

# Venomous Aussie redback spiders invading Japan

November 25 2009

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A dozen people have reportedly been bitten in Osaka prefecture alone, media reports say, including a six-year-old boy who was treated with

antivenom in June, the first time the medication had been used in the country.

"Their poison is strong and they are particularly dangerous to people in weak physical condition, like children and the elderly," Kishimoto told AFP.

"Redbacks are becoming a common species in Japan. They are very numerous, especially in the western region, and are now often sighted in residential areas.... Once the spiders spread, it's hard to eliminate them."

Redback bites, which inject a potent neurotoxin, have caused numerous deaths in Australia, although an antivenom stocked in hospitals has prevented fatalities more recently.

Redbacks were first spotted in Japan in 1995, around Osaka, a major port where, experts believe, they may have arrived in a container of Australian woodchips used to make paper in [Japan](#).

Several years ago a major redback infestation was found in the street drainage system of the city, and the arachnids have now spread to prefectures covering roughly a third of the country.

In one case, a man moving from Osaka north to the Tokyo region by car unknowingly took a redback [spider](#) with him after the animal had latched onto the vehicle, the wildlife researcher said.

He said Japanese people must become more aware of the dangers of redbacks, a species long feared in Australia, where the creatures are known to lurk in garden sheds, in shoes left outdoors, and under toilet seats.

"People need to be warned on how to treat them, and to be careful when

they're out cleaning ditches, and to wear thick cotton gloves for example," said Kishimoto.

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Citation: Venomous Aussie redback spiders invading Japan (2009, November 25) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-11-venomous-aussie-redback-spiders-invading.html>

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