CAUTION: DANGEROUS

If you come across any of these critters, please DO NOT handle them. The forest is their home, and since these critters play important roles in the natural environment, please DO NOT kill them either.

Extremely Venomous

The female black widow and brown recluse spiders have extremely venomous bites that can cause serious injury to humans, and in some cases be fatal. Even though you're more likely to encounter these spiders in your house, they do live outside as well... preferring wood piles and fallen debris.

Black Widow

The brown recluse (also known as the violin spider, brown fiddler and fiddleback spider) has a violin shaped marking on the top of its cephalothorax.

Thanks for joining us on the trail today! Visit our website to find more TRACK Trail™ adventures near you!

The next generation of stewards will help preserve the world's plants, animals, natural lands, and our heritage. What will you do to make a difference?

Potentially Dangerous

Wasps, bees and centipedes have a mildly poisonous sting or bite that can cause severe reactions in some people. Although it is rare, ticks may carry dangerous diseases.

Wasp

Bee

Tick

On your hike today, use this brochure to identify some of the various insects, spiders, and arthropods that call the forest home.

TRACK your hike at kidsinparks.com and get FREE prizes!

WARNING

Some of our insect and spider friends have adaptations that help them survive that can be harmful to you. Be Aware! Please read the side panel for information regarding potentially dangerous spiders and insects before beginning your adventure.
Insects are an extremely diverse group of animals. More than half of all known organisms on Earth are insects. There are over 1 million different types of insects!

The drawing of the honeybee below is typical of most insects. All insects have:

- A hard, external skeleton called an exoskeleton
- A head with two antennae, compound eyes and mouth parts
- A thorax with six jointed legs and, if present, 2 or 4 wings
- An abdomen with respiratory, reproductive and digestive organs

On the drawing above, circle the three main body parts of an insect.

What is an Exoskeleton?

Unlike humans and other animals who have skeletons on the inside of our bodies, insects have their skeleton on the outside.

A hard exoskeleton protects an insect like a knight’s armor.

Other Arthropods

Arthropods are a group of creatures that make up about 80% of all living things on Earth. All arthropods have an exoskeleton, segmented body and jointed legs. Insects, spiders, and crustaceans are all arthropods.

Look Similar, But Different

Although centipedes and millipedes look similar, they are not. Centipedes are venomous carnivores that eat insects and millipedes. Centipedes have two legs per body segment.

Millipedes are nonvenomous herbivores that like to eat decaying plant matter. Millipedes have four legs per body segment.

Spiders

Although insects and spiders look similar, they are actually different. Insects have a three-part body and six legs. Spiders have a two-part body and eight legs.

Spiders have a hard exoskeleton and a two-part body made up of the cephalothorax and abdomen. The head and thorax in insects are combined into the cephalothorax in spiders. It contains eight legs, pedipalps and has venom injecting fangs! A spider’s abdomen has web-making spinnerets.

Body Parts

- Second Leg
- Front Leg
- Third Leg
- Fourth Leg
- Spinerets
- Cephalothorax
- Abdomen

Hunting Strategies

Not all spiders live on or make spider webs. Some spiders actively hunt their prey by crawling through the leaf litter. Others patiently wait on vegetation. Where did you find the most spiders today?