

# Tarantula Morphology



Tarantulas, like all spiders, have a body that is divided into two main regions: the anterior cephalothorax, or prosoma, and the posterior bulbous section called the abdomen or opisthosoma. The upper side of the cephalothorax is a shield-like carapace. The cephalothorax and abdomen are joined by a narrow waist called the pedicel.

All spiders have four pairs of walking legs, which are numbered on each side as leg I, leg II, leg III and leg IV. Each leg has seven segments.

In addition to the walking legs, there is a shorter pair of leg-like appendages, called the pedipalps, at the front of the cephalothorax.

Between the pedipalps there are a pair of chelicerae that terminate in the hollow fangs which deliver a venomous bite. The “true spiders” (infraorder Araneomorphae) have fangs that point towards each other. But tarantulas are in the infraorder Mygalomorphae, which have fangs that fold along the underside of the chelicerae when at rest, and fold outward like a pocket knife to point downwards when a tarantula delivers a bite.

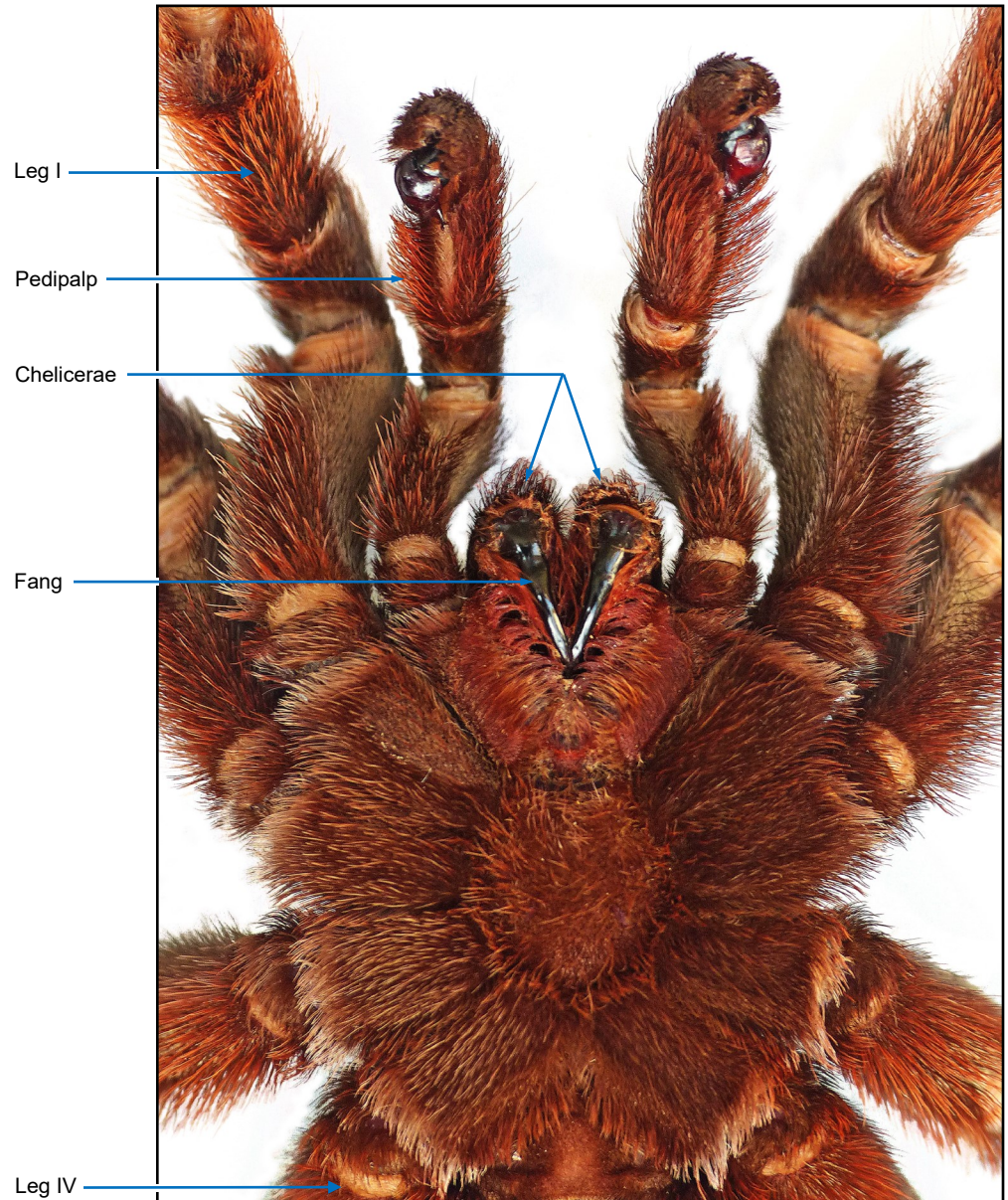
The venom of most North American species of tarantula is not considered life-threatening to people.

**#WeLoveTarantulas**

For more information:

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**Underside of an adult tarantula. The specimen pictured is a preserved *Brachypelma klaasi* (Mexican pink tarantula).**