

# Pest Profile



**Photo credit:** By Benjamin Smith from United States (American Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*)) [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

**Common Name:** American Dog Tick

**Scientific Name:** *Dermacentor variabilis* (Say)

**Order and Family:** Acari: Ixodidae

**Size and Appearance:** The American Dog Tick is brown in color with whitish markings present on its scutum. Nymphs lack the white scutums and feature a more yellowish hue. This is one of the larger ticks found in North America, with females being up to 5 mm in length.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
<b>Egg</b>	< 1 mm	Yellowish-brown, eggs laid in clusters of 4,000.
<b>Larva/Nymph</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Instar- 0.64 mm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Instar- 0.9 mm	1 <sup>st</sup> Instar- 6 legs, small, yellowish coloration 2 <sup>nd</sup> Instar- 8 legs present, red markings near eyes, yellowish brown coloration, gray when engorged

<b>Adult</b>	Unengorged Female: 3.2 mm Males: 2.9 mm	Flattened body, brown with white scutum, becomes gray when engorged
<b>Pupa (if applicable)</b>		

**Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.):** Chelicerate (chewing, sucking)

**Host animal/s:** *Dermacentor variabilis* (Say) Uses small mammals such as meadow mouse, cotton rat, swamp rabbit, squirrels, Norway rats, and house mouse as larvae and nymphs. As adults, they prefer larger mammals such as dogs, cattle, coyote, hogs, deer, and humans.

**Description of Damage (larvae and adults):** American Dog Ticks are attracted to scent and will cling to tall grass to be picked up by a host. They use their arachnid mouthparts to attach to a host and proceed to drain blood until they are engorged. Once engorged, ticks mate, lay eggs, and repeat the cycle. This species is a vector of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia, making them of medical importance.

**References:**

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Blood Feeders- American Dog Tick. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (pp. 19-20). National Pest Management Association International.

American Dog Tick. (2008). University of Florida. Retrieved June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from [http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/medical/american\\_dog\\_tick.htm](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/medical/american_dog_tick.htm)