

WHITETAIL News



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Science Makes the BEST Even BETTER!

Story on Page 5

COVER:

SEED PRODUCTION A Complex Journey to the Perfect Product

Story On Page 8

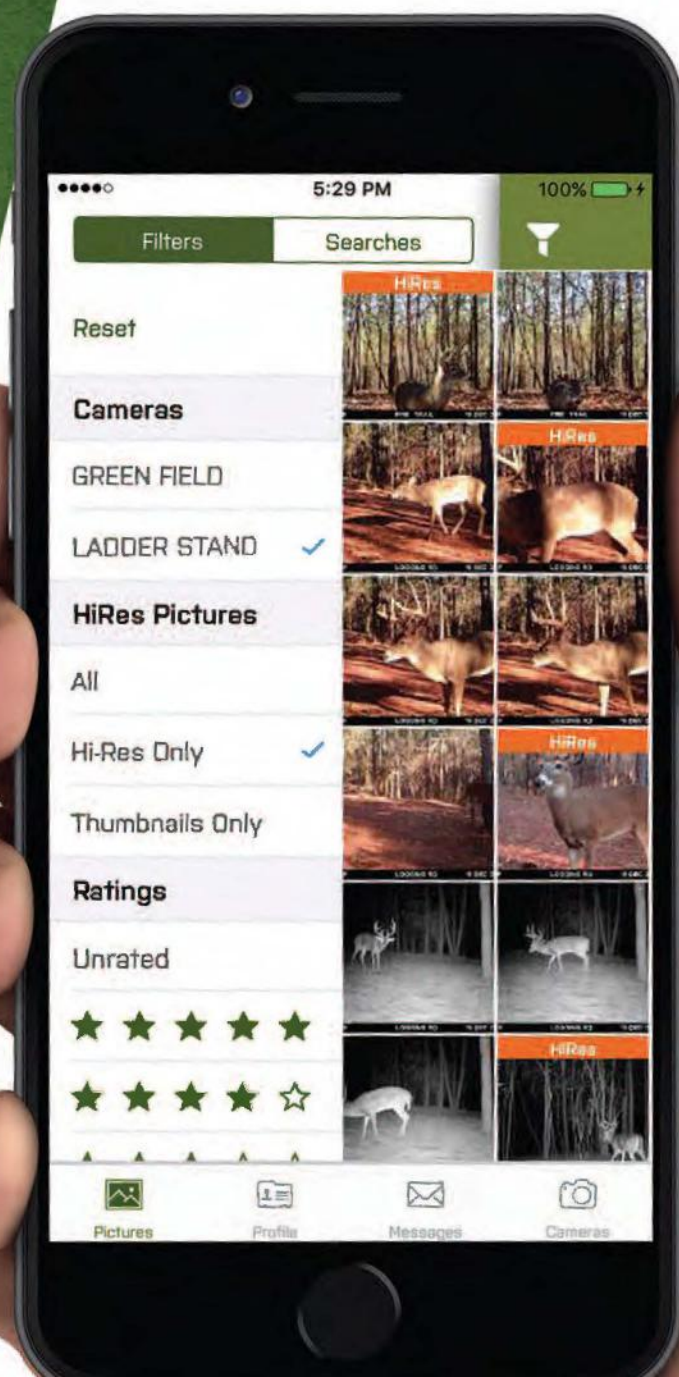
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Cover Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer



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A Message from **RAY SCOTT**

Founder and President of the Whitetail Institute of North America

The Tiny, Mighty Seed

"Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof."
— Julie Moir Messervy

When you stop to think about it, the concept of a seed is an amazing thing — so small yet so powerful. So full of potential and promise.

From the tiny mustard seed of the Bible — referring to the growth of faith — to the compelling image of the mighty oak emerging from an acorn, seeds remind us that great outcomes can come from the smallest beginnings.

Seeds are nothing short of a miracle when you consider that all the properties of a plant are programmed into their diminutive structures. From protein content to taste to climate hardiness and more, they contain all the qualities we consider when we select a planting for our own personal management programs — the qualities the Institute programs into their exclusive seed products through years of research and testing.

I started the Whitetail Institute based on my confidence in one particular seed — Imperial Whitetail Clover. That one seed started a deer nutrition revolution. And it planted a seed in my mind, the conviction that serious whitetail managers everywhere could benefit from a range of nutrition and forage products designed specifically for deer — especially fine fields of forage to attract, hold and grow better quality whitetail deer. That seed of an idea, nearly 30 years ago, took root and grew into a whole new industry dedicated to whitetail nutrition.

At the Whitetail Institute, we know everything starts with

the seed. We know the quality of the outcome will be no better than the quality of the seed itself. It's that simple. That's why it takes years to develop and test our products.

Food plotters rightfully get caught up in all the steps beyond the seed: the soil, planting procedures, annuals, perennials, the weeds, the climate, equipment, when and where to plant, etc. All those things are critical but I hope you will take the time to read what all goes into annually producing the many tons of Imperial Whitetail food plot seeds in the excellent comprehensive article by Jon Cooner on page 8 "Seed Production — a Complex Journey to the Perfect Product."

The headline says it all. It is a complex journey indeed. And the product is as perfect as we can make it. The article demonstrates more than anything the extraordinary lengths the Whitetail Institute goes to insure the quality of its products. We have one aim: to make sure you get the absolute best possible results from your plantings.

So if you always thought a seed was just a seed, be sure to read the article. I don't believe you will ever be able to open a bag of Imperial Whitetail seed in the same way as in the past.

Ray Scott



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Imperial 30-06 Antler Up D3

Science Improves an Already Legendary Product

By Matt Harper

For those who have read any of my articles, you may know I am not inclined to clichés or over-used euphemisms. But there are a few undeniable truths that have stood the test of time. One such example is the old adage, “If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it.” I have used this tidbit of wisdom on many occasions, in particular with my wife. In our longstanding battle of her trying to “fix” me, I argue that I am not broken, so why fix me. Her reply: “Even if we say you’re not broken, that doesn’t mean that I can’t make you better.”

We all have our favorite products that we have patronized for years, and because we are happy with them, we like them just the way they are. Hunters and outdoorsman probably are more loyal to particular products than most demographics. A shotgun or rifle you have had for years remains your go-to weapon even though you have plenty to choose from in the gun safe. A knife that your uncle gave you when you were 15 never leaves your pack even though you’re now 45.

I could go on, but I think you get the point. Call it nostalgic, superstitious, or old fashioned, but hunters tend to stick with what works for them. Sure, we may be tempted by the newest, sexiest broadhead on the market, but most gravitate back to what has worked for them year in and year out. The worst thing about this tendency is what do we do when our favorite product is changed?

Stroll through any sporting goods store and when you get to the section that houses the deer mineral products you will find no shortage of choices. It seems like there is no end to the parade of new products that boast incredible claims and try to outdo each other with shiny graphic designs on the bags. But as you sift through all the clutter, you will likely find a bag and a name that has not changed for many years. While the litany of new products comes and goes, the familiar blue-and-white and red-and-white bags are there year



Photo by Matt Harper

in and year out. Why has this product line not been swept aside by the avalanche of newcomers? Well, it's simply because Imperial Whitetail 30-06 Mineral/Vitamin Supplement and 30-06 Plus Protein work and have outperformed their competition for more than 25 years.

30-06 Mineral was first introduced to the market more than 25 years ago, and like other Whitetail Institute products, was the first in its category. It was developed by nutritionists to meet the specific nutritional needs of whitetail deer, as opposed to other products that were designed for cattle or were glorified salt licks. So why would competition not follow Whitetail's lead, especially since it has been proven that the mineral needs for cattle and deer differ drastically and that salt (in itself) does little to nothing for antler growth? The simple answer is that it was and is easier and cheaper to not do the research and just put their money into marketing to convince customers that their products are "special." Even today, this is the approach most so-called "deer mineral" products take. Some boast about the dozens of various minerals in their product, but if you look at the guaranteed analysis on the bag, you will see that many of them are 70 percent salt and some are more than 90 percent salt.

But, as with Imperial Whitetail Clover, the folks at Whitetail Institute put their money and effort into research and testing to develop a product that truly worked, and indeed, results have proven that it does work and works incredibly well. Over the last 25 years, millions of pounds of 30-06 Mineral has been used by hundreds of thousands of deer hunters and managers. The consistent results these customers

have found are bigger-bodied deer, increased fawn growth and, yes, heavier and bigger antlers.

This should not be surprising if you consider that 30-06 Mineral contains the needed minerals and vitamins that affect these growth characteristics. But it is not simply the fact that these nutrients are present in the product. The science runs much deeper. The sources where the nutrients are derived, the ratios of each nutrient in the formulation and total amounts of each nutrient all play critical roles in the success of 30-06 Mineral. But unlike other companies that will just tell you their product works, the Whitetail Institute lets its customers do the talking, backing up the claims with thousands of field trials and testimonials from customers across deer country.

More than 20 years ago, a sister product was introduced: 30-06 Plus Protein. At its core, 30-06 Plus Protein had the same mineral and vitamin formulation. The difference was that a 10 percent protein component was added, but the main purpose of the product remained to provide needed minerals and vitamins to the deer herd. Research showed that depending on factors such as a property's soil type, nutritional availability, etc. that deer would gravitate to 30-06 Mineral or 30-06 Plus Protein with one or the other having a higher intake. Regardless of which product the deer preferred on a particular property, they were still receiving the vital minerals and vitamins needed for optimal growth and overall deer herd performance. Many users of 30-06 Mineral and 30-06 Plus Protein use them because they are outstanding nutritional products and others use them because they are incredible for attracting deer.



Antler Up D3 increases calcium and phosphorus uptake to promote growth and development of antlers. Antler Up D3 also promotes heavier body weights and improves the overall health of deer. Photo by Daryl Cherry

KEY COMPONENTS OF



- **Same successful mineral formulation**
- **Increase calcium and phosphorous utilization**
 - **Plasma levels**
 - **Transport**
- **Antioxidant – improved immunity**

Over the years, the 30-06 Mineral formulation has been updated to use new research finds, but in general, the highly successful product has remained primarily unchanged from its original design. But this year, 30-06 Mineral and Imperial 30-06 Plus Protein is unveiling its biggest formulation change since the original product introduction, and it's called **Antler Up D3**. Catchy name, but what does that really mean? First, the mineral formulation is not changing. It is the vitamin portion of the mix that is being changed, specifically, doubling the vitamin D3.

You may be saying, "Vitamin D, why is that so important? All I ever read about is minerals." It is true that the vitamin portion of a deer mineral is rarely mentioned with most of the press being given to minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, copper and zinc. Indeed, minerals are extremely important, but so are vitamins, and properly formulated deer mineral/vitamin products such as 30-06 Mineral and 30-06 Plus Protein need appropriate levels of minerals and vitamins for maximum digestibility and functionality.

The next few paragraphs will delve a little deeper into the science of Vitamin D, and then I'll write more in laymen's terms.

Since vitamin D is not very well known, we should begin by getting a bit more familiar with this nutrient. First, there is sometimes confusion with the often interchanged names of vitamin D and vitamin D3. The two common forms of vitamin D used in animal feeds are vitamin D2 (ergosterol or calciferol) and vitamin D3 (7-dehydrocholesterol). Vitamin D2 is not utilizable by all animal species. However, D3 is utilizable to all animal species so D3 is essentially the exclusive source of vitamin D found in almost all animal feeds and supplements. So when generally stated as vitamin D, the reality is that

likely it is specifically vitamin D3.

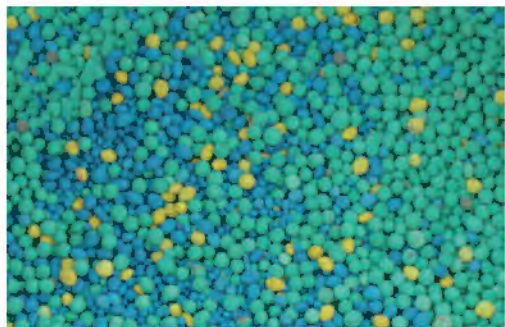
Vitamin D belongs to the fat-soluble vitamin family, meaning it is soluble in oils and fats but not in water like B vitamins (riboflavin, niacin, thiamin etc.) which are classified as water soluble. The two most significant characteristics of the fat-soluble family is that fat soluble vitamins are stored in the body, and in the case of vitamin D, specifically the kidney. Second, water-soluble vitamins are produced by rumen micro-organisms, where fat-soluble vitamins are not, which is why fat-soluble vitamins (A, D and E) should be supplemented to deer via deer mineral/vitamin products. Vitamin D is also an antioxidant, which means that it helps prevent oxidation and the subsequent creation of free radicals, which if not kept in check, can cause health issues. Therefore, vitamin D creates a positive immune response and helps maintain overall health.

But none of these functions were the primary reason why the Whitetail Institute R&D department decided to double the vitamin D content in 30-06 Mineral and 30-06 Plus Protein. The change was made because vitamin D is critical for proper utilization of calcium and phosphorus. When vitamin D is ingested, it is converted in the liver to 25-hydroxyvitamin D3, which is the main circulating form of vitamin D. This compound is then converted in the kidney to 1,25-(OH)2D3, which, in this active form, is involved with calcium and phosphorus functions. Vitamin D functions to increase calcium and phosphorus plasma levels and specifically functions in the transport of calcium to target tissues.

What does all of this mean? You have probably heard of the importance of calcium in terms of antler growth, doe lactation, fawn development and overall body growth. Calcium is the most prominent mineral found in antlers, and deficiencies have shown a result in low density (weak) antlers, less mass and less overall antler size. A doe's milk is high in calcium and therefore requires high amounts of available calcium for optimal lactation. Calcium is critical for skeletal development and necessary for fawns to achieve maximum growth.

In general, the higher amounts of calcium plasma levels mean more availability for this mineral to go toward antler growth, lactation and increased production rates. Vitamin D functions as a key calcium transporter and delivers this needed element to target tissues such as growing bone and antler. Theoretically, the higher the vitamin D in the deer's system, the higher the calcium plasma level and transport capacity, which results in greater performance. But it is not just theory. Countless studies involving ruminant and non-ruminant animals have shown higher production results with higher Vitamin D levels in the diet including increased lactation, skeletal growth and overall body weight increases. In short, higher vitamin D levels means increased antler growth and improved overall deer herd growth and production. In other words, no matter the calcium level in the diet, without vitamin D, the benefit of the calcium cannot be realized.

While it doesn't make sense to fix something that isn't broken, it does make sense to utilize research to make a great product even better. That is exactly what the R&D department at the Whitetail Institute has done with Antler Up D3. Undoubtedly, Whitetail Institute could have left the product as it was and continued to produce great results. But that is not how the folks at the Whitetail Institute operate. And if Whitetail Institute researchers find a way to help deer hunters and managers improve their deer herd, they will unhesitatingly do so, which is evidenced by 30-06 Mineral and 30-06 Plus Protein with the new Antler Up D3. The science is unquestionable and the results will speak for themselves. 🦌



SEED PRODUCTION

A Complex Journey to the Perfect Product

By Jon Cooner

Much has been written in the *Whitetail News* about the exhaustive research, development, and real-world testing the Whitetail Institute puts its forages through before they're allowed to display the Whitetail Institute name. Given that, it's past time to discuss all the hard work Whitetail Institute puts forth to produce the many tons of seed used in its blends. This article will shed light on that. As you'll see, this process is rigorous and time consuming but necessary to ensure that Whitetail Institute products are the very best the Whitetail Institute can make them.

After the scientific research, development and field testing of all Whitetail Institute forage components and blends to determine optimum component percentages, attention turns to producing the massive volume of seed required to supply Whitetail Institute's customers with the best food plot products available. It would take a book to fully describe the process of food plot seed production and the work that goes into producing the finest food plot seed available. We'll hit the high points here, and as you'll see, this is much easier said than done. It's a far different and vastly more difficult process than just growing a forage crop in a food plot. A thorough understanding of each plant's life cycle is required, and painstaking steps must be taken to ensure purity and attain the highest seed quality.

The first step is to understand each plant's life cycle, including how flowering is initiated and how flowers are pollinated, optimum seed production environment, nutritional requirements to optimize seed production, and what diseases and pests could negatively affect the seed crop.

When this information has been reliably compiled, it's time to find qualified seed growers. Here too, the requirements are vastly more stringent than growing crops to take to the local elevator. The best seed growers pay attention to every detail of the seed production process, listen and work closely with the Whitetail Institute, and complete all field activities required to produce a clean and genetically pure seed crop in a timely manner. When the grower is identified, a contract is written for the production of the seed which details requirements of seed purity, germination, genetic purity, seeding rate, etc. Whitetail Institute then provides the grower with seed stock for planting the seed production field.

A Typical Seed Production Cycle

Weed control is a major factor influencing seed production. Before the grower plants the stock seed, steps must be taken to control weeds and create a good seedbed. Weeds are removed through cultivation, and pre-plant herbicides are incorporated into the soil. Controlling weeds in the field is more effective than trying to clean weed seeds from the seed crop, since good seed is always lost when weed seeds have to be cleaned out of the seed crop in the cleaning plant. (More on the cleaning process later.) **Photo 1** shows young Whitetail Institute kale plants growing on beds in which no weeds are present.



Photo 1

Seed crops are planted on beds, which allows for good irrigation and drainage. Rows in seed production fields are 24 to 30 inches apart, which is much wider than any food plot or field for forage production. This wide row spacing allows for close cultivation to control weeds prior to the crop covering the rows as well as maximum plant development and seed production. Note the root development in this young Whitetail Institute radish shown in **Photo 2**.

Because most of the seed for Whitetail Institute food plot products is produced in very dry environments, the fields are irrigated as soon as planting is complete. There are many different ways to irrigate fields including furrow irrigation, as pictured in **Photo 3** using siphon tubes, various types of sprinkler irrigation and, in some instances, fields are flooded. Irrigation is applied every seven to 10 days throughout the growing season depending on the crop and the environment. In between irrigations, fields are cultivated and sprayed to control weeds and insects.

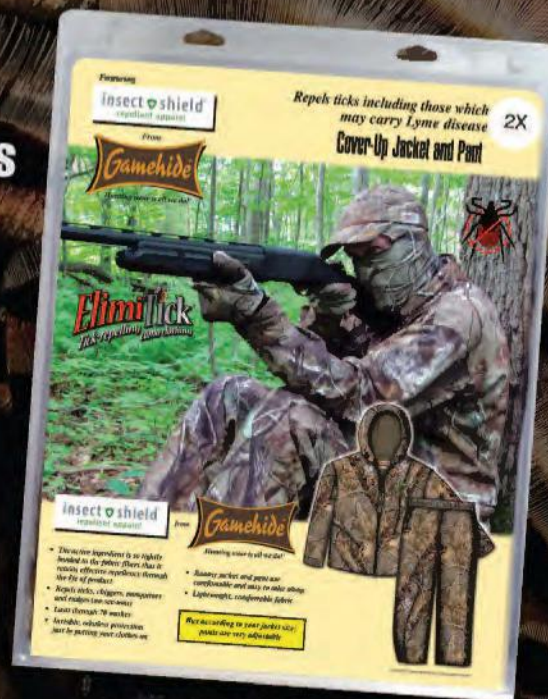
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Photo 2



Photo 4



Photo 3



Photo 5

Production field men and growers constantly watch for insect, weed and disease problems. As problems or potential problems are identified, the grower takes the appropriate action to control the issue. In **Photo 4**, a field man sweeps an alfalfa seed field looking for potential insect issues. While in the field, any weed or disease issues are also identified. If any problems are found, the field man coordinates with the grower to develop an action plan to address the issue.

For crops requiring bees for pollination, the bees are brought to the field just before the field starts to flower. Growers know how many bees are required to set a full seed crop and bring that many bees to the field. This can be done at night when bees are less active, but can also be done in the early morning, as seen in **Photo 5**, when temperatures are cool and there is little bee activity. When the bees are in or near the field, controlling insect pests becomes a sensitive process so that the insect pests are controlled without hurting the bees that are pollinating the crop. After the crop is fully set and the final seeds are filling and the seed crop ripens, bees are removed from the field and any final insect sprays are applied.

The last seven to 10 days before seed harvest are perhaps the most intense of the entire cycle. While all the weed, insect and disease control is finished and the irrigation for the crop is done, this is the wait-

ing time before harvesting the seed when Mother Nature can destroy a seed crop with hail, high winds or untimely rains. If everything goes well, combines harvest the crop and take it to the seed cleaning plant for the next part of the food plot seed production process.

Cleaning, Treating and Packaging Whitetail Institute Food Plot Products

Harvested seed can be delivered in bulk to our seed house and unloaded into bins containing up to 3,000 pounds of seed. Seed can also be harvested directly into small bins in the field. Regardless of how the seed gets to the seed plant, a lot number is assigned to the delivered seed so the seed can be tracked back to the production field and followed through the cleaning and bagging process. Accurate record keeping is a key part of the whole process.

The harvested seed is referred to as “dirt seed” to distinguish it from the final clean seed product. **Photo 6** shows a dirt seed sample being taken from each bin. A composite sample is made for each complete lot. The composite sample will be used to determine the cleaning requirements for that specific lot of seed. The seed is securely stored to ensure that seed is protected and no cross contamination with other



Photo 6



Photo 7

seed or other lots occurs.

Photo 7 shows the composite sample being “docked,” which means it is being run through a small cleaning process that estimates the total clean seed and separates out weed seeds, chaff and other inert material. The resulting “docked sample” provides information necessary



Photo 8

to clean the lot. Dirt samples are retained for two years as reference samples.

Seed is first cleaned through five screen Delta cleaners and then by a gravity deck and rice rolls. Each bin that comes off the cleaning line is again sampled, and a mill check is performed to determine whether there is a need for additional or specialty cleaning. Depending on the specific issue, magnetic separators, indent cylinders or spiral separators may be used depending on the special cleaning needs.

Following cleaning, a composite sample is taken from the cleaned seed and sent to the seed lab where a registered seed technologist performs a complete purity and germination test. (**Photos 8 and 9**). If the seed passes and meets Whitetail Institute’s seed quality standards, an official seed analysis report is made, and the seed is then stored in the small seed bins prior to treating, blending and packaging. If it does not pass, the seed is re-cleaned, and the conditioning process and analysis begins again.

The last steps are mixing Whitetail Institute blends to the exact percentages that Whitetail Institute research has determined to be optimum to realize all the benefits for a particular product, and then packaging them. Each Whitetail Institute product has exact specifications regarding coating, inoculation and other seed enhancements. Care is taken during each step of the process to ensure customers receive the highest quality Whitetail Institute seed products for their food plot plantings.

The packaging process starts with seed being weighed into each bag using a bag scale that has been checked by a certified scale agency for accuracy. Bags are also spot-checked to confirm weight accuracy. After the seed is put in the bag, it drops onto a conveyer belt where the bag is heat-sealed and then placed in a pallet liner prior to being shrink-wrapped for shipment.

The care taken during the production and cleaning process ensures that only the highest quality seed is used in Whitetail Institute products.

Now you can see why it can take six to eight years or more for a new Whitetail Institute product to go from the idea stage to store shelves. Whitetail Institute’s strict attention to details is the reason why Whitetail Institute products continue to be recognized as the gold standard of the food plot world. We enjoy every aspect of this process especially when we see the great photos and stories you share with us that result from use of Whitetail institute products. We appreciate your continued support and input as we continue to develop food plot products to help you enhance the quality of the deer you hunt. 🦌



Photo 9

HUNTERS AND FARMERS SHARE THE SAME SOUL

By Zeke B. Pipher

Our house is surrounded on all sides by cornfields. As I drove home from work this evening, chaff flew from a combine to the west of our acreage, creating a steal-your-breath sunset. As I write this article, it's Oct. 31, and the corn is almost out. The red and yellow leaves that made our maple trees look like torches a few weeks ago are now scattered across our lawn. The whitetail deer along the Platte River are scraping and rubbing. All the signs are clear; fall is upon us, and winter is quickly approaching.

Harvested fields bring a dramatic change to our family's acreage. For six months of the year, our house feels hemmed in and tucked away in the middle of thick, tall stalks of corn. The other six months of the year, our house feels exposed and open. Beginning about the middle of November, and lasting until early summer, we can see for several miles in every direction. And then the farmers hit the fields in April, and by June, we feel nestled in again. We love it all. Our family wouldn't want to live anywhere but in the middle of farm country.

I have a theory: I believe many deer hunters and farmers share the same passions. Farmers love being outside, alone with their thoughts. They rise to the challenge of overcoming weather, equipment and wildlife to find success in the field. And farmers carry a deep satisfaction in providing food for their families and others. Is this not the same soul that we have as whitetail hunters?

A while back, during a crisp, breezy November afternoon, I sat in a stand on the edge of a tree line. On the other side of the road, one of my neighbors — a hard-working farmer in his 60s — cut wide swaths through his cornfield as he brought in his harvest. His John Deere 9860 had pulled into the field about the time I arrived at my stand, so I had about three hours to watch him work. I wasn't the only one who watched him work. Several does popped out of the timber at dusk, stood below my stand and joined me in admiring my neighbor for several moments before crossing the road and browsing his cut stalks. As I watched this farmer work, he seemed content, comfortable in his own skin and happy to be outdoors, alone, under the big Nebraska sky. Watching him reminded me of what Edward Abbey wrote: "I find that in contemplating the natural world, my pleasure is greater if there are not too many others contemplating it with me, at the same time."¹

I felt solidarity with my neighbor that afternoon. In different ways, we had enjoyed the same things and in the same place. As I pulled out of my hunting property, I greeted him by turning my headlights off and on. He did the same.

So far in this article, I have romanticized farming when it's actually one of the hardest professions a family can choose. Like I said,

Andrew McHargue and his son look on as the harvest takes place.

Photo by Emily McHargue

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The author with landowner Mike Toukan and the buck Zeke got a few years ago. Photo by Zeke Pipher

I live in a farming community. I've watched men with thick, chapped fingers take off their gloves in frigidly cold weather to switch out equipment or loosen a bolt. I've watched those farmers deal with drought, tornados, tractor fires, hail storms and overturned pivots. Every Sunday morning at church, I see the wrinkles and cracks on the faces of men who have worked outside in tough farm country for more than 50 years. I only know of the struggles of farming and ranching second-hand; but I know of them nonetheless. And I respect these farmers and ranchers for them. Theirs is a hard, uncertain life.

But it is also a life rich with reflection. When I was young, I'd visit my grandfather Bernie in Tekamah, Nebraska. He felt pride in taking his grandson for coffee to meet his friends. He'd wake me up early and often say, with a wink and smile, "It's time to go to the House of Wisdom." I knew what he meant — it was his way of saying it was time to listen to the older men share their opinions. I remember sitting on a bar stool, sipping hot chocolate, staring at the older farmers' and ranchers' hands as they gripped the white porcelain coffee cups. Their hands were thick and rough, cracked like sun-scorched Midwestern soil in July. The men would talk together for about an hour, sharing their thoughts on everything. "Does everyone have as many opinions as these farmers and ranchers," I wondered.

At 45, I've concluded that the answer to that question is no. Farmers are one up on the rest of us. All those hours logged in the tractor, putting up fence or cutting cedar trees have provided these men with tremendous opportunities to put their thoughts in order. Those mornings at the coffee shop were the unpacking moments; the times when these minds, busting at the seams, unleashed themselves on one an-

other. And at 5 or 6, I was fascinated by what I heard those mornings. I respected these older men's opinions. Most of them made sense to me. They had a sober, honest pragmatism to them; solid thinking by solid men.

In college, I roomed with a friend who was raised on a farm. His family grew corn and beans and kept about 60 dairy cows. I spent several weekends and winter breaks helping his family. It's the closest I've ever come to farming. In our down times, my roommate and I hunted pheasants and geese, flooded gopher holes with pig manure or shot at pigeons with pellet guns. It was during those weekends that I began to feel a bit of envy, perhaps even sadness. My parents had always told me I could do anything in life. Yet, as my admiration grew toward the farming/ranching life, I knew this dream would be almost impossible to actualize. Spending time with my friend's family, and talking about the land, equipment and the capital needed to farm, I knew that too many variables had to line up perfectly for someone like me — who grew up in the city — to be able to farm as a vocation. So, I took my love for the great outdoors, and I majored in biology and aquaculture, planning to work with a state wildlife management organization.

That was in the 1990s. Today, I'm a pastor in a rural community in central Nebraska. But the part of me that loves the outdoors — the fresh air, the time alone, the challenges of weather and wildlife — never diminished. And I scratch that itch through deer hunting. I spend several hours in the fall sitting outside. Sometimes I take my children. Sometimes I go with a friend. Often, I'm alone with my thoughts. Every time, however, I feel indebted to the landowners,



Cale Carlson with three of his children, (left to right) Adam, Amanda, and David. Cale's farming practices help wildlife flourish, and he makes his property available to a few fortunate hunters each year. Photo by Megan Carlson

farmers and ranchers who let me hunt their property.

Thanks to farmers and ranchers, those of us who have become teachers, accountants, mechanics, grocers or pastors, get to spend time outside with our thoughts, chasing adventure, and providing food for our families and others in need. We owe these families so much. We're indebted to them not only for the food they produce, but also for being the backbone of our county. Perhaps Paul Harvey said it best in 1978, when he said, "God said, 'I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper and then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.' So God made a farmer."²

Our nation has been built largely on the tired, strong backs of the men and women who work the land and raise livestock. And it is largely because of their faithful management practices that we hunters have millions of acres of wildlife-fertile land to hunt today. So, let's not take our farmers and ranchers for granted this year. Hop out of your truck, and shake your landowner's hand this season. Perhaps give them a copy of this article as a way of letting them know your appreciation as a hunter. Or, better, visit your local House of Wisdom some morning this week. You'll get a chance to thank several farmers at one time — and pick up a few opinions in the process. 🙏

¹ Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey

² Paul Harvey, quoted by Garance Franke-Ruta, in Paul Harvey's 1978 'So God Made a Farmer' Speech on The Atlantic's website: <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/02/paul-harveys-1978-so-god-made-a-farmer-speech/272816/>

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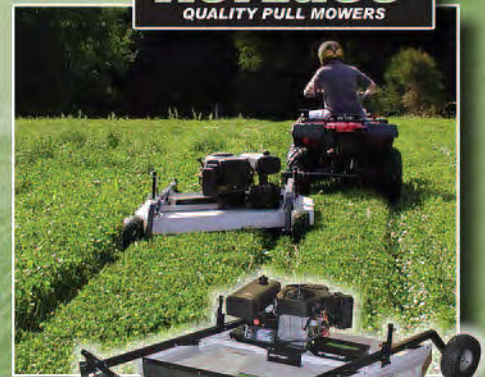
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Imperial Whitetail PowerPlant

Performance Far Beyond the Ordinary

By Whitetail Institute Staff

Imperial Whitetail PowerPlant is a spring/summer annual forage product that excels at the highest level for getting lots of protein into your deer during spring and summer. Even as awesome as PowerPlant is as a spring/summer forage, though, limiting its description that way might be a huge disservice. PowerPlant can also provide benefits far beyond that, even into hunting season.

PowerPlant as a High-Protein Food Source

PowerPlant's benefit as a spring/summer annual forage for deer can be summed up in one word: protein. Abundant protein during spring and summer is vital if bucks are to grow the biggest antlers their genes will allow. Also at this time of year, protein is a crucially important nutrient for does, which are in the late stages of pregnancy, and later, when they're producing milk for fawns. Exactly how much protein deer need during spring and summer is a matter of debate, but it's generally recognized that bucks require about 16 percent protein when building their antlers, does about 18 percent when they're lactating and fawns up to 20 percent (some of which they get from their

mothers' milk). To be clear, those are the optimum levels — amounts required if deer are to have the opportunity to reach their genetic potential.

In contrast, natural forages of spring and summer are generally low in protein — often only around 3 to 5 percent, and their availability to deer drops off sharply in most areas as summer progresses. Even with these low protein levels and lack of availability, deer can survive, but a manager who wants his deer to thrive and push his deer as far as their genetic blueprints allow will have to supplement the protein shortfall. That need is what prompted the Whitetail Institute to develop PowerPlant. It's an extremely prolific forage producer that can generate tons of high-quality, high-protein forage during the antler-growing period.

Also, remember that for any forage to be of maximum benefit to deer in terms of protein delivery, it also has to provide protein in the highly palatable form deer require. Agricultural soybeans, for example, offer high protein, but their utility is less than optimum when they're used as a deer forage because they can become stemmy and unpalatable to deer as they mature and the amount of lignin in their stems increases. Agricultural soybeans also don't tolerate heavy browsing very well, often being completely wiped out quickly or dying as soon as they are bitten off by deer. These are not necessarily flaws, but products of the purpose for which they were engineered — optimum bean and pea production, not as a high-protein and heavy browsing

food source.

In contrast, the forage soybeans and peas in PowerPlant are highly browse-tolerant, and when they are established, they can continue to vigorously grow even after being bitten off by deer. In addition, the beans and peas in PowerPlant are vining varieties that remain tender and palatable throughout their lives and don't get stemmy as they mature the way agricultural varieties do. To maximize production of the vining legumes, PowerPlant also includes small amounts of sunflowers as a structural plant for the forage vines to climb. PowerPlant also contains Sunn Hemp, which acts as a highly attractive and nutritious regenerating forage source and as a structural plant.

Whitetail Institute has combined these components in specific ratios that testing has shown will produce maximum growth, resulting in a thick, tall stand in which deer will often bed and feed, and in which turkeys often nest and raise their poults. It's that growth characteristic that also makes PowerPlant uniquely suited to a hunting setup for folks willing to do some planning.

Killer Setup for Hunting Over PowerPlant

PowerPlant will continue to produce until the first frosts of fall. This can provide an option for a unique and productive hunting setup for early season.

It starts with identifying the most commonly prevailing wind direction during hunting season. Toward the end of summer, identify a good stand location overlooking the plot on a downwind corner or edge. A few weeks before your fall planting dates arrive, mow lanes through the PowerPlant so you can see down them from the stand.

When you're ready to plant the lanes in fall, lightly disk the clippings into the soil, fertilize and plant a Whitetail Institute fall annual in each of the lanes. The fall annuals will keep the plot attracting deer after the PowerPlant dies off. In the meantime, though, deer will continue to bed in the standing PowerPlant, and they'll step in and out of the lanes throughout the day, offering you one of the best hunting setups you'll find.

Final Thoughts

The recommended minimum plot size and seeding rate for PowerPlant vary according to deer density. If you live in an area with a low or normal deer density, plant at least one acre with a seeding rate of 25 pounds of PowerPlant per acre. If deer density in your area is high, plant at least 1.5 acres with a seeding rate of 50 pounds of PowerPlant per 1.5 acres.

Another huge benefit of PowerPlant is that it's now Arrest Max-approved, so you can spray to control grass if it appears soon after planting. PowerPlant should not be planted until spring soil temperatures have warmed to a constant 65 degrees or higher.

Finally, the Whitetail Institute only produces enough PowerPlant each year to satisfy anticipated demand for that year. Supplies usually run out every year, so don't delay in ordering your PowerPlant.

If you have questions about PowerPlant or would like to order, call the Whitetail Institute's in-house consultants from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST Monday thru Friday at (800) 688-3030. The call and service are free. 🦌



PowerPlant® ... a spring/summer annual that produces high protein and massive tonnage.

Deer love fresh spring legumes. So much, in fact, that they can clean out an entire planting before the plants are even established. The mix of high-protein annuals in PowerPlant better withstand heavy browsing to produce a high-tonnage crop that continues to thrive throughout the heat of summer, providing deer with not only excellent forage, but with attractive bedding areas as well. In university testing, PowerPlant produced more tonnage per acre than any other spring/summer annual tested. Deer will come for the succulent plants and stay to bed and spend more time on your property.

The New PowerPlant now includes Sunn Hemp that produces even more protein and is **Arrest MAX APPROVED** which helps you control competing grasses within your PowerPlant plots.

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Extend Life of Plots with Frost Seeding

By Craig Dougherty

Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer



When my son and I design food plot programs, our staple has always been clover — Imperial Whitetail Clover to be exact. We've been running it for years, and it feeds the deer we hunt. It greens up early and stays late. Ever see a deer paw through the snow to chomp down on clover? I have. We've learned a few things about clover through the years. Mostly, we've learned that if you take good care of your clover plots, they will take good care of you and your deer.

Replanting your food plots every couple of years is an amateur move. It wastes time and money. The real pros can get many more years than that out of a clover plot. That means keeping it relatively weed free and freshening it every so often. Herbicide applications and strategic mowing will help handle weeds, but the freshening-up part will require some effort — very little, actually — especially if your food plots are planted in a part of the country where the ground freezes in winter.

Frozen ground opens the door for what we call frost seeding. It's one of the simplest food plot procedures you will ever do. If you can walk a food plot and figure out how to spread seed, you can master frost seeding. All you need is winter temperatures that freeze the ground for extended periods, a spring thaw and, of course, some seed.

Each winter, water in the ground freezes and then thaws in spring. Typically, spring thawing occurs when night temperatures are still at or below freezing and daytime temperatures warm. The freezing ground expands (because of ice forming), and the thawing ground contracts as the ice gives up its form. The continuous cycle of freezing and thawing forces the top few inches to open and close regularly. This cycle continues until nighttime temperatures typically remain above freezing. This expansion and contraction allows particles of matter (including seed) to enter the ground and make contact with the soil. This opening and closing action allows seeds to enter the ground and be planted.

The time to frost seed is when the frost is leaving the ground in early spring. Typically, across most of the North, this lasts for two to three weeks. The ground often takes on a honeycomb appearance during the frost-leaving phase of the spring thaw. Walking on the morning ground typically sounds like walking on cornflakes or potato chips. The freeze/thaw cycle allows the seed to penetrate the uppermost layer of soil and gives your seeds a reasonable chance of germinating and surviving. The open ground allows the seed to work into the earth and make contact with the soil. The soil contact will result in seed germination. No special equipment is required, and the results can be satisfactory.

Not all ground freezes in winter. Don't confuse a frost with a frozen ground. You need frozen ground for frost seeding. An overnight frost or light freeze is different. Frosts and light freezes are temporary events that often leave a thin coating of ice on anything containing moisture. Frozen ground refers to a condition when the first few inches (or feet) of earth freeze for extended periods. I live in an area of New York where the ground freezes a foot or more during most winters. Our plots are concrete-hard in winter, but sometime in April, the sun gets higher in the sky, and the spring thaw and frost seeding can begin.

If you don't want to work with the freeze-thaw cycle, you can spread your seed directly on the snow. We like to do it in spring so the seed

doesn't have to be exposed to the elements for extended periods. Also, if you snow seed too early, you cannot always be certain about where your seed will wind up. Melting snow has a bothersome way of transporting seed from where it was intended to grow to somewhere downstream. You can seed on top of snow if you happen to catch a spring snow or the final snow of the year. This type of snow typically doesn't hang around for long. Around here, we call it an onion snow.

A note of caution: If you spread seed after the ground has already passed through the freeze/thaw cycle, you might be simply spreading your seed on bare ground. You need the opening and closing of the ground to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. Without it, germination will be limited. You can only frost seed if you have frozen ground at the start. Many parts of the country do not experience the opening and closing conditions typical of spring thawing in Northern climes.

Frost seeding is a surefire way to breathe new life into a tired food plot. A good clover plot should be able to produce tons of forage per acre. A tired or worn-out plot might produce only a few hundred pounds. A frost seeding can bring it back to producing tons of fresh clover forage per acre per season.

Sometimes, we spread seed over the entire plot. Other times, we just hit the bare spots. It depends on how things looked the previous year. We mark our bare spots the previous year so we will know where the seed is needed next spring when everything looks the same. We use a hand-held spreader for most of the seeding, but we sometimes throw out a few handfuls. We always have a bag of clover handy when we are hunting sheds or celebrating spring with a walk around or ATV trip around the hunting property.

We mostly use Imperial Whitetail clover seed, but you can also use

other hard seeds, such as chicory. Frost seeding will not work with soft seeds as they might rot waiting for ideal growing conditions.

You can spread seed over an acre in a few minutes. When you look at the cost and time it takes to construct a food plot from scratch, a few pounds of clover seed is pretty cheap. It can take you an entire day to build a new plot from scratch—and a lot more money. A freshened plot can mean the difference between feeding a few deer and feeding a dozen deer all summer.

You shouldn't restrict your thinking to food plots when considering frost seeding. We also use frost seeding in out-of-the-way places such as logging roads, woodland openings and any place we find bare soil on our property. We do a lot of frost seeding on log landings. They are common on most hunting properties and shouldn't be left to turn into mud and weeds. No one can turn a clearing into a pile of mud and ruts like a log crew. A little frost seeding can make it right in a few minutes.

Frost seedings don't germinate as well as planting on seedbeds prepared with traditional cultivation tools and procedures. Nothing beats a well-prepared seedbed for germination and initial stand development.

Limitations aside, frost seeding has its place in food plotting. You work too hard on your food plots to be planting new ones every year or two. Some frost seeding and loving care can keep your plots feeding deer for years. 🦌



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Good Things in Small Packages

Hard work on a half-acre paid big dividends for the author and his family.

By Bob Humphrey

Photo by the Author

You've probably heard those claims that you can successfully hunt deer on the smallest parcel, if it's the right parcel. This story is about one such parcel, though it didn't start out that way.

I own 100 acres, part of a much larger (about a square mile) area of undeveloped land that, like most of southern Maine, is characterized by very poor and extremely acidic soils. Further, most of my land is saturated throughout much of the year. All, that is, except a tiny bump of scarcely more than a half-acre.

I recognized it as something special when I bought the land more than 25 years ago, but it was some time before I did much with it. Back then, nobody in New England had ever heard of a food plot. I released a couple of small apple trees on one side and trimmed the brush a bit to keep the area open, but then left it largely untouched and un-hunted. Trail camera results showed little to warrant further attention.

Two years ago, I decided to get serious, so I turned the ground over, added soil nutrients, planted Imperial Whitetail Clover and prayed for rain. The rains came, but so did my neighbor's carpenters, to build his new house just a couple of hundred yards from my new plot. First-year growth on the poor soils was marginal, but I ran trail cameras just the same, limed it again in fall and never bothered to hunt it. During October and November, I only managed two photos of racked bucks, which was about par for the course in my neighborhood.

With the disturbance of house building subsided, I turned my sights again on the plot the next year, expecting I would have to re-plant. To my pleasant surprise, I found a lush, green carpet of clover already in place, and the best was yet to come.

By mid-summer, does and fawns were using the plot daily. The first sign of something really special came in late August, when two shooter bucks showed up on camera. In more than two decades of hunting there, I'd never photographed more than two shooter bucks in the entire square-mile area. Now I had two on my plot. And things got better when, by October, I had identified at least five bucks on the plot, including three shooters. It might not sound like much to you, but it was unprecedented in my neighborhood.

I tried hard to temper my enthusiasm, knowing the area received heavy hunting pressure and patterns often change with the onset of gun season. To hedge our bets, I encouraged my son to take a doe during bow season. He was successful on his third attempt, and our plot had proven productive.

Being busy hunting other stands, I had failed to check the food plot cameras during the first week of firearms season, which nearly proved a big mistake. Then, a last-minute change of plans found me hunting the plot one afternoon, which wore on uneventfully until I was mentally preparing to call it a day. With only moments of legal shooting time left, I heard the unmistakable sound of an approaching deer. I expected it to stop short in thick cover until daylight passed, but it came at a steady pace, stopping only after entering the plot. The decision to shoot was instantaneous, and the action almost as quick.

As I later admired the fallen buck, I reflected on all that had contributed to my success. Taking a nice deer is satisfying enough, but the reward is enriched when it's on your own land — land that was enhanced through your own efforts. That success encouraged me to build another plot. 🦌

He may not make any record books but he's about as big as they get in my neck of the woods, and I shot him on my own Imperial Whitetail Clover patch.



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Be Sure to Get the Most from Your Perennial Food Plots

*Controlling grass and weeds in your perennials
should be at the top of the list*

By **Jon Cooner**

WINA Director of Special Projects

As the first warmer weather of the year turns our minds to getting back outdoors and enjoying spring leisure activities, it can be easy to forget about food plots. Avoiding that temptation, though, yields big dividends. Controlling grass and weeds in perennial forage stands is one reason that's so especially important. Doing so is easy, and it pays off in many ways for next hunting season and years to come.



Whitetail Institute perennial food plot products are designed to attract and hold deer for multiple years from one planting. As has been discussed in Whitetail News many times, following the Whitetail Institute's seedbed preparation and planting instructions is the best way to ensure that your food plots can flourish. When your perennial is established, though, don't forget to also follow the Whitetail Institute's forage-maintenance instructions so your perennial plantings can keep performing at top levels and last as long as they should. The Whitetail Institute offers Arrest Max, Slay and Surefire Crop Oil Plus to help you fulfill one of the most important steps in perennial maintenance: keeping grass and weeds under control.

The Steps in Whitetail Institute's Forage Instructions Work Together

Every Whitetail Institute food plot product comes with a set of seedbed preparation and planting instructions on the bag (these instructions are also available at whitetailinstitute.com). Perennial products also provide maintenance recommendations. The Whitetail Institute drafts its product instructions with two goals in mind: (1) Make sure that all the bases are covered for ensuring that your planting has an optimum growing environment, and (2) do it in as few steps as possible.

Putting those together, you can see why two things are true. First, if you cut corners with the Whitetail Institute's seedbed preparation, planting and forage maintenance instructions, it's likely to limit the positive results in terms of stand quality, stand longevity or both. Second, many of the steps in the instructions are interdependent — multiple steps combine to affect various growing conditions so you end up with a growing environment that's optimum for the food plot product you planted, and that it stays that way during the life of the stand.

Grass control is an excellent example. Our first thought about grass control is that it's only a matter of forage maintenance, so those are the only instruction steps that apply to it. In other words, grass only comes to mind if we see it, and if we see it, we spray it. Period. End of story.

The truth, though, is that grass control also involves seedbed preparation, and that's also true of weed control. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from Dr. Carroll Johnson, the Whitetail Institute's weed and herbicide scientist, is, "Grass and weeds are opportunists. They tend to show up most heavily in the part of our plots that are thin—where there is room for grass and weeds to get a good foothold." That is, the better job we can do of providing an optimum growing environment in a food plot, the less room there will be for grass and weeds to invade. In that way, the seedbed preparation and forage maintenance steps concerning soil pH and soil fertility are extremely important to keep grass and weeds in check today and during the entire life of the planting.

Controlling Grass and Weeds as Part of Perennial Food Plot Maintenance

No matter how good a job we do of ensuring that perennial forages have an optimum growing environment, grass and weeds will almost certainly return at some point. And that's where the forage maintenance instructions come into play by providing control advice for grass and weeds that appear after planting. The Whitetail Institute

Ensure the success of your food plots.



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Whitetail Institute herbicides protect your investment by making sure that the plants you have so carefully planted can flourish by winning the competition battle with grasses and weeds for root space, nutrients and moisture. Arrest Max controls most grasses and can be used on all Whitetail Institute perennials or other clover, alfalfa or chicory. Slay controls broadleaf weeds, and can be used on clover or alfalfa. Both herbicides are extensively field-tested and can be easily applied by 4-wheeler or tractor sprayer.





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offers three superb tools for helping you keep grass and weeds in check: Arrest Max, Slay and Surefire Crop Oil Plus.

“When it comes to perennial food plot maintenance, grass control is your No. 1 priority. If you don’t control grass, it can take over a plot in a hurry.” That was one of the most important and often-repeated cautions of the Whitetail Institute’s first director of forage research, Dr. Wiley Johnson. And anyone who has let grass go unchecked in a food plot knows how true it is. The best time to use herbicides is in the early spring before the grass or weeds have a chance to mature.

Arrest Max (selective grass herbicide). All Whitetail Institute perennial food plot products are now Arrest Max approved to make it easier for you to control grass that appears in your perennials. Arrest Max is the newest generation of selective grass herbicides, and although it’s similar in use to earlier grass herbicides such as Arrest, it’s a big step up in several ways. Arrest Max controls more kinds of grass than Arrest, it generally controls grass better and the mixing instructions are even easier. And Arrest Max will even let you stretch your food plot dollars farther. One pint of Arrest Max will make one acre of spray solution for Whitetail Institute perennials. You can find the full list of grasses Arrest Max controls on the Arrest Max package and at www.whitetailinstitute.com.

Arrest Max also provides better control of grasses that have been allowed to mature. With Arrest, mowing mature or perennial grasses a week or so before spraying was recommended to allow time for the mowed grass to resume growing and grow more vigorously to try to recover the foliage it lost when mowed, allowing it to take Arrest in better. With Arrest Max, though, mowing before spraying is not recommended. In fact, the herbicide label says not to. This is an excellent example of how much easier Arrest Max is to use.

Another reason for the superior performance of Arrest Max is that it comes with an adjuvant already mixed in. Even so, it’s still a good idea to add Surefire Crop Oil Plus to the Arrest Max spray tank when the grasses to be treated are perennial or mature. And because Surefire is so inexpensive, there’s no reason not to add it to the Arrest Max spray tank.

Slay (selective broadleaf-weed). Of course, no selective herbicide I know of can control every type of grass and other weeds that might appear in a food plot, and that’s also true of Arrest Max. For example, Arrest Max won’t control sedges such as nutsedge (also called nutgrass), but like many other weeds Arrest Max won’t control, nutsedge can be controlled with the Whitetail Institute’s Slay herbicide. That’s one reason it’s so important to identify the grass or weed you’re trying to control and then check the herbicide label to make sure the herbicide will work. Slay is labeled for use in established stands of Imperial Whitetail Clover and in other clover or alfalfa. Also, for Slay to work, you MUST mix an adjuvant such as Surefire Crop Oil Plus into the Slay spray tank.

Surefire Crop Oil Plus. Surefire is an agricultural oil that’s tailor-made for food plotters. It’s vegetable based, not petroleum based, and it even contains an anti-foaming agent to help you mix the spray tank correctly.

Mixing the Arrest Max and Slay Spray Solutions

To spray one acre with Arrest Max: Use 15 to 20 gallons of water,* plus one pint of Arrest Max, plus 1/2 pint of Surefire Crop Oil Plus.**

To spray one acre with Slay: Again, use 15 to 20 gallons of water* (20 is preferred), plus four ounces of Slay, plus (required) 1/2 pint of Surefire Crop Oil Plus.***

To spray one acre with Arrest Max and Slay: Use 15 to 20 gallons of water,* plus one pint of Arrest Max, plus four ounces of Slay, plus 1/2 pint of Surefire Crop Oil Plus.***

* 20 gallons of water per acre is preferred

** highly recommended

*** required for Slay to work.

Finally, don’t overlook the mowing recommendation you’ll find in the maintenance instructions for each Whitetail Institute perennial food plot product. Your goal when mowing each spring is to keep anything growing in the plot (grass, weeds and even the forage plants) from having a chance to flower. From a grass and weed control perspective, your goal should be to remove any seed heads or flowers from grasses and weeds before they have a chance to dry and produce viable seed. By being diligent about your mowing, you can often break the reseeding cycle on annual weeds. Mowing two or three times each spring and summer is sufficient in most cases. If you have weeds that tend to flower in mid-to-late summer, be sure you mow again to keep those from reseeding.


Try to mow so your forage plants stay at about 6 to 8 inches tall. Don’t wait too long to mow, because it’s not a good idea to take off more than a few inches off the tops of the forage plants at a time. If you mow more deeply, you might take off too much foliage, which can stress the plants and speed moisture evaporation from the soil. And, of course, don’t mow when conditions are excessively hot or droughty.

The Big Picture

So far, we’ve discussed why keeping grass and weeds under control is important to make sure your food plots last as long as they should. Consider also that doing your part to keep your perennial food plots as healthy as possible during spring and summer can have a huge effect on the quality of deer you hunt the next fall.

Spring and summer are when bucks are re-growing antlers, does are pregnant and, later, when does are producing milk for their newborn fawns. Each of these processes takes huge amounts of nutrients, especially protein, and it takes high-performance food plots to make sure they have the protein they need.

You can see how important controlling grass and weeds is if you think of your food plot as a parking lot with a limited number of parking spaces, representing root space. Your goal is to have as many of the parking slots as possible occupied by your high-quality forage plants. That makes it much harder for grass and weeds to find an open space in the lot to park (seedbed preparation instructions). And if grass or weeds find a space, you have a wrecker on standby to remove them (forage maintenance instructions).

For additional information about Arrest Max, Slay, Surefire Crop Oil Plus and grass and weed control in general, visit whitetailinstitute.com, or call the Whitetail Institute at (800) 688-3030, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST Monday thru Friday. 

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REAL HUNTERS DO THE TALKING

about Whitetail Institute products...

I have been hunting the same property since I was in the third grade and, we rarely killed deer at all in those early days. Our first real success came about 17 to 18 years ago when I started purchasing Magnet Mix.

The other hunters thought it was an odd thing to be pouring that liquid on the ground... and then these holes appeared and got larger and larger. Three hunters each killed 8 point

bucks in the stand where I first put out Magnet Mix and I spread the news about Whitetail Institute to every one of my hunting buddies.

The next spot I picked got replenished every three months without fail and in three years I could lay down in the gully that was dug out; I would show people on Google Earth the 3-foot x 6-foot brown cavity in this otherwise green area... I killed over 50 deer from that stand.

Then quality became more important than quantity, and I added 30-06 Plus Protein to my shopping list. I would have never dreamed that Georgia deer could grow to look like their distant cousins from the Midwest. Now I have (seven) deer on my camera that are 8 point to 12 point and all 120- to 150-class bucks in the same year.

This past week the Lord gave me the largest one we ever caught on camera and the heat of the rut led him out of his bedding area only 200 yards from a 30-06 Plus Protein mineral site. After four years of pictures I finally got mine made with him! He is an 11 point buck, and 164 inches.

God gets the glory, and Whitetail Institute provides a product that, simply put, grows giant deer, attracts deer and keeps them coming back.

Thank you, Whitetail Institute, for all you do and for giving hunters the opportunity to make dreams come true!

John Bloodworth - Georgia



I'm very pleased with PowerPlant. It's a good food source for a variety of animals. Planted 4 acres of Winter-Greens and had good success with it also. The enclosed photo shows a buck that was killed this past hunting season by my wife, Nikki Markham. My daughter Maleece Markham and her cousin Cody Markham are in the picture with the buck. Also, Whitetail Institute has great customer service. It's nice to talk to a person when I call.

Dan Markham - Idaho



Just started using PowerPlant last year. Got this 12 point the first day of firearms season. Saw several smaller bucks during our antlerless deer season. Have never seen this many bucks on this ground since we built here in 1984. Will be ordering more later in the spring. Thanks, Whitetail Institute.

Mike Wyland - Pennsylvania

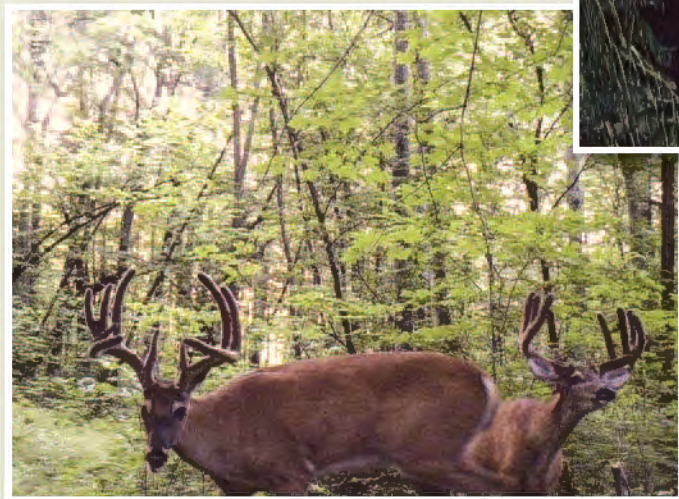
We purchased 80 acres in Indiana in the spring two years ago. The land is approximately 13 acres of tillable ground and 67 acres of woods. We immediately started several mineral spots around the farm with 30-06 Mineral/Vitamin Supplement. The following spring, we planted two 4-acre food plots in Imperial Whitetail Clover. In mid-summer, we began clearing a 1/2-acre food plot deep in the woods and put in a stand of No-Plow. Every product we have used from Whitetail Institute has delivered as advertised! We have seen a tenfold increase in the number of turkeys on the property and double the number of deer.

This fall we harvested two nice bucks weighing field-dressed at 201 and 205 pounds. (See photo of the bigger one.) We have pictures of several more deer that are even larger that will live to see another season. We have already begun to put down more 30-06 mineral. We are going to increase the size of our No-Plow plot and add a second 1-acre No-Plow plot, as well. We are really looking forward to the results a few years from now with our sustained efforts in implementing our land and wildlife management plan. Whitetail Institute's products have been and will continue to be an important part of our plan. Thank you, Whitetail Institute, for developing and delivering world-class products. God bless.

Brent Clodgo - Indiana



I purchased 97 acres of land about 10 years ago that had a mixture of agricultural land and woods. Over the first few years, we would see deer during bow and rifle season but no real large bucks and not a lot of deer. Five years ago, I started using Whitetail Institute's Imperial Whitetail Clover. The first year I planted, we started seeing more deer on the property and had more success harvesting deer. A couple years later, I purchased Chicory Plus (now Fusion) and the number of deer and the size of the bucks we saw were getting bigger. In the last couple of years, I added 30-06 Mineral/Vitamin Supplement to the arsenal and have captured more deer and larger bucks on the trail cameras. This past season we saw more bucks along with does and fawns visiting the mineral site. Here is a picture of some of the bucks that were visiting the mineral site. And this fall, I was able to harvest the largest buck I have ever shot during my 35-plus years of hunting and was able to share this moment with my sons. As you can see by the picture, he was one of the bucks visiting the mineral site. I have used other products in the past but have not



had the same success of attracting deer. Thanks, Whitetail Institute, for products that keep deer coming back and giving my family the opportunity to harvest great bucks and make lasting memories.

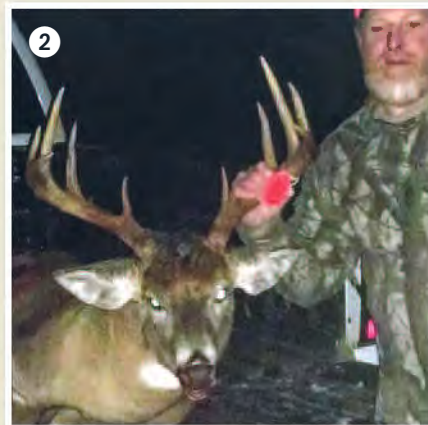
Terry Haas - Minnesota



I started food plots four years ago with just a rake, push mower and weed whacker. I worked the ground in the spring, when the ground was easy to move around and planted some clover from a local store. Shot a 10 point buck the first year. Three years ago, I put in Winter-Greens. The deer went nuts over it. I was getting thousands of pictures a week on the trail cameras. This past year I planted Imperial White-tail Clover, Winter-Greens and Tall Tine Tubers.

Then came deer season. My son set in the tower four afternoons straight watching the same deer each night and right at dusk the fourth night a buck drove the other deer out of the plot and stopped for a bite of clover. That was enough time for my son (Cody Raven) to kill what I call The Raven Buck, an 11 Point, green score 166, net 163 (photo 1). I killed a buck we called G-3sr (photo 2) we had several trail camera photos of him on the plots. Both our bucks are at the taxidermist.

Seth Raven - Maine



(Continued on page 65)

Don't Take The ATV...

By **David Hart**

Photo by the Author

Millions of us own an all-terrain vehicle. In 2015, we bought nearly 750,000 ATVs and side-by-side utility vehicles, according to the Motorcycle Industry Council. Who can blame us? They are useful tools that serve as gear haulers, deer carriers and food plot makers. They get us into places a truck could never reach, and they save us lots of walking time. There's no question ATVs have made our lives a little easier.

For some of us, an ATV is a constant fixture in the beds of our trucks when deer season opens. We don't go anywhere without them. The problem is, we don't go anywhere without them. Instead of parking our truck and walking to our stand, we hop on our four-wheeler and ride to within 100 yards of it.

Even during the off-season, we spend our weekends buzzing down the trails that wind through the woods and across the fields of our favorite hunting land. We motor up to tree stands to make sure they are in good working order, and we cart saws and other tools to clear paths. Unfortunately, many of us haven't stepped more than 10 yards off a trail since we bought a four-wheeler.

There's certainly nothing wrong with having a little fun, saving some time or even cutting your walk by a few minutes. However, an ATV rumbling through the woods of Alabama or across the Dakota grasslands, even at walking speed, might do more harm than good during deer season. The low, throaty growl of a gas-powered machine carries across a silent landscape like a subwoofer across a city block. ATVs are loud. Whitetails hear them coming from a mile away and know exactly what that sound means. Don't believe it? Watch a deer feeding in a food plot as the sound of a four-wheeler gets closer. The deer will turn and look, studying the sound to see where it's going or if it's coming closer. They won't necessarily bolt if the machine passes in the distance, but they will if it draws near. And they almost certainly will when the engine shuts off. They might be animals, but they aren't stupid.

ATVs aren't just costing some of us a direct chance at a deer. They have, in many ways, robbed us of our woodsmanship. Instead of taking an occasional slow, deliberate walk through the woods, our four-wheelers take us past those woods. We sail down trails without taking our eyes off the ground in front of us, missing obvious and subtle sign. We have no idea what lies across the rugged canyons on either side of the trail or over the ridge. That's too bad. The less we see, the less we

learn, which means the less we know about whitetails and the land we hunt.

Walk and Learn

Whether it's hunting season or the off-season, there's no better way to become a more skilled hunter than by ditching the ATV for a few hours and getting some mud on your boots. It's amazing what you might see from your feet instead of a seat. It doesn't matter if you hunt or own 50, 500 or 5,000 acres. There's always something to learn about your land that you won't see from the top of a four-wheeler.

Of course, walking through the woods during hunting season is a good way to mess up your woods. You don't want to do that. The less human activity that takes place, the more likely deer will be to stick around and move during legal shooting hours. But walking directly to your stand from your truck is far less intrusive than riding a four-wheeler. The exhaust scent left behind might not spook deer, but the sound will condition them to your presence. It only takes a few ATV trips in and out of your woods for deer to associate that sound to the presence of a hunter.

That's why it's best to explore on foot soon after the season ends. A walk in the woods in January, February or March can be the best time to find such sign as rubs, trails and areas where deer spent lots of time during hunting season. A blanket of snow on the ground can make that walk even more productive and insightful. In fact, there's no better time to walk through thick cover in search of bedding areas and other high-use spots than right now. You might jump deer from their beds, but that's OK. In fact, that's a good thing. Where they bed then is likely where they bedded when the season was in full swing. You'll see exactly where they hide when you are hunting them, and you'll get a clear view of their entry and exit trails. They might be spooked, but don't worry. Those deer will have an entire summer to forget. You can use that newfound knowledge to your advantage next fall.

A walk through your woods far from your ATV trails can show you lots of other things you might never have seen otherwise. Some might be obvious. An area with lots of fresh deer droppings or rubs and scrapes from the previous fall, for example, can lead to a new hunting spot next year. Other things can be a bit more subtle. A large tree that falls or otherwise dies can point you to a new food source or bedding area and something that can shift deer off their normal patterns. The sunlight that now reaches the forest floor will result in a flush of new growth, much of it high-quality deer browse. In a few years, those plants can turn into a jungle-thick pocket of bedding cover large enough to hide a buck or two. If the area is large enough, it might even be a potential new food plot site. You'll need to determine if it gets enough sun, of course. Let it go for a season to see how much volunteer growth comes up, and check on it occasionally to gauge the amount of sun that hits the ground. If it's abundant, consider converting that area to a food plot. Who wouldn't love to have a secret spot far away from the ATV trails that deer learn to avoid?

Take a Walk and Learn

Even more subtle are the changes of a naturally maturing forest. Pine plantations so common in the South and Southeast, for example, are continually evolving. As the trees grow, they shade out the naturally occurring vegetation that provides abundant food and bedding cover. In time, they can become near-lifeless deserts.

Even a slow-growing hardwood forest changes every year. Trees fall, new ones sprout, food sources dwindle and new ones emerge.

Fast or slow, dramatic or subtle, those changes can result in some dramatic shifts in deer activity. Trails that led from bedding areas right past your stand to feeding areas go cold as deer shift to new areas. Only a foot-bound excursion can show you where the new trails and bedding areas are located. You won't find them from the seat of your ATV.

A Well-Rounded Hunter

Don't just look for deer sign when you walk, though. Take the opportunity to learn more about the natural world. Scores of field guides help you identify trees, plants and almost everything else you might find. By learning to identify plants, you automatically learn more

about whitetails. Don't just identify them. Learn the plants that deer prefer. That way, you'll know where to hunt if the acorn crop fails or if you want to look at some new country for a change. When you learn more about the animals you hunt, you increase your chances of success.

Make that walk even better by taking your spouse or children. Share with them your knowledge of the natural world.

There's another benefit to walking beyond quality family time — one that can have a profound, long-term impact on your life. It can extend it. Is it any wonder two-thirds of Americans are overweight, according to the World Health Organization? If we aren't riding around on our four-wheelers, we are sitting behind the wheel of a truck. It seems like we'd rather drive down to the mailbox than walk.

Of course, spending a few hours traipsing through the woods isn't going to help us shed much excess weight, but every little bit helps, right? Besides, a walk through the woods isn't just good for your health; it's good for your mind, and it's even better for your deer hunting. Ditch the ATV at every opportunity, and enjoy a quiet stroll across the land you love. You'll love it even more when you get to know it better. 🦌



Turkey Select —

Top-Quality Perennial Chufa for Whitetail Institute Customers

By Whitetail Institute Staff

Since it first opened its doors in 1988 the Whitetail Institute has stuck like glue to its core business — developing the very best food plot products for deer. That being the case, you may wonder why the Whitetail Institute now also offers Turkey Select, a chufa food plot product that's specifically for turkeys. The answer is that offering Turkey Select is simply another way Whitetail Institute goes the extra mile for its customers who manage their properties primarily for deer. However, turkeys are second behind deer on the list of game animals our customers manage, and Turkey Select allows Whitetail Institute customers to take advantage of the Institute's excellent contacts in the seed business and provide them a source for high-quality chufa seed.

Chufa is a perennial sedge that produces underground tubers, which are a highly preferred, high-energy food source for turkeys and waterfowl. Also known as "ground almonds" and "tiger nuts," chufa tubers rank tenth among the most important waterfowl foods in the United States, and many believe they're the Number 1 preferred choice for turkeys.

Turkey Select is for spring planting only. The plants produce underground tubers during the summer, and once the foliage dries in the fall, turkeys dig up the mature tubers with a vengeance. Although chufa is a prolific-growing perennial, smaller plots in high-density turkey areas can be wiped out the first fall, but if enough is planted to withstand that initial attack, it can last for years, benefitting both spring and fall turkey hunters. Obviously how much is enough will vary from case to

case based on how much you plant and how many turkeys you have in the area.

Plant early enough to leave 100-120 days for the chufa plants to mature before the first frosts of fall. Exact dates, which vary regionally from April to June, are on the back of the product bags and also posted at whitetailinstitute.com. Be sure to wait until there is no remaining chance of late spring frost before planting Turkey Select.

Also, be sure you choose a site that gets lots of sunlight. As little as 30 percent shade can substantially reduce tuber production. While Turkey Select can adapt to a wide variety of soil types, including clay, clay loam, loam, sandy gravel and sand, medium to lighter soils with soil pH of 5.5-7.5 are best. Tuber production is generally lowest in sand. Soils that remain moist are optimum for maximum tuber production. Chufa can adapt to temporary or seasonal flooding, provided the plants are not completely submerged. Prolonged flooding during the growing season or drought conditions can severely reduce tuber production and reduce chufa survival.

In sites where grass competition is expected to be especially heavy, it can be a very good idea to incorporate Roundup into seedbed preparation. Turkey Select is also Arrest Max-Approved to help you keep competing grass in check through the spring and summer after planting.

Turkey Select is available in 10-pound bags that plant 1/4 acre. For additional information about Turkey Select, go to whitetailinstitute.com, or call the Whitetail Institute at (800) 688-3030, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST Monday thru Friday. 🦃



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Passing It Forward

By **Bryan Hendricks**

Photos by the Author

Memories swarm like ghosts as I gaze from this stand in a hardwood bottom for what seems like the thousandth time.

It might actually be more than a thousand, and some of the ghosts are real.

I've hunted this spot since I joined the Old Belfast Hunting Club in 2009. It's in Grant County, Arkansas, in the northern part of the state's deer-rich Gulf Coastal Plain.

Like most hunting clubs in southern Arkansas, we lease the property from a corporate landowner. The atmosphere is family oriented, and it gives us ample opportunity to pass our cherished hunting heritage to new generations of young hunters.

The property that comprises our lease is a vast industrial pine forest in various stages of succession. Natural forage is sparse, so we provide additional food in the form of corn and cultivated food plots.

My stand in the hollow features three openings that stretch about 150 yards each. They are narrow and shady, but Whitetail Institute's Imperial Whitetail Secret Spot provides a mixture of seeds that thrive in that environment. I cultivated them with a four-wheeler and a tow-behind disc from a popular farm-supply chain, and the results were excellent.

I am father to seven children, ages 10 to 25. The oldest three are boys. Of my three sons, my middle son, Daniel, exhibited the only sincere interest in hunting. It started at age 5, when I took him on a muzzleloader deer hunt in Oklahoma.

"When the shadows cover that field, pay attention because deer will come out of that ravine down there and start feeding," I said as we rested beneath a big oak tree.

As predicted, a herd of does raced out like a football team running onto the gridiron. A young buck peeled away from the herd and came right to us. From that time on, Daniel considered me a deer prophet, but I nearly ruined him with the mistakes of inexperience.

Youngsters quickly grow impatient and discontented if there isn't any action, and I made Dan sit too long during days when deer didn't cooperate. He enjoyed short outings, though, so I modified our routine.

By extension, I learned to concentrate on the early morning and

late evening, when deer are most active. I found that I more enjoyed shorter hunts, as well.

I brought Dan to the stand in my "Secret Spot" when my plots were established. It was an evening in mid-October, the first weekend of our muzzleloader season. My strips were verdant among the fiery oaks, hickories and sweetgums.



Helping your child sight in their weapon is a great way to bond.

The evening was still, and it was late when a quartet of does emerged from a thicket and stepped into a strip directly in front of us. Dan was anxious, but I urged him to wait for the buck that he really wanted.

With about 10 minutes of legal shooting time remaining, the deer got nervous.

"They're getting ready to boogie," I said. "If you want one, you'd better do it now."

He chose a mature doe. When the smoke cleared, the strip was empty. Dan was distraught.

"I made a good shot," he insisted.

"I know you did," I said. "We'll find her."

We walked widening circles in the gathering darkness, and I found the doe to the side of another strip.

It was his first and only deer.

One week later, I took Dan's little brother, Matthew, to the Secret Spot. Matt didn't have the same drive, but he wanted to upstage Dan by killing a buck.



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On October mornings, the Secret Spot has a consistent and peculiar history. At about 8:30 a.m., a shaft of sunlight illuminates a circular zone at the far end of the middle food strip, almost like a stage light. At that time, a deer almost always steps into it. It's happened every year I've hunted it.

As if on cue, a doe stepped out of the thicket into the spotlight and presented a perfect broadside profile. Matt squinted into the scope. He squinted over the scope. He squinted to the side of the scope.

"That deer isn't going to stand there forever," I whispered impatiently.

Matthew rubbed his trigger finger vigorously against his trousers.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked.

"I can't feel my finger," he said.

"What do you mean you can't feel your finger? What's wrong with it?"

"It's ... It's frozen."

"Frozen? Dude, it's 72 degrees out here."

"It's frozen. I can't feel it."

Matt clearly didn't want to kill the deer.

"Relax," I said. "Let's just watch. Maybe a buck will come out."

Eventually, the deer departed, and Matt never hunted again.

My oldest daughter, Amy, might be my most avid hunter. When she was small, I took her and her siblings on walks around town. She always carried a stick and pretended it was a gun. On those nightly safaris, she killed enough elephants, elk, buffalo, deer, hippos, lions and tigers to stock the Sultan of Brunei's trophy room.

When she was in ninth grade, I took Amy to the Secret Spot during Arkansas's statewide youth deer hunt. I selected for her a Browning BPS 20-gauge with a slug barrel.

To my astonishment, the biggest buck I'd seen on the property at that time stepped into the strip precisely where Daniel shot his doe. The buck was only about 35 yards away, but Amy struggled to find it in the fixed 4X scope. The shotgun was too long and too heavy for her. That is why you should fit your child with a gun and have him or her practice before the hunt.

The buck walked away without a shot.

A year later, Amy killed her first deer — a doe — with a Savage bolt-action chambered in .22-250, a combination for which she was better suited.

My youngest child, Hannah, accompanied me on her first hunt on opening day of the modern gun season two years ago.

You know how it is with children. They're excited on the eve of a hunt, but you can't wake them when it's time to rise. If that happened with her, I'd just let her sleep.

I needn't have worried. She popped up as soon as I opened her bedroom door. She had slept in her hunting clothes.

I'd learned a few things through the years about keeping little children happy in a cold deer stand. I filled Hannah a thermos full of hot



Among the youngsters the author introduced to deer hunting in his "Secret Spot" was his son Daniel Hendricks, who died last summer at age 22. Daniel's only deer kill was a doe, but he found this rack on some family property in central Arkansas.

cocoa. I brought the peanut butter crackers she loves and a honeybun, and I got her a hot sausage, egg and cheese biscuit before we entered the woods. She was warm and content.

About 90 minutes after we arrived, a quintet of does stepped into the open at the far end of the Secret Spot. We watched them feed for a few minutes until Hannah said, "Well, are you going to shoot one or not?"

I recognized that tone. She sounded just like her mama.

"Do you want to shoot?" I asked.

Hannah shook her head negatively.

"Do you want me to?"

She nodded vigorously.

I fired at the biggest doe, but it stepped forward as I squeezed the trigger. The shot struck too far back.

Hannah and I went to where the doe stood, and we looked for a long time before we found the first drop of blood.

"I'm going to put my hat on this drop, and then we'll look for another drop," I said. "We'll just make us a little hat trail until this deer shows us where she is."

Hannah proved to be a natural tracker. Crawling on hands and knees, she found droplets far down in the grass that I wouldn't have seen. Drop by drop, we crawled to a rise that dropped into a weedy ravine. We looked down and found the doe lying dead about 20 yards away. She only ran about 70 yards, but she was concealed in the thick cover.

"I wouldn't have found her without you," I said, pulling Hannah's cap bill over her eyes.

Hannah is looking forward to going again, but she doesn't care to hunt. She just wants to be with her papa.

All these memories swirl around me as I gaze alone down the strips in the Secret Spot. Matthew is away in college. Amy, a high-school senior, will leave for college next year, so this might be our last hunting season together for a while.

And Daniel, my companion in so many deer, duck and dove hunts, died in an automobile accident at the beginning of summer, just five months ago. He was 22 years old.

The metal chair where he sat — where Matt sat, where Amy sat, where Hannah sat — is empty beside me.

This is where I feel Dan's presence the strongest. I hear his voice and see his grin when we found his first deer. Those memories sustain me in his absence.

I've experienced all the ups and downs with my children that most fathers experience, but we put them aside when we were here because there are no walls in the deer woods. There are only bridges.

We've learned a lot about each other as I shared my love of hunting, and I hope my kids will do the same with their children.

Maybe they'll even do it here, in the Secret Spot. 🍷



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Whitetail Institute **RECORD BOOK BUCKS...**

Todd G. - Illinois



Shot this guy in Illinois last year with a bow at our food plot on Nov. 15. He scored 171 inches. I planted Imperial Whitetail Clover, No-Plow and Tall Tine Tubers. Photo 1 is a trail camera photo of him in the Imperial Whitetail Clover the day before I got him. I have many pictures of deer using the clover plot from May to present. They love it. They are now transitioning to the No-Plow and Tall Tine Tubers. We had about 4 inches of snow a few weeks ago, and we caught some does sticking their heads through the snow to get to the No-Plow. I love Whitetail Institute products. Whitetail Institute, keep doing what you guys do.



Chad Carney - Kansas



When I received word last year that my company would be moving me from Cary, NC to Olathe, KS, I immediately started daydreaming of hunting giant Kansas bucks. I and a few hunting buddies at work found a great 500 acres to lease.

One of the first things I did was put out several trail cameras. A couple of weeks later, as I was checking the pictures on my laptop, I actually jumped out of my seat when a huge non-typical buck with points going everywhere walked into the frame. He hung around for several minutes to enjoy the 30-06 Plus Protein min-



eral I had put out. He loved that stuff. He was a true Kansas monster! My wife, Ashley, started calling him "Coral Reef" due to the points going everywhere, but my hunting buddies would just call him "Big Boy."

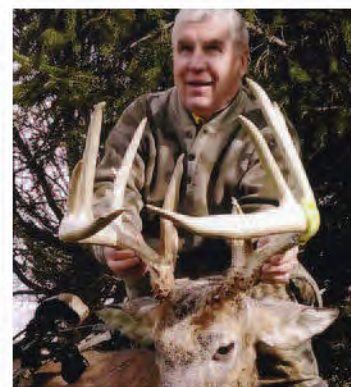
Once the season started, to say that Coral Reef became my obsession would be a gross understatement. It was so bad I passed on four trophy bucks, and several of those would have been my best ever with a bow.

I hunted him every chance I got, and on Halloween evening, luck and fate smiled on me. My arrow hit further back than I wanted, so we waited until the next morning to try and find him. Fortunately, there was a good blood trail, and after a few minutes one of my friends, Justin, looked down the hill and said, "There he is!" Once I looked over the hill and saw him lying dead only about 150 yards from where I shot him, I just completely lost it. I kind of blacked out from excitement, and I'm not really sure what all I did or said.

He had 30 scorable points, and after the 60 day drying period, I had an official Boone & Crockett and Pope & Young scorer put the tape measure to the awesome rack that gross scored 219-3/8. Coral Reef is truly a trophy buck of a lifetime! Enclosed is a photo of me with him and also one of the trail-cam photos of him eating 30-06 Plus Protein.

Doug Dick - Pennsylvania

We have been utilizing Whitetail Institute products for over 10 years on our 474 acres. We annually plant 12 acres in a variety of food plots such as Chicory Plus (now Fusion), Whitetail Oats Plus, Tall Tine Tubers, and No Plow. We have found that the four things bucks need to get big are... food, water, cover and time to mature. The Whitetail Institute products have provided the needed high protein food and we have observed an increase in deer and deer size. This buck had 5-1/2 inch diameter bases with a rough score of 179-3/8 and was taken last year during the Pennsylvania archery season. It does not get any better than this! Thanks, Whitetail Institute for great products.



Randy Rampey – North Carolina

I have been hunting whitetail deer for 20 years on private land. Most of this time has been with a hunting club not utilizing any type of herd management. Five years ago, I was given the opportunity to hunt land with very little hunting pressure where small deer are not shot.



Embracing the efforts to let bucks walk allowed me to observe bucks 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 years old. This “new” way of hunting significantly added to my hunting enjoyment and knowledge. Being patient means experiencing rut activity and seeing shooter bucks. Over the last few years, I have lost count of the nice bucks I have seen and let walk.

I’ve used Whitetail Institute products off and on until I started using them exclusively three years ago. It’s pretty cool to see the almost immediate results on an already healthy herd with good buck to doe ratios (1-to-1) and good buck genetics. The terrain is mountainous with mostly well drained soils and small openings for food plots. Even with small plots we have had success planting PowerPlant, No Plow, and Double Cross. Nutrition availability is obvious. This past hunting season we do not remember seeing a spike buck. All of the young bucks begin their antler display with tines.

Attached is a picture of buck activity on one of the 30-06 mineral sites. The non-typical buck shown, named Stickers, was definitely on our hit list. Lots of effort was made to pinpoint his bedding area. Many hours were spent in the stand trying to catch a glimpse of him. Until the opening morning of rifle season, we had only seen him in nighttime pictures.

My wife had just sent a text asking if I was cold (it was a nice and chilly morning). As soon as I replied and put the phone back in my shirt pocket, I heard the rustling of leaves. I looked up to see a large dark bodied deer straight in front of me at just over 100 yards. He was circling to my left as he walked. Simply strolling through the woods. When I finally found him in my scope, buck fever came over me like never before. Although I did not know for sure which one he was, it was obvious he was one of our shooters. I had to wipe the rear lens on my scope clear three times before shooting due to my heavy breathing. He was getting closer with every step and I feared the wind direction would change and ruin my opportunity. He walked to within 40 yards of my stand and decided to stop on his own. He was quartering toward me presenting the shot opportunity. I fired and he took off like a bull making a nose dive. He crashed 20 yards just behind the stand. I could see his body, but not his rack. I was shaking so bad I did not feel safe climbing down from my stand. I had to wait 30 minutes before I could lay hands on my prize. My next text to my wife, only four minutes later, was “Holy crap, I just got one of the monsters.”

When I walked up on him I knew it was Stickers. His unique rack’s right side was easily identifiable. The county biologist and official B&C scorer green-measured him at 178–3/8 inches gross with 16 measurable points and a 17th point broken off. Aged to be 4-1/2 years old. Truly, a buck of a lifetime for our area. Thanks to the Whitetail Institute,

I feel confident more bucks will be grown to the hit list and harvested by my hunting partner and his family. I am thankful and forever in debt for this hunting opportunity.



Taylor Oxendahl – North Dakota

Five years ago, my family was fortunate enough to purchase a small 25-acre parcel of land in North Dakota. The property is situated in the middle of a winding valley that cuts its way through open crop fields and pasture land. We had been granted permission to rifle hunt this same area in years past, so we knew there was at least the potential for some hunting opportunities.

While scouting out our newly acquired 25 acres, I quickly realized it was going to be a serious challenge to bow hunt, due to a lack of heavy cover on our property, and an overabundance of available food sources on neighboring properties. After a couple years of minimal hunting success, I began looking into Whitetail Institute's products, and eventually planted my first Alfa-Rack Plus food plot three years ago.

As the Alfa-Rack Plus began to sprout, it was as though I had opened the flood gates. We suddenly had more deer on our property than we knew what to do with. Even though there was an abundance of alfalfa and other crops on neighboring properties, the deer made it clear they preferred my little Alfa-Rack Plus plot. We also began seeing more mature deer, including a 3-1/2-year-old 5-by-5 that caught my eye. I watched this 5-by-5 grow by leaps and bounds each year as he fed in our food plot, and he quickly became the dominant buck in our area.

Skip ahead to this past Sept. 12, as my wife, mom and I all sat in a blind situated on our food plot. Twenty minutes before dark, deer started streaming into the Alfa-Rack Plus. Among those deer was the 5-by-5 I had been watching for three years, who had now blown up into a monster 6-by-7. As light faded, something off in the distance spooked the deer, and they all began exiting the food plot. I grunted at the big buck, and he stopped long enough for me to range him, draw back and send an arrow his way. My arrow hit its mark, but due to a light blood trail, we decided to back out and let him sit overnight. When I picked up the blood trail the next morning, it didn't take me long to find the buck I had so much history with. Thanks to Whitetail Institute for their incredible products that made this hunt a possibility, and for helping me seal the deal on this 180-inch North Dakota monarch, my biggest buck ever. 🍷



Send Us Your Photos! Do you have photos of a buck that qualifies for the Pope & Young, Boone and Crockett or your state record books that you grew or took with the help of Imperial products? Send it to us and you might find it in the Record Book Bucks section of the next issue of *Whitetail News*. Email your digital photos and a 3 to 4 paragraph story telling how you harvested the deer and the role our products played to info@whitetailinstitute.com or send them to: **Whitetail News, Attn: Record Book Bucks, 239 Whitetail Trail, Pintlala, AL 36043**



Imperial Whitetail “CHIC” MAGNET

Forage Chicory Provides Outstanding Versatility

By Whitetail Institute Staff

Wouldn't it be great to find a highly attractive forage product that would attract deer right away, produce heavy early growth and exhibit superb drought resistance? And what if that forage product could be planted by itself, mixed with other seeds before planting or top-dressed into existing forage stands? Sound too good to be true? It's not. The Whitetail Institute has such a forage product: Imperial Whitetail “Chic” Magnet.

“Chic” Magnet is the Whitetail Institute’s WINA-100 perennial forage chicory. It attracts and holds deer as well as its name implies. It’s well suited to a variety of soil types, and it can be planted alone, blended with other seeds or top-dressed into existing forage stands to boost attraction, variety and drought tolerance.

“Chic” Magnet perennial forage chicory has lots in common with other Whitetail Institute forages and forage components, plus a few characteristics that make it unique. One similarity is how WINA chicory became a component in Whitetail Institute forage blends such as Fusion, Alfa-Rack Plus, Edge and Extreme through the Whitetail Institute’s exhaustive research, development and testing process. This is the same process that first brought other industry-leading forages to the food plot market, such as Imperial Whitetail Clover, the lettuce-type brassicas in Winter-Greens, the Persist forb in Extreme the Whitetail Oats in Whitetail Oats Plus and others. In fact, it’s the same long, tedious process that assures Whitetail Institute customers that no product will bear the Whitetail Institute name until it is the best

the Institute can make it. “Chic” Magnet stands alone, though, as the only Whitetail Institute product that started with Whitetail Institute as a component in other Whitetail Institute forage products and then became its own stand-alone product. The reason that happened is simple: You asked for it. So many field testers liked WINA-100 chicory that they asked the Whitetail Institute to start packing it by itself.

You can actually see why “Chic” Magnet is so much more attractive to deer than other chicory varieties. If you’ve planted other types of chicory before, you already know they can get stemmy and waxy as they mature, rendering them less palatable (and therefore less attractive) to deer as they mature. “Chic” Magnet, though, is a visibly lighter, more tender chicory, and you can see that it stays that way even after it matures.

And like all Whitetail Institute forage products, “Chic” Magnet is a top performer, establishing and growing quickly, and providing protein levels up to 44 percent, even during excessive heat and drought when other forages can slow or cease production. It’s also versatile, designed to grow well in various soil types and is even one of the easiest perennials to plant — by itself in a prepared seedbed, by mixing with other seeds or simply by overseeding into existing forage stands. “Chic” Magnet can be planted in fall or in spring in most areas, and it’s designed to last up to three years. One 3-pound bag of “Chic” Magnet will plant up to one acre. “Chic” Magnet is also Arrest-Max approved.

If you’d like an extremely high-protein perennial forage that’s highly attractive, easy to plant, well suited to a wide variety of soil types, tolerant of lower rainfall, and resistant to late-summer heat and drought, then “Chic” Magnet is what you’re looking for. Give it a try.

For more information about “Chic” Magnet, call the Whitetail Institute’s in-house consultants at (800) 688-3030, extension 2, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST Monday thru Friday. The call and consultation are free. 🐾



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THE WEED QUESTION:

Where Did All These Weeds in My Food Plot Come From?

By William Cousins

Whitetail Institute Director of Operations

The Whitetail Institute's seedbed preparation instructions will help you plant a seedbed that's "clean," meaning as free of competing grass and other weeds as you can get it. As the instructions recommend, this can usually be done during seedbed preparation by repeated disking or tilling, the use of Roundup-type glyphosate herbicides, or both. Despite your best efforts, though, weeds can still reappear in even the best-prepared food plots. If you planted in a clean seedbed, it might seem a logical assumption that the weed seed must have come with the seed you planted. If you have already read the article, "Seed Production — A Complex Journey to the Perfect Product" on Page 8, you know that's not the case. You know that many steps are taken by the Whitetail Institute in the production and cleaning of your seed to prevent the possibility of contamination before it is packaged by the Whitetail Institute.

So, if the weed seed did not come in the bag, and you started with a clean seedbed, where did those weeds come from? Weed seed can be introduced into a plot in various ways, such as by being carried

into the plot on tillage equipment or by birds and other animals. By far, though, the most common reason is the soil seed bank, which is comprised of viable weed seeds and other vegetative plant parts, such as rhizomes, bulbs or tubers of weedy plants that lie underground and can grow into new weeds.

Many references confirm that a square foot of soil can contain thousands of viable weed seeds waiting to germinate. The soil seed bank develops through time, as each year, new seeds are added from weeds that grow and are allowed to go to seed.

Rhizomes are underground stems that are usually associated with weedy grass species such as quack grass. Most of us have pulled up grass and seen these thick, white, root-like stems, which lead to another plant we also pulled. Sometimes, it seems to go on and on without end. When we cultivate or disk fields during seedbed preparation, we cut up those rhizomes in the soil, and new weeds develop from them. Bulbs and tubers that occur naturally in the soil are most commonly seen when nut sedge or wild onion pop up in food plots.

Believe it or not, the soil seed bank is Mother Nature's way to ensure a healthy soil. For our purposes, the term weed describes any plant growing where we do not want it to grow. Corn growing in a soybean field, for example, is considered a weed. In nature, there are no weeds. There are only plants that grow to protect the soil, improve the soil, nurture the soil microorganisms and provide food for animals. What we typically call weeds are actually soil-colonizing plants that produce lots of seed, grow quickly in a wide range of environmental conditions and produce seeds that can survive in the soil for years

without germinating, waiting for the right conditions to germinate and grow.

The right conditions for those colonizing plants usually follow some event that disrupts the soil. Those include natural disasters such as a tornado, fire, flood or earthquake that destroy plant life or disrupt the soil. A tree being uprooted during a windstorm also creates exposed soil that will quickly have plants that begin developing from seed in the soil seed bank.

Unfortunately, disking or tilling the soil, which is necessary to prepare a good seedbed for most food plot plantings, also disturbs the soil and can create ideal growing conditions for weeds. From Mother Nature's viewpoint, creating a food plot, or any kind of agriculture activity, is basically a natural disaster because it disturbs and exposes the soil. Immediately, the soil seed bank is put to use, and weeds begin to grow from dormant seeds and other components.

Weeds, of course, compete with food plot plants for nutrients, moisture and light, so we need to do our best to control actively growing weeds and to try to reduce our soil seed bank through time. There are several ways to do so.

If you'll be planting in fallow ground or another area with abundant grass or weeds, plan out your seedbed preparation so you can till the soil several times at two-week intervals during seedbed preparation. When you disk or till, you'll bring some of the dormant weed seed in the soil seed bank to the surface, where it can sprout and grow. Then, by tilling or disking again two weeks later, you'll kill those new weeds before they have time to develop viable seeds of their own.

Incorporating a glyphosate herbicide into your seedbed preparation before you plant can also help reduce competition from grass and

weeds. If you have a fairly heavy soil seed bank, you might consider trying to finish your tillage a few weeks early, allowing grass or weeds that sprout from seeds you've brought to the surface to germinate and start to grow (generally a week or two) and then spraying glyphosate. The key is to not disk, till or otherwise turn the soil again after you spray. That way, you won't bring more weed seed from the soil seed bank to the surface.

Third, if you'll be planting a Whitetail Institute perennial seed product, remember that you'll need to keep weeds under control during the life of the plot. Two tools can help you do so: periodic mowing and, in some cases, herbicides. (Be sure to always follow label directions for any herbicide.) The Whitetail Institute recommends periodic mowing for all its perennials. Specifically, mow your perennial plot any time you see any grass or other weeds starting to flower or put on seed heads. Your goal is not to reduce height as much as it is to remove the seed heads before the seed in them becomes viable. The Whitetail Institute also offers Arrest Max and Slay herbicides to help with grass and weed control in most Whitetail Institute perennial forage stands.

Finally, remember that weeds usually appear in areas of a forage stand that are thin or not as thick and healthy as they should be. Accordingly, making sure you address soil pH and fertility as specified in Whitetail Institute's seedbed preparation and planting instructions helps with weed control and helps ensure that your forage will have an optimum growing environment.

In-house consultants are available to assist you with these matters from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST, Monday thru Friday, 🔥

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Knowledge is Power

By Charles J. Alsheimer

Photos by the Author

As I walked into my office, I noticed the message light blinking on my phone. I hit the replay button and heard the voice of a doctor from Pennsylvania. After listening to his message, I returned his call.

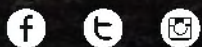


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He began by telling me he had attended one of my deer hunting seminars and believed I might be able to help him. He had purchased 400 acres of land five years ago and was struggling to implement a successful deer management program. He detailed how he had created 10 acres of food plots, done soil tests, applied the recommended lime and planted a variety of forage options based on recommendations of local dairy farmers. Though he thought he was doing all the right things, he was seeing little improvement in the quality of his deer.

After letting him explain his situation, I began to ask questions. I started by asking if he had any farming background. He said he didn't but was working hard to learn all he could. I then asked if he had sought the advice of a land-management consultant. No again. I then asked if he had done any natural habitat improvements. He said except for cutting firewood, he'd done little. But he added that he'd recently hired a forester to do a forest management study. Next, I asked him what he was planting in the property's food plots. He said he was planting primarily rye, timothy, orchard grass, red clover and some winter wheat. I probed deeper, and during the next half hour, I offered recommendations I believed would help flatten his learning curve to improve his property.

Dawn of a Movement

If I had a dollar for every time I've taken a call or addressed questions like this doctor's, I'd be rich. Like so many who wish to become better stewards of their land and wildlife, this man thought the process would be quick and easy. But, based on the tone of his voice, I could tell he was frustrated and discouraged. He needed help.

Unfortunately, no matter your IQ, there is no such thing as a born deer/land manager. It takes knowledge and time to turn a property into one that produces better deer and deer hunting. The more knowledge you have, the less time it will take to see success, so the question is, where do you go to gain the knowledge required to turn a property into a whitetail paradise?

When I feverishly jumped into the deer and land management process in the early 1980s, about the only way you could learn what it took to produce better deer was trial and error, because no one in our area planted food plots or managed for quality deer. Unfortunately, I learned the hard way the trial-and-error route was a tough road to travel. In spite of my early struggles, I eventually discovered in the late 1980s that help was on the way.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and as the 1980s inched toward 1990, more deer hunters and land managers began thinking about what it took to have better deer and deer hunting. One person was Alabama native Ray Scott, founder of Bass Anglers Sportsman Society. Though Scott is known for his fishing exploits, he is also an avid whitetail hunter. Feeding off of his success founding a fishing organization, Scott used his entrepreneurial skills to launch the Whitetail Institute of North America in 1988. Before then, few folks were writing about food plots, and other than Scott, no one was marketing a seed specifically designed for whitetail deer. Little did he know his creation would spawn a movement the likes of which the whitetail world had never seen.

Build It, and They Will Come

We love the technology that purports to make us better deer hunters. We spend thousands of dollars on ATVs, ammunition,

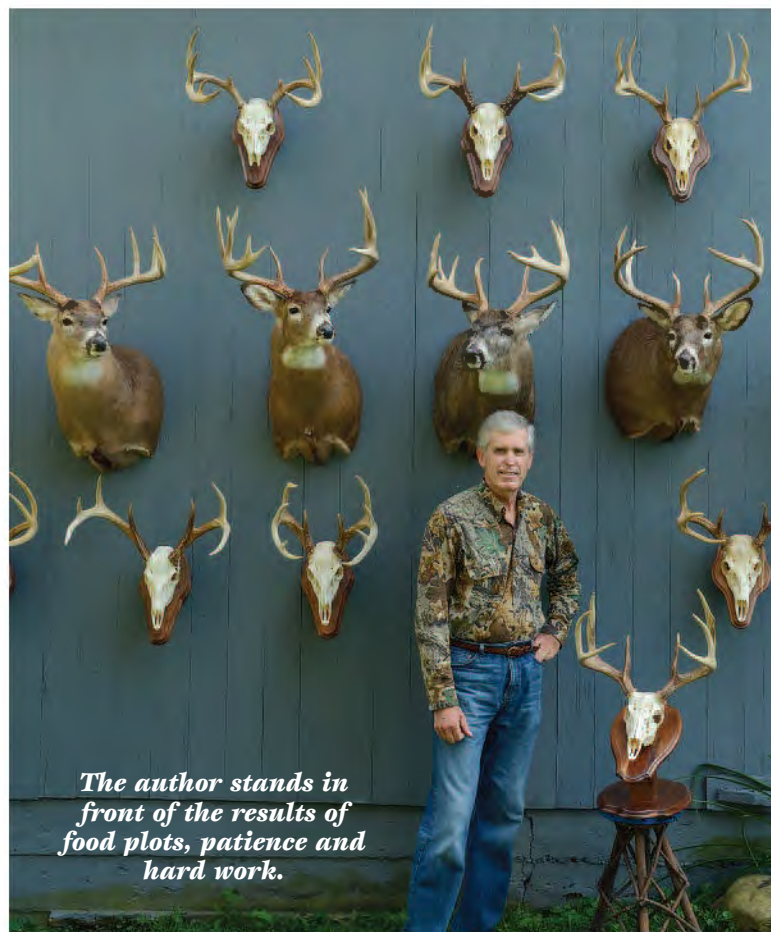
firearms, trucks, camo, archery gear, tree stands, ground blinds, trail cameras, range finders other deer hunting gear. As great as they are, none can produce better deer. No, stuff can't do it, but food sure can.

When Scott set out to develop a seed that would be best for whitetail deer, he jumped into uncharted territory. With the help of Auburn University plant geneticist Dr. Wiley Johnson, he struck gold with the development of the original Imperial Whitetail Clover, because it didn't take long for land managers and hunters to see how it improved their deer and enhanced hunting opportunities. The successes that followed are the things college business professors love to talk about.

Vision

The Bible says, "Where there's no vision, the people perish." This applies to the business world. Make no mistake, competition drives innovation, and without a vision toward future success, interest in a product quickly fades. The Whitetail Institute is run by savvy businessmen who rely heavily on science and input from their valued customers.

Recently I asked Whitetail Institute's Steve Scott to share how the company has been successful. "A number of factors have allowed us to be the leader in this industry," he said. "My father began with a vision to provide a product and philosophy to benefit hunters and wildlife. As good as that was, we didn't stop there, because we knew there was much more to be accomplished. So, we didn't rest on our laurels. As the vision grew, we worked hard to not only improve existing products but also develop additional products for hunters and land managers. We also worked hard to develop a great customer serv-



The author stands in front of the results of food plots, patience and hard work.

ice team, which is one of our greatest strengths today. But I'd have to say the foundation for our success lies in the research we've put into each product along the way."

Research

"Research equals results" has been Whitetail Institute's motto since the beginning. An example of this is its flagship product, Imperial Whitetail Clover. Though the name on the bag is the same as when it was introduced, the current product is far superior to what Dr. Johnson and Ray Scott developed in 1988. Thanks to science and demands from customers, it has been improved upon many times. As a result, today it is considered the gold standard in clover offerings for deer.

Since 1988, Whitetail Institute has introduced a bevy of products. In each case, years of research went into the product before it hit the market. Unlike some companies, which may or may not test a seed at one location for a year or two, Whitetail Institute puts an average of four to six years into a seed before bringing it to market. During that time, researchers test for everything from how well it will do in various soils and climates to its ability to withstand cold and droughty conditions.

In addition, Whitetail Institute works closely with its field testers to ensure a seed will perform in various regions of the country. Its field-testing program can be best described as grass-roots by using the expertise of loyal customers who have worked with the company for many years. As Steve Scott said, "Our field testers are just everyday people who have shown a commitment to us. Each tester must follow our instructions to a T, operate in strict confidence, respond to our queries for their reactions and opinions, and be totally honest in their assessment of the seed they are testing. We have folks all over the country, pretty much in every state. Our testing program, coupled with our in-house research, ensures we are offering the best seed the industry has to offer."

Knowledge is Power

In the early going, Whitetail Institute relied heavily on magazine advertising and word of mouth to introduce and educate the public of its offerings. Then, in 1991, it again struck gold when it launched this publication. According to Steve Scott, "Whitetail News has given us an opportunity to communicate regularly with our customers to inform and educate them on proper food plot implementation and deer management. What we've learned over the years is that an educated consumer is almost always going to do business with the Whitetail Institute."

Though Whitetail Institute has reaped financial and personal rewards through the years, the big winners have been the consumer and wildlife. Ray Scott's crew isn't the only one disseminating seed and food plot information, but it's safe to say no one in America does it better than the team of researchers and writers Whitetail Institute has put together. Each issue of *Whitetail News* is packed with cutting-edge information covering everything from proper seed selection to food plot maintenance to hunting strategies. I wish this publication had been around when I began my land and deer management journey more than 40 years ago. Yes, knowledge is power, and the knowledge you can glean from these pages will not only flatten your learning curve but also set you on a course to have better deer and better deer hunting. 🦌

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Upfront Investments Yield Big Deer Hunting Dividends

By Scott Bestul

Photo by Dustin Reid

I honestly don't know how much time I log creating, prepping, planting and maintaining food plots every year. Let's just say that between five properties in Minnesota, another in Missouri, and some occasional work in Wisconsin, a large part of my spring and summer is devoted to growing deer food.

Then, of course, there's the money. I fork out cash for vehicle gas, fuel for ATVs, chainsaws and mowers.... And, of course lime, fertilizer, and herbicide.

You can't sugar-coat it; all this stuff is expensive. With such a huge investment of time and cash, it'd be perfectly understandable to want to save money on the item in the equation where I have a choice; the seed itself. All the rest—the fuel, the chemical, the fertilizer — is a fixed-price deal (of course the time and sweat is “free”). But shop around enough, and I know I can find better deals on clover and brassicas, wheat and rye. There's no shortage of people selling seeds out

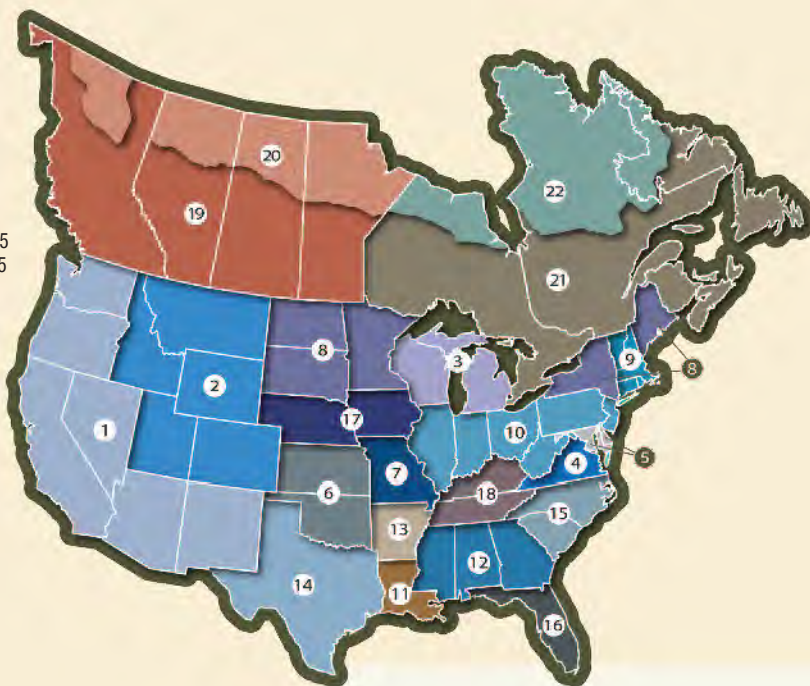


Food Plot Planting Dates...

PLANTING DATES FOR IMPERIAL CLOVER, ALFA-RACK PLUS, EXTREME, NO-PLOW, CHICORY PLUS, CHIC MAGNET AND EDGE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Call for planting dates | 7 North: Mar 15 - May 1
Aug 1 - Sept 15
South: Mar 1 - Apr 15
Aug 15 - Oct 15 |
| 2 Apr 1 - July 1 | 8 Apr 1 - June 15
July 15 - Sept 5 |
| 3 Apr 15 - June 15
Aug 1 - Sept 1 | 9 Apr 1 - May 15
Aug 1 - Sept 15 |
| 4 Coastal: Feb 1 - Mar 15
Sept 1 - Oct 15
Southern Piedmont:
Feb 15 - Apr 1
Aug 15 - Oct 1
Mountain Valleys:
Mar 1 - Apr 15
Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 10 Mar 20 - May 15
Aug 1 - Sept 15 |
| 5 Feb 1 - Apr 1
Aug 1 - Sept 30 | 11 Sept 15 - Nov 15 |
| 6 Feb 1 - Apr 15
Sept 1 - Nov 1 | 12 Feb 5 - Mar 1
North: Sept 5 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 |
| | 13 Feb 15 - Apr 1
Sept 1 - Oct 30 |
| | 14 North: Sept 15 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 |

- | |
|---|
| 15 Feb 1 - Mar 1
Coastal: Sept 25 - Oct 15
Piedmont: Sept 1 - Oct 5
Mountain Valleys:
Aug 25 - Oct 15 |
| 16 North: Sept 25 - Nov 25
South: Oct 5 - Nov 30 |
| 17 Mar 1 - May 15
Aug 1 - Sept 15 |
| 18 Feb 1 - Apr 15
Aug 20 - Sept 30 |
| 19 Apr 15 - June 15
July 1 - Aug 15 |
| 20 May 15 - July 1 |
| 21 May 1 - June 15
July 1 - Aug 15 |
| 22 May 15 - July 1 |



PLANTING DATES FOR DOUBLE-CROSS, PURE ATTRACTION, SECRET SPOT, WINTER PEAS, BOWSTAND AND AMBUSH

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|----------------------|
| 1 Call for planting dates | 7 North: Aug 1 - Sept 30
South: Aug 15 - Oct 15 | 13 Sept 1 - Oct 30 | 18 Aug 20 - Sept 30 |
| 2 Call for planting dates | 8 July 15 - Sept 5 | 14 North: Sept 15 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 | 19 July 1 - Aug 15 |
| 3 Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 9 Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 15 Coastal: Sept 15 - Oct 15
Piedmont: Sept 1 - Oct 5
Mountain: Aug 25 - Oct 15 | 20 June 15 - July 15 |
| 4 Coastal: Sept 1 - Oct 15
Piedmont: Aug 15 - Oct 1
Mountain Valleys:
Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 10 Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 16 North: Sept 25 - Nov 25
South: Oct 5 - Nov 30 | 21 July 15 - Aug 31 |
| 5 Aug 1 - Sept 30 | 11 Sept 15 - Nov 15 | 17 Aug 1 - Sept 15 | 22 July 1 - Aug 15 |
| 6 Aug 15 - Nov 1 | 12 North: Sept 5 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 | | |

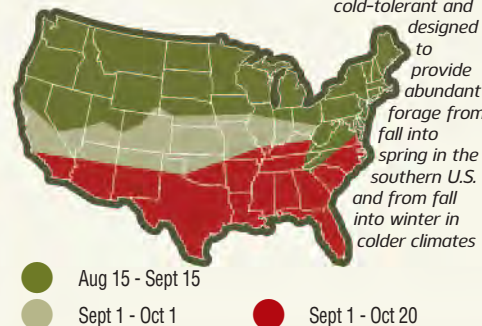
PLANTING DATES FOR WINTER-GREENS, TALL TINE TUBERS AND BEETS & GREENS

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| 1 Call for planting dates | 7 North: July 15 - Sept 15
South: Aug 1 - Oct 1 | 14 North: Sept 5 - Oct 30
Central: Sept 15 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 | 17 July 15 - Sept 1 |
| 2 Call for planting dates | 8 July 5 - Aug 20 | 15 Coastal: Sept 1 - Oct 1
Piedmont: Aug 15 - Sept 20
Mountain Valleys:
Aug 5 - Sept 15 | 18 Aug 1 - Sept 30 |
| 3 July 1 - Sept 1 | 9 July 1 - Aug 30 | 16 North: Sept 15 - Nov 15
Central: Sept 25 - Nov 15
South: Oct 5 - Nov 30 | 19 July 1 - Aug 15 |
| 4 Coastal: Aug 15 - Sept 30
Southern Piedmont:
Aug 1 - Sept 15
Mountain Valleys:
July 15 - Sept 15 | 10 July 15 - Sept 15 | | 20 June 15 - Aug 1 |
| 5 July 15 - Sept 15 | 11 Sept 15 - Nov 15 | | 21 July 15 - Aug 31 |
| 6 Aug 1 - Oct 1 | 12 North: Sept 5 - Nov 1
Central: Sept 15 - Nov 15
South: Sept 25 - Nov 15 | | 22 July 1 - Aug 15 |
| | 13 North: Aug 15 - Oct 1
South: Sept 5 - Oct 15 | | |

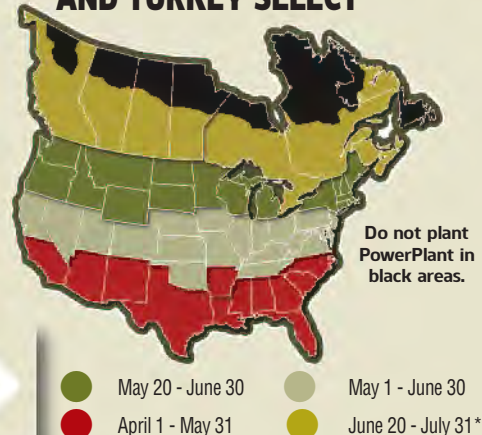
*Do not plant PowerPlant until soil temperatures reach a constant 65 degrees F. Wait as long as necessary for soil temperatures to reach a constant 65 degrees F before planting PowerPlant.

PLANTING DATES FOR WHITETAIL OATS PLUS

Use the map below as a guideline for when to plant Imperial Whitetail Oats Plus in your area. For best results, wait to plant until excessively hot, droughty summer weather has passed. Imperial Whitetail Oats Plus is highly cold-tolerant and designed to provide abundant forage from fall into spring in the southern U.S. and from fall into winter in colder climates



PLANTING DATES FOR IMPERIAL POWERPLANT AND TURKEY SELECT



there (including local ag-product dealers) and any time you have competition, someone is willing to sell cheaper than the rest.

But here's the thing: after all my initial "investment" why in the heck would I want to gamble on the major item that could make or break a food plot?

"It amazes me," Steve Scott said, "how a guy will spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on his gun or bow, thousands on an ATV, a bunch more on trail cams, lease fees, clothing and other gear, and when it comes to the things that will actually help him have more deer, better quality deer and just a better hunting experience, he starts nickel-and-diming." High-quality food plots and mineral products are the things that can have a positive impact on the number and quality of deer on our land.

Scott's point is an excellent one, especially when you consider this. You could easily make the argument that all the aforementioned gear — as important as it can sometimes be — is secondary to a more fundamental goal: attracting and growing better quality deer and keeping them on your hunting property. Now I love gear and gewgaws as much as anyone, and a quick tour of the shed that stores my hunting toys will prove it. But here's the thing: I could dump most of my gadgets and still get deer killed on any property that held a decent number of whitetails. And what better way to ensure that deer will live on or make frequent visits to your chunk of real estate than to provide them with the best food and habitat in their home range? What follows, then, are some thoughts on perspective when applied to food plots and land management.

The Seed Equation

If you're reading this issue, there's a good chance you're familiar with the quality of Whitetail Institute products. What might be less obvious is that there's a dramatic difference between the quality of the seed products offered here and those marketed by many others selling seed.

"It took seven years before our first genetically developed seed was incorporated into Imperial Whitetail Clover," Scott said. "And we've maintained the same standards for the entire history of the company. The average testing period before we release any new product is about five years. We've left a lot of money on the table because we just won't throw something on the market we aren't totally confident in. It's just not the way we do business."

One little-known fact of the food plot industry is that the vast majority of companies obtain their seed through a veritable handful of the same sources: large seed companies that supply farmers and other non-deer-industry growers. And to the uneducated consumer, the product they offer seems identical. The package has a big deer on it and says, for example, clover. So if Joe Lunchbucket reads the ingredients list and sees two companies offering clover, a lot of customers will buy the cheapest one. What they don't realize is that there are many varieties of clover, and some might be more suited to livestock forage or growing hay than for deer.

As noted, Whitetail Institute products are meticulously tested on whitetails, the ultimate judge of whether a certain seed variety for the food plot market is better than another. And that process costs money. Is the difference worth it? Scott and tens of thousands of hunters think so. As an illustration, he told me a little-known story from the Whitetail Institute archives.

"Over 20 years ago, when we saw the first 'me-toos' diving into the

food plot business, my brother Wilson and I did what most businessmen do; we looked for ways to stay ahead of them," he said. "We realized we could get product from the same places others did, and take this shortcut and that one, and penciled out this plan where we could cut costs by about 50 percent. So we pitched the plan to our dad (Whitetail Institute founder Ray Scott) who listened intently, nodded his head and was quiet for a bit. And then he said 'Well, I remain the majority shareholder in this company, and if we decide to cheapen the product, I'll shut this place down.' Everything went quiet for a minute and then he said, 'If we're still in business 20 years from now, it'll be because of the quality of the products we offer, not the dollars we tried to save making it.'" Steve went on to say, "What a great business lesson that was and giving the old man credit, he was right and we haven't looked back."

Soil Prep Savings?

You don't have to read many issues of *Whitetail News* to learn about the importance of proper soil prep, weed control and maintenance. They're every bit as vital as the quality of the seeds we choose to stick in the ground. Yet this is another area where, inspired by penny-pinching, rushing, ignorance or laziness, many food plotters decide to cut corners.

"Sometimes I get sick of hearing the broken record, which is me, chanting, 'Soil test, soil test, soil test' to everybody who calls here to talk about food plots," Scott said. "There's no more important step to getting the most out of a food plot, yet one that many still choose to ignore."

Scott said the phenomenon isn't all that surprising, however. A lot of us are trying this farming thing for the first time, and the temptation to rush in and simply try to grow stuff is heady indeed. Plus, we're a busy lot these days. Our schedules are full of commitments that leave us in hurry-up mode in almost everything we do. That said, taking the time to do it right is the best insurance we have for ensuring that our food plot efforts are as successful as possible. Taking a soil sample is a relatively quick and painless procedure. And the costs — whether you use Whitetail Institute's soil testing service or take it to your local agriculture co-op — are minimal. Think about it: If someone said, "I can guarantee you better food plots if you spend \$15-20," few of us would balk at the expenditure.

The same mentality can be applied to the critical steps that follow: applying appropriate lime and fertilizer. I was reminded of this only a month ago, when my neighbor and bowhunting partner, Dave, and I visited several plots we'd planted on his hunting acreage this past summer. As we walked up to them, I remembered working them in the blazing heat of August. Time for both of us had been at a premium, but we'd taken the extra effort to prep the soil before planting. It was a no-doubt-pain-in-the-butt at the time, but when we walked into a plot that included strips of Winter-Greens, Whitetail Oats and Bow Stand and saw the unbelievable feeding activity there, it was all worth it.

Other "Money Savers"

There are other aspects of managing land for deer where an extra up-front investment makes sense. I've written in this space before about the importance of timber management. It's one where most of us need some professional guidance. Think about it: You screw up a

food plot, and you get a do-over less than a year later. Make mistakes with a chainsaw, and you'll live with them for decades. When my neighbor wanted to do some clear- and hinge-cutting on his property, I arranged for a logger buddy to come and assess the project beforehand. Tom was able to make some great recommendations at a price that my neighbor was more than willing to pay, and the results from that project are already showing dividends.

There's a final category that comes to mind when considering financial perspective. In recent years, there's been an increase in habitat consultants that will visit your property, assess the deer habitat and feed, and make recommendations (short- and long-term) for improvement. Although the fees for such a service vary widely, I'm convinced it's a good investment for many property owners. A while back I was a member of a large hunting lease that held tremendous potential. Indeed, the property was so big that deciding where to start was an intimidating prospect. We talked to the landowner, who agreed to a cost-share if we hired a consultant, and the experience was beneficial to everyone. The visit took the better part of a day, as we toured the farm and listened to some general recommendations. After his visit, the consultant drew up a detailed report (complete with aerial photos and a timeline) that carved out a path for us to follow. Again, the financial cost would have been easy to shirk, but in the long run, it was an investment that I'm convinced made plenty of sense.

Conclusion

It's no secret that we live in challenging economic times. Many of us struggle to pay for the basics of any endeavor, much less consider risking any extra money we have. But when it comes to managing deer, the investments we make are rarely large; an extra few bucks here and there, some added effort that most of us can expend, a handful of hours spent thinking before we act. And in the end, these measures almost always come with a payoff.

Of course, these are the ruminations of a deer hunter, a simple guy who views a churned-up food plot in midwinter as proof that his time and money were well spent. But somehow, I believe if you're reading this, you share the same perspective. 🐾

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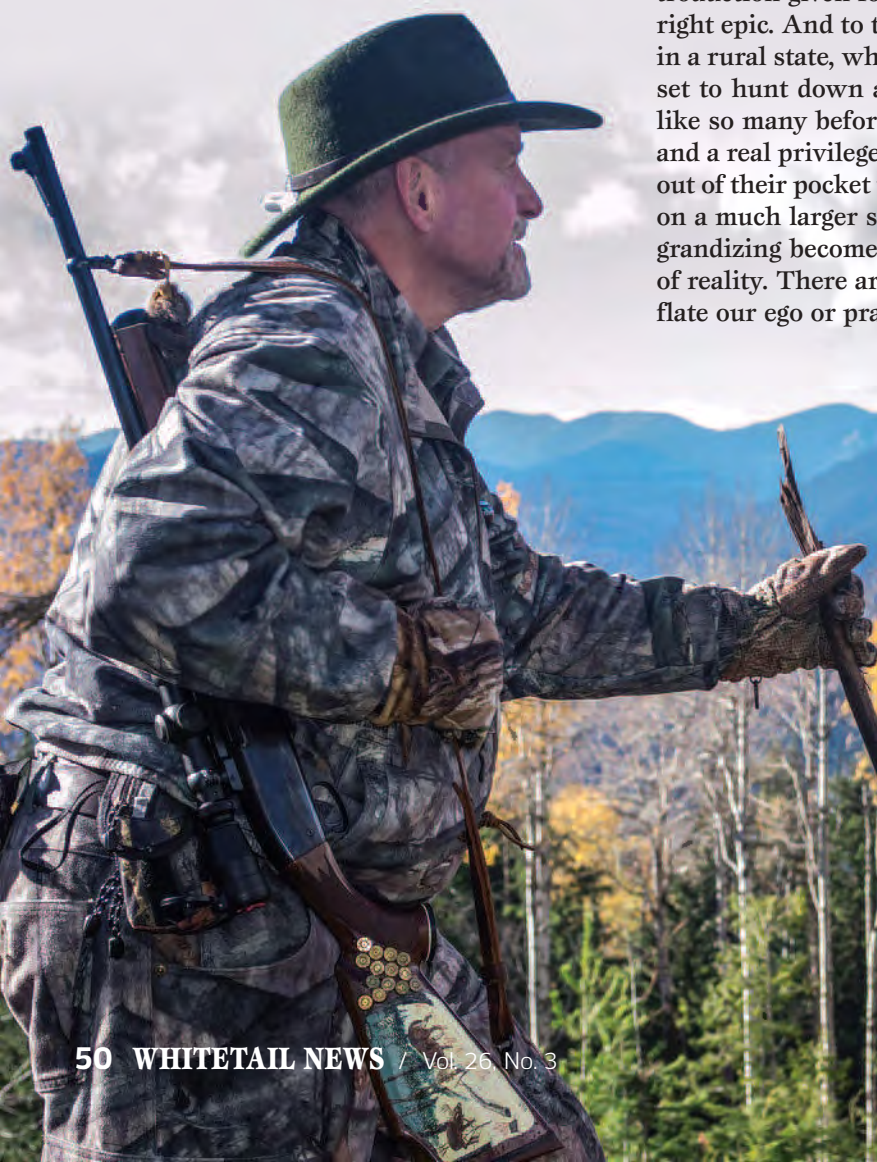
By **R.G. Bernier**

Photos by the Author

"The (deer) hunt now takes on a totally new significance in our urbanized society; it has become primarily a much-needed recreation for a large sector of our outdoor-minded population."

— George Mattis

As I stepped onstage, the applause from the capacity crowd was deafening. The introduction given for and about me by the host was beyond flattering — it was downright epic. And to think all of this fanfare for a guy that grew up in a small mill town in a rural state, who, for his own personal satisfaction, developed the necessary skill-set to hunt down and kill large-bodied wilderness whitetails. Facing that audience, like so many before, with the spotlight shining directly on me, was indeed an honor and a real privilege. To think that all those folks took time out of their life and money out of their pocket to come and listen to me. Although exhilarating on a personal level, on a much larger scale it demands real responsibility on my part. You see, where aggrandizing becomes problematic is when we start believing the press at the expense of reality. There are really only two ways we can go when attention is paid to us, inflate our ego or practice humility.



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For me, deer hunting has always been an adventure where I eagerly take up the challenge to place my boots into the unknown and embark upon a journey through a darkened forest, starting prior to the golden rays of morning's first light, tramping endlessly in search of a mere vision. My uninhibited spirit soars to meet the next mysterious bend in the trail and I delight in the sweat, toil and struggles that ultimately lead me to both satisfaction and success.

Hyperbole? Perhaps, but certainly valid. After all, it is these adventurous traits that helped me set the bar high and seek exceptionalism. Because of my accomplishments and the attention they have gained me, I feel a genuine sense of gratitude and live by the Biblical principal, "To whom much was given, of him much will be required."

With that being stated, questions arise. Does the fact that I have been successful in my deer hunting endeavors and recognized for those accomplishments place me in the mold of a hero? Have we as a whole unwittingly classified deer hunting celebrities as heroes? Are celebrity and hero synonymous with each other?

I can still remember Saturday mornings as a kid. With excitement, I'd sit spellbound before the television for hours watching my favorite animated super heroes. Weekly, they would perform acts of bravery, heroism and feats that no human could. They were able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, were faster than a speeding bullet, stronger than a locomotive, and transformed into instant crime fighters with the mere utterance of, "To the bat pole Robin." Although cartoons, they portrayed a wholesome character and performed acts of justice before impressionable young minds. The focus wasn't just on them but moreso on what they did to make things right, even if it meant putting their seemingly indestructible selves at risk.

Although the days when I was entertained by those fictional characters have long since passed, the message they personified is no less heroic today. When I think of heroes, beyond my boyhood cartoon caricatures, the images that resonate with me are certainly not what are currently portrayed as today's heros, especially when it comes to deer hunters. After all, just because I or anyone else has the ability to kill something, it doesn't put any of us in the mold of a hero. Standard University psychology professor, Phil Zimbardo retorts, "We assume heroes are demigods. But they're not. A hero is just an ordinary person who does something extraordinary."

So that brings us back to deer hunting. The quarry, a whitetail, is a defenseless animal. Yes, I will agree that a deer has incredibly elusive qualities and can run extremely fast when necessary, but not fast enough to elude bullets or dodge arrows. With all due respect, even though a whitetail can humble even the most proficient of us with uncanny regularity, it does not have near the capabilities the hunter has. We can make numerous mistakes during our seasonal quests but the animal can't make one without risking its life. Yet within the deer hunting ranks, much akin to how Hollywood turns actors and actresses with the biggest following into stars, we have found a way to elevate those who possess a prowess in killing the biggest male specimens with consistency into larger-than-life figures. Why is that? Because every industry needs leaders and spokespersons. But we need the right ones, whose character is never in question. We need celebrities who do the right thing, every time, under any circumstance, even if it hurts.

Right vs Wrong

Often the line is crossed when the purity of the sport is compro-

mised as a trade-off to further one's success. And that folks is a trail leading to certain demise. It may start off innocent enough, but the demand and craving for achievement sometimes causes one to do things illegally, or at best, unethically. This behavior only leads to a conceited ego along with a superiority complex, which also plays a role in one's eagerness to attain and continue under the focus of fame. Once the limelight shines brightly, the slippery process of self-aggrandizement begins. This requires the effort to seek more and more attention, which ultimately becomes similar to any other kind of addiction. And hunter beware, once you fail in your integrity, the rest is essentially over. Audiences can and do forgive, but they don't necessarily forget. Folks in the media are even less likely to be understanding.

The Quest for the Best

Hunting for trophy quality deer is not new. There have always been those who thirst to test their mettle and skill against "no mean antagonist" as both a challenge and adventure. Most do not. They are equally satisfied to take what comes their way with little discrimination, all the while enjoying to the fullest their favorite autumn pastime. But for those who cannot be satisfied with anything less than a legitimate wall hanger, who are willing to abide within the stringent limitations this decision requires, who will work much harder and consequently face many more obstacles and disappointments, the challenges and satisfactions of a path they themselves have chosen await. And it should be as a direct result of self-satisfaction, as Dennis Dunn, the eloquent author of *Barebow* points out,

"They hunt only for themselves. They set their own standards as to what they consider a trophy, and — as they go through the various stages of life — their definition of a trophy animal usually undergoes periodic "upgrading" or revision. Trophy hunting is all about a competition with yourself, and with a quarry whose much keener senses and greater knowledge of home habitat give it all the advantages. All, save one. Man's only advantage is the possession of rational intelligence, and sometimes we even wonder about that — so refined are the self-preservation instincts of the older, more mature animals we seek. As a trophy hunter, you are trying to find — and then outsmart — a particular animal, or a particular quality of animal. Far more often than not, you return from the hunt empty-handed, not having taken a single shot. You have usually passed up opportunities at several (or perhaps many) lesser animals that don't meet the standard you've set for yourself."

— Dennis Dunn, *Barebow*

If this is indeed the case as it rightfully should be, then why the fascination with another hunter's success beyond simple sincere congratulations and perhaps some inspiration?

Identity

Everyone in all walks of life wants to be recognized in some form or fashion for their accomplishments. It's just human nature. From a pat on the back to a "like" on a Facebook post or even receiving an award, it's all commensurate with the difficulty involved in reaching

that achievement. Each autumn I see hundreds, if not thousands, of hero shots depicting happy hunters showing off their fallen prize. Within the hunting culture this triumphant gesture is both acceptable and expected. If you're a deer hunter it's within our common interest and curiosity to look upon someone's conquest and learn of the details. With that said, where, and better yet, why does the line get crossed that causes hunters to go from simple admiration to an all-out fascination with another man's accomplishments? Mark Twain opined in his autobiography that:

"Unconsciously we all have a standard by which we measure other men, and if we examine closely we find that this standard is a very simple one, and is this: we admire them, we envy them, for great qualities we ourselves lack. Hero worship consists in just that. Our heroes are men who do things which we recognize, with regret, and sometimes with a secret shame, that we cannot do. We find not much in ourselves to admire, we are always privately wanting to be like somebody else. If everybody was satisfied with himself, there would be no heroes."

To take that a step further, Tony Evans writes in *Kingdom Man*, "Men fantasize about greatness. We crave significance, influence, and impact... we want to feel the rush of the chase. Not only do we long to be great, but we also desire to be recognized as great." And when that doesn't materialize for one reason or another, the default mode immediately reverts to either envy of what another has accomplished or living vicariously through someone else. What many who watch hunting programs fail to realize is what they are seeing being played out in a 30-minute show might well have taken days, weeks, months and in some instances years to accomplish. We cannot base our own experiences on what we see on TV. Nor should we become frustrated or feel inferior to the hunting celebrities.

Conclusion

Deer hunting is, at this point in history, primarily a recreational sport. To some it would undoubtedly be classified a sport of the finest kind. Like any other activity there will always be those that excel beyond the norm due chiefly to desire, talent and perseverance. And when they do, rest assured, despite the hype and marketing, they are not superior nor are they super heroes; after all there is nothing heroic about killing a deer and certainly nothing heroic in whatever the manner the hunt was undertaken. Keep in mind, we're not slaying dragons here. But we do indeed need celebrities that go the extra mile to ensure they are above reproach. These ambassadors of the sport will be the ones that don't have to kill something on film at any cost to make the program worth watching — those are the iconic figures that are worth following.

The endearing part about deer hunting is that it's parlayed on an equal playing field. While some may have distinct advantages derived from the region they hunt, privilege or wealth, the animal is still wild and free ranging, offering opportunity for whomever the bell tolls. Hunting whitetails has been and continues to be a game of predator vs. prey, where the outcome is always questionable and has no guarantees — may it always be so. Let's leave the "super heroes" to Saturday morning television. We still need the uncertainty. 🦌



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Big-Woods Food Plots

The right food plots in the right places can transform a big-woods property from mediocrity to a deer hunting paradise.

By **Michael Veine**

Quality deer hunting has different meanings to different hunters. Some believe putting a big-antlered buck on the ground defines quality, but others are mainly turned on by tasty venison, and antlers are way down the priority list. Many hunters are more concerned with aesthetics or elements of the hunt that value particular settings, equipment or techniques rather than success.

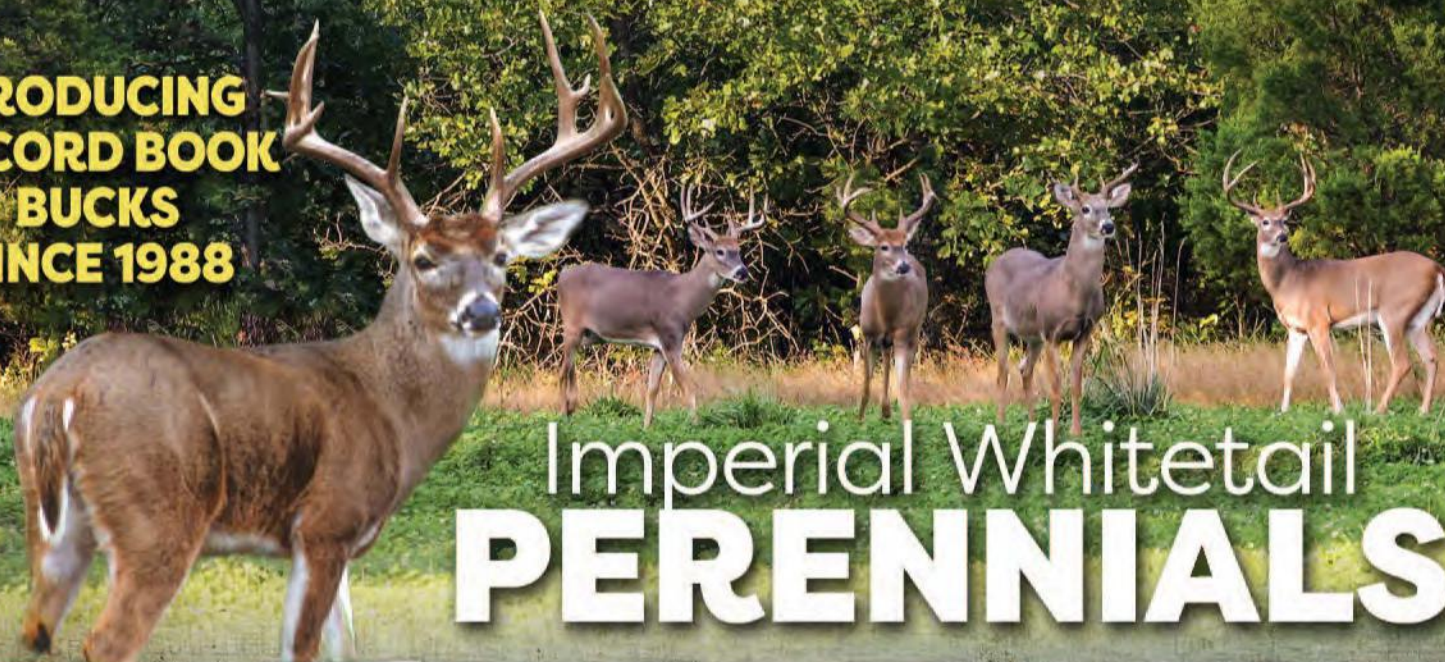
Some hunters want it all, though. They seek hunting experiences with aesthetically pleasing settings where they can consistently kill deer “their way” — with some big bucks on the landscape, too.

I want it all. For me and many others, the big woods provide deer hunting that reeks of quality. By big woods, I mean settings where timber is king and agriculture is not much of a factor. Peace and quiet rule, and the sights and sounds of modern life are ushered away by the tranquility of a remote, natural world where the only sounds are the wind blowing through the trees and other melodies of nature.

Normally, big-woods deer, especially adult

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bucks, are very challenging to hunt, as big-woods deer densities are often lower than those in farm country. Natural food sources are scattered through a wide area, making it difficult to pattern deer. Big-woods deer tend to be spookier and more reclusive, too.

Savvy big-woods property owners can increase their odds of success by implementing a land management program that focuses on high-quality food plots. In fact, there's no other environment in which food plots will have such a dramatic impact on a deer herd. The right food plots in the right places can transform a big-woods property from something less than mediocre to a deer hunting paradise.

My wife and I own 160 acres in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Agriculture is almost nonexistent, and the area has few residents. In recent years, bad winters and overabundant predators — including wolves, coyotes, bobcats, bears and even cougars — have lowered deer numbers. In fact, we now have the smallest deer herd there in more than 50 years. I was told by a Department of Natural Resources biologist that the area by my camp has one of the highest wolf concentrations in the region with three large, overlapping packs.

Despite the doom and gloom in our area, my wife and I bucked the trend last season and had one of our best deer seasons ever. By providing top-quality nutrition and cover, and by hunting intelligently, my wife and I each took our limits of adult bucks. In fact, I have taken my Michigan limit of two bucks every year there for more than 10 consecutive years — in an area where less than two percent of hunters tag out. It takes a considerable investment in time, money and effort to reach such a high degree of success in an area with such a depressed deer herd, but it's a labor of love seeing a property go from rags to riches in terms of deer numbers and age structure despite overall herd trends.

Background Info

We bought our hunting property in 1996. It consists of a 50-50 mix of high and low lands, with a beaver dam-studded stream meandering through one side. Much of the land had not been logged in more than 100 years, so a timber treatment was in order. We hired a forester to develop a management plan and had some major timber treatments performed in 1996 and 1997. The treatments consisted of a mixture of clear-cuts, select-cuts and strip-cuts. As a byproduct of those projects, workers installed a series of carefully planned logging roads, which opened up most of the property for easy access. Ideally, access roads will circle the perimeter of a property, with spurs leading off those roads for food plots and stand locations on the interior. Because of the lay of our land, though, with lots of wet areas along the borders, we only have one main road running the length of the property, with lots of spurs. It's important the main access routes not run past one stand to get to another, which we accomplished.

In 1998, we hired an excavator to clear our first food plots on the property. One was perhaps one acre, and the other was almost two acres. We worked those plots with ATV implements. We also installed several small plots we cleared and maintained with just hand tools. The first year, I tested several seed blends from various manufactures in those plots to see what worked the best. I did soil tests and had to add a lot of lime to increase the pH. I followed the manufacturer's planting instructions along with the soil test recommendations. The plots grew pretty well the first year, but one section of my larger food plot planted with Imperial Whitetail Clover really seemed to shine.

I learned a lot from that first planting. Breaking ground with late-

summer plantings on those heavy soils, which sometimes dry out like concrete, is nearly impossible with ATV implements. Also, some plants did not hold up to the heavy grazing pressure. In the big woods, with food sources being limited, deer often gobble up any quality food sources until they're gone. My plots were chewed to the dirt by mid-October. My solution was simple: I had to create more food plot acreage, and those plots needed to be planted with forage that was extremely resistant to overgrazing.

A couple of years later, I hired another excavator contractor who used his bulldozer to expand the 2-acre plot into a 5-acre field. That large plot is not normally hunted directly. It serves as a central attraction on the property where deer can feed in peace. We hunt the periphery of that field. I also had the contractor clear out several more small food plots. Based on experience, I planted all of my plots with



The author's wife, Donna, stands by this large, mature buck shot because of a big-woods food plot.



Imperial Whitetail Clover. The next year, though, I started to plant Imperial No-Plow during late summer at spots prone to spring flooding, where clover did not survive. Eventually, I also started using Imperial Secret Spot at those wetter spots — with great results.

In the late 1990s, I established four mineral stations on my property. Those sites were next to some of the smaller food plots, with stands overlooking them. I have used 30-06 Plus Protein with outstanding results for decades. Deer consume the minerals during spring and summer, but even though there is nothing left during fall, they still visit the sites out of habit or social curiosity.

Although a stream flows through the property, deer seem to prefer to drink from muddy water holes instead of clear, flowing water. Deer really like water by a food source, too. I'm convinced a water hole next to a food plot will dramatically increase deer usage. The water table in our area is high, so I've dug dozens of small water holes throughout my property. I dug most with a shovel but some with a mini-excavator I rented. During dry autumns, those water holes will attract deer like a magnet.

Maintenance

I live more than 400 miles from my hunting property and because my time is extremely limited during spring and summer, my food plot maintenance is very restricted. In spring, I fertilize the clover plots with a low-nitrogen, high-phosphorus/potassium mixture. If I find any bare spots, I might do some overseeding, too. During June or early July, I make a spraying trip to my property and hit my food plots with a herbicide treatment, using a selective herbicide on my perennials and a non-selective herbicide on my annuals. I use my ATV sprayer on larger plots and a 5-gallon backpack sprayer on the smaller ones.

In August, I mow my plots to about six inches, using an old modified garden tractor on the larger plots and a heavy-duty string trimmer on the small plots. I also mow my roads and trails. I then give my annual plots a second herbicide spraying to kill off any remaining vegetation. I plant my annuals and fertilize the smaller kill plots during that August trip, too. I regularly do laboratory soil tests because my soils are very acidic and vary in pH from one spot to another. I invested in an ATV lime spreader and use it on my larger plots with bulk lime deliveries. I use bagged, powdered lime on my smaller plots, and I really keep those kill plots well limed and fertilized for optimal growing power.

I also do periodic timber cuttings on my property to keep things fresh and thick in strategic areas. During some treatments, I harvest timber, but I just hinge-cut some small spots. I also do some trapping and varmint hunting on my property to reduce predator numbers.

The Result

I have kept detailed logs of every hunt at my property for the past 20 seasons. Compared to data published by the Michigan DNR, the number of deer sightings we experience is more than 10 times higher than the average for our area. Even our neighbors see just a fraction of the deer we do. We also log higher-than-average fawn recruitment at our property.

We practice quality deer management on our land, passing up young bucks. We would shoot does if the overall deer population were higher, but we'll refrain from antlerless harvests until deer numbers increase sufficiently. We also keep hunting pressure as light as possible. I read a study in which a researcher used telemetry to determine the effect hunting pressure had on deer. He concluded that it takes at least five days for deer to return to an area during daylight after being spooked by a hunter. We try not to hunt a stand more than once a week. The U.P. has more than one million acres of public land, much of it with little hunting pressure. I hunt public lands often, too, which lowers pressure on my land. We also have a lot of stands on our property (22) to help spread out the hunting pressure.

Last year, on Nov. 17, with both of my deer tags filled, I headed to town to run some errands while my wife went hunting at a ground blind only 200 yards from the cabin. About noon, she spotted a big buck. When he stopped broadside at about 100 yards, she aimed and fired her .270. The buck ran off, so she waited an hour before tracking him in the snow. He only made it about 50 yards before piling up, and she was shocked when she saw the brute. The buck had a large 10-point rack, but the body size really made the deer stand out. It fell among some fallen trees in a puddle, and my wife couldn't even move it. She had to gut it right there. After the buck was dressed and lighter, my wife wrestled it into a Jet Sled and extracted it back to camp.

When I returned and saw that buck next to the cabin, I couldn't believe my eyes. Even with a block and tackle, I could barely hoist it onto the buck pole. Although he had little fat, he still weighed 226 pounds dressed, so his live weight would have been almost 300 pounds. When we processed that deer, it yielded more than 120 pounds of pure boned venison, and the best news was that he was tender and provided good eating. My wife won a local big buck contest with her deer. The stand she shot the buck from overlooks two food plots, which was no coincidence.

If you want more and bigger deer in the big woods, food plots will likely help. They sure helped us. 🦌

A Labor of Love... and Payback Time

By Gerald Almy

Photos by the Author

Glancing at the white farmhouse, I wondered what my neighbors would think if they saw the commotion where I was tilling a food plot that August afternoon. The plume of dust, which rose like smoke above me, must have looked like a scene from *Dante's Inferno*. And the noise from the old diesel tractor as it rattled, clattered and banged into rocks in drought-parched dirt was no doubt deafening if you didn't have ear plugs in, like I did.

But hey, that's food plotting. It was August. The plots had to be prepared during the right time frame, with a hope and a prayer that rain might come to help the seeds sprout when they were scattered. So the sweat, sore muscles, black fingernails and dirt in my nostrils were just part of the dues to pay for the outcome I knew lay ahead: a shimmering green, lush food plot that would attract the most beautiful animal on earth — the whitetail deer.

My knuckles were bloodied from forcing a balky PTO connector in when I attached the tiller. My throat was parched and dry from the heat and dust that kicked up and swirled around me from plowing. My eyes blinked rapidly from the soil particles in the air. And the sweaty, dust-covered clothes hanging on me were so routine I didn't even notice their pathetic condition.

After a brief pause, though, I really wasn't worried about what the neighbors thought. They'd lived in their white farmhouse for decades and knew well my crazy, obsessive passion for food plotting. They knew drought seemed to be a regular part of summer life in our area, and that plumes of dust were common when equipment touched dry soil.

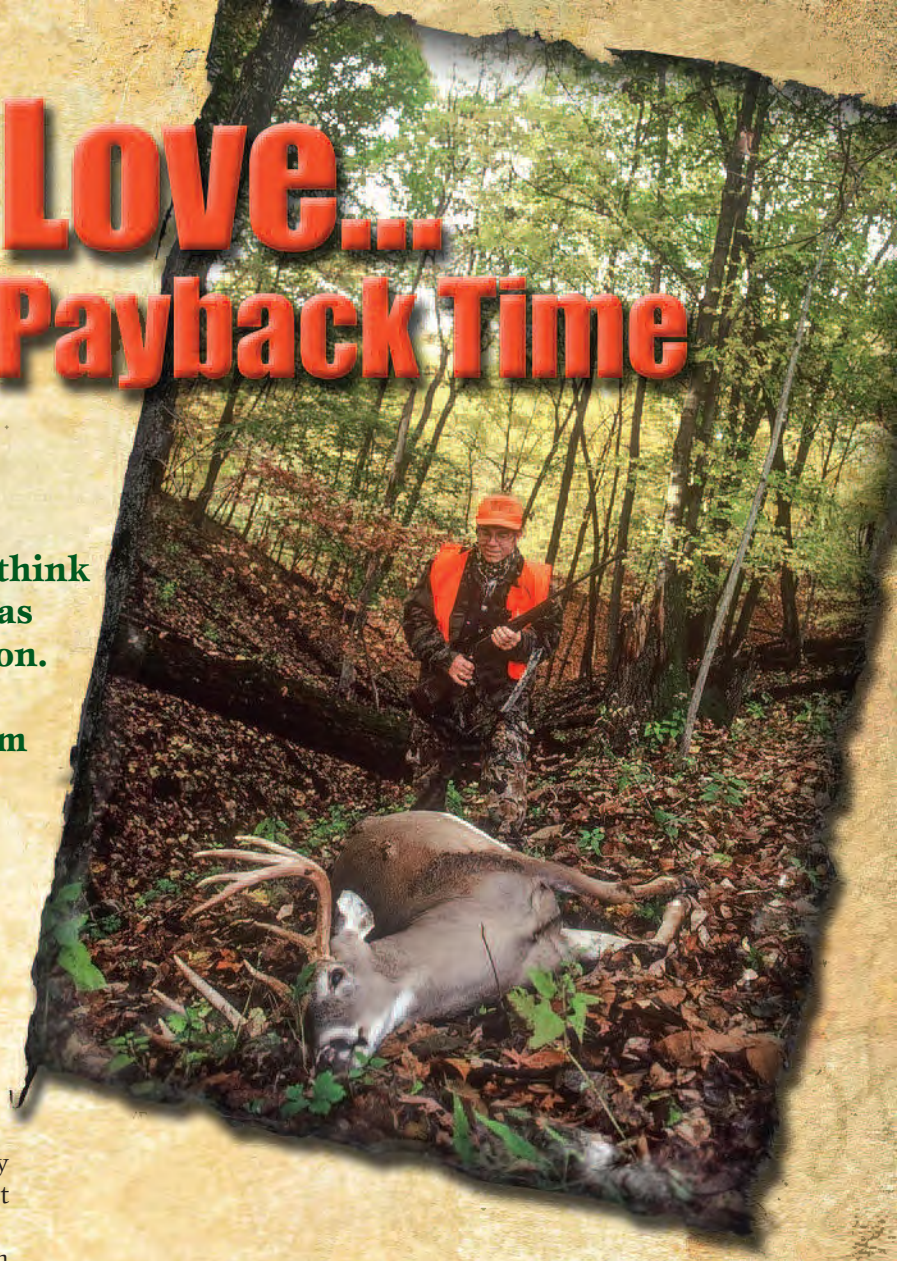
As for my own aches and pains, sweaty clothes and bloodied knuckles, they brought a strange smile over my face as I continued to till the dusty field.

Ah, the joys of food plotting.

If you're a die-hard food plotter, you're probably nodding your head in empathy.

Been there, done that.

When the editors of *Whitetail News* assigned me this piece, they knew from my past writings that I considered food plotting a labor of love. I'm proud of that. Another title might have been "Dues to Pay."



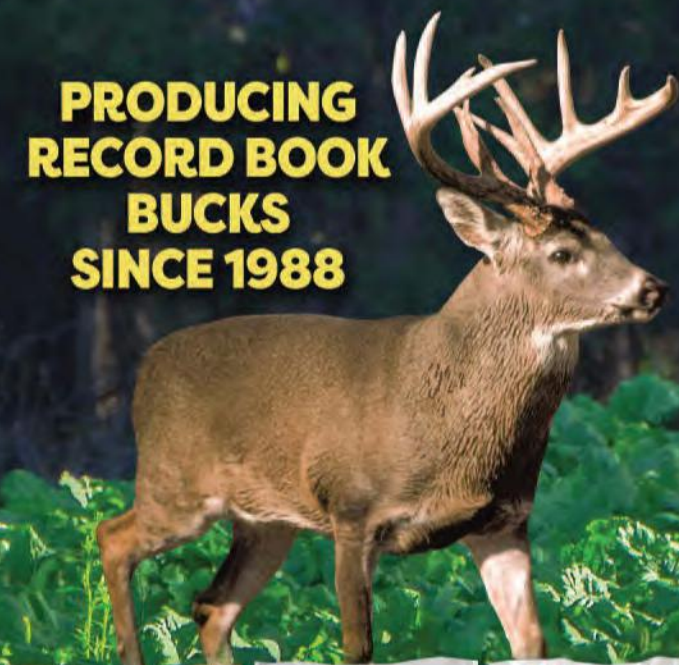
Doubtless, most of you have these same mixed feelings about food plotting.

Sure, it's work. Sometimes it's uncomfortable and gritty and leaves you aching and worn to a frazzle at day's end. When you're coughing from the dust, your hands are bruised, your back and legs hurt and your wife (or husband) doesn't want to get too close as you walk in the door after you've worked on your food plots, you realize that's part of what makes the final outcome — beautiful food plots that nourish and attract deer — worth the effort. All the tiring work that goes into it, the challenge of the undertaking and the things you have to endure — they're part of what makes the reward so fulfilling.

Sometimes, when your fingers are bleeding, your nostrils are caked with dust and ibuprofen won't touch the aches you have at day's end, you might feel like cursing everyone at the Whitetail Institute for getting you addicted to this strange passion. But that feeling will start to leave when the first nascent sprouts emerge from your hard work. And it will vanish when fall comes and the wind is blowing in your face, your legs are shaking and your heart is racing because you have a half-dozen healthy deer feeding in the fully grown plot in front of you, including a nice 3-year-old buck that you have to decide whether to harvest or allow to grow another year.

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Yes, food plotting is hard. Yes, it can leave you aching and drained at the day's end, sore from head to toe. But in the end, it's worth it. Otherwise, you wouldn't keep doing it. And far from being considered a chore, for most of us, it's enriching and uplifting. It is so fulfilling, in fact, that it has become a labor of love for many of us. The Whitetail Institute has tens of thousands of customers such as us who like nothing more than putting in hard work on our plots. Some of us, in fact, enjoy it as much as or even more than the actual hunting.

I've been a writer since I got out of college many years ago. And I enjoy writing. It's hard, but fulfilling. The minute I type or edit the last word for the day, though, instead of relaxing with a cold one, I slip into my work clothes and head for the tractor. If there's nothing to do involving the tractor, I'll pull weeds, pick up rocks in fields or investigate new potential spots for plots.

I'm sure that's how many of you feel, whatever your job. The minute you can get free and devote a few hours or a full day to food plot chores, you are like a racehorse chomping at

the bit to get out of the gate.

One of the many reasons we enjoy planting and caring for food plots so much is that it makes our passion for deer a year-round activity. No matter how long your state's hunting seasons last from early bow to late muzzle-loader, there are long stretches of the year when, other than a scouting trip, there's nothing you can do.

Food plotting gets you out there in the fields and woods soon after the hunting season closes. And the various activities and tasks involved keep you engaged and connected to the land and deer throughout the year. You learn more about the habitat, vegetation and the nuances of the topography than you ever would as just a hunter. You feel connected and a part of the land as a habitat manager and a sportsman. It's a rich, uplifting feeling.

And it's a feeling that you can pass on to your children and grandchildren by getting them involved in some of the chores such as planning the site, weeding, spreading seed or clearing rocks and debris from potential plot locations.

Of course, it's dangerous to paint too rosy of a picture of food plotting for those just getting started. There will be plenty of frustrations, setbacks, mistakes and disappointments.

Equipment breaks down at the



The author loves his time working on his food plots as much as sitting in his stand.

most inopportune time. Weeds and grasses invade your plots. Every time you till, you unearth more rocks and need to haul them out of the plot. Rain doesn't come when you put the seed in the ground and desperately need it. A neighbor shoots a 2½-year-old that you just passed up while it fed in your Imperial Whitetail Clover plot. All those and other trials and misfortunes occur on top of being sunburned, sore, sweaty and coated with dust at day's end after working in your plots.

At such times, it's sometimes difficult to keep the endgame — the final goals of creating food plots — foremost in your mind. But they're always there, in the back of your head, encouraging you to keep at it. You know the rewards that will come from your efforts — more deer, healthier does, increased fawn production, bucks with larger racks and stunning green plots that make your land beautiful. You know, too, that hunting suddenly becomes even more absorbing and rewarding; more than just a sport because you've learned so much more about your quarry's habitat and why and when animals move the way they do.

The hunting itself is more enjoyable, too. The deer in your plots are feeding naturally and calmly instead of slipping past you furtively, as when you're hunting an area without a concentrated food to hold them for any extended time.

A Year-Round Passion

The deer hunter who doesn't grow food plots basically finishes his involvement with deer when sun sets on the last day of the season. For the food plotter, that last day of hunting marks the beginning of

the habitat-management chores that will keep him engaged with his favorite animal until bow season opens next fall.

Shopping is the first order of business. What? OK, you might hate to shop in malls or big box stores. But when you're purchasing a bag of seed, herbicides or minerals that will grow healthier, larger-racked bucks at a farm co-op or sporting goods store, maybe shopping isn't so bad.

And if you choose, you really don't have to leave your house to shop. You can select products from articles you read about in Whitetail News and order them at the comprehensive and educational whitetailinstitute.com website or by calling 800-688-3030.

Next on the agenda is taking care of equipment that might need repair, servicing or replacing. It's time to check off that chore before peak food plot planting season arrives. You need your tractor or ATV and implements in top shape for the demanding work required of them.

You need to conduct soil tests to see how much lime and fertilizer you need to add to each specific site. When the results come back, usually in just a few days, you must order those products and apply them.

Lime in particular needs to be spread on fields as soon as possible after hunting seasons close to bring the pH level up so plants can fully absorb the nutrients in the soil. Some people with time and equipment do this themselves, but many of us hire this out to agriculture companies, which will spread lime on fields for reasonable rates.

Fertilizers are next. I go both ways on this. Sometimes I have them spread by farm co-ops. Mostly in recent years, I've applied my own.

You might need to kill weeds and grasses, to prepare new plots and when they're invading perennial stands such as Imperial Whitetail

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 - Contains scent and taste enhancers including Devour, which drives deer wild.
- Maximum Flexibility in Delivery Systems!**
 - Can be used in most spin-type feeders, trough feeders, and gravity feeders.
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Clover. I must admit, spraying is one of my least favorite chores. But I know what will happen if I don't do it. And I know how much better weed-free plots look aesthetically and how much more effective they are at producing a high tonnage of forage for deer and attracting more animals.

You might be like me on this one. But you bite the bullet and do it, because you want the best plot possible. And you know weed-free plots will last much longer. Hey, it's not that onerous.

Then it's time for tilling or disking. This is often a trying time because you're anxious to get going on this enjoyable task, but you know you can't start until conditions are right. If the soil is too wet or still partially frozen, you won't get the smooth seedbed you need for the best possible germination and plant growth. Be patient.

After the seedbed is prepared, it's time for spreading seed. This is always a fun chore, and a great one to get youngsters involved with if the plot is small enough to cover with a hand-crank spreader. It's also good exercise. Once you've done this correctly, move on to the next chore or another plot that needs your attention.

The good thing about food plotting is that when things get rolling, there's almost always another job waiting to keep you engaged and enthusiastic about the pursuit. OK, so by now you've purchased seed, serviced equipment, tested the soil, added lime and fertilizer, sprayed for weeds, tilled and planted some high-quality seeds from the Whitetail Institute.

Sit back and wait for hunting season? No way. About the time you get done with these tasks, it's time to start preparing other plots and getting ready to put in PowerPlant. When those are in, it's time to begin preparing for the first of several mowing sessions established

perennial plots usually require. If you're like me, mowing the flowering tops of clover and protruding weeds and grasses is one of the most enjoyable food plot chores. Revel in it, and have fun. Mowing is definitely a labor of love.

About the time your spring-planted PowerPlant plots are growing strong, you'll want to devote time to preparing seedbeds for your fall/winter plots of Pure Attraction, Winter-Greens, Ambush, Tall Tine Tubers, etc. that need to be planted from July through September in most regions. Or perhaps you'll want to put in a fall-planted Alfa-Rack Plus, Imperial Whitetail Clover or Chic Magnet plot.


The perennial plots might need another mowing or sometimes a late-summer dose of Arrest Max to take care of a few stubborn grasses that remain. You might also want to do soil tests on a few new potential food plot sites and start removing rocks, brush and weeds to be ready to expand next year.

Soon, fall will have arrived, and hunting seasons are at hand. It's time to taper down on the food plot work to practice shooting, set trail cameras and hang stands. This is the season where you reap the rewards of the time you've put in, the efforts exerted, the bloody knuckles and dusty sessions on the back of your tractor or ATV.

Then, when the weather turns crisp, the wind caresses your face and you watch a herd of healthy deer with a few mature bucks in a lush green plot in front of you, it all proves worthwhile. Dues paid and hard work gain this reward, but in the end, it's really a labor of love.

Now draw your bow, aim carefully and release.

It's payback time. 🏹



Ray Scott's Trophy Bass Retreat

You're invited to fish America's most famous private bass waters

Noted outdoorsman and B.A.S.S. founder Ray Scott is making a long-time personal dream come true. As a proud supporter of his home state's new initiative — Alabama Black Belt Adventures — he is opening his personal lakes, his home and guest accommodations to a limited number of anglers to enjoy great fishing and gracious southern hospitality.

Guests at Ray Scott's Trophy Bass Retreat will fish in the wake of presidents, first ladies and fishing superstars like Kevin VanDam, Rick Clunn, Bill Dance and Roland Martin — all amidst 200 acres of live oaks, Spanish moss, whitetail deer and blue herons. And they will also enjoy many outstanding amenities as well as the opportunity to visit with host Ray Scott.

Ray Scott's Trophy Bass Retreat is located just south of Montgomery, in the heart of Alabama's Black Belt, a land of rich history, rich traditions and rich black soil that is credited with contributing to the outstanding fishing and hunting that has been treasured by so many generations of outdoorsmen.

Whether you're with your best fishing buddies, son or father, or important business clients or employees, your Ray Scott Trophy Bass Retreat will provide an exclusive, one-of-a-kind fishing experience to be remembered.

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Your all-inclusive Trophy Bass Retreat package includes:

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Bookings: All lodging is based on double occupancy with private baths. Booking and fishing is in pairs only. There is a maximum of eight guests. Booking groups of four in the Presidents Guest Cabin is a recipe for fun and fellowship.

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Be sure to inquire about the limited number of Ray Scott's trademark marketing seminars, "From a Fishing Hole to a Pot of Gold" personally conducted after fishing hours by the Bass Boss himself. Or call to book the whole lodge and customize your own tax-deductible marketing and motivational agenda with Ray.

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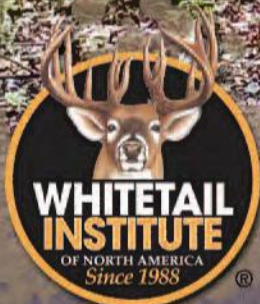
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from The Whitetail Institute

Like the protein found in Whitetail Institute food plot products, minerals and vitamins are also an essential part of the growth matrix of any deer, especially a buck. Hardened antlers are comprised largely of mineral, approximately 55 percent, and most soils in North America lack one or more of the minerals vital to antler development. When you consider that a buck re-grows antlers each year, you can understand why they require such high levels of minerals in their diet.

If you want your deer to thrive and help them reach more of their genetic potential, then mineral and vitamin supplementation is vital. 30-06 mineral and vitamin supplements are extremely attractive to deer. They are also designed by nutrition experts and are professionally formulated to provide the best nutrition possible for your deer. 30-06 is an extremely attractive and nutritional product, not a glorified salt product.

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My Opinion on the Fundamentals for Becoming a True Sportsman

By Chad Brown

Photo by the Author


Do you feel a need to work the land and restore the habitat, plant food plots and fruit and nut trees, and create more browse, thickets and bedding areas? Do you feel the desire to teach others about hunting, fishing, conservation and management of wildlife and the land? If so, that's great because those feelings are the fundamentals of becoming what is considered a true sportsman.

These are also the duties for stewardship of this earth spoken about in Genesis, the first chapter of the Bible. In the beginning, God created everything — heaven and earth in its vast array — and then put men and women here to be stewards and managers so we would work and care and reside over all of his creation. I have an overwhelming desire — call it a passion — for all these things. With that being said, I would like to encourage you to do as a few others are doing now.

Some have stepped up and are spreading the word about how to plant seeds, and nurture them, and get them to

their full potential. A few have stepped up to show us how to open up the canopies of our woods to get rid of the darkness and allow the light in so our woodland habitats will come back more plentiful than before. A few are stepping up to show us how our perception of beauty in these mowed fields and park-like wood lots are really harmful to the wildlife we long to protect. Some are stepping up and teaching us how we need to be more than hunters. We need to be managers that control population numbers based on biologically sound data, which, in return, will create healthier and stronger species that will benefit us all. A few are stepping up and planting the seeds of conservation, management and stewardship for the next generation of managers. Unfortunately, only some are stepping up. We need a lot more.

The Bible teaches us that God entrusted authority to us over all his creation, and we are called to manage his creation in accordance with the principles He has established. We are asked to be stewards of all that God has given us, and by doing so, we will glorify Him. As true sportsmen and God's appointed stewards, we need to take whatever gift or talent that God has given us — regardless of how small you think it might be — and use it in service to Him and others. Jesus Christ died for us so we could be renewed and would no longer live for ourselves but for Him. So stewards, managers and true sportsmen, I want you to know the work we

are doing will benefit us all and, if done for the right reason, will glorify God. So let us get back to what we were put here to do. Find your gift, step up and plant some 'seeds.' Jesus Christ and the power of God's word from the Bible have had a huge impact on my life, and it could also affect yours if you allow it to. God bless. 



REAL HUNTERS DO THE TALKING

(Continued from page 27)

about Whitetail Institute products...

We hunt several farms in three southern Michigan counties. All of our farms are groomed to attract and hold deer. The backbone to our success over the years has been food plots planted with products produced by the Whitetail Institute. Each one of the farms has four food plots placed strategically and each food plot has a different Whitetail Institute product planted. We plant Imperial Whitetail Clover, Alfa-Rack Plus, Tall Time Tubers and Whitetail Oats Plus. They keep the deer well fed throughout the year. A deer's life cycle revolves around food, water, safety and reproduction. So of course we supply the other means to maintain this balance. My 15-year-old granddaughter Alyssa's buck made her dad and her papa very proud because she studied topographical maps, aerial photographs and plat maps to locate a hotspot to place her blind. Her choice of locations was between a ridge and a strong funnel that basically empties at this point. On top of the ridge behind her is a three-acre food plot planted with Imperial Whitetail Clover. When looking at the whole picture, she actually chose a perfect ambush site that should last her many years. Most experienced deer hunters would have hunted the pinch points of the funnel, and like Alyssa said, "That may work for a couple of years, but I'm in it for the long haul." That way of thinking is what made us so proud of her. Both my son, Greg's buck and my buck were taken in or near one of our food plots, but what makes these successful hunts so interesting was the fact that each buck was taken in a different southern Michigan county.

Fred Abbas - Michigan



My brother-in-law got lucky with this 170-plus inch buck on our land. He thought it was the 9-point buck he had seen earlier, but it turned out better than that. Since putting out Imperial Whitetail Clover, Winter-Greens and Chic Magnet, we are seeing nothing but bigger and bigger racks every year. Thank you, Whitetail Institute.

Jerry Hargett - Missouri

Where I hunt is about 1/2 mile up on the mountain near a national forest. Since starting to use 30-06 mineral supplement several years ago, I have noticed healthier deer and better racks. On Nov. 5, this past season, I harvested the biggest buck I have taken in my life! He scored just over 168 inches and dressed out at 189 pounds. It was around 70 degrees that day, so I set up near a small creek that flowed out of the mountain. About 4:30 p.m. he came down the ridge to the water. It was about a 90-yard shot with my muzzleloader. I just sat there for a long time in shock, thanking God for this blessing. After 42 years of hunting (I am 52), I finally harvested the buck of a lifetime! I took my buck to the Virginia State Competition in Fishersville, VA this past weekend. He took first place in the western region and first place in the state class 10 (muzzleloader 9, 10 and 11 point division). Thanks, Whitetail Institute, for creating a great product that definitely works!

Chris Dunford - Virginia



Send Us Your Photos!

Do you have photos and/or a story of a big buck, a small buck or a doe that you took with the help of Imperial products? Send it to us and you might find it in the Field Tester section of the next issue of *Whitetail News*. Email your digital photos and a 3 to 4 paragraph story telling how you harvested the deer and the role our products played to

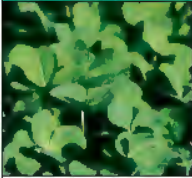
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Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 36 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

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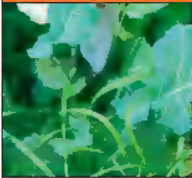


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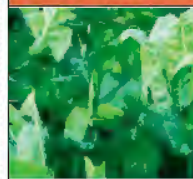


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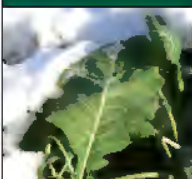


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IMPERIAL WINTER-GREENS™ YOU SAVE \$70.00

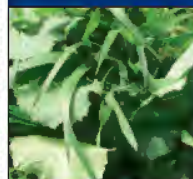


Suggested Retail: \$239.96 (24 lbs. - 4 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$169.96
 Please send _____ 24 lb. quantities of
 Imperial Winter-Greens™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$12.00 for shipping and handling for each 24 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

IMPERIAL PURE ATTRACTION™ YOU SAVE \$35.00



Suggested Retail: \$94.96 (52 lbs. - 1 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$59.96
 Please send _____ 52 lb. quantities of
 Imperial Pure Attraction™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 52 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

IMPERIAL TALL TINE TUBERS™ YOU SAVE \$65.00

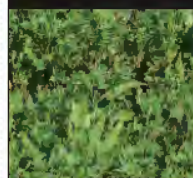


Suggested Retail: \$199.96 (24 lbs. - 4 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$134.96
 Please send _____ 24 lb. quantities of
 Imperial Tall Tine Tubers™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$12.00 for shipping and handling for each 24 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

IMPERIAL WHITETAIL EDGE™ YOU SAVE \$65.00



Suggested Retail: \$289.96 (52 lbs. - 2 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$224.96
 Please send _____ 52 lb. bags of
 Imperial Edge™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 52 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

IMPERIAL TURKEY SELECT™ YOU SAVE \$40.00



Suggested Retail: \$149.99 (40 lbs. - 1 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$109.96
 Please send _____ 40 lb. quantities of
 Imperial Turkey Select™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 40 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

IMPERIAL "CHIC" MAGNET™ YOU SAVE \$50.00



Suggested Retail: \$139.94 (9 lbs. - 3 Acre Planting)
Price with coupon: \$89.94
 Please send _____ 9 lb. quantities of
 Imperial "Chic" Magnet™.
 TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____



Please add \$9.50 for shipping and handling for each 9 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

COUPON PRICES NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

DISCOUNT COUPONS - Order Today!

IMPERIAL WHITETAIL OATS PLUS™ YOU SAVE \$13.00



Suggested Retail: \$49.95 (45 lbs. - 1/2 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$36.95

Please send _____ 45 lb. bags of Imperial Forage Oats Plus™.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 45 lbs. ordered. (Not available in Canada.)
Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



IMPERIAL AMBUSH™ YOU SAVE \$20.00



Fortified With Sugar Beets

Suggested Retail: \$120.00 (40 lbs. - 1-Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$99.96

Please send _____ 40 lb. quantities of Imperial Ambush.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 40 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.

NEW!



IMPERIAL 4-PLAY BLOCK™ YOU SAVE Up To \$25.00



Suggested Retail: \$59.96 and \$29.95

Coupon Price: \$34.96 or \$19.95

Please send _____ ☐ 2-Pak Blocks @ \$34.96

Please send _____ ☐ 1 Block @ \$19.95

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____

Please add \$12.00 for shipping and handling for EACH Block or \$18.00 for EACH Double Pack. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



ARREST MAX™ HERBICIDE YOU SAVE \$10.00 to \$50.00

Suggested Retail: \$49.95 (1 Pint - 1 Acre); \$189.99 (1/2 Gal. - 4 Acres)

Price with coupon: 1 Pint - \$39.95; 1/2 Gal. - \$138.96

Please send _____ pint(s) of ARREST MAX™ Herbicide.

Please send _____ 1/2 gallon(s) of ARREST MAX™ Herbicide.

Call for larger quantities.

TOTAL \$_____

No charge for shipping and handling. Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



Apple OBSESSION "Super" Deer Attractant YOU SAVE \$15.00 - \$40.00



Suggested Retail: \$119.96 — 6-Pak, \$59.97 — 3-Pak

Coupon Price: \$79.92 or \$44.97

Please send _____ Apple OBSESSION 6-Paks @ \$79.92

Please send _____ Apple OBSESSION 3-Paks @ \$44.97

TOTAL \$_____

No charge for shipping and handling. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.)
Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



SLAY™ HERBICIDE YOU SAVE \$10.00 to \$21.00

Suggested Retail: \$59.95 (4 oz. - 1 Acre); \$159.95 (1 Pint - 4 Acres)

Price with coupon: 4 oz. - \$49.98; 1 Pint - \$138.98

Please send _____ 4 oz. Package(s) of SLAY™ Herbicide.

Please send _____ Pint(s) of SLAY™ Herbicide.

Call for larger quantities.

TOTAL \$_____

No charge for shipping and handling. Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



IMPERIAL 30-06™ BLOCK™ YOU SAVE Up To \$13.00



Suggested Retail: \$59.96 and \$29.95

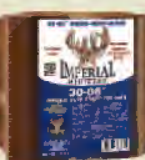
Coupon Price: \$46.96 or \$24.95

Please send _____ ☐ 2-Pak Blocks @ \$46.96

Please send _____ ☐ 1 Block @ \$24.95

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____

Please add \$12.00 for shipping and handling for EACH Block or \$18.00 for EACH Double Pack. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



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SMALLER SIZES
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For Details

IMPERIAL 30-06™ Mineral/Vitamin Supplements YOU SAVE \$25.00



Suggested Retail: \$90.97 and \$99.97 (60 lbs.)

Coupon Price: \$65.97 or \$74.97

Please send _____ 60 lb. quantities of 30-06™

☐ Original 30-06™ @ \$65.97

☐ 30-06™ Plus Protein @ \$74.97

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$_____

Please add \$19.00 for shipping and handling for each 60 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



* Important: Shipping & Payment Information

* Please Include Daytime Phone Number For UPS Shipments
and Any Questions We May Have About Your Order.

Name: _____

Shipping Address: (No P.O. Box) _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Email: _____

Payment Method:

☐ Check or Money Order Enclosed

Charge to my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

Credit Card#: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

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"KRAZE" Flavored Deer Attractant YOU SAVE \$40-\$65



FREE FREIGHT!

Suggested Retail: \$119.99 — 6-Pak, \$69.96 — 3-Pak

Coupon Price: \$54.96 or \$29.97

Please send _____ ☐ 6-Pak KRAZE @ \$54.96

Please send _____ ☐ 3-Pak KRAZE @ \$29.97

TOTAL \$_____

No charge for shipping and handling. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.)
Please enclose with shipping and payment information.



COUPON PRICES NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

The future of our sport!

Nate Katzenmeyer – Wisconsin

I have been using Whitetail Institute products for the last 10 years and have seen excellent results. Not only have I seen more deer, I have seen larger deer and on a consistent basis. Last year I established a new plot of Chic Magnet, and we noticed immediate results, and the deer couldn't seem to stay out of it. It consistently looked like it was being mowed off. I even have one buck on video during the rut, which stopped mid-chase of a doe so that he could eat.

On opening weekend of the Wisconsin archery season, my 11-year-old son, Gunner, harvested this 8-pointer from a box blind with a crossbow, which is located over the food plot. This was his first buck, which not only had a nice rack, but it also dressed at 180 pounds. As if all of that wasn't accomplishment enough, the day before, he harvested a turkey from the same blind in the same plot.

I just wanted to say thanks, Whitetail Institute, for the great products and *Whitetail News* magazine. I study the articles because I'm always looking to improve our plots, our land, and our herd health. Thanks again.



Lisa Patterson – Mississippi

Our daughter, Alyssa, has been hunting hard over our Imperial Whitetail Clover plot this year, hoping and waiting for her first deer to walk out. Jan. 11 was the day that this beauty came out for a bite. Alyssa has been helping her parents plant Imperial Whitetail Clover plots for years. This 8 point buck was her first deer!



Michael Hartman – Pennsylvania

On the final day of the Pennsylvania's antlered deer season, our grandson Ian bagged this magnificent 7-pointer in close proximity to a small plot of Whitetail Oats Plus. The Whitetail Oats Plus kept the local herd on our property despite a poor acorn crop. Ian, age 10, was our third grandson to reap the rewards of our Imperial Whitetail Clover, Tall Time Tubers, Whitetail Oats Plus and Winter-Greens food plots. Each buck sported finer antlers than those bagged by their grandfather during the good old days. In fact, thanks to Whitetail Institute, the good old days are now. 🦌



First Deer is presented and sponsored by TRACT OPTICS. Visit them online at www.tractoptics.com.

Email your First Deer photos and story to info@whitetailinstitute.com or send them to

Whitetail Institute of North America, 239 Whitetail Trail, Pintlala 36043, Attn.: First Deer Dept.

Draw 'Em In and Hold 'Em with...

Whitetail Institute **ATTRACTANTS**



Whitetail Institute started it all in 1988 and nobody knows deer nutrition and what attracts deer like the Whitetail Institute. That is why we developed our complete line of liquid, block, and granular attractants to appeal to a deer's sense of smell and taste. Whether it's the irresistible scent of apples or Devour, our proprietary taste and scent enhancer, our products have what it takes to attract deer to your area. These attractants work so well, they can pull deer to your property from long distances, and will also help hold deer once they have found the source of the attraction.

Use Whitetail Institute attractants to lure both bucks and does in front of your game cameras, as well as to attract and hold hot does in your area when the time is right.

CAUTION

Due to the incredible attraction power of these products you will need to check your local game laws before hunting over the site.



Whitetail Institute

239 Whitetail Trail | Pintlala, AL 36043
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WHITETAIL INSTITUTE APPAREL

CAPS

All our Whitetail Institute caps are made from top quality cotton, and feature detailed embroidered logos and graphics.

Caps: \$9.95

(All apparel orders (unlimited quantity) please add \$5.50 for shipping and handling)



Hunter Orange Logo Cap



Camo w/Tan Mesh Logo Cap



Brown w/Tan Mesh Logo Cap



Camo Logo Cap



Black Logo Cap

SHORT SLEEVE TEES

All our Whitetail Institute tees are made from 100% preshrunk cotton, and feature screen-printed front and back designs.

Short Sleeve Tees: S-2X: \$13.95, 3X: \$16.55 (All apparel orders (unlimited quantity) please add \$5.50 for shipping and handling.)



Front Chest Design



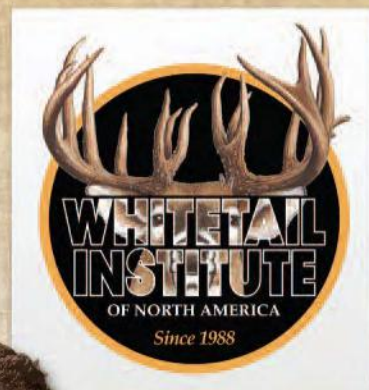
Front Chest Design



Upper Back Design



Upper Back Design



Whitetail Institute
"RESEARCH = RESULTS"

Front Chest Design

Whitetail Institute Short Sleeve Tees

Available sizes:

S to XXXL

Available colors:

Black, Yellow



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239 Whitetail Trail, Pintlala, AL 36043
Fax Orders To: 334-286-9723



Whitetail Institute Official Logo Short Sleeve Tees

Available sizes:

S to XXXL

Available color:

White

Imperial Whitetail Clover FIRST in the FIELD SINCE 1988



When Imperial Whitetail Clover was introduced in 1988, it marked the first in the field of food plot management and deer nutrition. This new product gave hunters the ability to attract deer, hold them on their property and supply the herd with optimal nutrition throughout the year. In fact, deer hunters today are five times more likely to kill a buck that qualifies for the record books than before the introduction of Imperial Whitetail Clover.

The Whitetail Institute's research and development staff have continuously upgraded and improved the original blend. Proprietary clovers developed by Whitetail Institute agronomists have been incorporated resulting in even better attraction and extremely high protein levels, up to 35%. These clovers are available only in Whitetail Institute products. Imperial Whitetail Clover was the first in the field and has become the gold standard by which all other food plot products are judged.

Whitetail Institute

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BLINDS**

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- Heavy Duty Double-Stitched Cover
- Black Powder-Coated Steel Frame
- 6X6 Octagonal Floor Plan
- Double-Zipper Design Allows Windows To Open In Any Configuration
- See-Through Camo Mesh Adjustable Window Covers
- Vertical Windows: (4) 10" wide X 46" high
- Horizontal Windows: (3) 30" wide X 14" high (1 Door Window) 17" wide X 10" high
- Interior Size: 70" wide X 70" deep X 77" high



www.RedneckBlinds.com

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