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American Arachnological Society

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THE ULTIMATE MATERNAL SACRIFICE

DENVER—March 9, 2015— The American Arachnological Society announces the discovery by Mor Salomon (mor.slmn@gmail.com) and her co-authors from universities in Israel that females of a spider with an extreme form of maternal care digest their own bodies in order to feed their offspring.

Even human moms don't show the level of maternal care for their young as female spiders of the species *Stegodyphus lineatus* in the Old World family of Velvet Spiders (Eresidae). In this species, the mother's internal tissues begin to break down while she is guarding her eggsac. By the time the young hatch from the eggs, the female's degraded tissues are partly liquefied and absorbed by her own gut. Mom then feeds her offspring by regurgitating her own internally liquefied tissues.

At the time the spiderlings are big enough to feed themselves, the mother spider is killed by her young, who pierce her abdomen with their tiny jaws, and feed on her now largely liquefied body. This study is the first demonstration of the physiological processes leading to suicidal maternal care in any arthropod. It is reported in the current issue of the [Journal of Arachnology](#).

About the American Arachnological Society

The American Arachnological Society was founded in 1975 to further the study of arachnids (spiders and their relatives), foster closer cooperation and understanding between amateur and professional arachnologists, and to publish the [Journal of Arachnology](#), one of the premier scientific journals presenting current research about arachnids. Connect with the AAS on its [website](#) or [Facebook](#).

NOTE: Photos available

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