

SHERWOOD SHEET 3

THE SPIDERS OF FOREST



The more well vegetated areas of Sherwood Forest, are good places to look for the wide range of spiders that can be found here. Different species can be found on different types of vegetation. Some spiders only live in Sherwood's ancient Oaks, whilst others tend to be found on or near the ground.

The Nursery Web Spider is a large, fast moving spider found on low plants such as Docks and Nettles. They get their name from the way the female protects her eggs and young from predators, though this is something that many female spiders do. The Nursery Web Spider is a common species at Sherwood Forest, but is found widely throughout the UK.



But Sherwood Forest has a spider that is seen far less than its characteristic egg sac. The spider is *Agroeca proxima*, a moderately sized, brown spider, which hunts on the ground. It is largely active at night and the adult spider is usually only recorded, when it appears in the light produced by moth traps. *Agroeca*'s egg sac is very distinctive, shaped like an upside down wine glass and attached to a plant or grass stem. Sometimes the female will cover the egg sac with soil, but many egg sacs are left exposed and the young left to fend for themselves.

The Nursery web Spider is the opposite to *Agroeca*, but many other species show a similar amount of parental care after the eggs have hatched.

Female Wolf Spiders are perhaps even more extreme, carrying their egg sac around with them and even after hatching, will continue to carry their young on their backs.

So on your visit to Sherwood Forest, why not have a look for some of it's amazing range of spiders.

Spiders illustrated

- 1 Nursery Web Spider
- 2 *Agroeca* egg sac
- 3 Linyphid Spider

