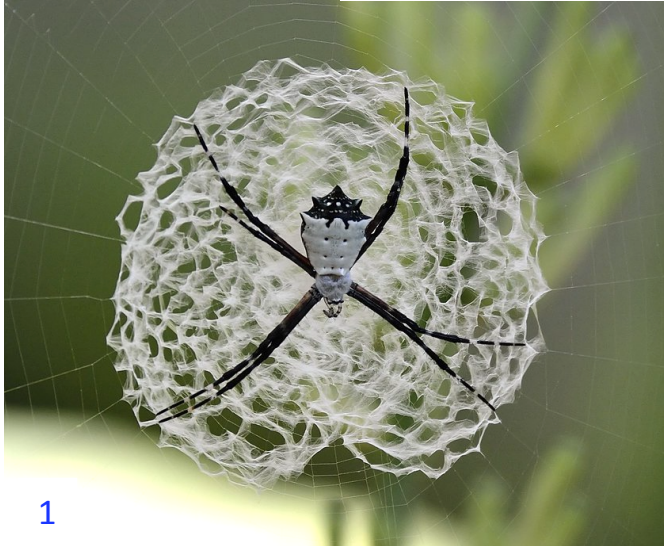


Web decorations (Stabilimentum)

The name “stabilimentum” suggests that this web decoration structurally stabilize a web. But, this is **not** what it does. Instead, its purpose is to protect a spider.

Stabilimentum of *Argiope* species



The stabilimentum of spiders in the genus *Argiope* comes in many forms. It may be arranged in X shapes, vertical lines, or even circular patches. Its function has been a mystery to scientists for quite a long time. However, recent studies show that they are meant to make the web more visible to birds, which would otherwise fly through the webs and destroy them by accident. When a bird sees a stabilimentum, it will fly around the web to avoid getting all sticky, which is better for the bird and the spider!



The Stabilimentum of *Cyclosa* species



Spiders in the genus *Cyclosa* will build a vertical stabilimentum called a “trashline” down the center of the web, which is created by wrapping insect remains and other debris loosely in silk. A female spider also adds egg sacs. Typically, the center of the trashline is at the hub of the web. The spider will sit in the hub with its legs tucked in, which allows it to blend in with the trashline as a method of camouflage.



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