Natural Tick Repellent Recipes & Tick Bite Prevention Tips

Categories: Foraging, General, Health/Fitness, Home Remedies, Homesteading, Hunting & Fishing

Tick before and after feeding

Before we discuss natural tick repellent recipes and tick bite prevention, let's take a moment to learn a little more about ticks and their dangers.

Ticks. They're rightly considered to be one of the most unpleasant pests of the insect world. However for those who love nature, or those who are even outside for any longer than a little while, the eventuality of getting a tick bite can be an almost certainty. And, whilst the internet is full of blogs, guides and articles, it seems that many seem to conflict with one another as to how to avoid tick bites.

So let's take a look everything you need to know about ticks, from the symptoms of a tick bite right through to the natural tick repellents that actually work, and along the way, we'll try to debunk the most common tick myths and misunderstandings.
Ticks – A little about our not so friendly critters

As far as insects go, it’s safe to say that ticks are pretty much as crumby as it gets. They’re ugly, they’re difficult to spot and they’re both painful and absolutely disgusting when they go in on your skin for a bit of dinner.

What’s more, as they latch on and don’t let go until they’re filled with blood, you can be stuck with a tick for anything from a matter of days through to a number of weeks. And once full, they can reach the size of a marble, turning a green blue colour, before falling off.

Oh, and did we mention that when they fall off after they’ve been a right pain, they quite simply roll over and die. Pretty pointless, right?

And what happens if you do pull them off?

Well, without wanting to put anyone off their dinner, if you pull off a tick that is in full latch mode, you’ll likely end up with just the body, with the head remaining firmly underneath your skin. This can then lead to both a painful and potentially dangerous abscess that has the potential to turn sceptic.

The serious side of tick bites

Whilst we can laugh at the irony of the fate of the tick after they’ve had their meal from us, the serious side to tick bites is not quite as funny. Particularly as these little fellas can be responsible for spreading:

- Lyme disease
- Ehrlichiosis
- Anaplasmosi
- Tularemia
- Babesiosis

Symptoms of a tick bite

Not sure whether you’ve been bitten by a tick? Well the following symptoms can all appear within a matter of the minutes after the bite.

- A red, inflamed sport or a circular rash around the bite, that’s also know as the 'halo'
- Stiff neck and shoulders
- Headaches, nausea or a ‘foggy’ head
- Sudden weakness
- Aching muscles, joint pain and overall wellness
• Fever, a fluctuating temperature or chills
• Swollen, painful lymph nodes

The truth behind the blood type myth

There’s been many a myth circulated in the past about whether ticks are attracted or repelled by certain blood types. But we can clear this up once and for all by assuring you that it is absolute nonsense. Ticks are creatures of opportunity and, if they see a nice bit of flesh that’s within reaching distance, they’ll latch on. It’s as simple as that.

So what about the unlucky ones who seem to get bitten ALL of the time?

Well it would seem that this is simply down to bad luck (as well as perhaps a poor choice of clothing and repellent). However, with all of the helpful tips and tricks that are stored within this blog article for you, your luck when it comes to ticks is about to get whole lot better.

Homemade Natural Tick Repellent Recipes

Neem leaves have great natural tick repellent properties
Recipe One: Natural Tick Repellent For your clothes

**Ingredients that you’ll need**

- 5 Cloves of Garlic (around one bulb)
- 2 Tablespoons of crushed Neem Leaves
- 1 and half Lemons (skin and all)
- 2 Cups of Water

**Equipment that you’ll need**

- Stove
- Sauce Pan
- Strainer
- Funnel
- Spray Bottle
- Measuring Cup
- Measuring Spoons
- Knife
- Cutting Board

Natural tick repellent, a case note: The garlic ingredient in this recipe is an important element to add and has notably been found to reduce the chances of being bitten by a tick by as much as 21%. This may go some way to explaining why some of us are luckier than others, as for those with a high garlic content diet, the residual garlic within our sweat may serve as a natural repellent.

**Natural tick repellent for your clothes: Step by Step**

Step One – Heat up your water.

Step Two – Whilst the water is heating up dice up your lemon and garlic.

You needn’t be too careful with getting your chopping precise, or too finely cut, just cut them roughly.

Step Three – Measure out two tablespoons of dried neem leaves.

Step Four – Once your water is boiling you can add in your ingredients.

Step Five - Cover you sauce pan over and leave it to simmer on a low heat for between fifteen to twenty minutes.
Step Six – Remove the mixture and set aside, leaving it to cool down.

Step Seven – Place your funnel into the spray bottle that you have carefully positioned over the top. You should then take care to slowly pour through your mixture through the strainer. The strainer will then catch all of the solids, with the liquid filling up the spray bottle below.

Step Eight – Screw the spray bottle top back on and that’s it… you’re all done and ready to go.

Step Nine – If you do end up with any leftover repellent then it can be stored; to keep it at its most effective however you’ll need to get it refrigerated.

Tips for applying the natural tick repellent

Perhaps the most efficient way to use any repellent is to apply it to your skin, however given the garlic ingredient within this recipe it may be wise to avoid this if you don’t want to repel humans as well as ticks. Beyond misting your skin directly you can also use this mist to apply to clothes (just do so at a reasonable distance); it’s also suitable for pets too.

Recipe Two: Natural Tick Repellent For Your skin

ACV has natural tick repellent properties
If you want to go all out and mix up some natural tick repellent for your skin as well as your clothes then the following recipe is perfect.

**Ingredients that you’ll need**

- 2 Oz of apple cider vinegar, witch hazel or vodka (each is relatively as effective as the next, so feel free to choose freely between these)
- 2 Oz Water
- 20-40 Drops of *geranium bourbon oil*

One squirt of Castile soap to help distribute the oil better (this works out to be around a quarter of a tea spoon, however this is also an optional ingredient)

**Equipment that you’ll need**

- A glass or PET plastic spray bottle
- A sauce pan

**Natural tick repellent for your skin: Step by step**

Step One – Add your geranium oil to the apple cider vinegar, witch hazel or vodka.

Step Two – Mix the castile soap into the mixture if you’ve chosen to include castile soap.

Step Three – Wait for the mixture to sit for a few minutes, before you go on to mix further.

Step Four – Add in the water to the mixture

Step Five – Your mixture is now all done, so fill up your spray bottle.

Ideally your spray bottle should be made from either glass or a PET plastic, as oils can otherwise leach the chemicals from certain plastics, which essentially contaminates the repellent.

**Tips for applying this tick repellent**

This simple recipe is easy to use, and all you need to remember is to shake the mixture well before each use. Simply spray it on exposed skin. This repellent is also suitable for your clothes.
Geranium bourbon essential oil acts as a natural tick repellent

Recipe Three: A Homemade Tick Repellent Lotion For Your Skin

As another form of the recipe above you can choose to make this natural repellent in lotion form. This arguably may be a more effective natural tick repellent as the lotion will be naturally absorbed into the skin.

**Ingredients that you’ll need**

- 2 Oz of your choice of natural lotion (you can either make your own, or use any shop brought lotion)
- Between 20 and 40 drops of [geranium bourbon essential oil](http://knowledgeweighsnothing.com)

**Equipment that you’ll need**

- A glass or PET plastic spray bottle
- A container in which to mix your ingredients
Homemade tick repellent for your skin (lotion): Step by step

Step One – Mix your oil and essentials oils into a container

Step Two – Add the mixture to your spray bottle

*Tips for storing your repellent*

This lotion based tick repellent should be stored in a cool, dark place. If stored as such this is a repellent that should easily last for between two to three months.

**Tick Bite Prevention Tips And Advice**

So you are now armed with some natural tick repellent sprays and lotions, let's natural tick repelling education with a few well-placed tips.

1. *Wear clothes that are light in colour*

   This will give you a much better chance of spotting a tick before it has time to sink its teeth into your skin.

2. *Wear long pants along with protective footwear such as solid sneakers or hiking boots.*

   You can also increase your protection by tucking your shirt or top into your pants and, in particularly tick abundant areas, by wrapping some duct tape around your ankles and over your socks. This may give you a rather odd style, but it’ll certain ensure that you avoid being bitten!

3. *Remain on well-trodden trails*

   If possible, you should try to stay on well-trodden tracks where over hanging vegetation and planting is minimalized. Overgrown meadows are also to be avoided if at all possible, and what’s more, this tip not only helps you avoid ticks, but additionally allows you to leave a lesser impact upon the outdoor spaces that you love.

4. *Remember to do a daily tick check*

   This tip is particularly important if you’re staying out for a number of days where the chances of a tick reaching you or your clothing is heighted. You should also get a friend to help you out and check the places where you can’t, such as your back.

5. *Once you’re home remember to check the kids and the pets*
Before you set even so much as one foot over your threshold, you should check over your children and pets, and if just two or three make it in you could find yourself with a fresh littler of ticks to contend with!

6. When coming home after a trip to potentially tick infested zones, you should bathe or shower as soon as is possible

Ideally this should be within two hours, as ticks can tend to hide away from even the most extensive of overall body checks.

7. Be sure to examine not only each other and your clothes

But also your equipment, including coats, tents and day packs.

8. Always tumble dry your clothes that has gone on the trip with you.

If ticks have happened to latch on or hide away within these then they will be killed off when the dryer is set to a high heat setting (it’s worth noting that more recent research seems to suggest that even shorter drying times may be effective, particularly when the clothing inside isn’t wet to begin with).

9. If you choose to use shop brought, chemically based repellents then you should opt for those that continue between 20% and 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluidine), as this is most effective.

Bare in mind however that when sussing such repellents it’s patricianly important that you avoid the hands, eyes and mouths (aseptically when applying to a child’s skin).

10. Always be prepared for being bitten, including within your packing finely pointed tweezers and bite lotion.

(Images from: Bjørn Christian Tørrissen & Phongnguyen1410)