



Be LakeSmart

Lakes Environmental Association



LakeSmart Tip: Tick Protection

Ticks are unavoidable when enjoying life outdoors in Maine. While some ticks can transfer disease to humans, there are simple yet effective ways to protect yourself from tick bites while enjoying the great outdoors.

Personal protection

Avoiding tick bites starts with keeping them off your body. The best way to do this is by incorporating periodic tick checks into your day. Smart clothing choices such as light-colored clothes, long sleeves/ pants, and gaiters can help minimize tick bites without the use of bug spray.

DEET-based repellent on your skin and wearing permethrin-treated clothing are great supplements to tick checks and smart clothing choices. Repellents containing 20% or more DEET can protect up to several hours. Always follow product label instructions when applying any repellent. Permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing, and camping gear; it remains protective through several washings.

Managing your property

Deer, birds, mice, chipmunks, and other local wildlife host ticks and spread them geographically. Most people encounter ticks in their own yards or in homes after pets bring them inside. You can minimize exposure to ticks through both personal protection and smart landscaping. Some management actions worth consideration:

- Surface footpaths with a natural mulch (e.g., erosion control mix or bark mulch).
- Trim vegetation along the edges of footpaths and up to ten feet overhead.
- Bird nests and bird feeders can be homes to ticks and can be placed away from paths and use areas. Bird feeders also feed small mammals that host ticks, such as chipmunks and mice.

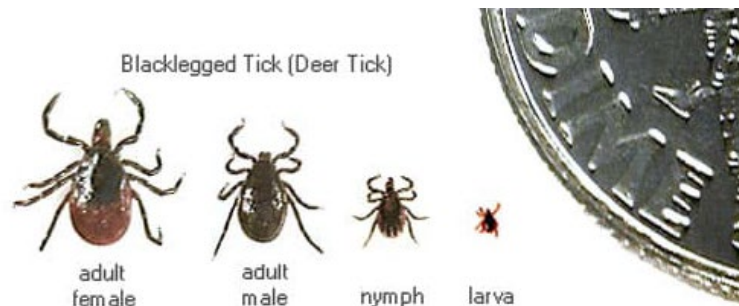
LakeSmart is a program of Maine Lakes run in the Lake Region by the Lakes Environmental Association. For more information contact LEA at 207-647-8580 or visit www.mainelakes.org/lakesmart.

Safe use of acaracides (Tick Pesticides)

A springtime application of an acaracide can greatly reduce the number of ticks on your property. However, both the conventional and “organic” treatments are broad-spectrum insecticides and will harm non-target beneficial organisms and can also be toxic to fish if improperly applied. If you are considering an acaracide, applications should be done on low wind days when it will have at least 24 hours to dry before rain or watering the lawn. Acaracides should not be applied within 25 feet of wetlands or freshwater bodies or within 100 feet of coastal waters.

After being applied correctly and being allowed to properly dry, acaracides are unlikely to enter the lake because they tightly adhere to the soil and duff.

Note that if there is an erosion event, insecticide attached to dirt particles will flow into the lake sediment. Accordingly, responsible lake protection requires that tick pesticide be applied correctly, per manufactures instructions, and have at least 24 hours to dry. Please make this a requirement for any professional application of acaracide on your property.



Deer ticks (also called blacklegged ticks) are of most concern locally because they vector the overwhelming majority of disease to humans in Maine.

Additional Resources

- [Tick Management Handbook](#) – An integrated guide for homeowners, pest control operators, and public health officials for the prevention of tick-associated disease (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven)
- [Prevention & Control: Ticks & Mosquitoes](#) – Vector-Borne Disease Laboratory (MaineHealth)

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