**Don’t Get Ticked!**

The most common ticks in our area are the black-legged or deer tick, the lone star tick and the dog tick. The black-legged tick is the one that carries Lyme disease. Because this tick is spread by deer, rodents and birds, a deer fence isn’t going to keep them away.

The black-legged tick is most often found in woods and adjacent brush. They don’t jump on you or fall on you from above. They “quest,” that is, they hang on to brush, bushes or tall grass and wait for you to brush against them. They are usually found within 18 inches of the ground.

The larvae, which are six-legged, may be as small as a poppy seed and can carry disease after the first feeding. Somewhat larger, nymphs and adults have eight legs. They feed on blood at each stage.

The preferred way to remove a tick is to use a thin-nosed pair of tweezers and to apply the tweezers to the tick’s mouth, which is the only part of the tick that penetrates your skin. By applying tweezers or fingernails to the body of the tick, you risk squeezing tick saliva and bacteria into you. After removal, swab the area with alcohol.

“Don’t Get Ticked!” is part of the New York State Integrated Pest Management program. You can learn a lot about ticks — probably more than you ever wanted to! — and how to protect yourself at http://blogs.cornell.edu/nysipm/tag/dont-get-ticked-new-york/.