Spiderwebs measure microplastic pollution

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Scientists in Germany have discovered spiderwebs can be used to measure the amount of microplastics in city air. They collected spiderwebs from bus stops located along roads with varying traffic levels.

The scientists found that all the webs they collected were contaminated with microplastics. They identified fibres from textiles, as well as soot particles. In some cases the plastic content accounted for a tenth of the total weight of a web. Almost 90% of the plastic detected consisted of poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET), poly(chloroethene) (PVC) and material from car tyres. The amount of tyre debris in the webs varied greatly, depending on traffic levels.

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Scientists are monitoring airborne plastics using sticky spider webs in cities

Questions

1. What are microplastics?
2. Suggests ways microplastics could enter human bodies?
3. PVC is an addition polymer and PET is a condensation polymer. Describe the differences in the ways these two polymers form.

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