Twitter Thread by ■scienTEAfic■

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Finally! Back with another #ScienteaficABC ■The next in my alphabetical journey through all 128 (currently, anyway) spider families is ANAPIDAE! This family of diminutive spiders contains 58 genera/231 species as of now. (images: Conoculus lyugadinus by Akio Tanikawa, CC)



They occur worldwide, but mostly S. America, Africa, Asia & Australia/NZ. A few species are found in Europe and North America as well. (Image: Micropholcomma sp. by tjeales on iNat, CC)



Interestingly, Anapidae have either 6 or 8 eyes, with the posterior median pair being either reduced in size or totally absent. They do not exceed around 2mm in body length so, as a family, are very small. (Image: Micropholcomma sp. tjeales on iNat, CC)



They have a modification to the carapace giving them a characteristic raised ocular area. They are tiny (<3mm long), w/ rounded or hunched abdomens & quite short legs. They have a light covering of hairs & some species have spines on their legs & even abdomen. (img: tjeales iNat)



An interesting feature that some species exhibit is the presence of hardened, shell-like dorsal &/or ventral scutes on their abdomen, which are useful in identification. You can see more images including some that show these scutes here: https://t.co/K1ER1dXKaU

Predominantly, Anapidae are orb weavers, though some spin tangle webs. Their orbs are generally horizontally inclined, usually around 2-3cm across, and pulled up in the centre into a tent-like shape. They prefer habitats close to the ground. (Image: ap2il on iNat)



This image, also by ap2il on iNat shows an Anapid spider in its web, inside a spoon for scale. Tiny! (ap2il's page is linked at the end of this thread).



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