



Campbell Creek Science Center

Spider Patrol

Spiders sometimes make people’s skin crawl. But, they are important members of the ecosystem. They eat insects, like mosquitoes and flies, that people often call pests. Head outside to take a closer look at spiders and how they catch their prey.

Directions

1. Look around outside for spider webs. Look everywhere, especially corners of buildings and hanging between plants.
2. Compare the webs you find based on shape, size, and location. What similarities and differences do you notice?

Here are some common webs to watch for:



Orb webs are circular.



Sheet webs have a layer of silk with a tangle of silk strands above.



Cobwebs, or tangle webs, look messy.

Questions

- How many kinds of webs did you find?
- How do spiders use different types of webs to catch prey?
- If you were a spider, how would you want to catch your prey?

Remember that spiders are living creatures. Be gentle and respectful with them.

3. Not all spiders use a web to catch prey. Some spiders ambush their prey, while others stalk and pounce on prey, or run prey down. Look for these active hunters in short grass, under rocks, and in areas that have more dirt than plants.

4. Spiders use silk for more than making webs. Watch for spiders using silk in other ways.

Spiders may wrap prey in silk.



Spiders spin a silk dragline behind them as they go along. This keeps them from falling and enables them to retrace their steps.



Some spiders use silk like a balloon, spinning long strands that catch the wind and transport them from place to place.

