

Spiders Build Giant Web in Texas Park



What's the largest spider web you have ever seen? This year, spiders in Texas have built a web so large that people from around the world are coming to take a look. The web stretches about 100 yards over trees and bushes. A few months ago it was about 200 yards wide, but wind and rain tore down part of it.

Scientists say the web was not spun by one big spider. They say thousands of spiders got together to spin the giant web. The web should continue to grow, said Donna Garde, park superintendent.

The web was white when the spiders first spun it, she added. But now it looks brown because millions of mosquitoes have been trapped in it.

Many scientists have taken a close look at the web. They have identified members of 13 spider families in it. They are interested in the web because spiders do not usually work together. Spiders usually spin their own webs as they compete with each other to catch food for themselves. Many spiders even eat other spiders.

Large webs such as this one in Texas are not as unusual as you might think. In past years, big webs have been seen in Florida, California, and Ohio.

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE GIANT SPIDER WEB

- Scientists think the park's spider population was larger than normal this year because there was a larger-than-normal population of insects for spiders to eat.
- Spiders are not insects. They are *arachnids*. They are related to scorpions and mites.

NEWS WORD BOX

arachnid mosquitoes
compete identified
superintendent normal

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Over Labor Day weekend, about 3,000 people visited the park to see the web. Of course many other people decided not go near the web. Would you have been among the visitors, or would you have stayed away? Tell why you would make that choice.