

# CREATE A SAFE ZONE IN YOUR BACKYARD

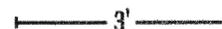
Keep your pet safe using these practical landscaping tips.

Despite regular, year-round use of preventives, your pet can still be exposed to ticks—even in your backyard. But did you know you can make your yard less attractive to ticks depending on how you landscape? It's true! Here are some simple tricks and techniques you can employ this year to help reduce tick populations around your home.

Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.



Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas and around patios and play equipment. This will restrict tick migration into recreational areas.



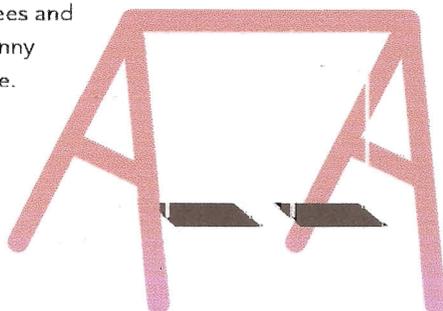
Mow the lawn frequently and keep leaves raked.



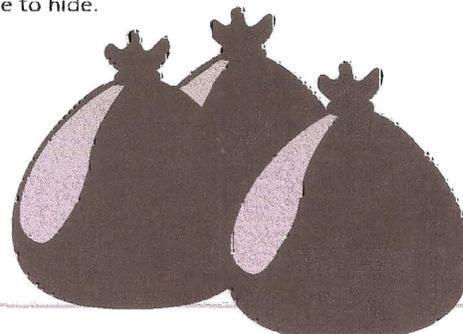
Stack wood neatly and in a dry area (discourages rodents that ticks feed on).



Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees and place them in a sunny location, if possible.



Remove any old furniture, mattresses, or trash from the yard that may give ticks a place to hide.



# LIFE CYCLE: *Ticks*

Ticks are second only to mosquitoes in the number of diseases they transmit, which is why it's so critical to prevent ticks from attaching to—and feeding on—pets and people in the first place. Understanding the tick life cycle and the behavior of these pesky parasites can help keep them in check.

Here's a breakdown of the tick life cycle from egg to adult:

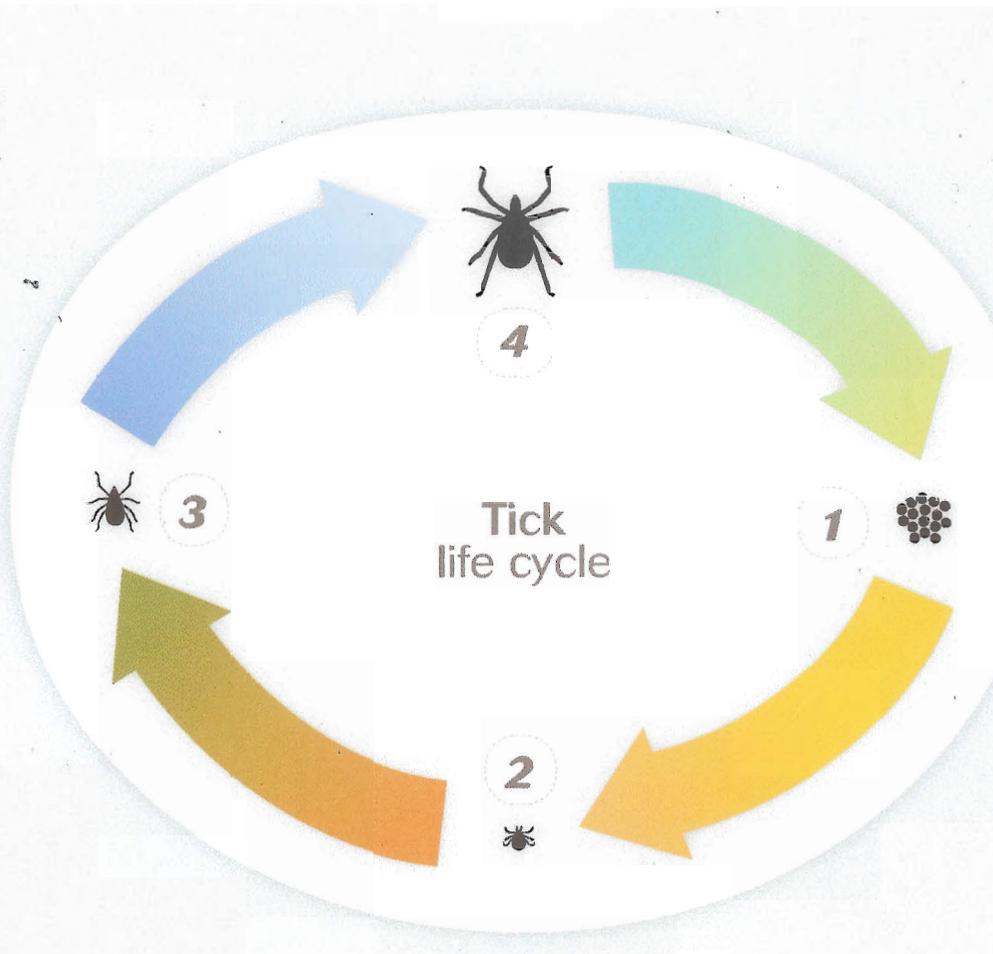
**1. Egg.** An engorged female tick can lay up to several thousand eggs in sheltered environments (not on a host).

**2. Larva.** The six-legged larval stage hatches from the egg within weeks to months, depending on environmental conditions. Larvae remain on the ground or on low vegetation waiting for a host, which is usually a bird or small mammal.

**3. Nymph.** After feeding on a host for several days, the engorged larva drops to the ground and molts to an eight-legged nymph. The nymph then finds an appropriate host and feeds for several days to a week.

**4. Adult.** Once the nymph has engorged, it drops to the ground and molts to the eight-legged adult, which then must find a third host—you or your pet, maybe?

> Ticks can survive in less-than-ideal environmental conditions, which is why it's so important to use year-round parasite protection.



# { LIFE CYCLE: *Fleas*

**A**ny pet owner who's had trouble with fleas on their dog or cat knows how quickly an infestation of these pint-sized pests can spiral out of control. But how does it go from one flea to hundreds—even thousands—so quickly?

Here's a breakdown of the flea life cycle from egg to adult:

**1. Egg.** Eggs are deposited on the pet and fall into the environment within a few hours.

**2. Larva.** Larvae are maggot-like and approximately 0.5 cm long. They feed on blood in adult flea feces, organic debris, flea eggshells and other flea larvae.

> Flea larvae develop outdoors in cool, shady areas where pets rest as well as indoors in undisturbed, protected sites such as in carpet, under furniture and along baseboards.

**3. Pupa.** Whitish cocoons can be found in soil, on vegetation, in carpets, under furniture and on animal bedding.

> Adults emerge about eight days after formation of the cocoon. All fleas usually emerge by day 13, depending on temperature and relative humidity.

**4. Adult.** Adults begin feeding immediately when on a pet—usually within three minutes.

> Egg production begins within 20 to 24 hours of females taking their first blood meal.

> Female fleas can produce 40 to 50 eggs per day—that's nearly 3,000 fleas in two months!

> During the warm summer months, the entire flea life cycle can be completed in two to three weeks.

