

Spiders of Central Europe: An internet identification key

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An short analysis of the most common books for the identification of spiders in Europe is presented. It shows that there is a clear need for a new identification tool, which should cover an as large area in Europe as possible. It should also include approximately a dozen figures per species, not necessarily from the same author. Additional informations (e.g. distribution maps) are desired but not crucial. An important criterion is the flexibility of a medium with respect to changes, e.g. due to taxonomic re-arrangements of genera or families or the incorporation of new species. A very preliminary marketing analysis shows clearly that such conditions can only be fulfilled by an internet version of an identification key.

At the occasion of this congress we report on the progress of our joint project during the last two years and we will make our current work available for the public. This premiere does not mean that our identification key is perfect: we include meanwhile 43 families, 335 genera and approx. 1250 species. These are presented by more than 8000 figures from books or articles published by more than 50 arachnologists which gave us their reproduction permit. Our work includes also a large reference chapter and a lexicon which explains all technical terms.

In the next years we intend to ameliorate our product. This means that we will perform a lot of corrections and additions, we will also have to translate the texts into English as main language (current language is German). Additional ideas concern the enlargement of the geographical area into the Mediterranean countries and we could also include distribution maps.