



established 1938

National Arborist Association

Dedicated to the Advancement of Commercial Tree Care Businesses

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For immediate release

Reduce Risk of Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is transmitted by the bite of an infected tick. Ticks feed on blood, and *infected* ticks transmit the disease as they feed. Ticks prefer to live in dense woods, although they are also found where the woods meet lawns or fields. Most suburban lawns are too hot and dry to sustain ticks. Ticks prefer the cool, moist woodlands where they have a better chance of finding an animal host.

Transmitters of the bacteria in North America include: the Western black-legged tick in the West, and the black-legged tick (also known as the deer tick) in the rest of the country. In other parts of the world, other ticks are responsible for transmitting the disease, such as the sheep tick in Europe, and the Taiga tick in Asia. Although most people think deer are the main carriers, in fact the white-footed mouse is the primary culprit.

While ticks can bite year-round, peak tick season in the Northeast is April to September, and on the West Coast is November to April. Ticks can survive under a variety of conditions as long as adequate moisture is available.

Experts recommend the following precautions:

- Wear light-colored clothing (ticks are easier to see).
- Avoid tall grass and areas with shrubs.
- Remove brush piles.
- Thin out low shrub vegetation in woods.
- Wear long pants *tucked into socks*.
- Widen trails through woods.
- Keep grass mowed.
- Wear a tick repellent.

Property Management

If Lyme disease is a problem in your area, reduce the number of ticks on your property by making it less attractive to them. Reduce the humidity in your landscape by pruning trees, clearing brush, removing litter and mowing grass short and letting it dry thoroughly. Move shrubs and overgrowth farther away from areas frequented by people.

Ground-cover plantings and leaf litter provide the type of moisture ticks need. Consider creating a 3-foot barrier of dry wood chips around your yard to keep ticks from migrating into the areas of the landscape you use.

In addition to pruning and clearing out your landscape, insecticides can be used to control ticks and reduce the risk of Lyme disease. Consider hiring a professional applicator who is trained in proper pesticide use and can help ensure a more complete treatment. Timing is crucial for pesticide application. Sprays targeting adult deer ticks may be applied just before leaves drop to kill adults that come out at the end of the growing season. This helps provide protection through winter.

Homeowners who are looking for someone to assess their landscape, prune back vegetation or apply pesticides should consult a professional arborist who will be able to suggest treatments. Contact the National Arborist Association (NAA), a 63-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture. It has more than 2,800 members who recognize stringent safety and performance standards, and are required to carry liability insurance. An easy way to find a tree care service provider in your area is to use their "Locate Your Local NAA Member Companies" program. You can use this service by calling (800) 733-2622 or by doing a zip code search on their Web site, www.natlarb.com.