



Webs - Why do spiders make webs?

Fact

- Spiders produce fine shiny threads called silk to make nests, cocoons or webs.
- The main use for a web is to catch food. Some spiders even wrap their prey in silk web if they want to save it until later.
- A web can be used as a nest for baby spiders to protect them from the weather and other animals or as a special sac to carry spider eggs in.
- Spiders use their silk thread to travel. They travel to find new places to make webs to find food or to keep their babies. They sometimes attach a silk thread to something, then they let out silk as the wind picks them up and carries them along – a bit like a safety line. Or they lower themselves down on a silk thread.

Do you know

- A web is made of silk. Spiders, silk worms and lots of insect larvae make silk.
- Inside the spider's abdomen are the silk glands. After silk is made in the glands, it leaves the spider's body through Spinnerets, which are small tubes found at the spider's bottom
- A strand of spider's silk is finer than a human hair, but it is stronger than nylon thread and more stretchy.
- Before sticking plasters were invented, some people put cobwebs onto cuts.

Experiments you can do

How sticky and stretchy is a spider web?

What you need:

An empty spider web (one that doesn't have spiders living in it anymore)

Some small leaves and twigs

What you do:

Touch the web with a leaf or a twig. Does the web stick to the leaf or the twig? Can you leave the leaf or twig sticking there, or will it fall out straight away? Try different sized leaves and twigs – will they all stick or are some too heavy or big.

How stretchy is the web. Gently pull on a little bit of web. How far will it stretch before it breaks? Do it slowly and gently.

Other Investigations

Find webs around your place – inside and out. How many different types of webs can you find?

Where do you find the most – out in the open or tucked away in corners? Why is that?

Is there anything in the web?

How many spiders can you find?

If you find a web but can't find any spiders gently touch the web with your finger. It will send a vibration along the web and if there is a spider lurking nearby it will probably come rushing out to see what has landed in its web.

Jokes

What do you call two spiders that just got married? Newly webs.
From Matt