

Home & Garden Pest Newsletter

Controlling Ticks Around Your Home

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You might think ticks are found only on hiking trails or in wild, natural areas, but in some parts of California, ticks can also live in backyards and neighborhoods. Californians living near natural areas (such as open fields, parks, or urban hiking trails) should get to know their arachnid neighbors and learn how to avoid ticks at home.

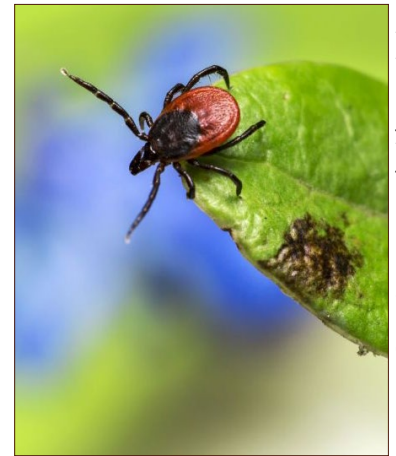
Meet the Western Blacklegged Tick

Ticks are found outdoors in brushy, wooded areas on plants, rocks, logs, and in leaves and twigs on the ground. Beginning in fall, adult western blacklegged ticks emerge in California, especially in northern coastal counties and the Sierra Nevada foothills. These ticks lurk on bushes, shrubs, and the tips of tall grasses waiting for a person or animal to brush against them so they can attach and feed on their blood.

Blood-sucking ticks can spread bacteria and other germs when they bite, causing diseases like Lyme disease in people and pets. The best way to prevent tick bites around your home is to keep ticks away from and out of your home.

Tick-Safe Landscaping

Landscaping and maintaining your yard can help make your backyard less desirable for ticks. Western blacklegged ticks prefer to live in shady, humid, overgrown areas, especially in tall grass and overgrown vegetation. These ticks are usually not found in open, sunny areas such as on mowed lawns.



Ixodes pacificus (western blacklegged tick).

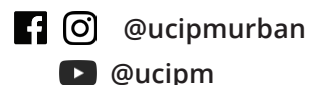
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Mow grass to protect against hitchhiking ticks.

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To create a tick-safe yard:

- * Keep your lawn mowed and decorative plants trimmed and well maintained.
- * Remove leaf and grass litter from your yard.
- * Create a tick barrier at the edge of your property by putting down a 3-foot gravel or wood chip border between your lawn and any unmaintained or overgrown natural areas that you may live next to (such as chaparral or woodland areas).
- * Move yard furniture and swing sets away from the edges of the yard to more open and sunny areas.

Protect Your Pets

Ticks are efficient hitchhikers—they can easily grab onto a pet or other animal walking through tall grass or overgrown areas. Pets can then bring ticks into your yard or home. Protecting your pets against hitchhiking ticks helps keep you and your pets from getting tick-transmitted diseases.

- * Talk to your veterinarian about tick control medication for your pets. Some products can be applied directly on your pet, and others can be given orally.
- * Check your pets daily for ticks, especially after they have been outdoors in overgrown and brushy areas. If you find a tick on your pet, remove it right away. Learn more about preventing ticks on pets www.cdc.gov/ticks/prevention/preventing-ticks-on-pets.html.

Keep Wild Animals Out

In nature, ticks feed on wild animals such as rodents and deer. Help keep ticks away from your home by keeping wild animals out of your yard and away from outdoor areas where people spend time.

- * Install 8-foot fences to keep larger animals such as deer out of your yard and garden.
- * Keep trash cans closed and away from your home to avoid attracting rodents and other animals.

- * Keep clutter away from your home to reduce areas where animals such as rodents might live.

Area and Perimeter Yard Treatments

If your attempts to reduce the number of ticks in your yard through landscaping efforts isn't effective, you might consider using pesticides labeled to kill ticks outside. Some commonly available products may have one of the following active ingredients in them: permethrin, bifenthrin, or pyrethrin. Other pesticide products include botanical oils such as rosemary and wintergreen, but these ingredients don't work as well to control ticks.

Tips for safely applying pesticides:

- * Consult with a pest control operator or your local vector control agency before applying any pesticide to control ticks.
- * Always read and follow all instructions on the label, including how to use the product safely.
- * Make sure you are using a product that has been approved for outdoor tick control.
- * Focus pesticide applications on areas where ticks may be found, such as unmaintained areas or near woodpiles. Do not apply pesticides in areas where pollinators (like bees), pets, and people often spend time.
- * Pesticides can pollute California's waterways, so only use them where they can't run off into storm drains, creeks, or other water bodies.

For information on using pesticides in your yard, see the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety resource www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/citizens-guide-pest-control-and-pesticide-safety.

For more information about avoiding ticks and the diseases they can spread, visit the California Department of Public Health's Tick-Borne Disease Prevention webpage www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/TickBorneDiseasePrevention.aspx.

—California Department of Public Health,
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Neonicotinoid Pesticides Off the Shelf in January 2025

The common insecticide imidacloprid, and the related pesticides acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran, and thiamethoxam, the pesticide group neonicotinoids, have been linked to the decline in honey bee and other pollinator populations. To address these concerns, the California legislature recently put into law AB 363.

Starting January 1, 2025, neonicotinoid pesticides in California for non-agricultural outdoor use will only be available for sale at licensed pest control dealers and limited for possession and use by certified pesticide applicators. Sale of neonicotinoids in retail nurseries and garden centers and the possession or use of these pesticides by anyone without an applicator's license will no longer be allowed.

Currently, almost 150 pesticide products containing one of these ingredients are registered in California for use on ornamental plants. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation is re-evaluating these pesticides in terms of their effects on pollinators, aquatic insects, and human health.

The European Union, Canada, Maine, New Jersey, and several other states have already banned or restricted these pesticides for non-agricultural uses. Limiting lawn and garden neonicotinoid uses



LL Strand, UC IPM

Soil drench pesticide products containing imidacloprid will no longer be allowed for use by consumers.

to trained professionals is intended to eliminate significant pollution from these pesticides in urban and suburban areas, protecting pollinators, aquatic organisms, and human health.

The new law does not apply to indoor neonicotinoid pesticide products like ant baits, or veterinary products, such as flea and tick treatments for pets.

For more information, see CDPR's announcement www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/registration/canot/2024/ca2024-18.pdf

Webinar Feedback Survey

Have you attended a UC IPM Urban and Community Webinar this year? Then we'd love to hear from you! We are interested in learning what topics you're interested in for future webinars and how you have used or shared information from the webinar.

Please respond to this short, five (5) question survey:

<https://forms.gle/nYVPyjiusvPZKfN3A>.

Your feedback will help us to improve these webinars and better serve you. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. We appreciate your input and hope you will join us for more webinars in 2025!

If you missed any in 2024, you can view all webinar recordings on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLo3rG4iqv4gGC9sa9Tdl_WfCV4BNMHral.



Invasive Pest Spotlight: Mediterranean Fruit Fly

The invasive pest spotlight focuses on emerging or potential invasive pests in California. In this issue we are covering the Mediterranean fruit fly.

Mediterranean Fruit Fly Facts

The Mediterranean fruit fly, *Ceratitis capitata*, commonly called Medfly, attacks more than 260 different plant species. It can be especially damaging to mango, citrus, grapes, and stone fruits. The Medfly originated in Africa and has spread around the world, becoming one of the most destructive agricultural pests. Despite recent successful eradication efforts in California, Mediterranean fruit fly was detected in Alameda County and prompted a quarantine in September 2024.

The adult Medfly is about 1/4 inch long, and very colorful. Its body is blackish with silver markings on the thorax, and its tan abdomen has dark stripes. The wings are clear with light brown bands and gray spots near the base. The white eggs are tiny and hatch into legless white larvae called maggots.

Under ideal conditions, the Mediterranean fruit fly can complete its life cycle in just 21 days. The eggs are laid under the skin of vulnerable fruits and hatch within a few days. The maggots feed upon the pulp of host fruits, tunneling through and reducing the whole to a juicy, inedible mass.

What Can You Do?

If you are located within a quarantine area, you can help prevent the spread of invasive fruit flies:

- * Do not move any fruits or vegetables from the property. Consume or process (juice, cook, freeze) fruits and vegetables on site.



Jack Kelly Clark, UCIPM

Mediterranean fruit fly adult.

- * Dispose of any fallen or unwanted fruit or vegetables by double bagging in plastic bags and placing in the garbage bin, not green waste.
- * Cooperate with agriculture officials and allow them access to inspect plants.
- * Report suspicious pests and maggots inside of your fruit to your local county agricultural commissioner's office or to CDFA's pest hotline at 1-800-491-1899.

Smuggled and illegally imported fruit is the most common pathway of invasive fruit fly entry into California. To help protect California's agriculture and natural resources please review the Don't Pack a Pest guidelines at www.dont-packapest.com/.

—Cherie Shook,
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For more information about managing pests, contact your University of California Cooperative Extension office, or visit the UC IPM website at ipm.ucanr.edu.

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