

Managing and Controlling Tick Infestations

Tick season is upon us and I thought it would be a great time to share some tips for managing the “uptick” in their numbers this year. But first a short bio on ticks... Deer Ticks, also known as black-legged ticks, transmit the bacterium Lyme disease via a skin bite. The disease can be transferred by an infected deer tick, but not all ticks carry Lyme. Not all tick bites lead to the dreaded Lyme disease. Both young and mature ticks can carry and transmit Lyme disease. Despite their name, deer ticks do not only drop off deer. Mice, cats, dogs, rabbits and other warm-blooded creatures are also modes of tick transport so ticks can wind up in your yard whether or not deer are present. Mice, cats, and dogs can also bring ticks into the house and because they are so tiny they can live indoors undetected. Make sure that all pets receive preventative tick medication on a regular basis.

Some tips to consider when working or spending time outdoors:

- Always tuck your pants into your clothes while walking through thick brush so ticks cannot find their way onto the surface of your skin.
- Apply an insect repellent to exposed skin and clothes while spending time outdoor in grassy areas.
- Perform period tick checks on your children, your pets, and yourself every few hours to make sure that no ticks have attached themselves to clothes or skin. The quicker a tick is removed from skin or clothing, the less likely an infected deer tick will transmit Lyme disease.
- Keep your grass and weeds cut as short as possible. The longer your grass, the higher ticks can climb for attachment. Wood piles and straw that is used to cover new grass seed may also contain ticks.

If you do find a tick on you, removal is recommended as soon as possible. Use tweezers to gently but firmly pull on the tick, ensuring that the entire tick is removed. It is crucial that the head/jaws (which is its smallest part) be removed entirely from the skin. Leaving it in place may expose you to anything it may be carrying.

As for tick control, there are a wide variety of treatments that are available. However, please check the labels of anything you may purchase. 99% of treatments contain insecticides which are harmful when applied near water. Seeing as how this is a lake community, applying these chemicals on your property will cause them to run-off into the lake after any rain event. This will directly lead to fish death as well as toxicity for anyone swimming or spending time in the water near your cabin as well as unhealthy to children or pets within treated areas.

I've listed some alternative, natural-based tick treatments below. They are safe to use around people and pets if applied properly. From personal experience, I've seen a significant reduction in ticks after using the following products:

- EcoLogic Granular 10 lb. Lawn Insect Control

- <https://www.lowes.com/pd/EcoLogic-Granular-10-Count-10-lb-Lawn-Insect-Control/1000132149>
- Try not to apply when windy and only if it will be rain-free for 48 hours or so after application. Wearing safety glasses and a dust mask helps since the granules are a bit fine.
- Harris Diatomaceous Earth Food Grade, 10.5 lb. w/ Free Powder Duster
 - <https://pfharris.com/product/diatomaceous-earth-food-grade/>
 - Comes in smaller sizes as well but can take a while to spread. It's very effective against all insects, not only ticks just in case you have other infestations.

(Note: The Board does not endorse any product. This information is the result of personal research and experience.)

The average price of a natural-based repellent spraying for up to 10,000 sq. ft. is \$150 per spraying (about once per month). Some places have discounts on the order of buy 5, get 1 free. I much prefer the EcoLogic Granules... 1-1.5 bags will cover about the same square footage for about \$20 and less than an hour of work. I've reached out to some companies to see if there are package rates available for mass-spraying for the entire community, but am waiting to hear back.

Hope this helps!

Feliks

113 Red Rd