

A pair of mating big-bellied Tylorida spiders

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Subjects: Big-bellied Tylorida, *Tylorida ventralis* (Arachnida : Araneae : Tetragnathidae).

Subjects identified by: Chua Keng Soon.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Singapore Botanic Gardens; 14 July 2018; 1135 hrs.

Habitat: Urban parkland, at the edge of an artificial freshwater pond.

Observer: Chua Keng Soon.

Observation: Two examples, each about 5 mm, were observed apparently mating (Fig. 1, left) on the smooth underside of a leaf of a *Hanguana malayana* plant at the water's edge. The pair broke apart after about 2 minutes with the male scuttling to the edge of the leaf (Fig. 1, right), while the female moved away slowly in the opposite direction. She stopped and turned around once before continuing in the original direction.

Remarks: The mating habits of the big-bellied Tylorida in its natural habitat in northern Sulawesi have been studied by Preston-Mafham & Cahill (2000). They observed that some pairs were mating throughout the day and over several days. The female is noted to be as likely to reinitiate sex, after a hiatus, as the male. This is in contrast to the popular notion of the female spider killing and devouring her male partner during or after mating.

Reference: Preston-Mafham, K. & A. Cahill, A., 2000. Female-initiated copulations in two tetragnathid spiders from Indonesia: *Leucauge nigrovittata* and *Tylorida ventralis*. *Journal of Zoology*. 252(4): 415-420.



Fig. 1. Left. A copulating pair of big-bellied Tylorida. Note the smaller male spider (bottom) and his pedipalp (indicated by arrow). Right. The male spider at the edge of the leaf immediately after mating. Photographs by Chua Keng Soon