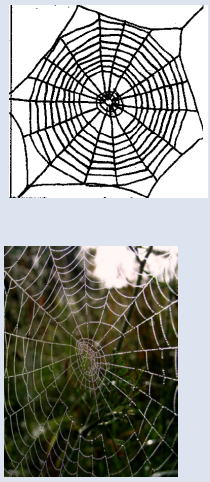
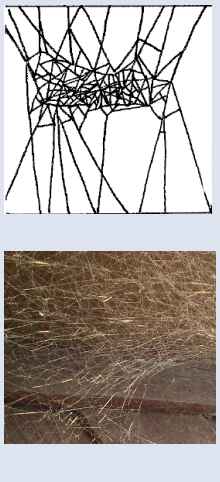
SPIDER KEY

Web-Building Spiders

Sheet Web Spiders

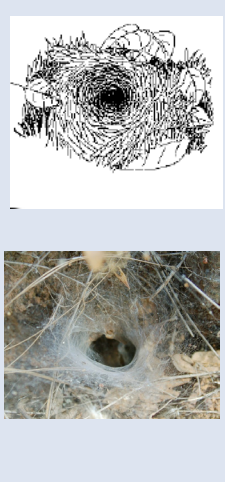


Orb web spider

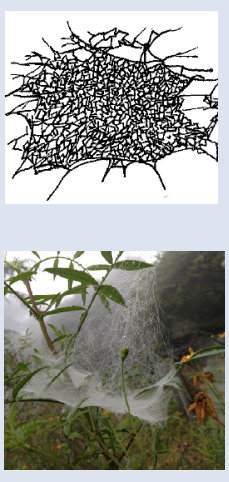


Cobweb spider

Cellar spider



Funnel web spider

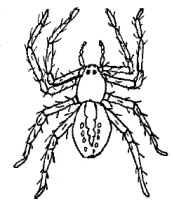


Platform spider

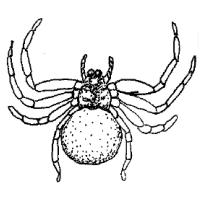
Filmy dome spider

Bowl & doily spider

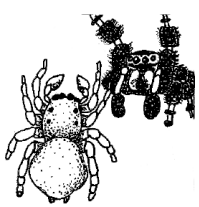
Spiders without Webs



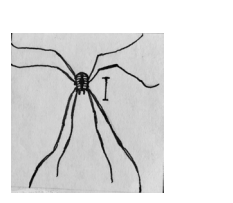
Wolf & nursery spider



Crab spider



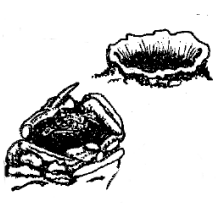
Jumping spider



Harvestmen

Burrowing Spiders

Trapdoor spider



Turret & folding door spider

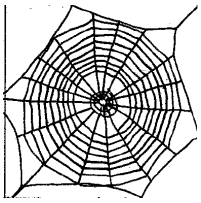
Tarantula spider

See Photo Credits on page 22 for sources.

SPIDER KEY

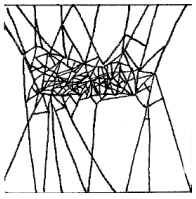
Shorter Version

Web-Building Spiders

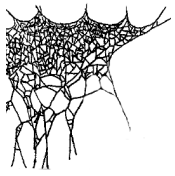


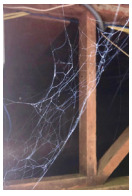
Orb web spiders. These spiders don't have great eyesight, but use their webs to feel the world around them. There are special lines in their webs that shake when something touches them. When the lines shake, orb spiders can sense it. The orb web spider can tell the difference between shaking from a prey that got caught in their web, a male spider that has come to mate, or something else.

Orb spiders make their webs sticky to catch prey. They do this by squirting sticky drops on the web and then plucking it with their legs so the sticky drops spread out along the silk lines.



Cobweb spiders. These spiders are irregular, usually with a platform with threads going up and down above and below it. The threads are sticky and tough. Some cobweb spiders set traps to catch insects that crawl on the ground. They put sticky drops at the ends of silk lines where they connect to the ground. When an insect walks by, it may get caught in one of these sticky drops and try to get away. When it does, the silk line breaks off the ground like a rubber band, snapping the prey to the center of the web where it struggles and gets tangled in other threads till the spider catches it.



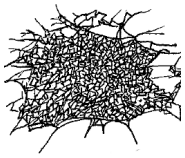


Cellar spiders. These spiders build irregular "messy" webs in the corners of structures—houses, dumpsters, etc. Daddy-long-legs sometimes shake their webs when threatened, to blur the web and make it seem to disappear.

Funnel web spiders. Most of these spiders spin platform webs with a silk tube. Funnel webs are not sticky, so when insects land on the web, they have trouble moving around and may bounce, like running on a trampoline. Funnel web spiders can run quickly on top of the web to grab the struggling prey. Funnel spiders return to their funnel to eat their prey. The back end of the funnel is open so the spiders can escape if threatened.

Shorter Version

Web-Building Spiders

a) 

b) 

c) 

a) 

b) 

c) 

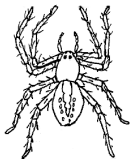
Sheet web spiders. These spiders usually hide, hanging upside down underneath their platform, dome, or bowl.

Their webs have trip threads that break when flying insects crash into them. The threads snap like rubber bands, knocking the insects into the silk web. Then the spider quickly grabs the prey through the web, pulls it underneath, and eats it.

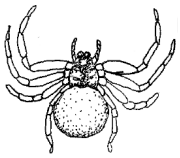
Sheet web weavers have to fix their webs after every catch.

Left: a) platform spider, b) filmy dome spider, c) bowl & doily spider

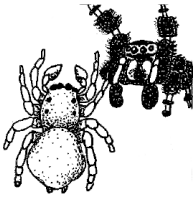
Spiders without Webs



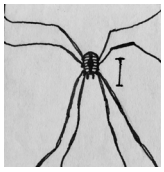
Wolf spiders. Instead of making webs, wolf spiders chase down their prey. They run on the ground, and some climb plants, leaving a silk "dragline" wherever they go. Some hunt during the day and some at night, and they rest under stones or wood in silk "sleeping bags."



Crab spiders. Crab spiders hold their legs out at their sides like crabs and can walk forward, backwards, or sideways. They wait in ambush for passing insects. Some are brightly colored and blend in with flowers where they hide to ambush bees and other insects.



Jumping spiders. Jumping spiders are often brightly colored, are active during the day, and in sunshine. They walk with a lot of stops and starts, and jump on their prey. Jumping spiders sometimes jump 40 times their own length! Before jumping, the spider attaches a silk thread so it can climb back in case it misses. Jumping spiders have four big eyes on the face and four smaller ones on top of the head. They have the best vision of any spiders, and use it to find prey.



Havestmen. A-ha!! Caught you! Harvestmen are spider "cousins," not real spiders. Though harvestmen have two body parts like spiders, they look like they don't—they don't have a "waistline." Harvestmen cannot make silk. They eat tiny insects.

Burrowing Spiders

Shorter Version

Trapdoor spiders. These spiders dig tube-like burrows lined with silk. They hide the top of the lid with leaves, twigs, and other things that are lying around. The trapdoor spider can hold its door shut with a lot of force. It makes silk lines around its burrow, which shake when insects walk by them. The spider feels these movements, rushes out, grabs its prey, and pulls it into its tube to eat it.

Top: folding door spider

Bottom: turret spider

Turret & folding door spiders. Some spiders make a "turret" (small tower) around the opening of their burrow. They mix soil and plant materials with silk to build a small wall, up to about 1-inch high, at the burrows' opening. The spiders feel shaking from insects wandering by and run out to catch their prey. Folding door spiders can close the opening of their burrow.

Tarantulas. These spiders are the largest of all spiders. Many people keep tarantulas as pets because they live a very long time, and aren't harmful to humans. They ambush and eat big insects, other spiders, centipedes, and millipedes. They almost never leave their silk-lined homes, waiting for prey to come by.