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Sunday, March 25, 2007

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**Progress note
pertaining to the life and actions of
the tiny spider**

Slide Show # 2

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Two days after its discovery on a twig of cherry blossoms, the tiny spider found a new home among three cherry twigs that were placed into a glass with stone pebbles and water.

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Then the entire arrangement was placed into a large flower pot saucer and under a protective plexiglass dome. And there the tiny spider sat silently, waiting for some prey to arrive. Hoping to attract some fruit flies or even to breed them, I placed slices of lime and orange at the bottom of the saucer.

My tiny spider, he or she?

Presuming it is a female,
I named her *Arachna* after the *Greek* word for spider.
My Wife Wanda thought that was too long.
So, we called her *Ara*.



Despite of the lack of food, *Ara* had further developed in four days, now sporting six side eyes next to the two main eyes. That makes a total of eight eyes, the correct eye number for spiders. As giant as this picture is, the actual spider is tiny and not bigger than 1/8 inch (3 mm).



Seven days after her discovery, *Ara* was desperately searching for some nourishment. She made a single thread and descended onto the slice of lime which by now had grown a thick layer of mold.



It appears that *Ara* is sucking in some moisture from the lime. The juice and mold may have contained some nourishment. Still, no real food had arrived.

Miracle in March!

Wanda discovered a small fly in our bathroom. I went on a very long hunt. Finally, with the aid of my high voltage electronic fly catcher, I caught the insect. It was temporarily stunned. In brutal support for hungry *Ara*, I decided to pierce the fly with a small, sharp injection needle. And then I headed for *Ara's* Plexiglass dome.



Here, the stunned fly sits on a rim of an orange slice. *Ara* is not particularly interested and climbs up on the stem of the needle.



I transferred the fly up into the cherry buds, pushing the needle into the twig. *Ara* watches with some interest. Two buds of cherry blossoms stand by silently.

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The fly begins to move its legs and wings. Ara comes nearer to explore.



No doubt, the spider has smelled the prey. The wings of the fly tremble. *Ara* is quite excited.

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She lunges for the
soft spot between
abdomen and chest



She retreats
again.
Hungrily she
surveys
the head of
the fly.
The Insect is
horrified.

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Finally, the first meal! And a very, very big one!



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Compare the giant, red facet eye of the fly with the tiny eyes of the spider.



Go for it,
Ara!

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Another view of the action!



The fly does not have a chance!

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Ara's abdomen swells like a balloon in the air.

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The spinning glands protrude from the pressure, and some fine threads have been pushed out into the air. The budding leaves of the cherry tree are unimpressed.



And here she rests three hours later. She has withdrawn from the prey. Happy eyes bulge out. The abdomen could not be bigger. One can only wonder what *Ara* will do next.

And so ends
the second installment of the life
of the spider *Ara*

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Ebo K. Sauerland
March 25, 2007