

Nickname: Seed ticks

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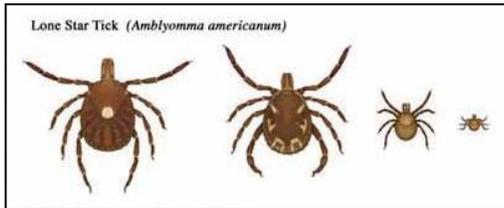


The **lone star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*)** lives primarily in the southeast and south-central regions of the United States. This species of tick is not commonly found in Vermont but can be found in southern New England. Both nymphs and adult ticks will bite humans and are associated with the transmission of the diseases ehrlichiosis and tularemia.

## Where is the lone star tick found?

Lone star ticks are most commonly distributed throughout the southeastern and south-central parts of the United States, though recently they have been found in abundance as far west as Texas and as far north as Maine.

## What does the lone star tick look like?



Lone star ticks are slightly larger than deer ticks and woodchuck ticks and have wide, tannish-red bodies (3-4mm, unfed). Female ticks are easily identified since they have a prominent light-colored spot in the center of their backs. Males have faint, lighter-colored markings on their edges of their backs. Nymphs are smaller and redder in color than adults.

## What are the hosts of the lone star tick?

Lone star ticks will feed on most mammals. Nymphs and adults are more likely to be found on deer and other large mammals, while larvae and nymphs usually feed on birds and medium-sized mammals such as skunks, opossums, raccoons, squirrels and foxes. Larvae, nymphs and adults may bite people.

## When are lone star ticks most active?

Adults are most active in the springtime when they are looking for a blood meal and preparing to lay eggs. Larvae hatch from the eggs laid in spring and take their first blood meal during late summer and early fall. Nymphs are active between April and June since they must find a host and take a blood meal before molting into an adult. High temperatures and low humidity usually decrease tick activity.

## What diseases can lone star ticks carry?

The lone star tick is recognized for transmitting ehrlichiosis and tularemia. This tick species does not transmit Lyme disease, but may carry a disease called STARI (Southern Tick Associated Rash Illness). STARI results in a rash similar to the rash of Lyme disease, without the other symptoms of Lyme disease. STARI has not been documented in Vermont.

## What is the ideal habitat of lone star ticks?

Lone star ticks can be found in wooded areas, usually where there is thick undergrowth and shrubbery. Meadows, brushy paths and vegetation along the edges of lakes and streams are suitable habitats for lone star ticks.

## How do you prevent tick bites?

### While outdoors:

- As much as possible, avoid high grass and bushy areas; stay on hiking trails.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to minimize skin exposure to ticks.
- Tuck your pants into your socks to form a barrier to tick attachment.
- Wear light-colored clothing to help see ticks on your clothing.
- Check for ticks, looking particularly for what may look like nothing more than a new freckle or speck of dirt, and remove ticks promptly.
- Use an effective tick repellent on your skin or on your clothing. There are several repellents that are effective against ticks. For an up-to-date list of EPA registered products, see <http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/>. Repellents should not be used on infants under 2 months of age. Read the label carefully and use according to the recommendations.
- Permethrin is an insecticide that can be applied to clothing or gear. If you spend a lot of time in tick habitat, wearing permethrin-treated clothing can be very effective at reducing your exposure to ticks

### After you come inside:

- Check your or your child's body for ticks, and remove them promptly. Pay special attention to the head, armpits, and groin area.
- Examine clothing and gear for ticks. Placing your clothes in a hot dryer for 60 minutes will kill any ticks that may be clinging to the fabric.
- Check your pets for ticks as well. Consult your veterinarian for advice on choosing effective tick repellents for your pets.
- Showering within a few hours of coming inside can also reduce your risk of getting a tick bite.

## How do you remove ticks?

Try to remove the tick as soon as you discover it because prompt removal can prevent transmission of tickborne diseases.

To safely remove ticks:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers and firmly grasp the tick close to the skin. Avoid touching the tick with your bare hands
2. With a steady motion, pull straight up until all parts of the tick are removed. Do not twist or jerk the tick. Do not be alarmed if the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit disease-causing bacteria.

**DO NOT** use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish, or other products to remove a tick. These methods are ineffective.

### Thoroughly wash your hands and the bite area

After removing the tick, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Clean the tick bite with soap and water or use an antiseptic such as iodine scrub or rubbing alcohol.