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# Invertebrate of the Month

## June 2009



**Three-banded Cross Spider**

The three-banded cross spider or banded orb-weaving spider *Argiope trifaciata* is characterised by silver, yellow and black bands on its abdomen. It is found throughout the world except Europe, the particular specimen pictured above was captured in jarrah forest north of Peaceful Bay. It is non toxic to humans and is a close relative of the well known St. Andrew's cross spider *Argiope keyserlingi*. This spider constructs a diagonal cross pattern in its web like the cross in the Scottish flag, hence its name. The three-banded cross spider is also known to construct what is called stabilimenta within its wheeled web, like that of the St Andrew's cross spider, but not consistently in a cross pattern. Stabilimenta are made from extra heavy silk constructed in a zigzag pattern and built into the standard wheeled web. They are strong, often constructed as a cross or other pattern and are thought to assist in stabilizing the web and perhaps advertise its presence to birds to reduce web breakage.