

Make Spider Web Art!

Do you have an extra curious third grader? Collecting spider webs is a fun way to preserve some of nature's greatest works of art and explore some fascinating creatures. This craft provides a way to study these amazing architects' work. Did you know that a spider uses its own body as a measuring tool when making its web? Spiders often build a new web each day.

This activity will take you and your child through the steps of collecting and preserving webs, but make sure there are no spiders present and if there are, be sure to gently nudge them away. But don't touch or harm the spiders! They are hard workers and are essential components of our ecosystem.

What You Need:

- Non-toxic white enamel spray paint
- Newspaper (to protect plants)
- A sheet of multi-colored construction paper for each web

What You Do:

1. Help your child locate an empty spider web and place newspapers around the area where you will be spraying paint. You want to make sure you don't spray other plants or structures.
2. Carefully spray both sides of the web with a small amount of paint (it's best for a grown up to do this part, but with a little help your child can give it a try if she likes). Spray gently and quickly in short bursts so that you don't break the web.
3. When you have fully covered the web in paint press the construction paper to the web and carefully pull the web away. Allow the web to dry on the paper.
4. When your spider web "casts" have been collected and dried, you'll be able to really take the time to explore these amazing creations. Not only that, but you'll have some beautiful and interesting art work to display in your home.

Did You Know?

While casting your net to capture the spider web, you and your child might want to consider the amazing creature that made the web. Most spiders have three spinnerets, or glands, that produce the silk for the webs. Spider silk is also called gossamer. This silk is one of the strongest natural fibers in the world. Spiders often eat their webs, in essence recycling their webs to reuse the material again.

Even spiders can get caught in their sticky strands, so they build less sticky wires that serve as walkways from which they monitor their webs. This prevents them from getting stuck and becoming a target for prey. They are truly amazing creatures!

Extension Idea: This activity is great to do any time of year, but next Halloween try this activity with your child and use black and orange construction paper as the background for your collected webs. Then when you're done exploring, you can hang the casted webs in your home as Halloween decorations!

