

Landscape to Repel Ticks Without Using Pesticides

Pesticides kill beneficial insects, like the bees and butterflies that pollinate the plants around us, and wash into waterways degrading water quality and harming aquatic life. They are also toxic to pets and people. **Instead of spraying to kill ticks:**

Rid your yard of Japanese barberry, which has been proven to harbor the white-footed mouse and the deer ticks that accompany them. The best pesticide-free method to control this invasive plant is to cut it back in March before the leaves come out and, if possible, dig pull out the root system. Another approach is to burn the plant using special blow torches designed for controlling invasive plant species.

Keep play areas for pets and children mowed. Mow the part of the yard you use to discourage ticks, which prefer tall grasses or shade to protect from extreme temperature changes.

Plant native pollinator-friendly plants that will draw a healthy mix of beneficial insects and birds to your yard. Birds eat insects, including ticks. Plant lists available at Pollinator-pathway.org and Xerces.org.

Consider including these plants that repel ticks

- American beautyberry, a native plant that also provides berries for birds
- Fleabane daisies
- Mountain mint, also a wonderful source of nectar for pollinators
- Garlic, Lavender, Rosemary, Sage, Mint

Put up birdhouses to draw insect-eating birds to your yard.

If you must spray, consider non-toxic botanical repellants instead of poisons. The botanical product that has been tested for its effectiveness against black-legged ticks is garlic oil (Hays and Stafford, Journal of Medical Entomology, March 30, 2015). The study concludes that garlic oil could provide a minimal-risk option for control of ticks. More information can be obtained from a company called Mosquito Barrier which sells a garlic product that can be used for mosquitoes, ticks and other insect pests. Garlic will repel pests rather than killing them. *It is reported that the royal gardens in England are frequently treated with garlic spray, despite the odor which dissipates after a day.*

The best way to protect from ticks is to apply repellent to clothing before going into high grasses or woods, wear light-colored clothes, tuck pants into socks, always check for ticks after you come in.

For more information, visit us at Norwalkriver.org/landscape-responsibly/