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## The First Record of the Black Widow Spider (*Lactrodectus mactans Texanus*) for Iowa

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THE FIRST RECORD OF THE BLACK WIDOW SPIDER  
(*LACTRODECTUS MACTANS TEXANUS*) FOR IOWA

KARL A. STILES

There is great interest at the present time in the most poisonous of spiders, the black widow. This interest has been stimulated by the belief on the part of some biologists that its geographical range, which heretofore has been considered southern is being greatly extended. Scientific journals have been reporting the appearance of the black widow in states where it has not previously been found until on January 22, in *Science*, the statement was made that Minnesota and Iowa were the only states in which it had not been found. The writer believes that Iowa may be added to the "black list."

In the fall of 1936, a specimen was collected in the warehouse of a Cedar Rapids machinery company. It was identified as *Latrodectus mactans texanus* which is a southern variety but is not uncommon in Kansas. This specimen was an extreme variation from this variety as it did not possess the typical hour-glass marking on its abdomen. The abdominal markings which did appear were those of two separate triangular figures on the anterior and posterior parts of the abdomen, representing the top and bottom of the hour-glass with the central portion missing. The fact that this was unquestionably identified as the black widow indicates that one can not always rely on the hour-glass character as a means of identification.

Field studies will be made next summer in an effort to determine the abundance and varieties of black widow spiders in this locality.

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