

Pollinator Pathway



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 dig out the root system.

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, such as New England aster, 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, dill
- Dutch white clover
- New England asters

Put up bird and bat houses to draw insect-eating birds and bats to your yard. Bats can eat 2000 insects per day and one opossum will eat 5000 ticks per season.

If you must treat your yard, consider tick boxes (not tick tubes). Available at TickBoxes.com, these boxes attract mice and expose them to a dose of insecticide (fipronil) which kills ticks. In field trials this system reduced the tick population by as much as 88% in one year. Boxes are placed by professionals around the perimeter of a property and must be replaced once a year. NOT recommended: Tick tubes filled with permethrin treated cotton balls. Studies have shown them to be ineffective in reducing numbers of infected ticks. (Communication from Kirby Stafford, CAES). Also, the permethrin treated cotton can become separated from the tubes and pose risks to pollinators.

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 yourself, your children, and your pets for ticks after you come in.