

# SHERWOOD SHEET 1

## THE SPIDERS OF FOREST



Spiders surely represent many people's biggest phobia. Yet a fear of spiders is not something we are born with, but usually develop sometime in our early childhood. Parents often unknowingly pass on their own existing fears to their children. But spiders should be appreciated, even just for their ability to construct a web that in orb weaving species, often seems mathematically accurate with each strand of silk.



Sherwood Forest is presently home to over 230 different species of spider, but their recording has been limited. Few surveys have ever taken place at Sherwood, but the forest is home to several nationally rare or endangered species.

*Midia midas* and *Zora sylvestris* are probably the rarest spiders found at Sherwood Forest. *Midia midas* is a small, dark spider, that lives on old trees.

It has been recorded on just two occasions - in 1912 and 1978. There is little doubt that it still occurs in the forest, just that no one is looking for it. *Zora sylvestris* on the other hand, is a ground dwelling spider. Fast moving and often difficult to find, Sherwood Forest is currently the only site in the UK with any recent records. It prefers a heathland habitat and is usually found underneath heather.

One of Sherwood's largest spiders is the Cave Spider, which lives in total darkness underneath two manhole covers at the visitor centre. However, you can see many more spiders on any visit to the forest in Autumn. A morning visit is recommended, when the webs are covered in dew. So go out and appreciate our spiders more!



### Spiders illustrated

- 1 Garden Cross Spider
- 2 Orb Weaver
- 3 Cave Spider
- 4 Mesh Weaver

