

## Dog Fleas and Ticks

### **Fight fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes in your yard.**

*Marcia King*

If you live in an area where ticks and fleas thrive, you may need to do more than keep your dog on a flea and tick preventive.

The following techniques will help you reduce or eradicate disease-carrying pests in your outdoor environment:

#### Fleas

Spray your yard with a flea-killing insecticide, taking care to follow label instructions to the letter, says Michael Dryden, DVM, professor of veterinary parasitology at Kansas State University. "Allow the product to dry before permitting pets and people into that yard. Once the product is dry and bound to grass, it's safe." Treat kennel areas, favorite spots where your dog spends time, and flea-friendly habitats (moist, warm, shady spots, and in organic debris such as leaves, straw, and grass clippings).

#### Ticks

Ticks like tall grass, tall weeds, and brushy areas, so keep vegetation mowed, brush cleared, and leaf litter picked up. Ticks also favor moist environments, so apply a layer of wood chips or gravel to lawns adjacent to wooded areas to create a dry, tick-unfriendly barrier. Kill ticks in your yard with pesticides specifically labeled for ticks, adhering precisely to instructions.

#### Mosquitoes

Eliminate areas of standing water where mosquitoes can breed: buckets, cans, flower pot saucers, old tires, plastic tarps, stagnant ditches, tree holes, and stumps (fill with mortar). Clean clogged rain gutters. Change the water in pet bowls every day and twice weekly for wading pools, bird baths, and livestock troughs. Stock ornamental pools with predacious minnows (mosquito fish) or goldfish (they feed on mosquitoes and mosquito larva), treat with larvicides or insect growth regulators labeled for use against mosquitoes in ornamental pools, or add a fountain to create turbulence and discourage mosquito reproduction.