

## Ticks

Ticks prefer cool, moist woodlands, but they can also be found where woods meet lawns, fields or landscaped beds. Where you live, your hobbies and your habits may affect your chance of a tick bite. Ticks do not jump or fly. They crawl up vegetation and wait for an animal to brush against them. They climb on the animal or person and insert their mouth parts.

Ocean County has three common types of ticks:



Lyme disease is spread by the black legged tick (a.k.a. deer tick). Black legged ticks are active as long as temperatures are above freezing. The black legged tick goes through three stages. Peak activity for adults is April, October and November. Peak activity for nymphs is May and June.

In New Jersey, one out of every four or five ticks is infected. Ticks need to be attached for at least 36 hours before they can transmit Lyme disease. However, just to be safe, you should check your health closely for one month after a tick bite and call your doctor if you have any of the early signs of Lyme disease.

Ticks can also spread ehrlichiosis and babesiosis. Symptoms of tick-borne diseases can include a bulls-eye skin rash, tiredness, fever or chills, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, joint pain and dizziness.

In tick-borne areas, apply insect repellent containing DEET. Wear long pants and long sleeves and tuck pants into socks. After being outdoors, check your body carefully, including armpits, groin and neck. Remove ticks as soon as possible. Use tweezers and grab the tick close to the skin. Pull straight up. Wash the skin with soap and water.

For more detailed information on ticks, including identification, their life cycle, habitat, disease cycle and bite prevention, see Rutgers Fact Sheet FS443 at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS443>.

## Checklist for May

### ***Flower and Vegetable Garden***

- ✓ Use Mother's Day as a rule of thumb for planting summer-blooming annuals and tender vegetables. Cover tender plants if frost is expected. See Penn State Extension Fact Sheet "**Transplanting Annuals into the Garden.**" <https://extension.psu.edu/transplanting-annuals-into-the-garden>
- ✓ Be aware that the last frost date in Ocean County will vary from May 15 – 30, depending on your location.
- ✓ Plant dahlias, gladiolas, lilies, cannas and other summer flowering bulbs this month.
- ✓ Work to eliminate weeds before they go to seed. Otherwise, you will be fighting them for years to come!

### ***Trees and Shrubs***

- ✓ Remove spent rhododendron and azalea blossoms and apply a fertilizer for acid-loving plants, if needed.

### ***Lawn***

- ✓ Eliminate lawn weeds. Pull by hand or spot-treat with herbicide.

### ***Ticks***

- ✓ Know that the risk of being bitten by an infected tick is greatest in May and June, when the nymph stage is active. See Rutgers Fact Sheet FS443, "**Prevent Tick Bites.**" <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS443>