



Take Back Your Yard!



*A Workbook for Kids to
Fight the Bite!*

For Parents

We share habitats with ticks and mosquitoes every day. We can protect our homes and yards from them with these simple steps. Use this workbook with your child in 3rd-5th grade. Discuss ways they can fight ticks and mosquitoes in their yard. Keep these important points in mind:



Reduce mosquito habitat around your home.

1. Dump or remove man-made containers in your yard.
2. Drill holes in containers you cannot remove to stop water collecting.
3. Some containers must hold water, like bird baths and pet bowls. Completely change the water in these containers at least once per week. This prevents mosquitoes from growing to adults.



Reduce tick habitat around your home.

1. Keep grass mowed.
2. Rake up and remove leaf and brush piles.
3. Use wood chips or gravel around your yard to create a tick-safe zone.
4. Place bird feeders and woodpiles outside of your tick-safe zone.



Apply repellents when playing or working in the yard.

1. Use an EPA-approved repellent (DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus). Avoid using on hands, eyes, and mouth.
2. Use permethrin products on clothing and outdoor gear, such as socks, pants, and shoes.
3. Protect your pets. Speak to your veterinarian about what product is right for your pet.



Do a tick check every time you come inside from playing or working in the yard.

1. Do a tick check:
 - Frequently while playing or working outdoors.
 - Once you come in from outdoors.
 - Before bed.
2. Check all over the body for ticks, using both sight and touch. Pay special attention to: in and behind the ears, in the hair and along the hairline, under the arms, inside the belly button, around the waist, between the legs, and behind the knees.
3. Shower or bathe within two hours of coming inside to wash off any crawling ticks.



Call a healthcare provider if you or your child notice any of these symptoms after a tick or mosquito bite: fever, fatigue, muscle aches, joint aches, or a rash.

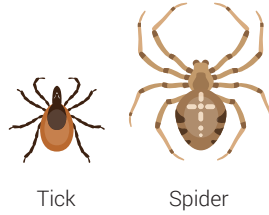
What are ticks?

Ticks are tiny bugs related to spiders. They bite humans and animals to suck blood so they can grow and lay eggs.

Ticks have three stages in their life: the larva or baby tick, the nymph or teenage tick, and the adult. Nymphs can be as small as a poppy seed and adults can be as large as a sesame seed.

As ticks eat, they swell up with blood. Some can grow to the size of a small grape!

Some ticks can carry germs that may make people and other animals sick, like Lyme disease. Ticks can spread these germs to people or animals when they bite.

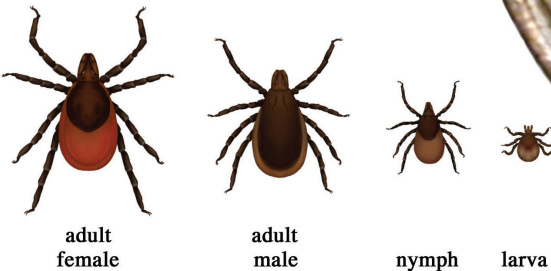


Tick

Spider



Image: MMCRI



adult female

adult male

nymph

larva



Image: US CDC

Where do ticks live?

Ticks like to live in many different habitats that we have around our yards. This includes forested areas with leaf piles and brush and open areas with tall grass. Ticks like to stay out of the wind and direct sun because they dry out.

Ticks do not jump or fly. They crawl and grab on to you if you come close enough to their hiding spot.

Wood
Piles

Bushes

Tall
Grass

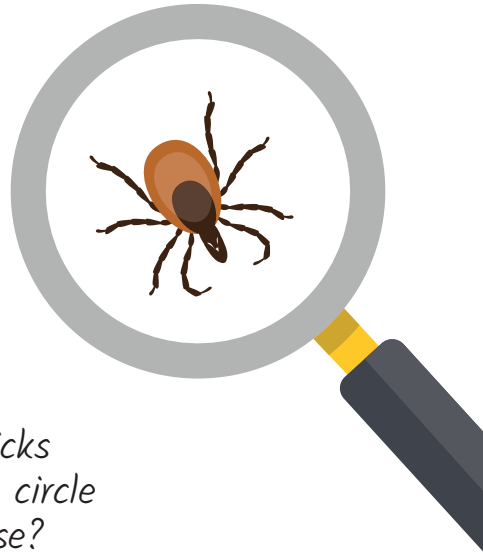
Leaf
Piles



Connect the dots to find tick habitat!



Find the ticks!



Now that you know where ticks like to live, can you find and circle the 15 ticks around this house?

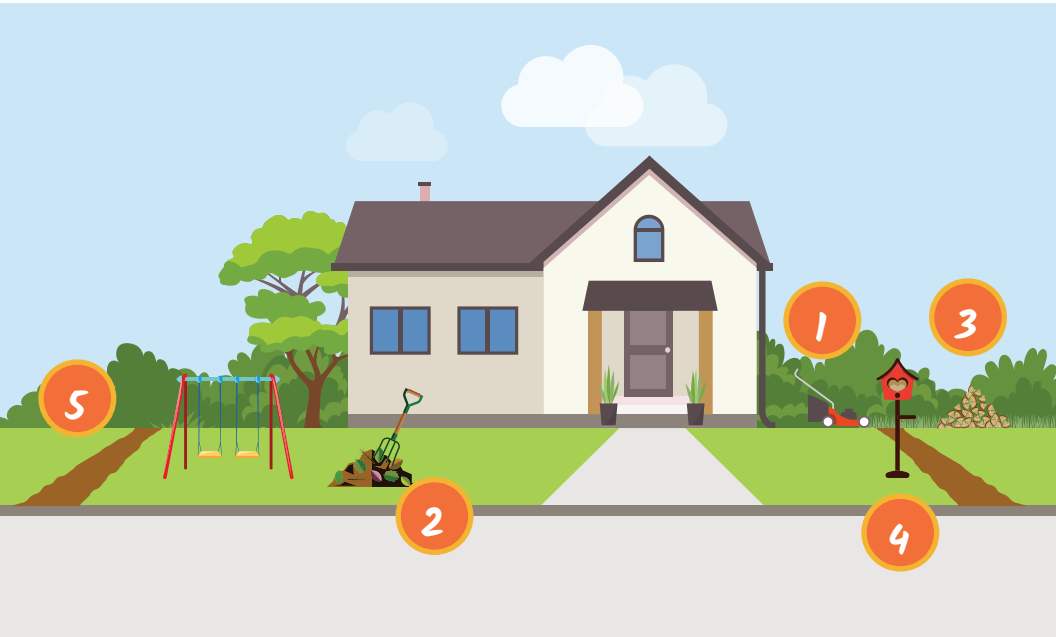
Ticks can hide in many different places around the yard. They can hide in leaf or brush piles, under bird feeders, around gardens, in tall grass, or in bushes.



How can I control ticks in my yard?

Here are some ways you can make your yard a tick-safe zone:

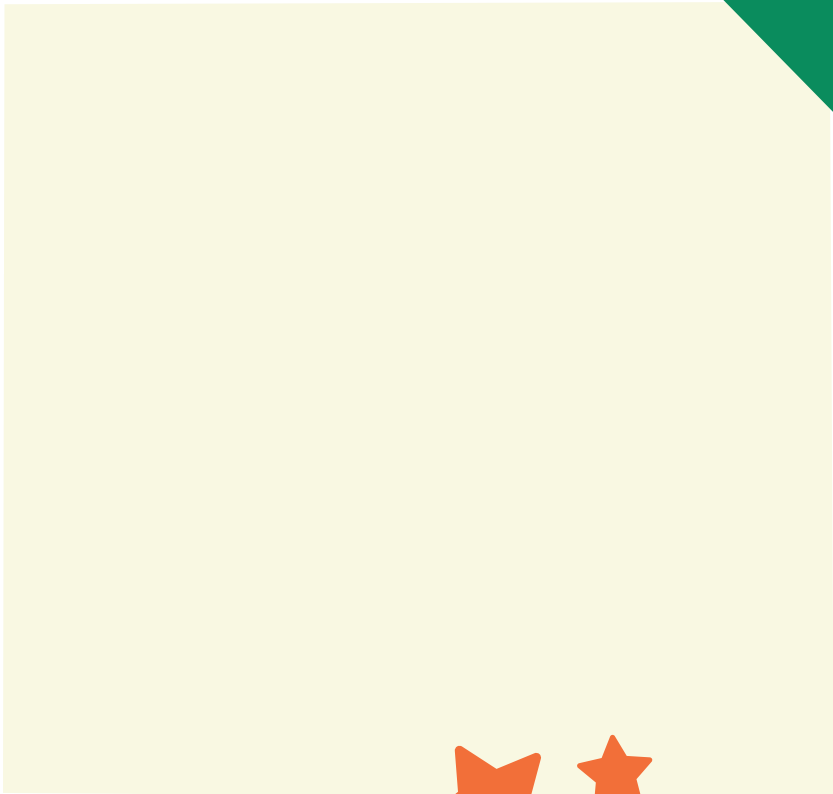
1. Keep the lawn mowed.
2. Keep leaves raked and get rid of leaf piles.
3. Move wood piles away from the house. Mice like to live here and can bring ticks with them.
4. Move birdfeeders away from the house, gardens, and yard toys. Deer and mice like birdfeeders and can bring ticks into the yard.
5. Use crushed stone or woodchips to make a tick-safe zone around your yard. This should be 3-feet wide to separate the yard from the woods and keep ticks from crossing into the yard.



My tick-safe zone

Draw a picture of what your yard would look like safe from ticks.

What would you need to do to make your yard a tick-safe zone? Do you have any leaf or brush piles, wood piles, bird feeders, or toys that you could move? Talk with your parents about what you could do to help keep your yard tick safe.



How can I protect myself from ticks?

While you are out playing or working in your yard, you should always protect yourself from ticks.

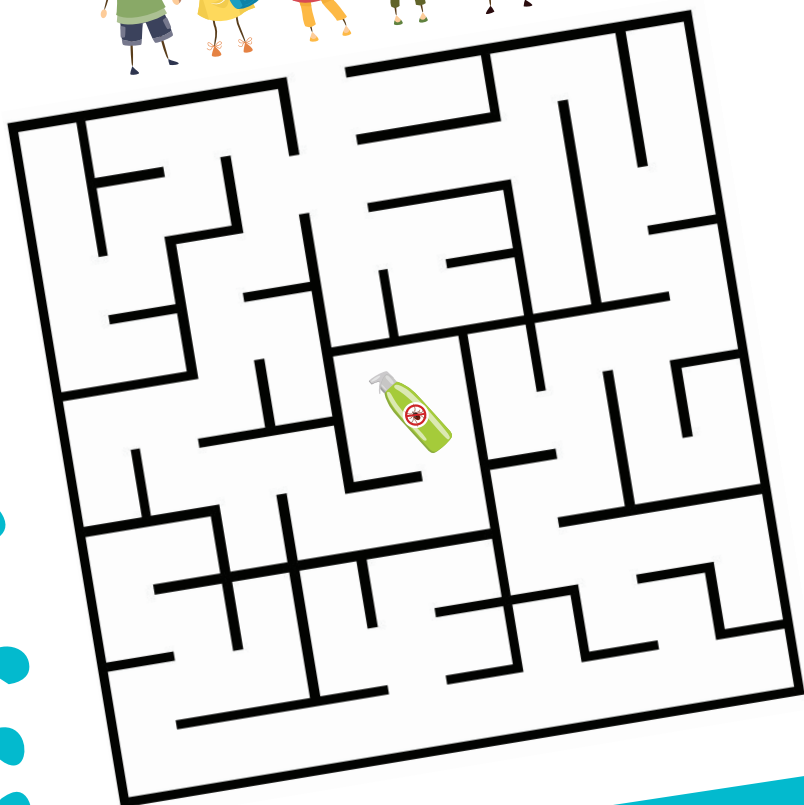
To protect yourself from ticks:

- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Tuck your pants into your socks.
- Wear light-colored clothes. These make it easier to see ticks crawling on you.
- Wear repellent (bug spray) that is EPA-approved. Have an adult help you put it on.
- Stay on a path if you go outside of your yard.



These kids are playing in the yard.

Can you help them find the repellent?



Do a tick check every day!

After playing or working in your yard, what should you do? While you play or work, stop for a few minutes and do a tick check. When you come inside do another tick check. Taking a bath or shower when you come in can help wash any crawling ticks off you. Do one last tick check right before you go to bed. If you find a tick attached to you, ask an adult for help.

How to do a tick check:

- Use your fingers to feel for bumps and look for tiny dark spots.
- Make sure to check in these places:

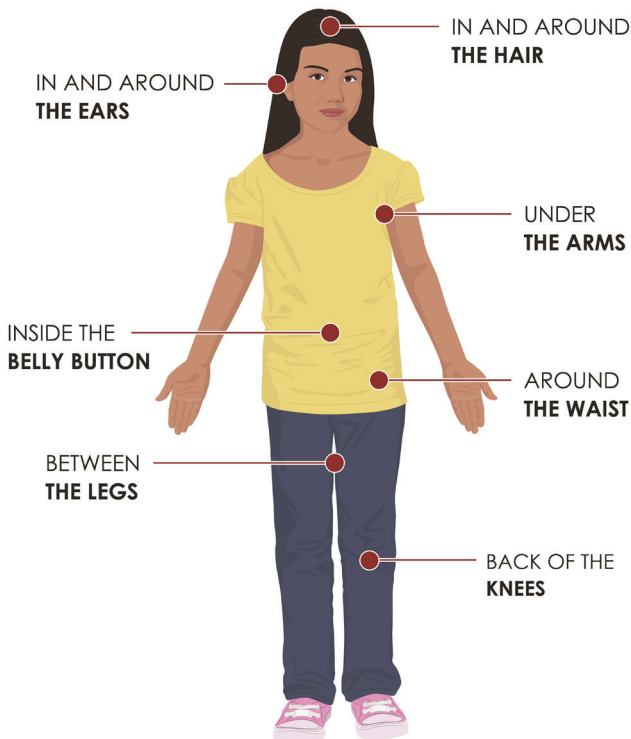
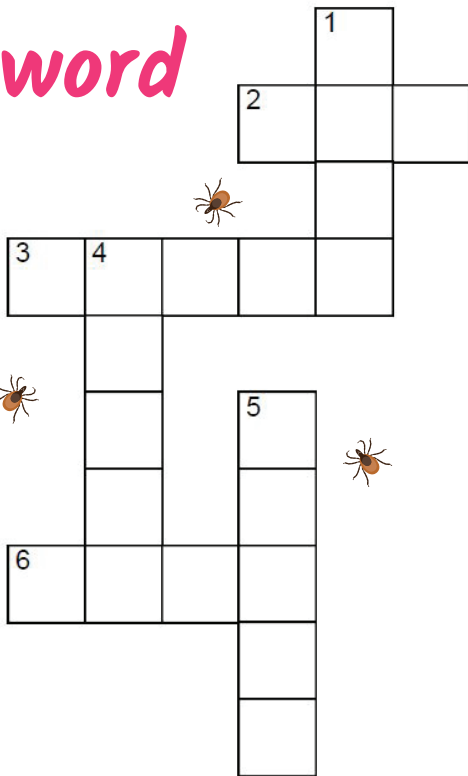


Image: US CDC

Tick crossword



Answer the clues and write the answers in the boxes.

Across:

2. ___ your lawn to keep the grass short.
3. Ticks eat ___.
6. ___ up leaves in your yard and get rid of the piles.

Down:

1. Move ___ piles away from your house.
4. The ___ is the baby tick.
5. Do a tick ___ every time you go into tick habitat.

Answers: 1. WOOD, 2. MOW, 3. BLOOD, 4. LARVA, 5. CHECK, 6. RAKE

Tick word search

Can you find the hidden words about how to protect yourself and your yard from ticks? Words can be forward, backward, horizontal, vertical, and diagonal.



R K N L I K D Y
E C I M E O B A
E E V D O A W R
D H V L O Z F D
V C B C Q O F J
T I C K E R W H

Word Bank

Blood

Mice

Yard

Deer

Tick

Check

Leaf

Wood

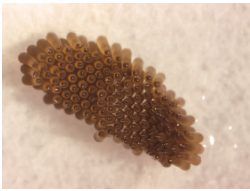
What are mosquitoes?

Mosquitoes are small flying insects.

Mosquitoes go through four stages as they grow. These are egg, larva, pupa, and adult.

Female mosquitoes need to eat blood to lay eggs. Male mosquitoes eat plant nectar. Mosquitoes can carry germs that can make people and other animals sick. Sometimes, mosquitoes can give these germs to people or animals when they bite them.

Eggs



Larva



Pupa



Adult

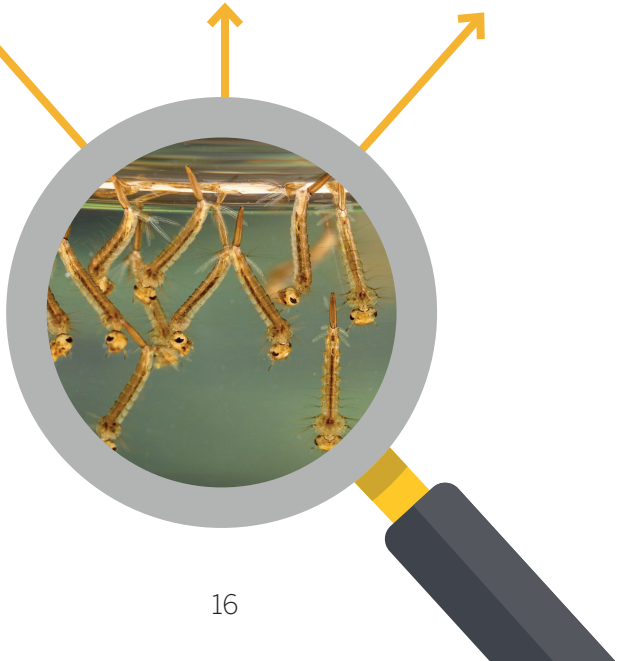


Photos: US CDC

Where do mosquitoes live?

Mosquitoes need water to lay eggs and grow. Some mosquitoes use water around our yards. This might be in puddles from rain or melting snow or in man-made containers that fill with water around the yard.

Examples of man-made containers are: buckets, flower pots, old tires, pools, and birdbaths. What others can you think of?



Word scramble

Unscramble the words and write letters in the boxes.

Use the word bank for help!

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | AREWT | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| 2. | VLARA | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| 3. | ODLBO | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| 4. | KTUBEC | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. | OLPO | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |

Word Bank:

POOL
BLOOD
WATER
BUCKET
LARVA



Answers: 1. WATER, 2. LARVA, 3. BLOOD,
4. BUCKET, 5. POOL

How can I control mosquitoes in my yard?

*Mosquitoes need water to grow to adults.
To protect your yard:*

- Empty the water from man-made containers.
- Change the water every week in containers that have to hold water, like birdbaths and pet water bowls. This makes sure that the mosquito larva cannot grow into an adult.
- Check window and door screens for holes that mosquitoes can fly through and fix them.



Mosquito hotspots

Can you circle all 7 differences between the top and bottom pictures to get rid of the mosquitoes?
Which yard is protected against mosquitoes?



How can I protect myself from mosquitoes?

What if you have to work or play in the yard with mosquitoes around? To protect yourself from mosquitoes:

- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear repellent (bug spray) that is EPA-approved. Have an adult help you.
- Stay inside when mosquitoes are most active. In Maine, this is early evening to early morning.



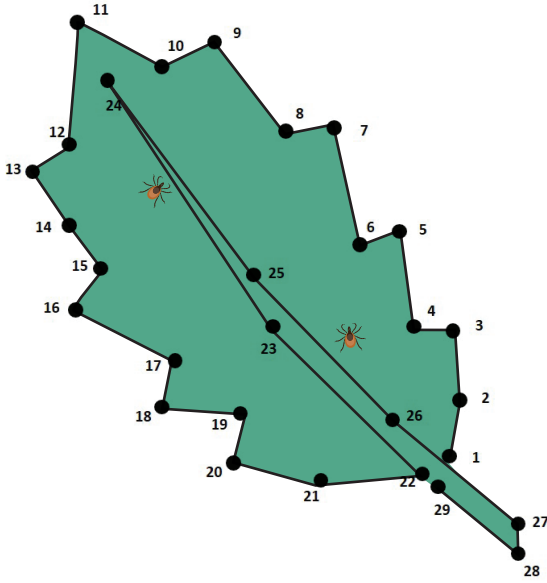
Take back your yard

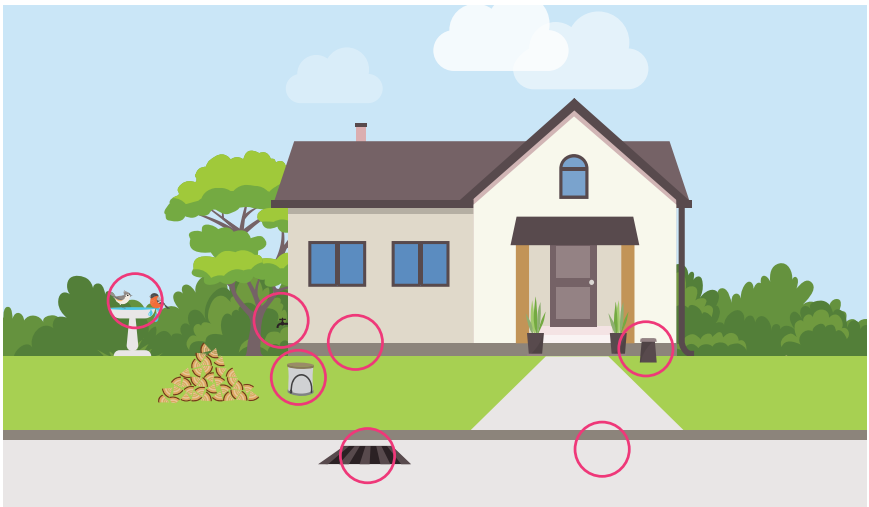
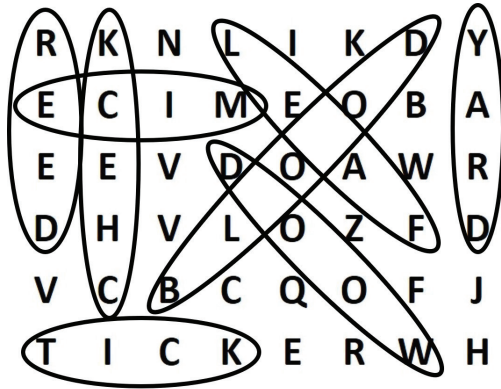
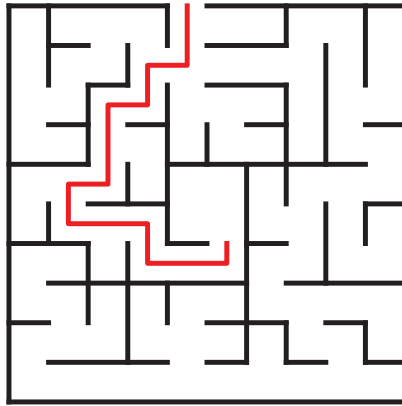
With an adult, look around your yard for places ticks and mosquitoes love. What can you do to can make your yard safer?

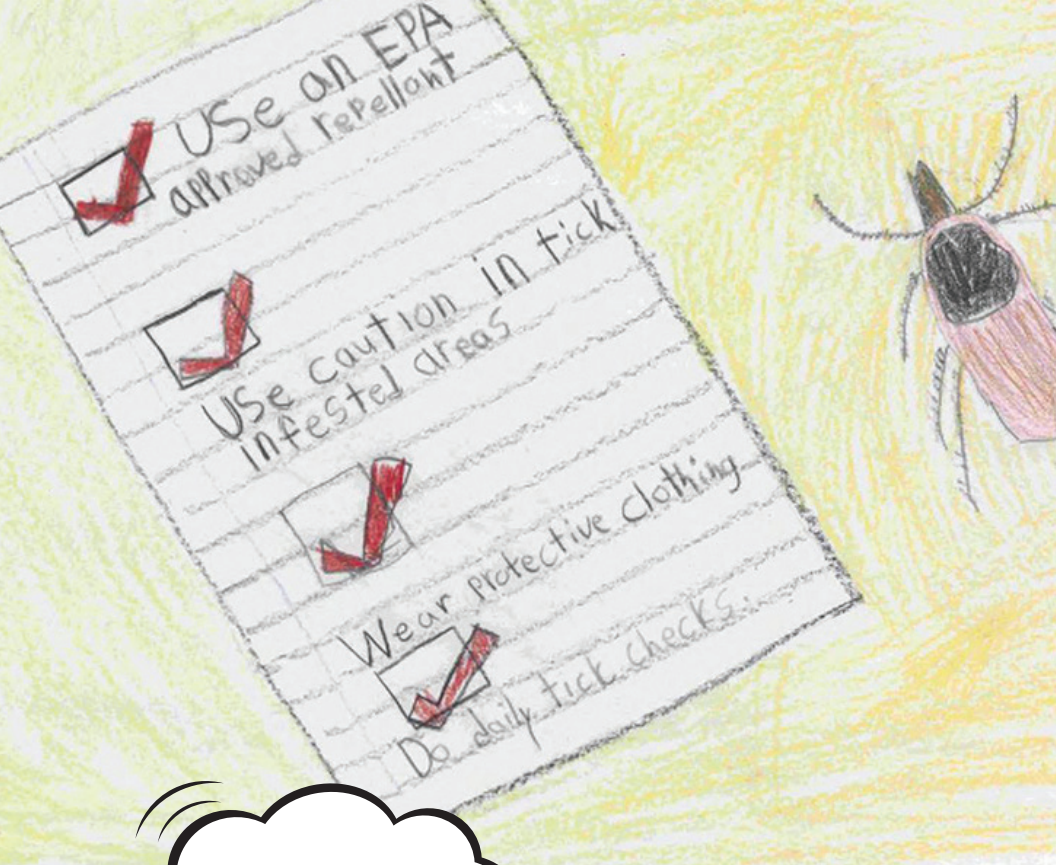
Check if you found any of these in your yard and then write down what you did to protect your yard.

| Item | Found | What did you do? |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|
| Bird bath | | |
| Bird feeder | | |
| Brush pile | | |
| Buckets | | |
| Cans, bottles, jars | | |
| Flower pots | | |
| Grass (mowed?) | | |
| Leaf pile | | |
| Pet water dish | | |
| Old tires | | |
| Screens (window and door) | | |
| Trash can | | |
| Wading pool | | |
| Wheel barrow | | |
| Wood pile | | |
| Other _____ | | |
| Other _____ | | |

Answer keys







...and limit outdoor activities from dusk to dawn



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit: www.maine.gov/dhhs/vectorborne
Or call Maine CDC: 1-800-821-5821