

Weekly Column  
Ericka Soumare  
Purdue Extension, Elkhart County  
Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator  
Phone: 574-533-0554  
17746 C.R. 34, Goshen, IN 46526

## Ticks

The warmer weather has been just enough for increased tick activity. Ticks can be found in wooded areas and areas where wild vegetation grows. They will wait on tall weeds, bushes, or anything else that will lift them up close enough to attach to animals or people passing by. They then proceed to feed on blood until they get completely full and fall off to molt into a new size and stage of development.

Female ticks can lay 3,000 to 8,000 eggs in the soil. The life cycle of a tick can vary depending on many things such as how they feed and how long they remain in one stage of development. So, how do these creatures find a host to feed on so they can complete their life cycles? All stages, from larvae to nymph to adult, can detect carbon dioxide, vibrations, and air movement. This helps them to easily attach to a host they can feed on. Common hosts are small mammals such as mice or ground-dwelling birds, but they can also feed on humans.

To protect yourself from ticks, it is important to avoid brushing against weedy vegetation, especially if a certain area has been known to have tick infestation problems. Wearing light colored clothing so that ticks can be easily seen is also an effective approach. Long pants and a tucked in long sleeved shirt will provide protection as well as socks pulled up over pants. Take time to occasionally check for ticks and inspect pets that have been outside. An insect repellent with DEET or permethrin is also effective.

No one wants to find ticks on themselves or their pets. For more information on ticks, you can visit the web at <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-243.pdf>. You can also go to <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-71.pdf> or contact your Elkhart County Extension office for more information.

Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution.