

## Ticks on the Move

**Asian longhorned ticks** (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) are native to East and Central Asia. They were first reported in Hunterdon County, NJ in 2017. The female Asian longhorned tick can reproduce without mating. They are most active in NJ from March through October. Thousands of these ticks may be found together on one animal, shrub or clump of grass.

These invasive ticks pose a threat to livestock, wildlife and pets. The ticks appear to be less attracted to humans, but large infestations of larva in autumn can cause itchy bites that can be confused with chiggers. In their native habitat, Asian longhorned ticks are known to transmit diseases. Studies are being conducted to determine whether they transmit these diseases in North America.

**Gulf coast ticks** (*Amblyomma maculatum*) are native to southeastern coastal states from Texas to Virginia. Delaware and Maryland are reporting rising populations of these ticks. Established populations of Gulf Coast ticks are also present in New Jersey.

Coastal uplands and prairies are their preferred habitat. The larvae and nymphs feed on small animals and birds. Adults feed on larger mammals and deer. Several diseases of livestock and pets are associated with these ticks. The gulf coast tick can also transmit *Rickettsia parkeri*, a form of spotted fever, to humans.

**Brown dog ticks** (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) are household pests found worldwide. They infest cracks in floorboards and other crevasses, garages and dog runs. In NJ they can only survive through the winter indoors. Control of this tick is difficult. Steps include sanitation through vacuuming, treatment of pet(s), treatment of the house, and treatment of the yard. Professional exterminating services are usually needed to control an infestation.

They feed mainly on dogs in all life stages but may bite humans or other animals. The brown dog tick can transmit *Rickettsia rickettsii* (Rocky Mountain spotted fever) to dogs and humans and a few additional diseases to dogs.

For further information see: Rutgers Fact Sheet FS007 "Brown Dog Tick Control"; [www.ticklab.org](http://www.ticklab.org); [ticks.rutgers.edu/ticks/](http://ticks.rutgers.edu/ticks/); [www.cdc.gov/ticks](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks) and [web.uri.edu/tickencounter](http://web.uri.edu/tickencounter). Ticks can be identified at the Cooperative Extension of Ocean County. See inside front cover for more information on tick identification and inside back cover for photos of these ticks.

## Checklist for October

### **Flower and Vegetable Garden**

- ✓ Update garden records (plant placement, yields, etc.).
- ✓ Prepare for frost. Provide protection for vulnerable plants.
- ✓ Wash and disinfect plant containers for reuse.
- ✓ Prune back all perennials except those that provide food for birds as well as winter interest such as coneflowers and black-eyed Susans, ornamental grasses, sedum and yarrow.
- ✓ Remove annuals, including roots, and add to compost pile along with your leaves.
- ✓ Improve flavor of Brussels sprouts, kale, carrots and leeks by harvesting after a frost.
- ✓ Dispose of diseased plants in the garbage.
- ✓ Dig and store canna bulbs and begonia tubers.
- ✓ Plant spring flowering bulbs.

### **Indoor Plants**

- ✓ Cut back on feeding houseplants.
- ✓ Keep holiday cactus in a cool, dark location from sundown to sunrise.

### **Lawn**

- ✓ Fertilize your lawn. See [Rutgers Fact Sheet FS633](#) "Fertilizing the Home Lawn" for instructions.