

# Northern Beaches Creepy Crawlies. Can you live with them?

Written on March 5, 2012 by Lesley Snell of Northern Beaches Know-How

I am often asked by my clients about the nasties that are lying in wait for them as they relocate to the Northern Beaches with their families.

Spiders always come up in the conversation.... closely followed by snakes.

Truthfully these creatures are more scared of you than you should be of them. But we here in Australia always like to frighten the newcomers into thinking the nasties are lurking .....and waiting for the right moment to strike..

I can honestly say, hand on my heart, that I have only had a few encounters with our dear little critters.

I do not go seeking them out and therefore they leave me alone...all good.

One of the best things you can do is to be prepared and recognise those creatures that really are a danger. By that I mean familiarise yourselves with pictures, and understand the environment you are in. I.e. If you live near bushland or long grassy areas you are **LIKELY** to see snakes hiding in logs so leave them be and teach your children to do the same thing. Same goes for spiders!



I decided to take a basic first aid course which covered bites and stings particular to Australia

because we took our family camping in National parks.

Its a good idea to keep a reference book of spiders and snakes handy in your home.

I live in Frenchs Forest on the Northern Beaches backing onto the National Park (bush). I have seen redback spiders in my garden and a snake. But I know where the spider's webs are and I **ALWAYS** wear a thick pair of gardening gloves. The snake I saw was not venomous and I left it alone.

Its all just common sense really.

Hunstmens spiders cause the most problems to newcomers. They are **HUGE** and therefore terribly frightening. I have been on the end of some frantic calls from clients who have found them running around in their bathroom. Though they bite they are not dangerous to humans. Once you know that you can catch it (if you can!) and throw it back into the garden.



They do run extremely fast!

When I first arrived in Sydney we had one on our kitchen wall and it was **SO** big we thought it was a fake spider put there by some kind English friends of ours as a joke...but then it moved.

I'm sad to say we annihilated it because we thought it was about to kill us!

Remember Spiders are your friends in the main they eat all those other pesky insects!!!

They are also fascinating to watch when they spin their webs. I like watching the giant orb spiders at this time of year.

With all that said here are the main culprits that **might** give you grief on the Northern Beaches.

## Mosquitoes

Tip out all containers of standing water around your house after it rains. The Ozzy Mozzies love still water to lay their eggs in. Purchase a roll-on insect repellent for each member of your family to take with them on trips out (Aeroguard, Rid and Bushman's are the main brands here). Wear long sleeved tops and long trousers at dusk or when you are walking through bushland. Light citronella candles when sitting outside.

## Horse Flies

Nasty big flies, that bite you hard enough to notice. Once again get out that repellent!

## Ticks

Quite prevalent on the Beaches in grass and bushland. Once again repellent and suitable clothing. Once on a human they can start to burrow into your skin and gradually fill with blood this is when you notice them!!!

If you have been gardening or out in the bush check yourselves for ticks.

Ticks can be **FATAL** to dogs and cats so if you are bringing them over or you plan to acquire one please talk to your vet about suitable preventive medication and during the summer months check your pets everyday for ticks. Follow the instructions on the tick medication **religiously**.

If you do remove a tick try to keep it to show a vet or Dr should you become ill. Ticks will often be sent to a lab for analysis.

## Leeches



Found mainly in grassland after lots of rain or in areas of rainforest. These latch onto you and once again SUCK your blood. Pretty harmless just yucky! Common remedy is to sprinkle with salt and they should fall off. Clean wound with antiseptic lotion. Once again repellent and long clothes will help. Take some salt with you if you go out bushwalking and check your socks!

## Spiders

Keep an identification chart on your fridge door.

Teach your children to stay away from all spiders if they are not sure what type they are. Learn basic first aid to treat spider bites. Wear gloves when you are gardening.

## Bull Ants

These little guys will give you a nasty bite if you are walking around barefoot or gardening round a nest. Some people can have serious allergic reactions so watch out for any usual symptoms such as trouble breathing etc. Antihistamines will bring down swelling bites.

## Blue Bottle Jellyfish



Found in the sea. When on the beach watch out for warning signs often placed by lifeguards. Last year the area around Manly had a surprising number of them. Do not enter the water if you see bluebottles on the beach or if you see the signs. SIMPLE.