

Dracula orchids tempt flies by masquerading as mushrooms. Goblin spiders lurk unseen in the world's leaf litter. The natural world is often just as haunting as the macabre costumes worn on city streets, as highlighted by two studies published this year by curators in the Division of Invertebrate Zoology at the American Museum of Natural History, David Grimaldi and Norman Platnick.

## **Goblin Spiders**

Over the past three years, Platnick and colleagues have named or redefined the taxonomy of hundreds of new species of goblin spiders -- an often overlooked group named for their unusual appearance and secretive habits. Goblin spiders (members of the family Oonopidae) are extremely small: the largest is 3 millimeters in size, and most are under 2 millimeters.

"Goblins are probably the most poorly known group of spiders," says Platnick. "Their small size has made them difficult to study, but scanning electron microscopy and recent advances in digital imaging are allowing us to examine their structures in much more detail than was previously possible."

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