

Diversity of Foliage Spiders in Two Contrasting Habitats in the Rain Forest Zone of Southwestern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This study investigated and described the diversity and characteristics of spider families occurring in two contrasting natural habitats within a typical rainforest ecosystem in southwestern Nigeria. Standard sweep-nets were used to collect spiders from the under storey foliage in the Forest reserve of Biological Gardens and a nearby Tree Park in a band from ground level to approximately 1.5m height. Sampling was done in August, 2011 (Rain season) and January, 2012 (Dry season). The specimens were collected from two sets of 100 sweeps to give a total of 200 sweeps per day at each site. Collected data were analysed using Simpson's index of diversity. The Forest Reserve had greater species richness, abundance and diversity than the Tree Park. Only 14% of the species were common to both sites. The study suggests the possible effect of habitat characteristics on the occurrence and diversity of foliage spider species.