

Itsy Bitsy Spiders

It's October, and that means Halloween is coming soon. And that means you'll see lots of spiders: spider decorations, spider costumes, spider webs, spider everything!

Some people think spiders are scary. All those legs DO make them look a little creepy!

If spiders scare you, challenge yourself to learn more about them. They're interesting, useful, amazing creatures. And they have a very important place in God's world.

Bug Patrol

Ever walked into a spiderweb? It's really hard to get that sticky silk off your hands. It's even harder for bugs to get unstuck from spiderwebs after they fly in. And that's a good thing for you and me.

Why? Because if spiders didn't build their webs, then mosquitoes, flies, and other bugs would be everywhere!

One spider can eat up to 2,000 insects in a year. Some scientists say that if there were no spiders, bugs would eat all the crops that farmers grow.

So if you find a spider in your house, don't kill it. Gently cover it with a plastic container or a jar and slide a piece of paper underneath. Then set it free outside so it can eat more bugs!

How to Build a Web

Most spiders spin their webs at night, so it's hard to watch them at work. But take a look outside some morning: you should be able to find at least one spider web.

- The spider uses one of its legs to pull a long piece of silk from a part of its body called a *spinneret*. The silk floats on the wind and gets stuck to a branch or a piece of outdoor furniture or a railing. (Some spiders can even spin a web across a river!)
- After one end of the silk is attached, the spider attaches the other end. Then it has a "bridge" to climb on.
- The spider then makes the "spokes" of the web. They look like the spokes of a bicycle wheel.
- Then the spider works in circles to connect the spokes in a spiral pattern with sticky silk.
- Spiders can make different kinds of silk, depending on the job the silk will do. Some spiders can make seven different kinds!

Want to see a spider at work building a web? Check out this video at tinyurl.com/BannerWeb.



ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOLLADAY

Best Spider Book Ever

Charlotte's Web, first published in October of 1952, is one of the best books ever. It's also the best spider book ever. The author, E.B. White, lived on a farm in Maine. One day, he saw a spider making an egg sac, and that's what gave him the idea to write this wonderful book.



FuN Facts

Scientists have identified **35,000** different kinds of spiders in the world, but there are probably many more that we haven't discovered yet.

Spiders have been around for a long time. There are even **spider fossils!**

Most spiders live about **two years**, but some live longer.

Spiders live on every continent except **Antarctica**.

Wherever you are, there's usually a spider within **10 feet** (3 metres) of you.

When a spider walks, **only four** of its legs touch the ground at a time.



PHOTO BY PAUL A. SELDEN



Up Close and Personal

It's hard to see a spider's face up close. But when someone takes a picture with a special magnifying camera lens, the results are amazing. Some spiders look like furry animals or creatures from a Star Wars movie. Pretty cool!



Spiders—Yum!

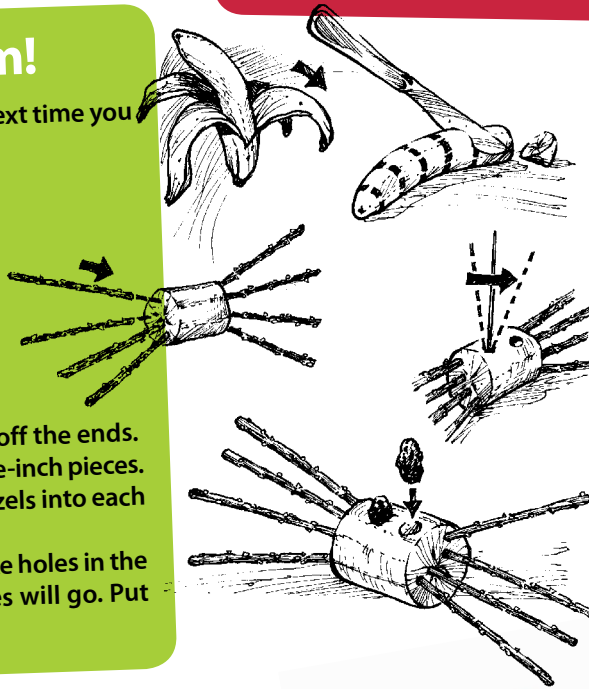
Make this spidery snack next time you get the munchies.

What you need:

- A banana
- A butter knife
- Small straight pretzels
- A toothpick
- Raisins

What you do:

- Peel a banana and cut off the ends.
- Cut the banana into one-inch pieces.
- Stick four straight pretzels into each cut side for legs.
- Use a toothpick to make holes in the banana where the eyes will go. Put raisins in the holes.



Spidey Senses

Do spiders have the same five senses you do? Not exactly.

Sight: Most spiders have eight eyes. But even with all those eyes, they don't have the best vision. Hunting spiders have better vision than web-building spiders.

Hearing: Spiders can't hear because they don't have ears.

Smell and Taste: Spiders don't have noses, and they can't really taste things. But special hairs on their legs can sense chemicals. That tells them if something is good to eat.

Touch: Spiders have an excellent sense of touch. Those tiny hairs on their legs help them sense vibrations in the world around them.



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