

# Tarentula hispanica

A creature that inspires fear in many people becomes, homeopathically, a powerful remedy, writes *Marysia Kratimenos*



*The person with a spider constitution is energised by music and rhythm is all-important. Drummer Richard Bailey photographed by James Chumpsty*

There are few creatures that can reduce normally rational people into nervous wrecks within seconds. Even a humble house spider can have people screaming hysterically in no time - a totally irrational reaction to a harmless creature. Snakes rate equally highly on the phobia scale, but as many are deadly there is some logic to the fear.

Filmmakers use this mass phobia to its full potential. *Arachnophobia* made millions. Harrison Ford was covered in tarantulas for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, though apparently it was the snake pit scene that truly terrified him.

In England there are no indigenous venomous spiders. It is a very different story in other countries. Poisonous spiders are occasionally found in fruit imported from more tropical climes. In Northern Spain and Italy there lives a small venomous spider misleadingly named the tarantula. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to the monster South American variety. In fact it is smaller than most garden spiders. Legend has it that after being bitten by the spider, women develop a dancing mania. There is even a city named in honour of it, Tarentum.

## **The remedies**

Tarentula hispanica was the first spider venom to be potentised and since then many other venomous spiders have been investigated and used as homeopathic remedies.

In the 19th century the search for new remedies was on and homeopaths travelled far and wide to collect new specimens. On a trip to Cuba, a specimen of the local venomous spider was collected and placed in a pot of formalin to be shipped back to England for further study. Unfortunately, due to a bad storm, the container shattered leaving the spider badly decomposed. In the adventurous spirit of the age, the homeopaths were not deterred and produced a wonderful remedy, Tarentula cubensis, which is fabulous for septic conditions!

Tarentula hispanica remains the most commonly known of the spider remedies, but thanks to the work of such brilliant homeopaths as Massimo Mangialavori the remedy pictures of the lesser known spiders are now coming to light.

Black widow, which has a heart shaped red mark on its front, is very useful in certain types of heart disease; Aranea diadema can be used in arthritis and Mygale for conditions where there is a lot of scarring and damage to nervous tissue. As the venoms of these spiders share common chemical constituents there are similarities in the drug pictures. There are also unique qualities to each remedy and these may be very subtle. I believe that it is important to regard Tarentula hispanica as the prototype of the spider remedies, just as Lachesis mutans is the mother of all snakes. Before prescribing

Tarentula, I always mentally check the other smaller spider remedies.

### **The remedy picture**

In Greek mythology Arachne was a Lydian girl who was exceptionally skilled at weaving. In her arrogance, she challenged the goddess Athena to a competition and then proceeded to mock the gods in the design of her woven cloth. The gods sought vengeance by turning her into a spider so she could weave to her heart's content. The species of spiders has been termed arachnid in honour of this myth. It is interesting to note that the story itself gives clues to the remedy picture. People responding to spider remedies are notoriously industrious, workaholics. The women are often exceptionally good at knitting, weaving, tapestry and similar crafts. The men often pursue rock climbing. Some can be very boastful and often have a vengeful streak. Revenge comes easily to a spider!

Other cultures regard the spider as a sign of change. It is said to be the primal symbol of fear, which is interesting as those needing spider remedies are often fearful, not just of spiders. The North Americans use dream catchers to aid spiritual guidance from the dream world. Clairvoyance is common in these remedies, though usually in a "gut feeling" sense rather than the true visions of clairvoyance seen in the snake remedies.

As with most remedy descriptions the focus has always been on the shadow side, that part of the character of which we are least proud. It is time to redress the balance of all this bad press. Just imagine a world without spiders.... flies everywhere!

*Charlotte's Web* by E. M. White is an utterly delightful children's book, which paints a very different picture of the spider. Charlotte, a large grey spider, befriends Wilbur, a pig who is destined for slaughter. The character of Charlotte is a far cry from the cruel blood sucking creature that Wilbur expects and their friendship blossoms. Ultimately Charlotte saves Wilbur's life by ingeniously weaving words into her web above the sty that proclaim Wilbur's brilliance. Everyone thinks that Wilbur must be really special as a result and only one little girl realises the genius of Charlotte.

The remedy descriptions of the spiders claim they are highly manipulative. Charlotte certainly was, but she used her powers of persuasion for the benefit of her friend. There are two sides to every story.

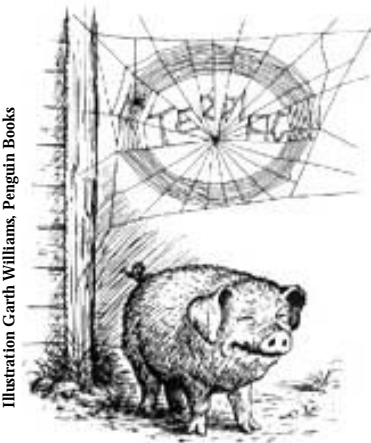


Illustration Carth Williams, Penguin Books

*Reversing the trend, Charlotte's Webb gives a positive view of spiders. In the book Wilbur's life is saved by his spider friend*

The Black widow is famed for eating her mate after sex and women responding to the remedy have a reputation as the femme fatale. In reality the female so much likes her own space that she only eats her mate if he hangs around too long and bugs her. It could be that she mistakes

him for lunch, as spiders are notoriously short sighted!

Tarentula hispanica is the most dramatic of the spider remedies. All the spiders show restlessness and can be used for certain anxiety states and hyperactivity. In some cases there may be twitching of the muscles or even epilepsy. Keeping busy calms the person, hence the high-energy lifestyles. Often there are great fears, especially of death. Fear may underlie some of the aggression, which may be almost maniacal. There is a destructive quality to the anger. The women that slash their ex's clothes may well need spider remedies.

Unlike the snake remedies, which are notoriously jealous, the spiders are not particularly suspicious or jealous. Nor are they as chatty as the snakes. Both have the animal magnetism, but the spiders are less overtly sexual. Music elicits very different responses. The snakes are almost mesmerised by it, whereas the spiders are energised. Spot the Tarentula woman at the nightclub, dancing on the speakers! The rhythm is all-important.

Spiders drink the blood of their prey, and hence there is thirst and lack of appetite. In extreme cases this may develop into anorexia nervosa or bulimia.

Just as Charlotte felt bad about her victims, I have often found there is a reluctance to eat meat based on the suffering of animals. There is also often a sense of guilt about the victims of their anger outbursts.

Spider bites often lead to nasty skin infections and hence boils and acne are common symptoms.

Colour is important to Tarentula. There can be a love or aversion to black, red

and green.

Spiders are solitary creatures. The mothers lay the eggs and die before they hatch. Spiders are free spirits by

nature.

The spider remedies are extremely useful in homeopathy. They are deep acting and so should only be

taken as prescribed by a qualified professional. Our knowledge of this fascinating species is increasing as more remedies are proved.

## *Case study*

Tim's story demonstrates the Tarentula picture perfectly. His main complaint was hay fever, which had come on a couple of years previously. Each summer he would have a perpetually dripping nose and streaming eyes. The anti-histamines would dry up the secretions but left him drowsy. He worked as a drummer in an up and coming rock band and had a day job as a computer designer. He desperately wanted to find something else that would help him, as the anti-histamines meant an alcohol ban, which hardly fitted with his lifestyle. He was a hard drinker and smoked a lot in the evenings. Sometimes he'd stop for a while, when he got worried about his health.

Tim was tall and very lean, dressed all in black, his preferred colour for clothes. He was very restless, his legs constantly moving. He had a real presence, something characteristic of the animal remedies in general. His health was good apart from the hay fever and occasional coughs. In the past he had suffered with acne, with large painful boils which had cleared with a course of antibiotics.

His father suffered with

mild asthma, but apart from that the rest of the family was healthy. His parents had divorced when he was in his early teens and he was very resentful of his father for leaving the family. When talking of this he showed his temper, which by his own admission was volcanic. He could and would explode with anger with little provocation and would fantasise about getting his own back when he was "provoked".

He was a very energetic person, almost "manic" as he called it. He detested being bored, "a fate worse than death". He loved the rhythm of hard rock and music with a strong beat. He thrived on the hard work of combining a day job with his music career and found the music energised him. The physical activity of drumming made him very thirsty, and he didn't have much of an appetite anyway. He drank huge quantities of water on stage to combat the dehydration. He loved fruit especially those with a sharp taste. He disliked meat.

He had a partner, but didn't live with her, as he needed his own space. He had a high sex drive. He didn't need much sleep, enjoying the tranquillity of early morning as much as the late nights. He often

dreamed of flying which he loved.

He was sensitive to the weather, disliking cold, damp conditions. He preferred hot weather. He also was sensitive to atmospheres between people and the politics of the band, which he played to his advantage. He admitted he could be moody at times and found doing something energetic could lift his mood. He had a very quick mind able to juggle many tasks at once.

Although hay fever is not a classical symptom of Tarentula hispanica, the overall picture of the remedy was so clear that I prescribed it on a constitutional level, 30c, 30c and 200c on the next three days. The effect was dramatic. His hay fever cleared within days and his craving for tobacco reduced. He felt calmer in himself and reduced his dependency on high-energy drinks, alcohol and coffee. His appetite increased and he began to eat more, still avoiding meat as it stuck in his throat. He also felt an abhorrence of eating dead animals. His energy remained high, but he lost the almost self-destructive urge to live hard (and die young!). He needed a repeat dose of the remedy a year or so later and has remained well since.

**In 1995 Marysia Kratimenos MB BS FRCS(Ed) MFFHom joined the staff of the RLHH, where she is involved in stress clinics, general medicine, paediatrics and neuro-linguistic programming.**