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Media Contact: Randy Schultz, schultz@schultzpr.com

Brace Yourself for Tick Season

Tick populations are on the rise, and these insects are carrying more diseases than ever before

Call it a tick-ing time bomb. In backyards, forests and fields across America, the population of disease-carrying ticks is increasing. Plus, a new species of tick not normally found in the Western Hemisphere has now invaded the United States.

As a result, many health and insect control experts are predicting the spring and summer of 2020 to be another bad season for ticks and their disease-carrying bites.

Lyme Disease—and More

Ticks are best known for transmitting Lyme Disease, which can cause a rash, fatigue, fever, chills, and headaches—plus aches in muscles and joints. If left untreated, Lyme Disease can cause arthritis, severe joint pain and swelling.



Every year, about 30,000 cases of Lyme Disease are reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the leading national public health institute in the United States. Lyme Disease is transmitted by the bites of infected Blacklegged Ticks (also known as Deer Ticks.) Unfortunately, the Blacklegged Tick is widespread throughout the Eastern US—particularly in the Northeast and the Upper Midwest.

But Lyme Disease isn't the only disease spread by ticks. The American Dog Tick, found east of the Rocky Mountains and in parts of coastal California, transmits Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The Brown Dog Tick, found throughout the continental US, also spreads Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The Western Blacklegged Tick, found in Pacific Coast states, can transmit Lyme Disease and Anaplasmosis. The Lone Star Tick—found in Eastern Texas, throughout the South and as far north as Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, southern New York and Massachusetts—carries several diseases.

As if that wasn't enough, the Asian Longhorned Tick was reported for the first time in the United States in 2017. Since then, the ticks have been found on pets, livestock, wildlife and people.

Prevention is the Key

In backyards and acreage property where people live and work, prevention is the key to keeping tick populations down. Ticks thrive in high-humidity areas in a landscape, and they are less likely to be present in sunny and dry areas. Ticks can't fly or jump, but they often climb to the tips of tall grasses, weeds, and shrubs to wait for an animal or human to come by. When that happens, ticks can climb aboard the unsuspecting person or animal.

To keep ticks away from houses, clear brush and tall grass, and remove leaf litter where ticks can hide. A barrier of wood chips or gravel between wooded areas and landscaped yards will make it more difficult for ticks to migrate into yards. Try to locate swing sets and playground areas away from wooded areas.

Deer can bring ticks into a yard, so protect vegetable gardens with a deer-proof fence. If possible, remove other plants that attract deer. Instead, plant deer-resistant shrubs and other plants.

Use Insect Spray to Kill Ticks

Ticks can be killed with a permethrin spray such as Summit® Tick & Flea Spray. Permethrin spray is a superior product for tick control because it provides a quick kill of existing tick populations and continues to kill and repel ticks for up to four weeks.



Spray Summit® Tick & Flea Spray around the perimeter of lawn areas, under porches, and in grassy or bushy areas near the house. Ivy and shrubbery up to a height of 2-3 feet should also be sprayed.

Ticks are attracted to dogs, so spray the areas in the yard where dogs travel or spend time. Kennels and dog houses should also be thoroughly sprayed.

Summit® Tick & Flea Spray is available in a handy hose-end spray bottle and as a concentrate that can be mixed with water and applied with a pump sprayer. A half-gallon bottle of concentrate makes 50 gallons of ready-to-use spray.

Summit® Tick & Flea Spray is available at Tractor Supply and select local garden centers. For more information visit www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com.

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The Life Cycle of a Tick

Ticks go through four distinct stages during their two-year life span.

1. A tick begins its life as an egg.
2. The egg hatches into a larva, which are sometimes called “seed ticks.” The larva attaches itself to a host animal, from which it takes a blood meal.
3. The larva becomes a nymph. The nymph attaches itself to another host animal and takes another blood meal.
4. The nymph becomes an adult. An adult female tick takes a blood meal from a third animal host. It then becomes engorged and falls off the host. A female tick can lay about 3,000 eggs in a protected area on the ground.

Brace Yourself for Tick Season 2020.06.19