

## Is the Feather-legged Lace-weaver *Uloborus plumipes* lurking in a garden centre near you?

Gary Farmer



01. *Uloborus plumipes* at Stratford Butterfly Farm. With scale line. February 2022. Gary Farmer.

In early February 2022 we visited Stratford Butterfly Farm (Warwickshire) for a winter 'insect-fix'. While we were there I noticed small spiders living free amongst the vegetation around the butterfly hothouse. I managed to get a couple of photographs showing spiders in situ (01 & 02) and reviewed the images later that evening. The small spiders were similar to *Hyptiotes* but more elongate, and their webs were more intricate. I quite quickly gave up on searching for a possible identification and sent the images to John Partridge requesting assistance with the identification. John replied that they would appear to be *Uloborus plumipes*, known as the Hothouse Featherfoot or Feather-legged Lace-weaver because of the plumes of long hairs located on the front legs.



02. *Uloborus plumipes* at Stratford Butterfly Farm. February 2022. Gary Farmer.

*Uloborus plumipes* is an Old-World species, first recorded in England in the early 1990s in three widely separated localities - Liverpool, Southampton and Reading (Spider & Harvestman Recording Scheme website). It is now becoming increasingly common in England and other European countries, where it is believed to have been imported from The Netherlands on plants (NatureSpot website). It is able to survive in heated greenhouses and garden centres giving rise to the alternative name of the Garden Centre Spider.

There appear to be just two records of *Uloborus plumipes* from Worcestershire; Laylocks Garden Centre, Crown East, Worcester and also in Malvern, both by Richard Comont (iRecord website).

So, it is worth peering a little closer at the indoor plants at your local garden centre.

### References

- Spider & Harvestman Recording Scheme website. Available at: <https://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal.php/p/Summary/s/Uloborus+plumipes> [Accessed 10.04.22]
- Naturespot website. Available at: <https://www.naturespot.org.uk/species/uloborus-plumipes> [Accessed 10.04.22]
- European Spiders website. Available at: [https://www.eurospiders.com/Uloborus\\_plumipes.htm](https://www.eurospiders.com/Uloborus_plumipes.htm) [Accessed 10.04.22]
- iRecord. Available at: <https://irecord.org.uk/>. [Accessed 16.04.22]

### Images

01. *Uloborus plumipes* at Stratford Butterfly Farm. February 2022. Gary Farmer.
02. *Uloborus plumipes* at Stratford Butterfly Farm. February 2022. Gary Farmer.