

## **South Windsor Eagle Scout Nick Palladino Presents Unique Method of Tick Control**

Killing ticks by spraying pesticides throughout your yard is harmful to the environment because it kills pollinating insects and can pollute water sources, harming marine wildlife.

Tick tubes offer a more direct application of pesticides by targeting white footed mice, a major vector in spreading Lyme Disease, without harming the mice. They are very effective at lowering the tick population because they can kill ticks living in mouse burrows.

The tubes are made from recycled toilet paper tubes and paper towel tubes that are filled with cotton balls that are soaked in the pesticide permethrin. They are inexpensive and easy to make and they can effectively lower the tick population in an area by up to 90%. The tubes are placed in early spring, when mice are breeding, where ticks are likely to be found. The mice use the cotton balls from the tubes to build nests, exposing their bodies and their nest to the permethrin that was on the cotton. The ticks that feed on the mice often carry Lyme Disease, but the permethrin kills them before they have the chance to spread it. Permethrin is not harmful to the mice or other animals.

For my Boy Scouts Eagle Project, I received donations of supplies from Home Depot and made 500 tick tubes which I placed along a local public walking trail. After a few weeks, I returned to the trail to find that nearly all of the tubes had been emptied. The cotton balls had been taken out of the tubes by mice and were used to build nests. To estimate the effectiveness of the tick tubes in eliminating ticks, I dragged a white cloth along the trail, counting the number of ticks that clung onto it. In the part of the trail that was treated with tick tubes, I did not find a single tick. Several ticks were found in other parts of the trail that had been left untreated.

Tick tubes can be used around your yard in places where ticks are likely to be found. Only about 10 tubes are needed to cover the area around of a typically sized yard. If you are interested in making your own tick tubes, here is the article I used to create the tubes:

<http://www.practicalprimitive.com/skillofthemonth/ticktubes>