

# Choosing More All-Natural Tick Repellents

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We get it. Ticks can drive you batty. Ticks are little sneakers that climb up from the dirt or fall from the trees. You find ticks on your body, in your hair, on your clothes, on your companion dog or cat, in your bed and on your furniture. And, if they attach and grow on you, you think, “Great. I hope I don’t have Lyme Disease or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.”

You are constantly checking your body, your hair, your clothes, your companion pets, your bed and furniture like someone six feet away from you had told you they had lice.

Searching for ticks on companion pets is like searching for a needle in a haystack if they haven’t attached yet and started sucking blood. A potentially ‘squirmy’ haystack.

You are vacuuming all fabric surfaces. You are tossing ten loads of heavy laundry in the dryer on high heat for at least ten minutes, then placing them in the washer, and then back in the dryer. You are barricading yourself and your companion dogs in the house, but feel awful because you want to enjoy the outdoors and want them to enjoy the fresh air too. Argh!

## Tick Control Is a Multipronged Effort

We at Hemopet like the basic Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tips on mitigating ticks in the yard. For instance, the CDC suggests keeping the grass short and creating a 3-foot barrier of wood chips around the perimeter. However, the CDC tips for the human body involve chemicals like DEET that should *not* be used on dogs or cats. Permethrin is often used to treat clothing and furniture, but is highly toxic to cats and should never be used in cat-residing households.

<https://hemopet.org/choosing-more-all-natural-tick-repellents/>

## Choosing a Tick Repellent or Killer

Indeed, we do prefer more natural alternatives to combat ticks.

Another yard option is to place human grade Diatomaceous Earth around the perimeter of the yard.

However, the internet has conflicting information when it comes to essential oils to combat ticks *and* which essential oils are toxic to pets. So, how does one choose an essential oil?

Well, that's up to you. We will give you an idea of how to narrow down your choices and how to mix your own tick repellent. We make no claims that these will work for your household, but you can try if you feel comfortable with them.

### A. Make Sure Essential Oil Is Non-Toxic to Pets

Lists differ, but in general we found these essential oils as being fairly consistently toxic to pets across the board.

Oils that are particularly **toxic to cats** include:

- Basil
- Bergamot
- Cassia
- Cinnamon; OK in small amounts
- Citrus
- Clove; OK in small amounts
- Eucalyptus
- Geranium (includes Rose Geranium)
- Grapefruit
- Lavender
- Lemon
- Lime
- Oregano
- Pennyroyal
- Peppermint
- Spruce
- Tea Tree (Melaleuca)
- Thyme
- Wild orange
- Wintergreen

Oils that are particularly **toxic to dogs** include:

- Clove; OK in small amounts
- Garlic; OK in modest amounts
- Geranium (includes Rose Geranium)
- Juniper
- Oregano\*
- Rosemary\*
- Tea Tree (Melaleuca)
- Thyme (includes Red Thyme)
- Wintergreen

*\*Definitely do not give to dogs that are prone to seizures.*

## **B. Find Essential Oils That Repel Ticks**

Anecdotal [evidence](#) has suggested that the following essential oils repel ticks:

- Cedarwood
- Citronella
- Citrus
- Clove Bud
- Lavender
- Lemongrass
- Oregano
- Neem Oil
- Peppermint
- Rose Geranium
- Rosemary
- Thyme (includes Red Thyme)

## **C. Compare A and B Listed Above**

As you can tell, your options have narrowed considerably.

## **D. Choosing an Over-the-Counter Essential Oil Option**

You can choose an over-the-counter, premixed, commercial option that can be applied to your companion pet so long as the manufacturer claims that it is safe to use on pets and is a tick repellent. Additionally, follow the manufacturer's instructions to a "T" in regards to size and application.

## **E. Making Your Own**

You can find many homemade recipes online that claim to repel ticks.

One of Hemopet's employees decided to go basic to find out if the tick repellent she mixed worked.

## #1. Choosing the essential oil.

Her logic was two-part.

One-half of her yard has a barrier of cedar mulch. *Consumer Reports* states you can use [mulch](#), but suggests dry wood chip mulch to prevent tick infestations. Her companion dogs have walked through and sniffed the cedar mulched areas without reaction.

Secondly, many of the commercial, more all-natural tick repellents for dogs contain cedarwood oil.

Ergo, she chose cedarwood oil.

She is thinking about using lavender in the future and has this on-hand as well to calm one of the dogs. She thought about adding lemongrass, but has a commercial lemongrass bug deterrent product on hand – that does not claim to repel ticks – but is deemed safe for pets.

## #2. Using a carrier oil.

It is critical to mix the essential oil of your choice with a carrier oil. Essential oils are highly concentrated and can irritate a person or pet's skin if applied directly without a carrier oil.

According to *Whole Dog Journal*, organic and cold-pressed [carrier oils](#) considered safe for pets include:

- Apricot Kernel
- Coconut
- Hazelnut
- Jojoba
- Olive
- Sesame
- Sweet Almond
- Sunflower

Since she has used and given coconut oil in the past to the dogs, she chose coconut oil.

## #3. Mixing

*Whole Dog Journal* states: The general rule for canine use is to mix one teaspoon carrier oil with three to five drops essential oil or one tablespoon (½ ounce) carrier oil with 10 to 15 drops essential oil.

[Vitality Extracts](#) suggests the following dilution:

- 9:1 ratio of carrier oil to essential oil for cats, small dogs and other small animals.
- 4:1 carrier oil to essential oil for medium-size dogs.
- 3:1 carrier oil to essential oil for large dogs.

## #4. Applying

She put the essential oil and carrier oil mixture on her hands and rubbed them on the bellies, underarms, paws, back and head (not face) of two of her companion dogs. (Much to their dismay, it must be added.)

## **#5. Results**

The dogs did not have ticks on them for approximately six days. Her male dog did have a tick on him on the sixth day. Of course, this was after several hours of napping in the grass and playing in the yard.

He was treated after finding the tick and one has not been found since.

Bear in mind, essential oil tick repellents and more all-natural treatments have to be applied more frequently than synthetic chemical or conventional tick repellents.

Is she attributing the lack of ticks to the homemade tick repellent? Possibly. Time will tell. Again, it is a multipronged effort to reduce tick infestations: increased checking and vigilance, lawn maintenance, and essential oil treatments.

## **Conclusion**

These are just ideas for you to try at home to see if they work for your household. The main takeaways are to do your research, choose the right options for your household and pets, and take the plunge into experimenting with essential oils to combat ticks!

**Good luck!**