

5-10-19 Nature, Nurture, and Nasty

Spring is blooming and bursting with pride! The herring have arrived, which always coincide with dandelions and forsythia. We have progressed to daffodils, tulips, cherry trees, magnolia and so many more!

This is an amazing time to drive around and enjoy the wonders of nature. The sounds of birds, such as the red wing blackbird bring back such wonderful childhood memories of fishing with my father. That is how I know this bird to be associated with wetlands. Even if you do not leave your car, open your window and enjoy the sounds and sights! People are gardening and there are so many beautiful sights to behold.

This week, I needed more than a ride; I needed a walk. I needed to get out there into a marsh and into the woods. Nature is nurturing and I needed it after months of debilitating pain from a foot ailment. I found what I needed.

Starting with a walk-through Audubon's trail to the North River in Marshfield, I was able to observe the osprey nest, where, apparently, there is needy teenager (juvenile, in bird-speak) in the nest sounding the alarm for the parents, who quickly fly in and around. (Not worries; no attacking ospreys.)

The boardwalk to the North River offers all kinds of beauty. Crab apples are in bloom. Grape vines are just beginning to unfurl their leaves. Skunk cabbage offers all kinds of wonderful green to an overall dark environment. Moss glows in many shades of green and fern heads unfold in fuzzy tan, silver and, finally, bright green.

The trail concludes with a view of the North River, swirling with a change in tides. If you take the right-side trail on your way out, you may get another closer view of the ospreys.

Nearby, the local bald eagle was seen! It is a young female with a few flecks of brown in her white crown.

The adventure continued into the woods of Marshfield, where I had heard about what is locally referred to as the root cellar. It is a beautiful stone structure on a hill in the middle of the woods. It is not ancient; the post and lintel entry way showed signs of fairly-modern means of stone cutting. (1800 to early 1900's) I was

so pleased it had not been vandalized with graffiti. It had an opening on the top for smoke to escape. Many mysteries there!

Along the way, old bottle dumps were discovered, and I took so many pictures with my phone, it wore out the battery. This was the only sad part of the day, well almost the only.

While all this nature exploring and picture taking was happening, I knew that I was not fully protected from ticks. I have been meaning to stock up on my supply of permethrin. Permethrin is not intended for the skin, like a repellent, but it is intended for clothing, where it can adhere to the fibers of clothing. Soak your socks, pants, gloves, shirts, jackets and boots in this and they are good for five cold water washes.

Repellants do not do a good job of repelling ticks. Permethrin kills ticks.

Your choice. My choice is to use it safely and wisely.

I knew that ticks love moisture. I knew that I did not have permethrin. I put my socks over my pants. I stayed to the trail (mostly). I knew I was at risk during this very nurturing adventure. I hoped for the best and worried and made plans for the worst.

A tiny deer tick was found as soon as my adventurous walks concluded. A plan was put into place.

First, the tiny deer tick was placed into packing tape for posterity and for teaching purposes.

While I admittedly felt all itchy and scratchy on the way home, I had a plan. All clothes, including underwear and jacket and scarf and bucket hat, went into the dryer, on medium heat for fifteen minutes. A shower is good for discovery but no guarantee.

Please don't let worrying about the very serious tick-borne diseases stop you from enjoying nature.

Socks over the pants.

Stick to the trail.

Wear repellent on your skin.

Please consider permethrin for your clothing. I consider it a life-saver.

Clothing into the drier when you return home.

Shower.

If you find a tick and it is still crawling, consider yourself fortunate; no disease transmitted. If you find it attached, but know it was not there the day before, you are safe. If you are not sure, call your doctor.

We are not living a full life without enjoying nature. Please enjoy it, by taking precautions. By taking precautions, we relax with nature, are nurtured by nature and we avoid the nasty part of nature.

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