



Magnuson Nature Programs

Spiders

Did you know that spiders aren't insects?

Spiders are **arachnids**. Spiders have 2 body parts, 8 simple eyes, no antennae, no wings and 4 pairs of legs.



What do spiders eat?

Spiders eat living prey, or things they very recently killed. They do not eat car-cion. Their usual food includes insects, millipedes, wood lice and other spiders. Some of the larger spiders will eat small lizards or frogs.

Spiders don't normally eat plant material because they can't digest it like we do.

Not all spiders spin webs. The crab spider (pictured to the right) doesn't catch its prey in a web. The crab spider lies in wait on a flower and pounces when an insect comes close. The crab spider can change its color to match its background, usually a white or yellow flower, allowing it to become camouflaged. Once they've pounced on their prey, the spider delivers a venomous bite that kills their intended meal.

Young crab spiders can change colors faster than older crab spiders. Crab spiders can cast a single line of web, which they use to escape if danger is near.



Did you know that Daddy Longlegs (like the one pictured to the left) are arachnids, but they aren't spiders? They're more closely related to scorpions than spiders. They don't produce venom and can't bite you. Daddy Longlegs can be found all over the world and have been around for a VERY long time - about 400 million years.



Spider silk is a protein fiber spun by spiders. Spiders use their silk to make webs or other structures, which function as nets to catch other animals, or as nests or cocoons to protect their offspring. They can also use their silk to suspend themselves

Not all spiders build the same type of web. Orb webs are spiral wheel-shaped webs often found in gardens, fields and forests.

Many orb-weavers build a new web each day. Most orb-weavers tend to be active during the evening hours; they hide for most of the day. Generally, towards evening, the spider will consume the old web, rest for approximately an hour, then spin a new web in the same general location.



Some spiders build funnel webs like the one pictured to the left. These webs are used as burrows or to trap prey. These webs have a flat surface for capturing prey and a small funnel-like tube leading to a silken burrow, in which the spider hides.

Some female spiders lay eggs into a silk sac and will stay around and protect the eggs until they hatch into spiderlings. Other spider moms never get to see their young. A female wolf spider carries her spiderlings on her back until they are mature enough to be in the world on their own.

The spider pictured below has used spider silk to wrap her prey. If her catch has a sting that could be lethal to her, she might wrap it before she kills it.

