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HOME & GARDEN

Tips to keep ticks away



(NC) Most do-it-yourself improvement projects help to make your home a more beautiful and comfortable place to live. However, some designs have benefits beyond just aesthetics, and can make your property a safer, healthier place for you and your family.

One project you can take on this spring is reducing tick habitats near your home. Ticks can carry Lyme disease, an infectious disease that is spread through the bite of infected ticks, and is on the rise in Canada.

The best way to protect against Lyme disease and other tick-borne disease is to prevent tick bites. Here are some simple ways to keep them away from your home or cottage:

Stay on top of lawn care. Ticks can carry Lyme disease and other diseases, and are most often found around and in wooded areas, shrubs, tall grass and piles of leaves. Keep them away from your greenery by mowing the lawn regularly to keep the grass short. Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of

the lawn and around stonewalls and woodpiles.

Rearrange outdoor furniture. The best spot for children's playground sets, sandboxes and dining tables is a sunny location that's away from the yard edges and trees. Consider placing equipment on a woodchip or mulch foundation.

Find a dry spot for firewood. Spring and summer nights can get cool, and many of us enjoy lighting a fire in the evening. Ticks can hitch a ride into your house or cottage on a piece of firewood. You can protect against this by stacking firewood neatly in a dry area.

Keep wildlife out. Animals found in rural and forested areas could carry ticks and increase your exposure. Put barriers around your property to keep deer out, and seal stone walls and small openings to discourage rodent activity. Since pets can also carry ticks into your home, talk with your veterinarian about options for tick prevention and do regular tick checks on your pets.

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