



Modifying Your Landscape to Reduce Your Risk of Getting Lyme Disease

Blacklegged ticks, or *Ixodes scapularis*, are vectors for Lyme disease in Québec. They are primarily found in heavily wooded areas and the overgrown areas between woods and open spaces. The ticks hold onto plant stems and climb onto passing people or animals. Ticks do not jump and do not drop from trees. There are fewer ticks in ornamental vegetation and grassy areas. In lawns, most ticks are found fewer than 3 metres from the outside edge of the lawn, particularly along woodlands and ornamental plantations.

If you live in a tick-infested area, following are a few precautions you can take to reduce tick habitat near your home.

Clear the boundary lines of your yard

- Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn, woodpiles and sheds.
- Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge to let in more sunlight.
- Create a 3-foot or wider wood chip, mulch, or gravel border between lawn and woods.
- Move children's swing sets and sandboxes away from the woodland's edge and place them on a woodchip or mulch foundation.
- Consider putting down patio stones, pavers or gravel or using container planting for the portions of your yard closest to the house and that your family uses most frequently.
- Keep the grass mowed.

Discourage rodent activity near your house

- Clean up and seal stone and cement walls and small openings around the home. Move firewood piles and birdfeeders away from the house.

Spraying pesticides or acaricides is not appropriate.

Sources: Public Health Agency Canada [<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/lyme-fs-fra.php#s11>] and K.C. Stafford III. Tick Management Handbook. Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, 2007 [<http://www.ct.gov/caes/site/default.asp>].