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Bauble-Spiders.
Ingenious new Theridiidae from South Africa

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A new species of *Achaeearanea* was found in the Cedarbergen, a semi-arid area in the western Cape Province of South Africa. The spiders lives in a very unusual retreat. It is an almost perfect sphere made of small pebbles and sand grains, dangling from a single thread. The tiny opening it is provided with leads to a narrow coiled tunnel. This arrangement may decrease the spider's vulnerability to enemies while foraging for ants during the night and make it escape from the attention during the day. Our study indicates that the sexes build their spiral retreats in opposite directions. This enables the male to build his retreat against that of the female in such a way as to form a brood chamber for the cocoon.

During the night the spider constructs a variable number of lines attached to the ground and apparently provided with some sticky droplets. These lines break upon contact and the prey is then hauled in a typical theridiid fashion.

The species has some unusual morphological features, the main one being the position of the spinnerets. These are situated far in front just behind the epigastric fold whereas the abdomen has a normal shape. The structure of the male palp could be called a modification of the palpal conformation of *Achaeearanea*.