

COMMENTARY

by Judi Weil

For most of us on Cape Cod we feel we have discovered our little corner of Paradise. However, living on the Cape does not come without some risks. I'm talking specifically about ticks and Lyme disease. Although ticks are around year round, we seem to be more conscience of them in the warmer months; and although these little critters carry other diseases we seem to be most aware of Lyme.

Research projects are constantly ongoing across the Cape to help prevent or limit the tick population. For instance, if you walk or hike some of the conservation trails I'm sure you've seen deer feeding stations containing treated corn for feed for the deer. The insecticide permethrin coats the deer's fur so when the ticks crawl across the treated fur they die. This certainly helps to lower the tick population.

There also are many ways for us to protect ourselves against ticks. There are repellents we can buy, clothing that has been treated and safer to wear in tick infested areas, we can treat our clothing (especially shoes) ourselves at home with store bought permethrin, and of course always do a "tick check" of your extremities after being in an area where you might have had contact. Keep in mind that ticks could also be in your own back yard. They love shady and humid spots which you could have on the edges of your property.

It is also important to protect your pet. Not only for their sake but they are a vehicle for carrying ticks into your home. Just make sure that what you use for topical protection for your pet won't be harmful to the animal.

This article is just a sampling of things to be aware of and different types of protection you can avail yourself and your pets of against ticks. To learn more about ticks, Lyme and other tick-borne diseases check out the Orleans Citizens Forum (OCF) website at www.orleanscitizensforum.org. A few years ago the OCF did a forum on ticks and this event can still be viewed on YouTube. You can find a link to the tick forum and other links concerning articles on this topic on the OCF website. For your information, these associated links are updated frequently so make sure to keep checking for the latest data available.

Judi Weil is on the Board of Directors of the Orleans Citizens Forum