



Close-up photography of living spiders in the field can be a frustrating business, particularly with species that hide away, but such spiders can often be enticed out of their retreats by presenting them with food. This method is not always successful as the attack may be so swift that the prey and spider disappear again within the reaction time of the photographer. A trick I often use is to tether the prey with a fine thread which effectively keeps the spider out in the open web for several minutes and enables both prey and spider to be moved gently into a more favourable position for the picture. A hesitant spider may also be reactivated by gently tweaking the thread.

This method is quite useful when photographing Tegenaria atrica and would be equally applicable to Agelena labyrinthica, Textrix denticulata and even Ciniflo and Segestria species.

Tegenaria atrica, on several occasions after much fruitless tugging, has "investigated", found the tethering thread and attempted to cut it as in the picture above. This is probably no more than a slight extension of normal behaviour, as occasionally prey must require cutting free from the spider's own silk.

Photographic details:- Exakta IIb 100 mm lens (50 mm Pancolor + 2x converter) and 90 mm extension, f22. Twin electronic flash. Microneg Pan film, developed in Acutol 1:20 for 7 minutes.