

Observations on the behavior of male and female *Paraphidippus aurantius* at the molting sac of a female (Araneae: Salticidae: Dendryphantina)

Barbara Thurlow¹

¹email: barbara.thurlow@netzero.net

On 23 June 2016 I was photographing an adult male emerald jumper, *Paraphidippus aurantius* (Lucas 1833), in a magnolia tree (*Magnolia grandiflora*) in Temple Hills, Maryland. I followed him to a thick sac containing an adult female *P. aurantius* that had recently molted (Figure 1). After displaying to her briefly, he quickly entered the sac (Figures 2-3) and settled in with her (Figure 4).



Figures 1-4. Entrance of a male *P. aurantius* into the molting sac of a female beneath a *Magnolia* leaf.

Although the male left the sac several times, he went back in very quickly and was in there with the female for the better part of 30 minutes. Then a second male arrived on the scene and he also attempted to enter the sac (Figures 5-6). This went on for about 10 minutes, and the males only very briefly

displayed to each other (Figure 7). The female then moved out of the sac (Figure 8) and quickly disappeared from my view. One of the males followed, but only for a short distance before coming back to the sac.



Figures 5-8. Interaction of two male *P. aurantius* at the molting sac of a female.

When the male returned to the sac, he entered it again, and removed the female's exuvia, carrying it off and dropping it over the edge of an adjacent leaf (Figure 9). Then, he settled himself back into the sac (Figure 10). The second male also remained close by, under another leaf only a few inches away. I had to leave at that point, but I returned to check back in on them about 1/2 hour later, and both males were still in the same position. Two days after these observations the female had returned to her sac, where she was resting alone.



Figures 9-10. Male *P. aurantius* removing exuvia and occupying the molting sac of a female.