Tara gratiosa* is endemic to Lord Howe Island.

References

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Žabka, M. 1987. Salticidae (Araneae) of Oriental, Australian and Pacific Regions, I. Genera *Clynotis* and *Tara*. *Annales Zoologici, Warszawa* 40, 437-450.

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Examples of live Tara

Illustrators (and ©) I.R. Macaulay & M. Zabka (diag.) (QMB)



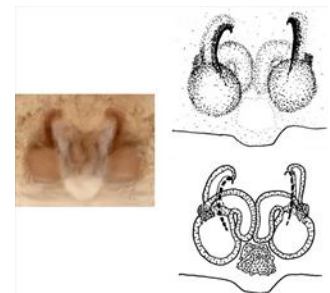
Aspects of the general morphology of Tara

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Palp morphology of Tara

Illustrators (and ©) B.J. Richardson (L), R. Whyte (C), M. Zabka (diag.) (QMB)



Epigyne morphology of Tara

Illustrator (and ©) B.J. Richardson (CSIRO, MP)

* The information sheet should be read in the context of the associated diagrams and photographs. Diagrams explaining anatomical terms can be found in the 'Salticidae' pictures at the beginning of the list of genera.