



## Activity 101A Habitats

# Home Away From Home

**Objective** Set up a habitat for a spider and learn about its life needs.

**What You Need** Aquarium tank or very large jar  
Small sponge and water  
Cheesecloth, aluminum foil, or paper with holes punched in it  
Tape  
Soil, rocks, leaves, and branches  
Flashlight  
Plastic container or net for catching spiders  
Insects (for spider food)

**Safety** Be sure that you know the characteristics of the Black Widow Spider, which is poisonous. Do NOT touch one. Remember that spiders are living creatures. Treat them with respect.

Follow your parent's or teacher's rules for safety.

*SpiderRoom.info . . . Spider Species . . . Virginia Species  
. . . Black Widow*

- Directions**
1. Place soil in the bottom of the container. Add a few leaves, rocks, and branches.
  2. Place a small wet sponge in the container for moisture. You will need to add fresh water to the sponge every few days.
  3. Carefully capture a spider to put in the container. Try not to hurt it when you capture it. If you injure the spider, it will not be a good model of spider behavior.
  4. Place the spider in the container. Cover the container with the fabric or paper. Tape the edges down securely.
  5. Every day, for three days, observe the spider. Make a Spider Journal. Record your observations.
  6. At least once a day, add live insects, such as flies or grasshoppers to the container. Observe what happens. What does the spider prefer to eat?
  7. Using the flashlight, see how the spider reacts to light and to darkness. Which does the spider prefer? How can you make the habitat better for the spider?
  8. Do spiders react to noise? What is your evidence?
  9. After 3 days release the spider in the same habitat that you collected it.
  10. If you are still studying spiders, collect a new spider to observe.

- Go Further** 1. Learn about the habitats of tarantulas, which are often kept as pets.

*SpiderRoom.info. . . Anatomy. . . Research a Tarantula*

2. Learn about the native spiders of Virginia and the habitats in which they live.

*SpiderRoom.info. . . Spider Species*

- Spider Math** 1. A tarantula ate 5 flies each day. How many flies did it eat in a week? A weekend? The month of August?

2. An aquarium tank to hold a tarantula is twice as long as it is wide. If the tank is one foot long, how wide is the tank?

- Spider Literature** 1. Read the book, **The Lives of Spiders**, by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent.

*SpiderRoom.info. . . Spider Yarns. . . Books. . . Non-Fiction*

2. Read the book, **A Spider Might**, by Tom Walther.