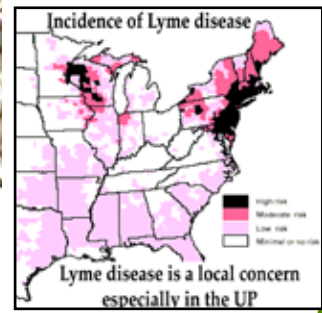
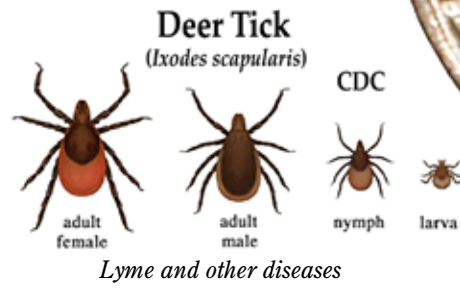
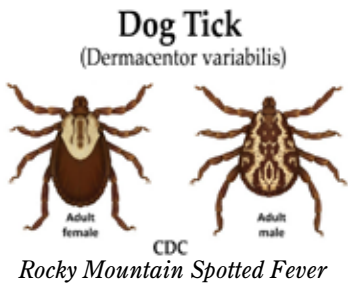


Nature Week at Heritage Village - May 31

Ticks



About 45% of Michigan adult deer ticks carry Lyme disease. Typical Lyme disease bulls-eye rash. About 80% of infected people get this rash.



by Howard Russell & Jackie Smith, MSU Extension

As long as we're talking about blood sucking parasites, let's talk ticks. Tick season is just beginning to heat up. Deer ticks are the ticks that carry Lyme Disease and they are becoming more common. Unlike the American dog tick, deer ticks do not have white markings on their backs. If you remove a tick that does not have white markings, it is a good idea to save the tick in a jar for a few weeks.

Dog tick bites rarely result in serious disease in Michigan, but like other wood ticks, it is a known carrier of Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia. The cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever reported in Michigan have been from primarily southern counties, particularly those located directly north of the Toledo Airport. Also, toxins injected with their bites cause itching, fever and in some cases tick paralysis. People with recent tick bites should be on alert for any rash, which is a primary symptom of both Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and tularemia.

Mice appear to be the preferred hosts of immature stages of both the dog and deer tick while the adults prefer to feed on dogs and other large mammals. Dog ticks can live for over a year without food. These ticks are most likely to be encountered in the spring and early summer along animal paths in grassy, shrubby areas adjacent to woodlots and forests. Family members and pets should be inspected daily where ticks are known to be abundant. Insect repellents containing DEET or permethrin applied to clothing will help keep wood ticks from biting. If an attached tick is found, it should be removed by placing tweezers near the head and gently pulling it off. Be careful not to squeeze the tick as this can inject the contents of the tick as well as possible toxins into the wound. Keep in mind that ticks cannot feed immediately after attaching. They require several hours to embed their mouth-parts deep enough to take a blood-meal.



Tick posture on leaf
 Ticks flail from the ends of grass blades waiting for something warm to pass. With their front legs extended they can pounce instantly. Then they scurry up your body often not stopping until they hit a constriction, like your belt, or until they reach your hair.

Four steps to prevention

Be invisible

Keep your pants tucked into your socks or boots



Be repulsive

Use insect repellent



Be a trap

Wrap duck tape below your knee with the sticky side out

Be clean

Take a shower when you get home and check your hair.

Save any embedded deer ticks in case you get sick.



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