



Tick Awareness

Spring has sprung and once again tick populations increase as the weather warms. We want to remind employees of some basic safety precautions when working or walking outdoors.

Ticks are present in yards, parks, tall grass, and leafy wooded areas on and off Center. There are several types of ticks (pictured below), which have been found on the Greenbelt campus; deer ticks, lone star ticks, wood ticks, and dog ticks. Ticks can carry various diseases including Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.



Wood tick



Brown Dog Tick



Deer tick



Lone star tick

It is important to take personal protective measures when spending time outdoors such as spraying repellent on yourself or clothing, pulling socks over the bottom of pant legs, and always checking your body for ticks after spending time outdoors.

GSFC has been reducing the tick population through a topical treatment of deer for a number of years. The program began in research through the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, when a device known as the '4-poster' deer treatment station (pictured on the next page) was developed and subsequently patented. GSFC was one of the test sites for the research.



GSFC environmental bulletin

The device is filled with corn, and while deer are eating corn they are coated with a specially formulated 10% topical permethrin solution through paint rollers which kills the adult ticks and breaks the life cycle of the surrounding ticks in the nymphal stage. This has shown some dramatic results for reducing ticks at GSFC, and tick counts are still on-going each year which prove to be low. There are 7 devices on the main campuses of GSFC and 6 other devices on the satellite areas of 200, and 300/400.



More on the research and results can be read on the American Lyme Disease Foundation website at www.aldf.com/fourPoster2.shtml. this has been a beneficial low environmental impact treatment, it is still important to take personal protective measures while outdoors.

For additional information on the GSFC treatment program contact Darlene Squibb, Code 250, 6-6137.

Other helpful references:

Managing Ticks on your Property, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station,

http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/fact_sheets/managingticks05.pdf

Cornell University Cooperative Extension, <http://wildlifecontrol.info/tickstudy/pages/default.aspx>