

A large brown spider is the central focus, positioned on its intricate web. Above it, a smaller spider of the same species is visible. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage and a blurred path.

Golden Silk Spiders  
and Hurricane Warnings

What we learned from them...

By Marnie L Hutcheson

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[www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com](http://www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com)

# Before we get started...

- Golden Silk Spiders are also called Banana Spiders
- The banana spider exhibit at [www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com](http://www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com) gets a lot of visitors every day during the summer months and I get lots of wonderful email from people who are fascinated with these enormous but gentle spiders. I am pleased to add this article to our exhibit.

Please enjoy it! ~Marnie



# Hurricane warnings and preparations

- When we heard that Hurricane Francis might be headed our way in September 2004,
- I sent my daughter to make sure that all the doors on the second floor of the barn were locked and bolted shut.



# The barn deck

- The second floor of the barn has a large covered deck. During the summer, you can find lots of banana spiders living there, usually 15-20 females and maybe twice that many males.
- We leave their webs alone so we can watch them up close, and also because they eat lots of flies that would otherwise be a problem.



# The banana spiders...

- Like to make their webs between the columns, from the roof to the hand rail, and from the hand rail to the floor. They create a sort of double-decker web all around edge of the deck. The average web size is about 6 ft by 6 ft, but some are much larger.



# There are so many banana spiders that...

- Sometimes there are as many as 3 webs overlapping the same space.
- Just think how many bugs they eat!



# The wasps

- Because there are so many banana spiders on the porch, there is a healthy wasp community nesting inside the second floor structure. They prey on both the smaller banana spiders and the insects caught in their webs.

# The banana spiders were gone!

- The first thing my daughter noticed when she came to the porch that day, was that all the banana spiders were gone.
- Their webs were there, but not a single spider.



# The wasps were gone too!

- My daughter hates the wasps and was very cautious when she entered the second floor. But there was not a single wasp.
- In fact, there were few bugs of any kind to be found anywhere.
- So, days before the hurricane arrived, the insects had already moved for safety.



# Hurricane Francís

- When Hurricane Francís struck, she ripped the tops off of the trees and dropped lots of rain on us.
- In one day, everything changed.



# Hurricane Jeanne

- One month later Hurricane Jeanne hit us with enough rain to create the 40 acre Lake Hutcheson on top of our best pasture land, and also a tornado.



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# The tornado...

- Ripped up huge trees and left a trail of destruction over a half mile long.
- It took 2 years to clean up the mess.



# After the storms...

- the water began to recede and creatures began to return.
- By the summer of 2006, the banana spider and wasp populations were almost back to normal.



# Now we watch the banana spiders...

- when a storm first appears in the Atlantic,
- if the banana spiders disappear, we prepare for the worst -- no matter what the weatherman is predicting.



Hope you will visit...

- [www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com](http://www.shadygrovetrainingcenter.com)
- Where you will find other interesting creatures and their stories. 😊

~Marnie and vel