



If a tick is found, it should be removed gently with fingernails or tweezers held as close to the skin as possible to prevent the head and mouthparts from breaking off and being left in the skin. Use of suitable clothing and appropriate tick repellent can reduce the chances of being bitten. Ticks can transmit serious diseases, so it is wise to be cautious and report any sightings of ticks in Bermuda to the appropriate authorities (doctor or vet).



Tropical Centipede

Bermuda has several types of centipedes, but the Tropical Centipede, also known locally as the St. David's Centipede, is the only one of concern. It can reach lengths of 12 to 14 inches and has a burgundy, yellow-green coloured body with red-brown legs.

Centipedes are predators and thus can bite, but the smaller centipedes are unlikely to give a 'sting' comparable to that of the Tropical Centipede.

If you live in a centipede area, reduce the chances of them entering your house by eliminating nesting and hiding areas near your house such as bushes, shrubs, rocks or woodpiles. Centipedes like to hide so keep grass mowed and wild vegetation well managed and away from your living area.



Wasps

Bermuda has several types of wasp and they range in colour from red to brown to yellow. Some live in single small mud cells, usually found on the sides of buildings, while others live in communal 'paper' nests made of chewed plant material, which can be found hanging from tree branches.

Unlike bees, wasps can sting several times. Care should be taken when removing nests as wasps can be aggressive. Adult wasps feed on nectar and sweet foods such as rotting fruit and juices, so removing these will discourage wasps from visiting you.

The mission of the Pesticides Focus Group is:
"To promote the safe and responsible use of pesticides, and actively encourage the use of alternatives, through the implementation of new policies, regulations and educational programmes".

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Please use all pesticides safely. Follow all instructions on the labels.

The Pesticides Focus Group will not be liable for the misuse of any of the suggested pesticide alternatives.

For more information go to www.bermudacommunity.com/pesticides.asp or email pesticidesfocus@bermuda.com



What's Biting You?



Bermuda is fortunate not to have too many biting pests, but we do have enough to annoy us from time to time

This flyer describes a few of the common, and not-so-common, biting and stinging pests and some suggestions on how to avoid their bites and stings.





Ants

Bermuda has a relatively small selection of ant species residing on the island, none of which can sting. All ants, however, have strong biting mouthparts and this is what people feel when being bitten by an ant. The ants are usually just trying to determine whether you are a potential food source rather than attacking you as an enemy.

Keeping ant populations under control inside the house is the best way to avoid bites. The most effective way to do this is to be meticulously clean in all food preparation and consumption areas.

Only resort to chemicals when absolutely necessary. Ants inside a house are either after food or water, so removing these sources will lead to the ants looking elsewhere.



Bees

Bees are easy to recognize with their fuzzy yellow and black bodies. They are not usually aggressive and, like most insects, will not sting unless threatened. If you find you are in close proximity to a bee, do not swat at it as you may aggravate it, increasing your chances of getting stung. Allow the bee to fly away on its own.

Stings are not normally life threatening unless an individual is allergic to bee venom. Hives located in heavily populated areas should be removed by professionals to reduce unnecessary stings. Bees sting once and then will die.



Bird Mites

Birds, particularly wild birds, are often infested with tiny mites, which are just visible to the naked eye. Bird mites will be a source of irritation for humans after birds vacate a nest that has been made in the eaves of a house. The mites will leave the nest looking for a source of food (a blood meal) and whatever warm-blooded mammal is nearest will be tested for suitability.

Bird mites will die after a couple of weeks if there are no birds available. If bird mites are found, examine the area of worst infestation for the source of the problem such as a bird nest. Removing the nest and ensuring that windows and vents are well sealed should be all that is required to prevent the mites

from entering a building. Mites already in the house can be wiped away with a general house cleaner or soapy water.



Fleas

Fleas cause not only discomfort to the infested animal, but often to persons in close proximity to the animal. They can also transmit serious diseases to humans.

Most adult fleas are small (usually less than 3mm), brown to black in colour and vertically flattened. Immature fleas are whitish larvae and they live in the bedding material or on the ground where the animal spends most of its time.

Adult fleas are excellent jumpers and can be difficult to spot unless you look in the right place. The easiest place is on animals, particularly where their fur is thin, such as under their ears and on the inside of the legs and chest.

The bedding or sleeping area of animals can also give clues to the presence of fleas, such as their droppings, which when dampened with water will turn red. Treat an infested animal with the appropriate flea medication and launder the bedding in very hot water. An insecticidal treatment may be required if the animal's bedding is not washable, but take care to exhaust all other non-chemical options and use the minimum amount of chemical to solve the problem.



Mosquitoes

There are four important mosquito species in Bermuda: the Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*), the Dengue Mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*), the Saltmarsh Mosquito (*Ochlerotatus sollicitans*) and the Common Mosquito (*Culex quinquefasciatus*).

These mosquitoes are vectors of serious diseases and every precaution should be taken to ensure that standing water does not collect providing the mosquitoes with a place to breed.

Over the counter repellent creams, citronella candles and burners may provide some protection. **Try to avoid using insect repellents on children, but if you do use them, use extreme caution.** Some people suggest that home remedies, such as fabric softener sheets wiped on the skin, can repel mosquitoes (worth a try!).



No-See-Um's

A still summer evening can be ruined by bites from these "invisible" biting insects aptly called no-see-um's. These flies are so small as to appear almost invisible, but they can give a nasty bite that itches without relief. They can particularly be a problem near shallow water or patches of wet, decaying vegetation. It is difficult to prevent attacks of no-see-um's; however, if your property has any potential breeding areas, try to eliminate them if possible.

Ensure that your windows are well screened to prevent insects from entering. Try over the counter insect repellents or other home remedies (see 'mosquitoes') to keep no-see-um's away.



Spiders

Most people are surprised to learn that Bermuda has a poisonous spider, the Brown Recluse, firmly established on the island.

Although all local spiders can bite, the Brown Recluse is the only one of medical importance. Bites are not fatal, but they can leave a painful, slow healing sore. Consult your doctor if a red circular area develops as medicines can hasten the healing process.

The brown recluse is usually not larger than the diameter of a 25-cent piece (legs included). The legs are long and slender and the abdomen is oval, globular and light to medium brown in colour. They are generally found in low traffic areas such as spare rooms, closets and basements. They are not aggressive and will only bite when they feel threatened. Treat all spiders that you don't recognize with caution.



Ticks

Bermuda is fortunate not to have a tick problem, although occasional clusters of ticks are reported, mostly associated with dogs.

Ticks can travel easily to Bermuda on humans, their pets or with migrant birds, so it is wise to be cautious of the possibility of ticks occurring in Bermuda. If you are returning from a high-risk tick area overseas, examine yourself and your children for ticks. Ticks are not always easy to spot and can be as small as a pinhead.

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