

## Protect Yourself and Your Pets From Ticks this Summer

*Deer ticks are most active in the spring and summer months, but you can protect your home using a few simple landscaping tips.*

Deer ticks can transmit bacteria that may cause diseases including Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis. Because it takes more than 24 hours for a tick to transmit these bacteria to its host, you can protect yourself by finding and removing any ticks from your skin as soon as possible. Of course, the best prevention is to prevent ticks from biting at all.

### Understanding Deer Ticks

Deer ticks, also known as blacklegged ticks, take two years to complete their life cycle. Larval ticks hatch in the summer and are active in August and September. They may become infected when they take their blood meal from a small mammal or bird. The larval ticks molt and become nymphs capable of infecting humans in late May. These poppy seed sized ticks are active from spring to fall when they become adults. After taking a blood meal from a deer or other medium-sized mammal, including humans, adults overwinter in the leaf litter. They lay their eggs in the spring which then hatch and re-start the cycle in summer.



### Landscaping a tick-free yard

Deer ticks typically prefer a shady, moist environment where they can avoid drying out. They wait in the underbrush, leaf litter, or tall grass for their next meal to cross their path.

- Create a barrier between the wooded tick habitat and your home by lining your yard with a 3-7 foot wide perimeter of mulch, wood chips, gravel, etc. This also creates a visual reminder to anyone crossing the perimeter to check for ticks.
- Discourage deer, which may carry ticks into your yard while browsing on your flowering plants, by installing deer fencing (for yards of 15 acres or more) or incorporating plants they find undesirable.

<b>Landscape to Discourage Deer</b>		
<b>Annuals</b>	<b>Perennials</b>	<b>Shrubs &amp; Vines</b>
Alyssum	Daffodil	Andromeda
Marigold	Hyacinth	Boxwood
Nasturtium	Iris	Butterfly Bush
Pansy	Snowdrops	Leucothoe
Sage	Beebalm	Wisteria
Spiderflower	Bleeding Heart	Weigela
Verbena	Columbine	
	Foxglove	
	Lily of the Valley	
	Poppy	
	Silvermound	
	Yarrow	

## **Maintaining a tick-free yard**

Good management will reduce the amount of tick-friendly habitat and also reduce the number of mice and deer that could bring ticks closer to your home.

- Keep your grass cut short (2")
- Prune plants, shrubs, and bushes to let it more sunlight.
- Remove leaf litter and underbrush around transition areas, including sheds and stonewalls.
- Store woodpiles off the ground and away from your home.
- Place bird feeders away from your home and only provide seed from Dec-April.
- Move swing sets, hammocks, and picnic tables away from the woods.

## **Pesticide use in the yard**

Mice are the primary source of tick bacterial infections, so it is important to include mouse management in your landscaping strategy.

- Purchase and distribute biodegradable Tick Tubes in your yard (24 tubes per 1 acre) in late July/August when new larval ticks are emerging. Mice will take the permethrin-impregnated cotton from the tubes to use as bedding in their nests, preventing them from becoming infested.

Hiring a licensed pesticide applicator with experience in tick control is also an option for controlling the tick population in your yard.

- Typically, two sprays a year (mid-May and mid-June for larval and nymphal ticks) are enough, but a third application in October may reduce adult ticks. The spray or granules need only be applied along the perimeter of your yard, shady perennial beds, or along wooded trails.

Always check yourself and your pets for ticks after spending time in tick habitats!

For more information, visit [www.TickEncounter.org](http://www.TickEncounter.org)