

# Tick



GARDEN EARTH  
NATURALIST  

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ECO-SERVICE CARDS

# TICK

FAMILY: Taxodidae

ORDER: Acarina

## IDENTIFICATION CLUES



- ◆ 1/12 - 1/4 inch long
- ◆ oval shape; head-thorax and abdomen are not separate
- ◆ can be soft or have a hard shield on the back
- ◆ 4 pairs of jointed legs
- ◆ jaw modified into a piercing stylet for sucking blood from prey



### Where to Look:

Ticks are found in woods and grassy fields. They are often found in the nests or dens of animals or attached to their host.

### Who Eats It?

Ticks have few predators but ants, centipedes, toads and wild turkey will feed on ticks.



### LIFE CYCLE

Most ticks lay eggs. The larva hatches and has 6 legs. It attaches to a host and feeds for several days, then drops off and molts. The nymph stage has 8 legs and attaches to a new host and feeds for several more days before molting again as an adult tick.

### What It Eats.

Ticks are parasites and feed on the blood of birds, mammals and reptiles. They attach with a dart-like anchor with backward curving teeth just below the mouth.



### Did You Know

Ticks carry several serious human diseases including Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Lyme disease. Ticks inject an anesthetic chemical into the host so that it doesn't know it is there.

### Role in the Ecosystem

Ticks can spread diseases as they move from host to host and indirectly play a role in population control.