

SHERWOOD SHEET 2 THE SPIDERS OF FOREST



With over 230 known species of spider found here, Sherwood Forest represents a great place to look for them.

On the ground, most of the spiders are the familiar Wolf Spiders. There are several different species, all generally coloured dark brown. They do not build webs to catch their prey, but rely on speed and surprise attack.



Jumping Spiders hunt in a similar way, but not so much on the ground. Checking tree trunks, walls and fences, will eventually be rewarded by finding these charismatic little spiders, but you can always look for them on the walls of your house. Jumping spiders have excellent eyesight, with four very large eyes at the front of the head.

*While Wolf Spiders and Jumping Spiders are quite easy to find, some others take a little more effort. The bright green spider *Araniella*, is common on the lower branches of trees and bushes. They make a small orb web on the upper side of a leaf and generally sit upside down in the web. There are two almost identical green orb weavers at Sherwood Forest and the differences between the two, require a good magnifying glass to see.*

Spider identification is rather difficult and in the case of many of the so called money spiders, actually need microscopic examination. This may be one of the reasons why they have been so rarely studied at Sherwood Forest. With such a large site, it is very likely that many more species still await discovery.

In recent years, some efforts have been made towards their recording and one new spider turned up in one of the visitor centre buildings. The spider was the Daddy Long-leg Spider. It is rarely found outdoors and prefers dark, quiet places. It is not a small spider by any means, with a small body and very long, thin legs.

Its discovery, just goes to show what can be found, even when people have looked before!



Spiders illustrated

- 1 Orb Weaver
- 2 Jumping Spider
- 3 *Araniella* Orb Weaver
- 4 Wolf Spider