

WHITETAIL News



Volume 29, No. 1
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IMPERIAL WHITETAIL CLOVER – The Next Generation

*Raising the bar again
as the number 1 food plot
product in the world!*

Story On Page 5

Become a MIX-MASTER

*Help for determining the correct
mix of annuals and perennials in
your food plot plan!*

Story On Page 50

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A Message from RAY SCOTT

Founder of the Whitetail Institute of North America

Planting success
can be right at
the end of your
nose — literally —
by reading and
following
the concise
instructions on
every Whitetail
Institute product.

Success at the Tip of Your Nose

Since deer hunting is really popular in my neck of the woods, at any given time I figure some of the folks around me are bound to be hunters. But I am still sometimes surprised where I run into them — especially in unusual places and under unusual circumstances.

That was the case recently when I visited a young oral surgeon for a minor procedure. In my usual nosey fashion it didn't take long to find out this was no ordinary surgeon. It turned out he was not only an outdoorsman but a Whitetail Institute fan of the first order and made no bones about it. He described the multiple types of soils on his 750 acres and quickly ticked off all the specific Whitetail Institute products he successfully used including almost 30 acres of Imperial Whitetail Clover thriving in its third year.

Ultimately, at the end of our conversation I expected to hear some profound strategy or philosophy for success. Instead he emphatically told me that he always followed the instructions on every product... to the "t." It was that simple.

And that got me thinking. It's true. Planting success can be right at the end of your nose — literally — by

reading and following the concise instructions on every Whitetail Institute product.

Now this might seem ridiculously obvious until you check with our consultants who confirm that most of the product problems they deal with directly relate to not following directions — or misinterpreting the directions.

From the very beginning we knew education was going to be critical to the success of the Whitetail Institute... and to the success of our customers. That's why one part of the "education" we provide takes the form of the instructions that have been continuously refined over the years and are printed on every single product. They're also available on our website whitetailinstitute.com or you can always call our consultants at 800-688-3030.

To put it in a nutshell: We can assure the quality of the products in the package are the best they can be but we can't assure their success unless directions are followed. Listen to the doctor!

Ray Scott

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Imperial Whitetail Clover: The Next Generation

RAISING THE BAR ON FOOD PLOT PERFORMANCE – AGAIN

By William Cousins

Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer

- *Revolutionary*
- *Genesis of the Food-Plot and Deer-nutrition Industries*
- *Quality and Performance Benchmark for All Food-Plot Products*
- *Gold Standard*
- *The Number One Food Plot Planting in The World*

Only one food plot product can claim all these titles: Imperial Whitetail Clover. Without question, Imperial Whitetail Clover is the single most important food plot breakthrough in the history of the industry, and it has remained the king of food plot products ever since. Now, the Whitetail Institute has raised the bar yet again by including its most recent proprietary clover, WT-177, in Imperial Whitetail Clover.

The Development of Imperial Whitetail Clover. The introduction of Imperial Whitetail Clover by the Whitetail Institute in 1988 marked the genesis of the entire food plot industry. The introduction in Quality Deer Management Association's book *Quality Food Plots*, Your Guide to Better Deer and Better Deer Hunting said it well: "The birth of the nationwide commercial food plot industry unquestionably began in 1988 with the launch of Imperial Whitetail Clover by the Whitetail Institute."

The idea behind the development of Imperial Whitetail Clover was that just as forages are developed for other specific purposes, such as grazing by cattle, new forages could also be scientifically developed specifically to meet the unique attraction, palatability and nutritional requirements of whitetail deer. Development of Imperial Whitetail Clover began with selection of more than 100 clover varieties worldwide to be used as breeding stock. These candidates were then cross-bred, and the resulting offspring analyzed for defined traits specifically important to use in food plots. Examples include exceptional attractiveness to deer, high nutritional content, quick stand establishment, early seedling vigor, rapid growth, resistance to disease, and tolerance of heat, cold and drought. Only the offspring best exhibiting these traits were retained for further crossbreeding, which continued over seven years until only one clover variety remained — a new clover variety specifically and scientifically developed for deer.

During initial and continuing development of Imperial Whitetail Clover, testing has been performed on wild, free-ranging deer from the Deep South to the far northern states and Canada to ensure that it is as attractive as the Whitetail Institute can make it, and that it will perform in a wide range of climates. The Whitetail Institute continues to follow a rigorous real-world testing process to this day when improving existing forage products and developing new ones.

For the industry, the standard is one of performance and Imperial Whitetail Clover continues to set the bar by which all other food plot plantings are measured. As stated by the NRA in an issue of *American Hunter* magazine, "The Whitetail Institute of North America is the preeminent supplier of wildlife seed products that help hunters attract and grow healthier deer" and "To meet the whitetail's need for protein, some seed companies have developed high-protein clovers and mixtures geared especially for wildlife. At the forefront of this research is the Whitetail Institute."

Making the Best Even Better. The Whitetail Institute has never been content to rest on its successes. Perhaps no better evidence of this fact exists than Imperial Whitetail Clover. Over the years since it originally developed Imperial Whitetail Clover, the Whitetail Institute has continued to improve Imperial Whitetail Clover whenever it found a way to do so. One way it has done so is by continuing to develop new clover varieties specifically for food plots for deer and adding them to Imperial Whitetail Clover.


Today, Imperial Whitetail Clover continues to serve as the standard for both the entire food plot industry and for the Whitetail Institute itself. The recent addition of the Whitetail Institute's newest proprietary clover, WT-177, raises the bar yet again. Here's how the Whitetail Institute's Director of Plant Breeding, Dr. Wayne Hanna, describes the process by which WT-177 was developed, and how it improves Imperial Whitetail Clover's performance even further:

"Over a decade ago I started collecting white clover samples from 16 states. Many were selected from old stands that had exhibited extraordinary longevity. We planted the test plants in 5 or 10-plant plots with 4 to 5 seeds in each area to allow the strongest plants to dominate. This left us with only the best 20 percent, which we then evaluated to determine which best exhibited numerous characteristics we consider crucial to the performance of a food plot planting for deer. These include plant "vigor" (height and width), leaf size, plant quality, pest resistance, cold heartiness and drought tolerance. This is the group that produced WT-177," Hanna said.

He continued, "WT177 grows more vigorously than any clover the Whitetail Institute has developed to date, and its development of WT-177 from clovers collected from such a broad range of states ensures that Imperial Whitetail Clover will continue to provide top performance in most any area of the country with good quality soils and proper seedbed preparation and normal maintenance."

In the future, you can be sure that Whitetail Institute forage research, development and testing is ongoing across the United States to ensure that Imperial Whitetail Clover and other Whitetail

Institute food plot products are the best the Whitetail Institute can make.

Imperial Whitetail Clover is designed for good soils that hold moisture, and it can last up to five years from a single planting. Planting and maintenance instructions for Imperial Whitetail Clover are on the product bags and also available at www.whitetailinstitute.com. You can also call the Whitetail Institute's in-house consultants at (800) 688-3030. 



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ARE HUNTERS ON THEIR WAY TO EXTINCTION?

Only if We Let it Happen

By **Craig Dougherty**

Photo by Tes Randle Jolly

We're losing hunters fast. At one time, about 17 million hunters purchased more than 28 million licenses. We now number just more than 10 million, and we purchased a lot fewer licenses.

The baby boomers are growing old, and old folks eventually hang up their guns and bows or pass them to the next generation. Trouble is, there is no next generation waiting for those guns and bows. The first of the baby boomers are statistically too old to hunt, and more boomers are on the way out.

A decrease of 17 million to 10 million is a heck of a decline, and many believe the snowball is rolling downhill and picking up steam, and there's nothing to stop it. You might say, "Good, fewer hunters to compete with." But it isn't good. In fact, we're facing an emergency. Declining hunter numbers have serious consequences, which none of us want.

As hunter numbers decrease, hunters cease to be important decision makers. American hunters currently comprise just 4 percent of the population nationwide. We were once a lot more important to the fine folks making the decisions. Consider public land use. Everyone — hikers, campers, anglers, boaters and others — shares public land. And don't forget oil drillers, miners and developers. When deciding how public land will be used, or even if public land will even remain public, who do you think the decision makers will listen to — an ever-declining handful of hunters or mega-powerful lobbying organizations? Hunters aren't good at lobbying. Our strength has always been our numbers. As our numbers dwindle, so does our ability to influence decision makers, and frankly, we hardly matter anymore.

And then there's the matter of wildlife and conservation. For more than 100 years, we have developed and followed policies intended to ensure that wildlife and wild places will be a part of North America forever. It's called The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and it's the gold standard for the rest of the world. But the various programs and agencies involved in the model require money —

big money. We operate in a user-pay, user-benefit system. In other words, the people who benefit from wildlife pay for it.

Hunters and anglers provide funding through the purchase of licenses, permits, stamps and many other privilege structures. Excise taxes are also paid on guns and gun accessories, as well as fishing tackle. Most of the funding for state wildlife agencies comes from hunters and anglers. The precipitous decline in hunter numbers has forced state agencies to cut wildlife programs.

Stemming the Tide

Let's start with children, our traditional recruitment audience. How will we start recruiting more children? They are much busier than we were at that age. The children of today have non-stop activity in their lives. They are on the hamster wheel of life, and their parents are there with them. No wonder no one has time to take a youngster hunting.

Maybe we should begin with their parents, as they're the ones signing children up for every activity and, when not running to this or that, shoving a video game in front of them. A good start would be to



*If we want to recruit more hunters,
we must stop limiting our efforts of
only focusing on people who look and
sound like us.*

help parents understand that hunting is good for their children — just as good as being on a championship soccer team or winning a karate tournament, or maybe even better.

Hunting teaches us about life and death. Youngsters who hunt learn how life is given and how it can be taken away. Children who hunt learn about life the natural way — the way youngsters brought up on a farm learned about life and death, and how to respect both. Can you really learn about life and death from a video game or 60-inch TV screen? Hunting teaches children valuable stuff, such as ethics and honesty, and doing right when there isn't anyone watching. It teaches the difference between fair chase and slaughter. It teaches participants to use everything you kill or to not kill. It teaches folks how to make good choices and the consequences of making bad ones. It's right there in the woods, in front of anyone who cares enough to look and learn. Best, it's free. As my grandfather used to say, "The woods is a good teacher".

Likewise, food plotting and habitat work is one of the greatest teachers in the outdoors. Food plotting requires you to understand where to grow your plots and why. Food plots require you to understand to-

pography concepts and how animals use them. It teaches basic horticulture and agricultural principles, such as planting windows, climate conditions and, of course, weather. You learn how to handle equipment safely and responsibly. Food plots require you to understand soil conditions and soil amendments and how to promote plants so they grow and prosper.

And there's always math — not complex college stuff, just simple measuring and metering, and maybe some addition and multiplication. Food plotters invariably learn about antlers, nutrition, deer biology and various wildlife forages. The learning starts early and continues through life. My son, Neil, and I have been planting wildlife food plots forever, and we are still learning. And if that's not enough, planting food plots teaches you to be a good steward of the land and that you reap what you sow. That's not a bad lesson.

And then there's the deer part. Nothing beats a food plot for getting up close and personal with deer. If you want to expose a newbie to using game cameras or wildlife photography, nothing beats a food plot. For teaching someone the difference between a yearling buck and a mature shooter, food plots are great classrooms. Does a new hunter have to learn which animal to shoot and which to pass? Food plots are the answer. If you want to index fawn recruitment, visit a few plots during August or September. For taking that momentous first deer? Need I say more?

Food plotters speak the universal language of doing good things for wildlife and wild places. Foodies into natural foods grown locally speak that language, as do preppers preparing for who knows what. So do naturalists and folks who seem to be against almost everything. Bottom line, just about everyone thinks planting food plots for wildlife is pretty cool. You can interest almost anyone in food plots, except people who hate getting dirty. Maybe the best part about food plotting is that it's best done with a partner. A mentor and new recruits make a good team. So do dads, moms and children, or husbands and wives. Food plots are good places to work, learn and build memories together. What better way than by doing something for which Aldo Leopold and the early giants of wildlife conservation would likely thank you.

And while we're on the topic of recruitment, we need to broaden our recruitment circle to include more of the non-traditional hunter population. Yes, children have traditionally been the demographic from which hunting recruits have come, but we have to start thinking outside of the traditional box. Race, gender, ethnicity and culture are also demographic issues we should consider. The hunters we are trying to replace are mostly Caucasian baby boomers who have grown too old to hunt. We have to stop limiting our recruiting efforts by focusing on people who look and sound the same way. Are you guilty of recruiting people who look and sound like you? I am.

How about the new guy at the office who struggles with English but sure knows computers? How about the organic gardener down the street or your daughter's roommate from Brooklyn? How about young college graduates who have time and, for the first time in their lives, have money? How about your children's soccer teammate, who was born in Brazil?

Conclusion

If we are to reverse this decline in hunter numbers, we must broaden the circle from which we recruit new hunters and the ways we use to recruit them. When it comes to recruiting new hunters, the same old is out, and food plotting is in. 🍷



Imperial Whitetail®

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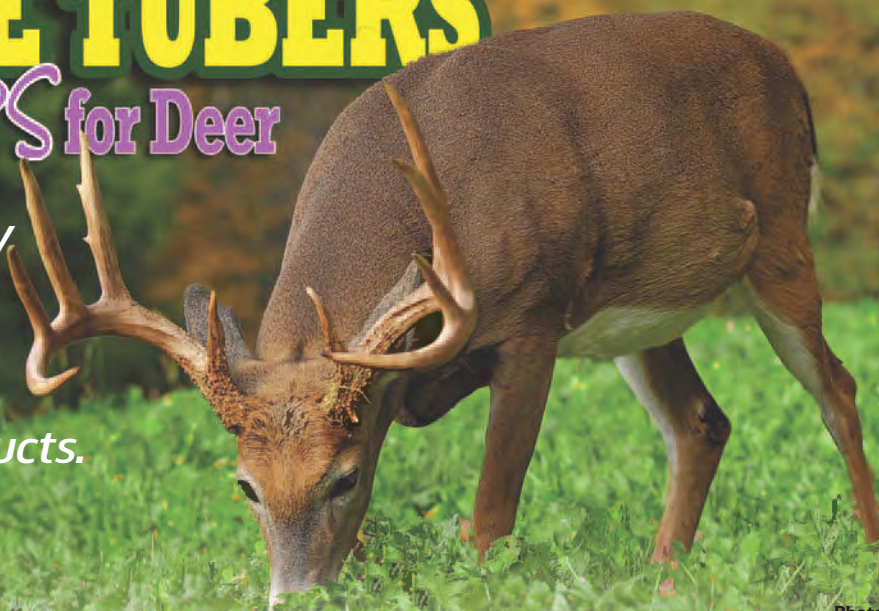


Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer

Tall Tine Tubers is different from any other turnip product on the market in one important way: its backbone turnip variety, Tall Tine Turnip, is the only turnip variety ever scientifically developed specifically for deer. Tall Tine Turnip is a proprietary turnip variety that you'll only find in Whitetail Institute products.

The research and development that ultimately led to Tall Tine Turnips began with the Whitetail Institute's agronomists, who painstakingly selected and tested numerous existing turnip varieties to determine the ones that best displayed specific characteristics the Whitetail Institute considered most important for any turnip product that would be planted in food plots for deer. Examples include attractiveness to deer, rapid establishment and growth, high tonnage, tuber size, and sustained availability.

The No. 1 Selection Criteria: Preference by Deer

It took the Whitetail Institute six years to develop Tall Tine Tubers — six years of constantly evaluating candidate components, alone and in different ratios, in a truly reliable way: by planting according to directions, observing the stand for establishment, growth and production under actual climactic conditions, and letting wild, free-ranging

deer show which they preferred the most.

Different formulations were initially tested by the Whitetail Institute until the list of candidate blends was narrowed to only the very best. The best candidates then went on for real-world testing on wild, free-ranging deer at the Whitetail Institute and at its Certified Research Centers across North America. Whenever Whitetail Institute was satisfied during a phase of development that its testing had proven deer preference for a particular plant, that plant was isolated and protected from further browsing in order to allow it to produce seed. That seed was then put back into testing the following year, and the process of developing the most attractive turnip variety continued. Think about it — if you're developing products intended to establish quickly, grow well, attract and hold deer, and last in a wide variety of climates, what could be a more reliable test than actually planting them and observing what happens under real-world conditions?

It's expensive and time consuming to do it that way, but that's how the Whitetail Institute does it, and for one simple reason: It provides as reliable proof as you can get. And that's the real beauty of Tall Tine Tubers. As is the case with all Whitetail Institute products, the guesswork has been taken out. You have the luxury of relying on the Whitetail Institute name and what wild deer have shown under real-world conditions.

Designed for planting in the late summer/early fall, Tall Tine Tubers provides two food sources for deer during the fall and winter. The first is its foliage, which grows very quickly, produces abundant tonnage, and becomes even sweeter with the frosts of fall. The second is the sweet tubers it produces, which can grow large underground and are attacked as deer dig them up when the cold weather sets in.

Tall Tine Tubers is available in 1/2-acre and 2-acre bags. For more information, visit whitetailinstitute.com, or call the Whitetail Institute's in-house consultants at (800) 688-3030. The call and the service are free. 🦌

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Subdivide Your Large Fields

Breaking plots into smaller sections with various forages adds variety and can make mature deer feel more secure.

By **Gerald Almy**

The scene was surreal — so stunning it seemed too good to be true. But I knew I had worked hard for this. It was payback time.

The projects I had invested so much time and hard work in were rewarding me — improving cover, thinning timber, hinge-cutting, planting shrubs, providing water sources, enhancing and expanding native browse, building thermal cover for winter protection from snow and wind, and, high on the list, offering a variety of plants in as many food plots as possible throughout my 117-acre property. It was time to enjoy the results as I watched three mature bucks in easy rifle range of my .30-06.

Early in my hunting career, I would have been thrilled to see one such buck in northwestern Virginia. Yet I was looking at a trio of magnificent whitetails during a frosty November morning. The farthest was maybe 200 yards — easy range for the 165-grain boat-tail bullet in the ultra-light rifle I clutched. The closest was perhaps 60 yards. The third was about 100 yards away on the western side of the field.

I was amazed at the sight of the mature bucks but also deeply gratified to see how well planting multiple forages in a field had worked.

It's the largest field I have; about seven acres. But instead of planting it in one type of forage, I had broken it into three sections. One corner arm was planted with Winter-Greens. Another was in Whitetail Oats Plus, and just more than a third of the field was devoted to



Photo by Dustin Reid



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my favorite food plot forage, Imperial Whitetail Clover.

Two of the three sections had a trophy-sized buck in them that day and also several does. That was part of what attracted the bucks. But each buck also nibbled on the forage besides keeping an eye on the ladies and occasionally lunging aggressively toward them. My strategy of breaking a large field into smaller sections with different plantings had paid off.

There are many reasons why you should consider this approach. We'll go through some and then detail some strategic steps to consider if you decide to institute this system.

Benefits of Subdividing

For starters, there's the obvious benefit of providing a variety of fare for deer living on your property or that you hope to pull onto your land. Any whitetail manager with a bit of dirt under their fingernails will tell you that various deer sometimes prefer different foods, just like one of us might prefer chicken while another likes steak. Providing maximum variety in a small space concentrates deer, keeps them content and helps attract them to your land.

Those benefits are extremely important for those of us who live in areas where not everyone practices quality deer management and young bucks often get shot. It's even more important to offer this variety of fare if you only have a small acreage, like me. By attracting bucks onto your property, you can, to an extent, protect those deer until they reach more of their potential. That might not mean protecting them until they are 5 or 6 years old, but at least until they reach 3 to 4 and have grown 75 to 90 percent of their potential antlers.

By offering various forages, you can also cater to the differing nutritional needs of bucks as the season progresses. In spring and summer, protein is most important. As fall and winter arrive, deer thrive with carbohydrate-rich, energy-producing forage in their diet.

The taste appeal and volume of food the plants produce will also peak at varying times. For example, Imperial Whitetail Clover, PowerPlant and Fusion are favorites in spring and summer, but as bow seasons open, some deer will shift toward young stands of Whitetail Oats Plus as it emerges in its early tender stage at 3 to 5 inches.

When frosts set in, deer might switch to the Tall Tine Tubers plot you planted in part of the field or Winter-Greens, as the cold weather converts starches in those plants into sugars and makes the brassica offerings especially appealing.

Through trail cameras and scouting, you can monitor their changing feeding patterns and focus your bowhunting efforts on the section of the plot where the food of choice for the time and day you plan to hunt is growing. Then, when their feeding preference switches to another forage, move to a stand you've already hung near that section of the field or along a route they use from bedding cover to reach it. During rifle season, you might be able to cover several of the field sections from one stand, like during the hunt described earlier.

Another reason for not planting a field in one product is you might not need that much of it. For example, if the deer herd isn't overpopulated, you might not require an entire 8 or 10-acre field of Imperial Whitetail Clover. This perennial produces so much forage and so many plants that deer usually can never eat it to the ground. Why not give them the amount of clover the local herd dynamics demand and then devote other parts of the field to other forage varieties?

Of course, there are exceptions to how small you want to divide the portions of a field. PowerPlant or pure stands of soybeans, for example, work best in larger parcels of several acres. If you plant these forages, put several acres in the ground — the entire field, if that's how large it is. If it's bigger than that, you could plant PowerPlant in 2 or 3 acres and then put Imperial Whitetail Clover or Fusion in a smaller section or in narrow rows along the borders of the warm-season annual crop. Deer will feed on those as they enter and depart the thick PowerPlant blend in the middle.

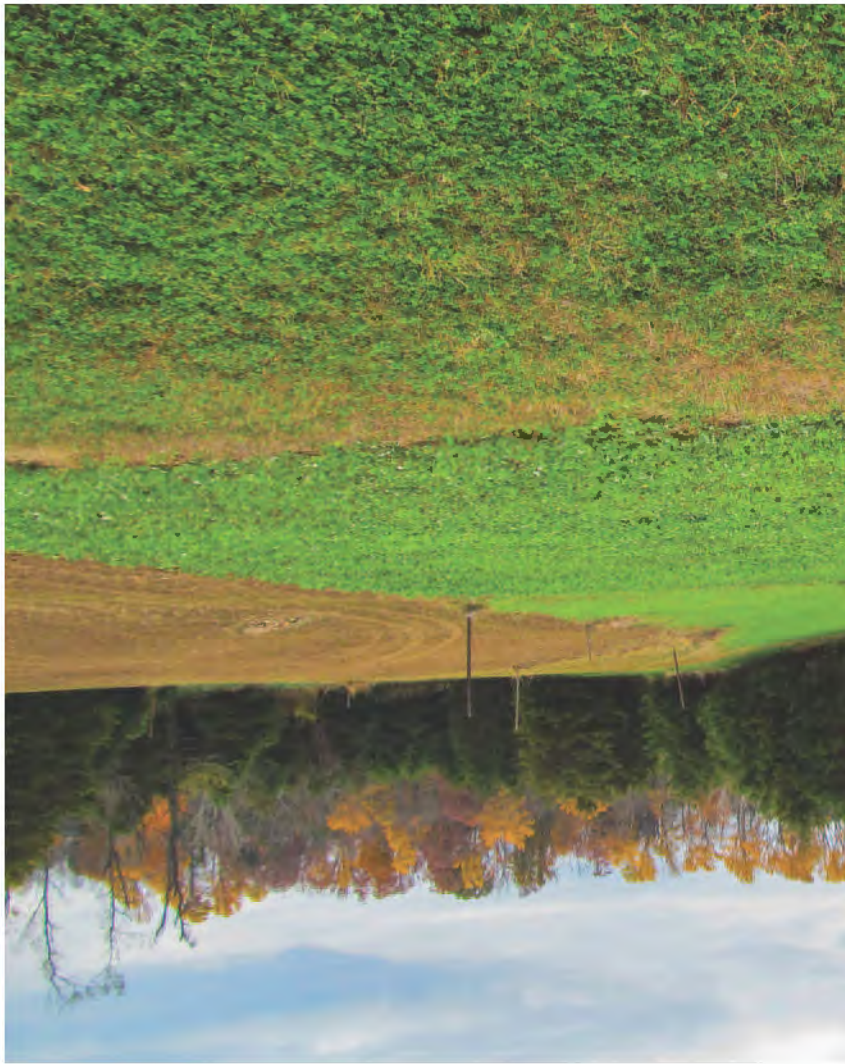
There's no requirement that broken up, subdivided fields must be laid out in simple block sections. Narrow strips can break up larger block sections to provide additional attraction and more linear edges, which attracts and calms older bucks.

You'll find planting fields in subdivided sections offers other practical benefits, such as time management. For those who must schedule their field and plot work between heavy job demands and family obligations, this approach lets you break up the field prep, planting and maintenance duties in small parcels.

If you only have a few hours free one weekend, that might be just enough to plant one acre in Winter-Greens or Fusion, and mow another section of the field already growing in clover. The time periods when the various sections of plantings need attention assure you'll always have some chores during a free half-day or day, but never too many.

Three sections — Imperial Whitetail Clover, Winter-Greens, and a plowed area ready for Whitetail Oats Plus. This combination attracted the three mature bucks in the lead to the article. Photo by Gerald Almy





Let's answer one question up front: No, these subsections don't have to be neatly measured out with clean crisp corners, straight edges and exact angular shapes. You need to know roughly the square footage for planting purposes. But shape and where to divide the plantings is not critical. I often use curving lines that follow woods edges and native vegetation borders or that parallel slopes to curtail erosion. This uses every available foot of food plot space and provides a natural, flowing aesthetic to the plot. And as mentioned, strips can be used instead of all blocks to give the field a more natural appeal and provide additional edge between the forage types.

Another thing to consider when contemplating subdividing fields is soil type. Every food plotter knows soil quality and variety can vary widely on a property. I've sometimes found that even a large field has different types from acre to acre. This is particularly true if the plot is on a sloped area. The soil on a higher part of the plot will likely be different from that in the lower areas where the slope flattens out.

Planting the field in various forages allows you to match the plant you put in to the soil type. For example, one of my fields in its lower section is rich bottomland and is ideal for Imperial Whitetail Clover or a warm-season annual mix such as PowerPlant. The other portion tapers up to higher, drier ground, where I plant Alfa-Rack Plus.

Practical Tips and Advice for Breaking Up Fields

To take full advantage of this strategy, do several soil tests on various sections of your large fields, and label them clearly. You might find they vary quite a bit. With the individual soil tests, you can fertilize and lime each section exactly as the test recommends. And you can further focus the soil amendment recommendations you receive from the test by specifying what crop you plan to grow in that section of the field. You can have the Whitetail Institute or a farm co-op do your testing.

I've had fertilizer and pH recommendations come back significantly different for various parts of a field. Applying the specific amounts of lime and nutrients recommended gets the most out of each section. Another important step if you decide to break up larger fields is to keep good records of what was planted in each spot, code them on a map and then rotate to other crops periodically. This prevents diseases and pest problems that can come with planting the same forage year after year in the same spot. It also lets you rejuvenate the soil, which might be depleted of nutrients such as nitrogen — by brassicas or corn, for example — and need to be replenished by another plant, such as clover or alfalfa.

Security for Mature Bucks

Planting different crops in various sections of a large field has another advantage: It seems, in my experience, to give mature bucks a greater sense of security and tends to attract them out earlier in the evening, during good shooting light. The variety of plants growing in different sections at various heights looks more natural and appears to put older bucks more at ease.

You can enhance this feeling of security by adding cover, between or around the perimeter of the sections with Whitetail Institute's New Conceal. I've even planted rows of fruit trees to break up a field into sections. The trees add a linear edge and a feeling of security to bucks, as well as a food source in addition to the food plot forage.

Of course, breaking up fields into various forages isn't always appropriate. It's best reserved for larger fields. It makes no sense to break up a quarter-acre plot into different forages. And as mentioned, some offerings, such as PowerPlant, thrive best when they are grown across several acres as one offering.

Yes, I'm the first to admit that a broken-up field with various crops might not look quite as aesthetically appealing as one beautiful spread of Imperial Whitetail Clover. But hey, if it keeps the deer satisfied, improves their health, attracts mature bucks earlier in the day and improves your hunting, who cares about looks?

Oh, and those three bucks? Indecision, panic, freeze-up, missed opportunity — call it what you will. I didn't pull the trigger on any of them. The show was so awesome, and I didn't want to spook the other bucks and does does by taking one of them with a rifle in front of the others.

Plus, I had a hunch the subdivided field would attract them again. And I was right. The next evening, when a heavy, tall-tined 9-pointer, emerged from cover with a doe, I dropped the hammer, claiming him an hour before dark and before the other bucks appeared.

No, he didn't match some of those Midwestern bucks we see on TV shows, but at 134 inches and with bases of nearly 5 inches, he was a deer I was proud to put my tag on in my home state of Virginia. And I believe a large part of what kept him there and kept attracting him and his buddies was the technique of providing maximum variety and nutrition all year through subdividing my larger fields.

Give this strategy a try. I think you'll be pleased with the results.





Why Cattle and Deer Dine Differently: **The Difference Between Large and Small Ruminants**

By Matt Harper

Photo by Matt Harper



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I'm not sure if nostalgia is a symptom of aging or merely the desire to recapture our youth. Undoubtedly, many folks seem to gravitate back toward elements from their youth as they age.

I have always felt a strong pull to the rural lifestyle where I was raised. Even as a young adult, I was drawn back to the farm and the wonderful nuances it provided. Case in point: My wife and I moved back to my grandparents' small farm house after only four years of town living. Soon, I had the grand idea that we should raise chickens, just like Grandma and Grandpa had done.

So, I fixed up the old chicken house and bought 50 laying hens and 100 broilers. Why would a young couple with no children have 50 laying hens and 100 broilers? Well, because that's what Grandma did. Suffice to say, I might have overdone it a bit, which was obvious when it came time to dress 100 broilers. Amazingly, my wife didn't leave me.

Poultry has not been my only venture into the family tradition of farming. Some have been — and continue to be — successful, but others have gone the way of the chicken. My latest endeavor is to become a cattleman, or cattle baron, if you will. Baron might be a bit of an exaggeration, as I don't think my herd of 30 head qualifies me for the title. Nonetheless, with the average cattle herd size in the United States being plus or minus 40, I'm on my way to becoming an official cattle farmer.

Several years ago, when I first acquired land, my sole intention was managing the property for deer hunting. I bought some beat-up equipment and began planting food plots about everywhere I could put one. I learned later my placement needed to be a bit more strategic, but I was a new landowner and excited to grow big deer. One of the first plots I planted was a one-acre Imperial Whitetail Clover field that adjoined a hayfield planted with hay-variety clover. Come hunting season, I watched deer walk through the clover hayfield to get to my Imperial Whitetail Clover plot, where they chowed down.

I had read that Imperial Whitetail Clover was designed for deer, but to be honest, I thought it was probably marketing hype. But there wasn't any denying that deer liked my plot better than the hayfield. When I dug into why and how Imperial Whitetail Clover was more attractive to deer than hay-variety clover, the findings made sense. The nutritional and physical characteristics bred into Imperial Whitetail Clover matched the nutritional needs of deer and the physiological makeup of a deer's digestive system.

You might say cattle and deer are ruminants and question why each needs different forages. True, cattle and deer are ruminants, but cattle are large ruminants, and deer are small ruminants. That means each have physical characteristics that are most efficient when digesting forages with specific traits.

The Ruminant Digestive System

Before we delve into the differences between large and small ruminants, it's important to understand how a ruminant's system functions. Be patient with me as I briefly go deeper into this. You might

have learned that a cow or deer has four stomachs. Actually, a ruminant doesn't have four separate stomachs but rather a stomach that is comprised of multi-chambered compartments that each perform specific functions. The sections include the reticulum, omasum, rumen and abomasum.

The reticulum, also called the honey comb, traps larger particles to be further digested in the rumen and lets smaller particles move to the omasum. The omasum contains many folds, resembling pages in a book, and functions to absorb water and some nutrients, and to move digesta into the abomasum. The abomasum, or the true stomach, functions much like the stomach of a non-ruminant and uses hydrochloric acid and enzymes to further break down food, which flows into the small intestine, where much of the nutrient absorption takes place.

The rumen is the largest portion and the core of a ruminant's digestive system. It's not hard to identify. It's the grayish balloon-looking paunch that, if accidentally cut into, expels typically green-colored material with an unmistakable aroma. The rumen is basically a large fermentation sack home to millions of microbes. Those microorganisms live in a symbiotic relationship with the animal, meaning each depends on the other to survive. The animal supplies the microbes with nutrients by consuming food, and the microbes break that food down to nutrients the animal can use.

The two largest groups of microbes are bacteria and protozoa. Bacteria can be broken down into cellulolytic bacteria, which degrade cellulose; hemicellulolytic bacteria, which degrade hemicellulose; amylolytic bacteria, which degrade starches; proteolytic bacteria, which degrade proteins; and lipolytic bacteria, which degrade lipids or fat. Protozoa can be grouped into two categories: ciliate and flagellate protozoa, with most rumen protozoa falling into the ciliate group. Protozoa species specialize in the type of nutrient they degrade and use, much like bacteria. For a ruminant to be healthy, it must have a healthy rumen microbial population that can break down the food a deer consumes. In fact, you might hear the statement, "Focus on feeding the bugs," which simply means that if you feed microbes correctly, the ruminant animal will be healthy.

Differences in Large Ruminants and Small Ruminants

Some aspects of physiology and biology are complicated, but when defining large ruminants versus small ruminants, it's simply the size of the rumen. Cattle are large ruminants, with a mature cow having a rumen roughly the size of a beach ball. Deer, conversely, are small ruminants, with a rumen about the size of a basketball. This difference in rumen size is one of the main reasons for the different forage preferences and eating habits of cattle and deer.

That preference is driven by the difference in digestion capacity. The larger the rumen, the greater the ability to digest a wide range of forage types. The rumen surface is covered with finger-like projections called papillae. The more papillae, the larger the surface area of the rumen, which also means the higher microbial populations. A large rumen will have more papillae, a greater surface area and larger microbial populations, and will typically have a slower rate of digesta passage, all of which result in a greater capacity to digest fibrous material even of poorer quality. Small ruminants have fewer papillae and a smaller rumen surface area, so they have a smaller overall microbial population. Therefore, small ruminants have significantly less ability to digest poorer-quality fibrous material as compared to large rumi-

nants. Small ruminants must consume more highly digestible forages or the more digestible parts of a plant. For example, cattle can digest anything from thick-stemmed grasses to corn stover (stalks), but deer would starve if only given those food sources.

As a plant matures, the stem produces dense fibrous compounds to give the stem the structure it needs to grow taller. A cow, with its large rumen and greater microbial population, can digest much of that fibrous material. Deer, however, being a small ruminant, do not have the ability to digest that fibrous material to the same degree. You've probably heard deer referred to as browsers and cattle called grazers. The eating habit of browsing means deer pick and choose the more highly digestible forage type and the more digestible part of the plant, such as a leaf. Conversely, cattle graze somewhat non-selectively because of their ability to digest a wide range of forage types and quality. For example, if you feed alfalfa bales to deer, they will eat the leaves but most often ignore the stems because they can digest the leaves but not the stems. If you feed that hay to cattle, they will eat it all, because they can effectively digest all of it.

Differences in Nutritional Needs

Deer and cattle require energy (carbohydrates, fat and other nutrients), protein, minerals and vitamins. The specific needs for those nutrients are defined as the proportion of the overall diet. Units are typically in the form of a percentage of the diet, or in the case of smaller units, mgs/lb. or mg/kg. Although cattle and deer require the same nutrients in their diets, the percentage of each in relationship to the overall diet varies significantly between the species. Consider

the difference in protein requirements. The protein requirements for growing cattle vary from 10 to 14 percent, plus or minus, depending on the stage of growth. Growing deer have a protein requirement of 18 to 26 percent. The protein requirement for bulls range from 8 to 14 percent, but a buck's protein requirement during antler growth is 16 to 18 percent. Protein requirements for young calves are about 20 to 22 percent, but a young fawn needs as much as 35 percent protein for optimal growth.

Mineral requirements for deer are likewise greater compared to those of cattle. Calcium requirements for growing cattle rarely exceed .44 percent. Even a lactating dairy cow will typically not have more than .60 to .75 percent calcium in their diet. Lactating does, bucks growing antlers and young growing deer are estimated to require 1 to 1.5 percent or more calcium in their diet.

Phosphorus requirement variances follow the same pattern when comparing cattle and deer. A typical phosphorus level in a cattle diet ranges from .22 percent on the low side to up to .4 percent or higher for peak lactating dairy cattle. Deer phosphorus requirements are typically .6 percent to almost 1 percent. Trace mineral requirements also differ. For example, most cattle rations contain 10 ppm or less of copper, but many deer diets range from 15 to 20 ppm or more. In general, a small ruminant's nutritional requirements are higher than those of a large ruminant. Deer require a diet that's more nutrient dense.

Feeding Deer not Cattle

As mentioned, I've become a cattle farmer. Because we have several months of winter where I live, I grow several acres of hay. When I

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was choosing the varieties of clover and alfalfa to plant for my hayfields, I picked those with traits best suited for hay production for cattle, including fast growth and high tonnage production. The faster the hay grows and matures, the more cuttings I can get during a growing season, which means more tonnage. To accomplish that, those varieties develop a stem to support the growth and grow quickly out of the vegetative stage.

That's not what I want for my deer plots. Because deer require forages that are heavy-leaved and highly digestible, I need clover with big leaves and that stays in the vegetative stage longer. The longer it's in the vegetative stage, the more digestible and more attractive it is. Further, I need the clover to be extremely high in protein. Those are the characteristics you will find with Imperial Whitetail Clover. If I used my hay-variety clover for deer, they would eat it for a brief period but then progressively less as it matures.

When I mowed it, deer would return to the hay, but I would only be providing a decent food source periodically and at a lower protein level than what I need for deer. Simply, one clover is designed for cattle, the other for deer, so I choose distinct varieties for my hayfields and Imperial Whitetail Clover for my deer food plots.

The same is true with mineral supplementation. Mineral supplements work well for cattle and deer, but as discussed, the concentrations of certain minerals need to be specific to the species. 30-06 Mineral/Vitamin Supplements are designed to meet the specific supplemental mineral requirements of deer. I use cattle mineral for cattle and deer mineral for deer.

Conclusion

I'm not sure how the cattle thing will work out. I would guess I will continue until I can't do it anymore, regardless of my financial success. My lineage comes with determination and stubbornness, regardless of whether it always makes for a pot of money at the year's end. But I know I will also continue to plant food plots and manage my property for big whitetails. You can do both, and my farm is proof. You simply have to use the right products for the animal. One final time: Use products designed for cattle for cattle, and use products designed for deer to grow bigger bucks and healthier deer. 🦌



The author stresses using products designed for cattle for cattle and use products designed for deer to grow bigger bucks and healthier deer. Photo by Dustin Reid

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Like all Whitetail Institute annual food plot products, Imperial Whitetail Ambush establishes and grows very quickly. It is also high in energy and protein, tolerant of heat, cold and drought, and it can even tolerate poorer soils better than some other forages. It's most impressive characteristic, though, is its extraordinary attractiveness to deer.

Ambush owes its outstanding attractiveness to two things: The first is the nature of its complementary forage components: sweet lupines, Whitetail Oats, winter peas and sugar beets. The second is the great care Whitetail Institute takes to ensure that the forage components selected for each of its products are included in ratios White-tail Institute testing has shown will provide top performance from the stand.

Sweet Lupine Component. "Sweet Lupines" are low-alkaloid varieties of lupines that are appropriate for use as food plot plantings for deer. The Whitetail Institute has been experimenting with sweet lupines for more than a decade. Early in that process, it became apparent that there were big differences in how attractive different sweet lupine varieties are to deer; while deer would lightly browse most sweet lupine plants, a very few varieties consistently proved so

attractive that deer absolutely devour the plants like a favorite candy. Ambush contains two of these exceptionally attractive sweet lupine varieties that are ideal for food plot plantings for deer.

Whitetail Oats. These are the same oats that serve as the primary forage component in two other outstanding Whitetail Institute food plot products: Whitetail Oats Plus and Pure Attraction. Whitetail Oats are so attractive to deer that independent university researchers had to remove them from grain-production studies because deer browsed them so heavily. They're also high in sugar and extremely cold tolerant.

Winter Peas. As is the case with Whitetail Oats, the winter pea varieties in Ambush are also serving as a major forage component in another hugely successful Whitetail Institute annual: Winter-Peas Plus. These winter pea varieties have proven to be the most attractive varieties the Whitetail Institute has ever tested.

Sugar Beets. Sugar beets are an excellent attractant and food source for deer, which heavily use both the foliage and roots of the plants. Like the other forage components in Ambush, the sugar beets in the blend are also very sweet. In fact, sugar beet roots are often commercially processed for sugar. And like the other forage components in Ambush, sugar beets can also tolerate a fairly wide variety of soil types as long as the site drains well.

Proprietary Annual Clover. The final forage component in Ambush is a proprietary Whitetail Institute annual clover. Like other forage varieties in Ambush, the clover component is nutrient-rich and highly palatable to deer, and it remains so even as it matures.

Performance from Fall Through Winter

Like other Whitetail Institute food plot products, Ambush contains forage components that are only available in Whitetail Institute products, and the forage components in Ambush have been painstakingly chosen and tested in different ratios to ensure that Ambush can deliver top overall stand performance.

The forage components in Ambush establish quickly in the early season and immediately begin attracting deer as they search for food sources that will help them pack on energy reserves for the coming cold weather. As the weather turns cooler, the sweet lupines and Whitetail Oats in Ambush continue to draw and hold deer. The sugar beets also continue to serve as a major attractant and food source, first as deer are drawn to the foliage and, later, as they dig the sweet roots up out of the ground.

The bottom line? Do yourself (and your deer) a favor and include Ambush in your food plot plantings this coming fall. Based on what I've seen myself, I bet you'll be blown away by how hard your deer hit it. Ambush is easy to plant, establishes quickly and is exceptionally attractive to deer from the moment it appears above ground, and it provides deer with lots of energy for fall and winter.

For more information about Ambush or to order, go to whitetailinstitute.com, or call the Whitetail Institute's in-house consultants at (800) 688-3030. The consultants are available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Central Time, Monday through Friday. The call and the service are free. 🔥

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A photograph of two deer with large antlers grazing in a green field. The deer in the foreground is on the left, and the one in the background is on the right. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

ABOVE THE CROWD:

FOUR WAYS to Ensure a Standout Food Plot

Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer

For maximum results, your food plots must rise above the crowd. Here are some suggestions to do just that on your property.

By Scott Bestul

My neighbor and hunting buddy Alan just keeps climbing the ladder. In each of the past three seasons, Alan, a farmer who spends most of fall in a combine and not much time in a tree stand, has tagged the biggest buck of his life. This past fall's buck, a gorgeous, mature 10-pointer appeared on a food plot an hour before dark and gave Alan a perfect shot.

Getting a mature buck to step into a food plot during legal shooting hours is always a challenge, but if you consider that each of Alan's bucks not only did that but walked out in December — after 10 weeks of bowhunting pressure and two weeks of firearms hunting — I'd say my friend accomplished something pretty amazing.

If you want to achieve similar results consistently, your plots must stand out from the crowd, offering whitetails something good to eat and other benefits. What follows are suggestions for creating that situation on your hunting property.

Plant the Right Seed

I'm fortunate to chat with a bunch of deer hunters every year — neighbors, buddies, readers and folks who sit in on my seminars — and the most common questions I hear revolve around food plots. What seeds should I plant? What works best in my area? What company(s) is the best?

Obviously, answering even one of these questions could take a fair chunk of time and would often require more expertise than is in my playbook. So, I rely on the simplest and most honest answer. I just tell them to go with the first seed company that made products specifically designed for whitetail deer and still leads the way.

The Whitetail Institute has been around since 1988 and was established with the mission of creating food plot seeds that are the most nutritious and attractive to deer. That's a task that's guided the company from the start and one from which they've never wavered. I've been around the whitetail hunting/management world long enough to have seen just about every whiz-bang product and gew-gaw created

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to entice deer (or the hunters that pursue them). I've also been around long enough to see most of those products disappear, by dying a slow death or simply going up in smoke.

All I know is the Whitetail Institute doesn't introduce a seed or product without extensive testing. It does everything in its power to educate customers about the best practices for using those products. And it offers free hotline assistance to anyone humble enough to say, "I need help." Those traits, married to the fact that I've used almost all of those products and never been disappointed, typically lead me to tell folks, "Just go with Whitetail Institute. You won't be sorry."

Brush it In

One of the best things you can do to make a food plot attractive to deer — at least deer wanting to eat during daylight — is to make them feel safe there. Whitetails are a prey species, chased by two and four-legged predators from the time they wore spots. Many hunters make the huge mistake of likening a mature whitetail buck to a bull elk; proud, majestic and fearless. In fact, that buck is a lot more like a cottontail rabbit. Unless a testosterone dump has a buck feeling grand and cocky (about six days of the year), the only way he feels truly safe eating is when he has escape cover handy. Like that cottontail, a mature buck wants thick stuff he can wriggle into, and the closer it is, the better he feels.

Obviously, it's fantastic if that cover already grows close to your food plot, and in fact, many managers plan plots that about a tangle of bedding or security cover. But if you don't have that luxury, you need to create the cover around the plot. Some of the best plots we have are ones where we've subsequently created screening cover that makes deer feel safe.

Perhaps the easiest place to establish this type of cover is around a food plot in the timber. We have several plots we've situated on log landings (cleared areas where loggers drag logs after harvest), and these plots are typically surrounded by wooded cover. If that cover is already dense, we leave it alone. If not, we come in with chainsaws and hinge-cut trees surrounding the plot to create a wall of cover. In a few hours with a saw, we can tip over enough trees that whitetails know safety is just a jump away.

In more open areas, such as plots at the edge of timber, you can create the same effect by planting Whitetail Institute's new Conceal product or fast-growing trees. One of my favorite creations is a plot we installed at the inside corner of a woodlot. Although feeding whitetails can easily escape into the timber, they were hesitant to feed in daylight because the plot was in sight of a road. But after we established a screen, which grows to heights of 6 to 8 feet, even mature bucks feel comfy poking their nose into the once-scary spot.

Spice it Up

One of the most sure-fire methods for jacking up a food plot is to make it more than just a food plot. Although the primary purpose of any food plot is, of course, to simply attract and feed deer, I like to make the spot one that whitetails use for other forms of social interaction.

The easiest way to do this is to place a mineral lick (where legal) adjacent to the plot. As most managers know, almost every deer in the herd — from lactating does to bucks growing antlers — are attracted to and need mineral. Although this period of attraction starts

and ends fairly early (late March to early September in my area), high quality mineral products have the ability to attract deer consistently, and any deer that find the mineral will also obviously find the food plot. To me, the mineral/plot combination works in tandem to imprint the area in a deer's brain. Not only does a buck know that he can get a shot of mineral and a bite to eat, but he's likely to find other deer when he visits the area.

Before the mineral window closes, I'm working on another food plot spice-up: mock scrapes. I'm not smart enough to know all the things deer "say" to each other at a scrape, but I know that whatever communication happens there is important, because deer of all ages and sexes visit scrapes. So, before summer starts to fade, I use any overhanging branches that hover over a food plot and start a mock under every one. And if there are no overhanging branches, I create a mock by cutting down a scraping tree (red cedar is a favorite in my area) and planting it in the plot. Using a post-hole digger, I create a 3- to 4-foot-deep hole, stick the tree trunk in it and create a scraping tree where once there was none. Conveniently, I place these scraping trees within easy shooting range of a stand or blind, and I've watched bucks walk into the plot and trot right to my fake tree.

Hunt it Right

I'll tell anyone that I have a love/hate relationship with food plots. That's kind of a strange attitude for a guy who spends much of the off-season planning, designing and thinking about food plots, and then an embarrassing amount of spring and summer prepping, planting and maintaining those areas. But hear me out.

There's no question that food plots play one of the most critical roles in attracting and holding deer on a property. Feed deer right, and they will be there. The problem I have with food plots is they can make hunters stupid. I've watched guys who used to be uber-savvy about hunting deer turn into complete morons when they get food plots established. Instead of paying attention to the wind, being mindful of the proper approach/exit to stands and blinds, and not overhunting excellent spots, these hunters throw those basics out the window as they hunt their favorite plots again and again. In doing so, they turn what could be one of the best deer-killing spots on a farm into a ghost town, at least during daylight.

I understand where the mindset comes from, of course. Plant a killer food plot, and deer are going to hit it — and hard. Our cameras prove it. The feeding sign is further evidence. And, of course, we sit the plot and see whitetails. But instead of treating that area like we would any killer stand or blind, we get as addicted to that lush green plot as the deer. Suddenly, instead of paying attention to fundamental deer hunting, we return, and return.

The remedy is simple on principle but difficult in execution. Figure out the best conditions for hunting a plot — wind direction, proper approach/exit and the phase of season that plot is most attractive — and resolve to only hunt during those conditions. On some plots, that might mean only a handful of hunts each fall, and I'm the first to admit that can be tough to do. But what would you rather do: Hunt a plot a dozen times and maybe see a mature buck? Or sit it three times and have a near slam-dunk opportunity at a target animal? When my neighbor Alan arrowed his gorgeous buck this past December, it was only the second time anyone had hunted that plot during a 100-day bow season. Instead of seeing a handful of deer tip-toeing into the plot at last light, Alan watched a 4-year-old buck stride confidently in (be-

hind 11 does and two smaller bucks) to a plot where he felt completely safe. I'm convinced that hunt played out because we'd limited our hunting pressure on that plot during the season, and Alan waited for a perfect wind before slipping into the stand.

Conclusion

It's no secret among hunters and managers that food plots are the cornerstone of any solid hunting plan. Not only do they attract and hold more deer to any property, plots can result in bigger and healthier whitetails. In short, if you're not planting food plots, you're missing the boat.

But as food plots become more prevalent, finding hunting success on them becomes increasingly elusive.

To make your plots stand out among the many feeding choices available to deer, you must find ways to differentiate; to make your plot shine in ways that others might not.

The suggestions above have helped my plots continue to be successful many years after they've been established, and I hope they'll be equally effective for you. 🦌



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REAL HUNTERS DO THE TALKING

about Whitetail Institute products...



My wife and I hunt together on my family's old farm property in the South Carolina upstate. Its only about 60 acres but has abundant cover and good water sources, which make it an ideal place to hunt deer and turkey. I started getting serious about food plots and trying to grow big deer about seven years ago. And, when I got serious, I knew I wanted to start using Whitetail Institute products. We've planted Imperial Whitetail Clover, Fusion, Extreme, Chic Magnet and Whitetail Oats Plus. Since I started using these products, the number and size of the deer on the property has improved dramatically. I have been amazed at not only how much the deer use the plots in fall and winter but also how they use them in summer. They want the good stuff. And the turkeys love the Imperial Whitetail Clover and Fusion. I routinely use 30-06 Mineral supplements as well. Especially in the spring and summer months. My wife also enjoys getting out there with me when I plant in fall.

Last season on Oct. 25 my wife was sitting in a tower blind on an old powerline right of way we had converted to a long food plot with Whitetail Oats Plus, Extreme and Fusion and all the hard work and effort paid off when my wife was able to shoot the biggest deer taken off the property to date: a 205-pound 9-pointer which green scored 142 inches. For a South Carolina deer, anyone will agree that that is a giant! For my wife, who only started hunting a few years ago, it is the buck of a lifetime. I named this deer Pit Bull two years ago when I started seeing him on my trail cams.

Eric Stephens, Ph.D. - South Carolina



The deer my cousin eventually harvested showed up this Dec 22 in the late season. I had him on camera every day for a week. My original plan was to give him another year because he may have been a booner next year. After being able to put my cousin on his first doe with a bow and seeing his excitement, we decided to sneak him in on this deer. I was sitting on another stand the night he shot this great 10. He was so pumped up he didn't make the best shot at 20 yards, but the deer crashed about 50 yards from the plot, and we were able to get our hands on him. I haven't received an official score yet, but everyone that I bow hunt with — most have been at it 20 years — put him mid 160s. He won't have really any deductions because he's pretty typical. Our average buck was 130 to 140 inches but now we see 160 to 170s. The cold snap we had late season brought him to the Alfa-Rack Plus plot and gave my cousin a deer of a lifetime. He's one of the biggest ever killed on the farm, including one I took a few years ago with a rifle (163 gross). I have now prepped the farm to make the existing plot bigger and cultivated to add another five kill plots. Thanks, Whitetail Institute.

Mike Saraco - Kansas



I have used a lot of other food plot seeds but none compares to Whitetail Institute. I have been using Whitetail Institute exclusively for seven years. This is a photo of Whitetail Institute's Imperial Whitetail Clover only three weeks after planting in late July in central Pennsylvania. With a little hard work, and proper displacement of lime and fertilizer from the soil test, Whitetail Institute makes it easy to have success like this. Just hunting a small area of land, it was my goal to create some plots to hold deer on our land and to have areas to take young hunters in the outdoors to harvest deer. Many hunts later, I can honestly say we have never been out without seeing deer. I have always had outstanding results with Imperial Whitetail Clover and Pure Attraction. Many bucks taken and many to come! Plant them for yourself, and you won't believe the results.

Dave Spear - Pennsylvania



We have been planting Whitetail Institute products in our hunting area the past few years. Whitetail Institute products along with QDM tactics have proven to be rewarding for our hunting group. We have planted Imperial Whitetail Clover, Tall Tine Tubers, Beets & Greens, Pure Attraction and No-Plow.

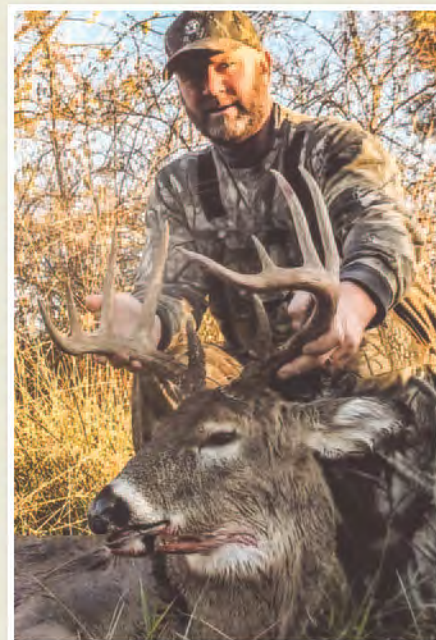
Two years ago was another great year. My partner, Brad Barkau, killed a nice deer with his crossbow. My son killed a mature, wide 8 that had broken brow points with his muzzleloader. I also ended up getting a nice 8 during Illinois' muzzleloader season.

This past year, Barkau harvested a huge 8-point with his crossbow in early November which rough scored around 158 3/8 (photo 1). My son killed a great 10-point, (photo 2) I killed a 13-point (photo 3) that scored 159-5/8 and I also killed a 15-point that scored 174-1/8 (photo 4). He is the biggest buck I've taken in 40 years of hunting.

This all wouldn't be happening if it wasn't for Whitetail Institute's great products. Most of these deer have been killed on the food plots or coming to them. Thanks again, Whitetail Institute, for the great products and advice when we have called in and discussed our goals for our plots.

Our local taxidermist also loves the results of Whitetail Institute products.

Bill Boeschen - Illinois



Whitetail Institute products continue to be the foundation for my management and food plot strategies on my farm. Imperial Whitetail Clover is my No. 1 preferred year-round food source. In addition, I add additional acres of fall food plots each year consisting of Beets & Greens and Whitetail Oats Plus for late-season food sources. This year I plan to add Fusion to the mix.

Attached are my last two bucks harvested on trails leading to my food plots: 136-inch 10-point and 169-inch 12-point typicals. Keep up the good work, Whitetail Institute.

Mike Meisberger - Indiana



(Continued on page 67)



WOODED OASIS:

Growing and Holding Big Bucks In Big Timber

By Jeremy Flinn

You might think you're seeing things if you walk through the 40,000-plus acres of mountainous public land in southwestern Pennsylvania and look across the property line to the private tract I manage.

The large, lush oasis seems so out of place that you'd wonder if it were real. But what you're seeing is real, and it's one reason my hunting partners and I have killed three bucks older than 5-1/2 in an area where, by all standards, a 2-1/2-year-old is dead. High-quality food plots tucked into the heart of the big woods can provide

Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer

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critical nutrition to grow larger bucks and attract them out of the shadows to make them vulnerable to harvest.

Though big-woods food plots initially sound like a no-brainer, they're not as simple as most food plots, particularly at first establishment. However, in my experience, no food plot makes a bigger impact immediately than a big-woods plot. To understand why these plots are so effective, you must understand what big-woods bucks are accustomed to and how hunters must adapt their strategies.

Hunters tend to focus on deer only just before and during the season. However, the entire year affects a buck's ability to grow larger. For example, though a buck might wear the previous year's antlers, he begins his potential for larger antlers long before shedding the current set. A hard rut and winter can dramatically affect a buck's body. The more resources he puts toward recovering lost body weight, the less he can use for new antler growth.

In many habitats, high-quality natural browse from better soils and exposed sunlight plus remnant crops can provide great sources

of nutrition through the winter. Big-woods bucks, however, are not so fortunate. With most of their fall diet composed of acorns, a fading and unpredictable resource, big-woods bucks must strategically find browse to maintain body condition. Many areas lack forest openings, so that's a tough find, and it often restricts a deer's ability to grow large compared to same-age class counterparts in agricultural regions.

Creating a new food source on big-woods properties increases the amount of nutrition available to bucks and provides a definitive destination point for hunting. It lets you affect an area a buck considers its home range and will improve your success at hunting and growing larger deer.

Proper site prep and selection of plantings are most critical for big-woods food plots. Ensuring the soil chemistry is ideal by doing a soil test is crucial and also ensuring that there's adequate light will result in much more successful plantings and improved hunting.

Whether you have access to larger machinery or not, anyone can



create beneficial big-woods food plots. The most important tool is a chainsaw. Without an opening in the woods and subsequent light, your food plot will be less than ideal. You can create a great food plot with Whitetail Institute's No-Plow, but that should be used as more of a final harvest plot than nutrition. Success in big-woods nutrition plots focuses on perennials. Food plot mixes such as Imperial White-tail Clover and Vision create year-round food sources that are high in protein, which is critical for bucks recovering from the rut in winter and packing on velvet antler in spring and summer.

To ensure successful growth, perform a soil test using the Whitetail Institute Soil Test Kit. That will indicate the amount of lime and fertilizer needed. Although more expensive, pelletized lime is often easier to transport to a big-woods plot and usually breaks down fast in the soil for quicker results. The foundation of your food plot will determine the success of growth.

Ideally, use a ratio of 60 percent perennial food plots and 40 percent annuals for big-woods plots. That might seem opposite of many situ-

ations, but creating year-round food sources is more critical in big-woods settings than in other whitetail ranges. Particularly in late winter through summer, food sources are limited in big woods, and acorns are tough to compete against during the season, when fall food plots are thriving. Consider this when planning your big woods plantings.

First, focus on fall annual plantings such as BowStand or Secret Spot, which get out of the ground quickly and provide ample food and attraction during hunting season. These plots can average ¼ acre or smaller, which is perfect for the big woods, where you will likely have to clear many trees to create an opening. If you vary your annual plots, you will notice various forages are attractive at different times of year. Maybe you can plant a smaller BowStand plot to hunt when acorns are dropping but a larger annual plot in Winter-Greens to hunt post-rut when there's less food and more pressure on the plots.

Although available year-round, perennial plantings can also be great hunting spots. Whether clover, chicory or alfalfa, perennial plantings have consistent attractiveness from the start of the season until the end. Also, when perennial plots are established, a few simple maintenance techniques can keep a plot consistently producing for up to five years.


Unlike in other habitat types, plots of summer annuals are least likely to succeed in big woods. If you can create an opening that is larger than ¾-acre, there's a good chance the plot can get established, but it won't likely last long. Plots larger than one acre are better suited for summer annuals. This is why perennials are even more critical in big woods. They're much more tolerant of deer pressure and provide great protein levels to bucks growing antlers.

Not all food plots in big woods must start from scratch. Many areas have been logged at some point, leaving remnant log landings, which can be molded into small plots. Additionally, with the increase of natural gas exploration, more well pads are being created in large wooded tracts. Contact the company putting in the well, and tell them you want to provide seed for a planting when the well job is complete, or ask to plant around an existing well. Right-of-way openings, such as power lines, provide another option in these areas. With proper permission, you can use these spots to create larger destination feeding plots. This type of plot might provide tons (literally) of biomass for your deer herd each year.

Ultimately, big-wood food plots take more thought and effort than plantings in habitats that are more open or already tillable. But there's no doubt the return of your time and effort will be larger. Creating big-woods food plots can provide a predictable food source and a jolt of protein needed for bucks to optimize antler growth. In addition, you're creating a patternable destination for hunting. If you've tried to pattern a mature buck in a 1,000-acre oak stand during the acorn drop, you know what I mean. Always remember that the initial investment in food plots will be higher in the big woods. Look to use existing openings from previous efforts, which can save you a ton of time and money.

Don't let the stereotypical results from big-woods deer be your norm. Take action to make deer healthier and subsequently larger on places you influence. And do yourself a favor by making them more patternable during the season by creating a place they want to visit. 🍄

Jeremy Flinn is a professional deer biologist and entrepreneur from Pennsylvania. With degrees from Penn State and Mississippi State, he has managed thousands of acres of land during his career.



Although they are often more difficult to initially establish, food plots in the big woods can create some of the best hunting opportunities anywhere.

Photo by Jeremy Flinn

The WEED DOCTOR

By **W. Carroll Johnson, III, PhD.**, *Weed Scientist and Agronomist*

Plan B?

The weed identification requests forwarded to me by the Whitetail Institute home office tend to be difficult and often present challenging — if not impossible — weed control scenarios for the customer. Usually, the weeds are species not controlled by the limited herbicide options or too large for control. In those cases, other than mowing, I must break the news to the customer that there is no solution other than to abandon the weedy food plot and start again. Nobody benefits when that happens. The only thing worse than me telling the customer to start all again is for the customer to hear the recommendation to start again. Fortunately these situations are rare but they most often arise mid to late-summer, with hunting season and cooler weather quickly approaching. A contingency plan is needed — a Plan B.

When situations arise that require us to quickly re-establish a food plot, landowners need reasonable goals. In this case, that means quickly establishing quality forage for deer to enhance the hunting experience and sustain the herd through winter. Usually, those goals must be achieved in short order, and in my experience, that means three months or fewer. In most of the cases assigned to me, there is not enough time for new plantings of perennial forages to establish and produce adequate growth before the onset of winter, although that effect varies among the wide growing conditions in North America. For that reason, for Plan B, I recommend annual food plot blends such as No-Plow, Winter-Greens, Beets & Greens or Pure Attraction. These products contain a blend of proven annual forage species that are easily established, grow quickly and have the track record of being extremely attractive to deer.

In the Plan B context, the food plot products mentioned have wide ranges of acceptable planting dates and strong seedling vigor, and tend to be adaptable to variable degrees of seedbed preparation. Although not immune from planting errors, these species are among the most forgiving forages for food plot use.

Pinning down specific planting dates for a Plan B food plot is impossible because of location and individual circumstances related to the need for replanting. These annual blends for Plan B scenarios can be planted across North America with plenty of time for establishment and ample forage growth by the onset of hunting season or cooler weather. When implementing Plan B, it's worth remembering that the effort is an attempt to making the best of a bad situation. Plan B planting dates might coincide with the normal recommended planting dates for your location, or they might differ. Thus, Plan B might

be a higher risk condition than what you might normally have and was forced by the original circumstances (the loss of the original food plot because of weeds). Higher risk is the result of deviating from the established agricultural norms. Commercial farmers face this every year and understand decisions related to risk. Food plot managers need to have the same understanding.

When a Plan B forage blend has been chosen and the planting date goal set, seedbed preparation needs to be just as thorough and comprehensive as if you were establishing food plots during normal circumstances. Implementing Plan B will sometimes create a near-frantic time crunch. If that's the case, make every effort to avoid cutting seedbed preparation corners. Similarly, avoid the temptation to be miserly on preplant fertilizer applications. Based on my troubleshooting experiences, most of the food plots terminated because of uncontrollable weeds were planted to perennial legumes. Perennial legumes do not need supplemental nitrogen fertilizer — a distinct advantage to perennials. However, the annual forages best suited to Plan B plantings will need ample supplemental nitrogen from fertilizer to fully capture the benefits of these species. Therefore, if at all possible, soil test in advance of Plan B seedbed preparation, and follow the recommendations for the forage product chosen with particular attention to the nitrogen requirement. That will greatly increase the odds of quick, robust growth of the Plan B forage.

The premise of the conditions that led to Plan B was an impossible weed infestation and no corrective option other than to start again. That should not be forgotten, because the weed species behind this decision will return unless strong weed control steps are taken. During the summer fallow (no crop) period between terminating the orig-

inal food plot and seeding Plan B, the troublesome weeds must be addressed. The fallow period is a valuable opportunity to use repeated aggressive tillage to chop perennial weed rootstock and spray systemic non-selective herbicides without concern for forage crop injury. An integrated program of tillage and herbicides controls weeds, especially perennial weeds, better than either used alone. Perennial weeds are a common cause of weed control failure in food plots, and fallow weed control using tillage and systemic herbicides is essential for success. Failure to address the troublesome perennial weeds during the summer fallow period will likely lead to a repeat of food plot loss. This system of fallow weed control has been thoroughly discussed in recent articles. If further explanation is needed, contact any of us at Whitetail Institute.

I mentioned earlier the inherent risk of deviating from established agricultural norms. Although Plan B will be an unexpected inconvenience, it might also be a high-risk planting. Higher risks include temperature extremes, drought or excessive rainfall — all exasperated by the time crunch inherent to the urgency to implement Plan B. In other words, the urgency to implement Plan B forces action when conditions might not be ideal. For that reason, initiate Plan B as early as possible to allow more flexibility in scheduling to reduce risk and avoid cutting corners. When experiencing the wide range of emotions encountered when Plan B is recommended and then implemented, remember the redefined goals: bountiful and nutritious forage to enhance the hunting experience for the upcoming season and sustain the herd through the harsh winter. Avoid dwelling on the recent failure, and focus on those goals while implementing Plan B. These redefined goals help make Plan B more palatable and successful. 🍖

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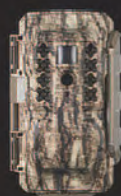
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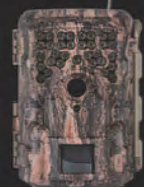
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The Elusive Balance — How Far Are You Willing to Go to Manage Whitetail Habitat?

B

By Kristopher M. Klemick

Photos by the Author

The phrase “striking the right balance” is common across the business world as employers and employees struggle to find the perfect work-life balance. The constant juggling act of giving equal time to your family, hobbies and professional life can be exhausting. I know. Sometimes, just finding the opportunity to get into the woods can be a challenge. Those who get out often must determine which precious few days will allow for harmony between the boss at work and all-important boss at home. My heart aches for those who lament that they can only get to their hunting grounds a few times a year. “I’d been on the road three hours before stopping for a second cup of coffee — halfway there!” began one recent article I read.

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I enjoy my profession in healthcare and am grateful to spend untold weeks each year on my hunting property in Tioga County, Pennsylvania. I'm extremely passionate about hunting and the outdoors, and am blessed to have a family that understands and embraces those priorities. Although I don't have a six-hour drive to the property, it isn't something to scoff at, either. As of this writing, on the eve of Pennsylvania's archery opener, we've logged almost 8,000 miles in our 30 trips to camp this year. Like relationships at home and work, hunting is a process of give and take. The question of how much time and money you're willing or able to invest varies greatly from one person to the next. Make no mistake, though; stiff competition among property owners has pushed the standards by which they manage their land to near nutty proportions.

Hunters everywhere realize the importance food plots have on their properties. Moreover, they understand the level of impact such plots carry considering the limited time they have on their land. Picking up a bag of seed, throwing it in some dirt and walking away for a few months is one thing. Investing hundreds or thousands of dollars on an all-inclusive, year-round habitat-management program is another. So, where's that elusive balance? The answer is surprisingly easy. You just need to know how far you're willing to go.

Managing property that's conducive to attracting and holding a healthy deer herd starts with envisioning a realistic goal, putting it down on paper and then defining what steps you must take to achieve it. A few decades ago, after spending a day on the stand, having seen nothing but squirrels and chickadees, I did that. I thought something needed to change. I could count on one hand the number of whitetails we'd harvested in recent years, and I longed for the deer activity my father and grandfather enjoyed on the property decades earlier. Notice, though, that sentence does not mention mature whitetails.

The forest had reclaimed the farm fields that dotted the landscape 80 years ago, and slowly, our mountain-fed deer became increasingly less common. Those that inhabited the land were small and undernourished, which meant the antlers on bucks were never anything to write home about. Determined to turn the tide, we began a journey that still continues by starting small and growing the vision through time. Any property owner can replicate the process. You simply need to draw your line in the soil.

It Has to Start Somewhere

For members of our camp, the proverbial lightbulb came on when we were introduced to the all-important ingredient in habitat improvement: lime. We had a half-acre field that was planted throughout the 1990s with Imperial Whitetail Clover, but soil deficiencies limited its production. We quickly learned the importance of lime and soil testing. I cannot stress enough how important these pieces are. Without them, you can pretty much eliminate any vision of grandeur, because it likely won't happen.

Everyone wants to hunt big, mature whitetails. But for the most part, whitetails only thrive in premier habitat. The environment they demand depends upon forage, and hard and soft mast crops, which require adequate nutrients from the soil. Unfortunately, soil cannot complete the circle without having a neutral acidity level in the range of 6.5 to 7.5 pH. Adding lime to acidic soil is critical and should be the next step you take after you've had the soil tested.

You can rely on the Whitetail Institute to provide a fast, affordable and professional soil analysis. It takes the guesswork out of the

The author shows off the results of his hard work with a great PA buck.



process, and if you have questions, the answers are just a quick phone call away, because the Whitetail Institute offers an industry-leading service that's all but extinct elsewhere. Picking up the phone and dialing (800) 688-3030, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday will put you in touch with a professional in-house consultant who will devote as much time as required to ensure your questions are answered. The call and the service are free.

As a land manager well versed on the importance of lime, you're on your way to improving your hunting experience, because plants and crops can use nutrients and minerals trapped in the soil at the molecular level.

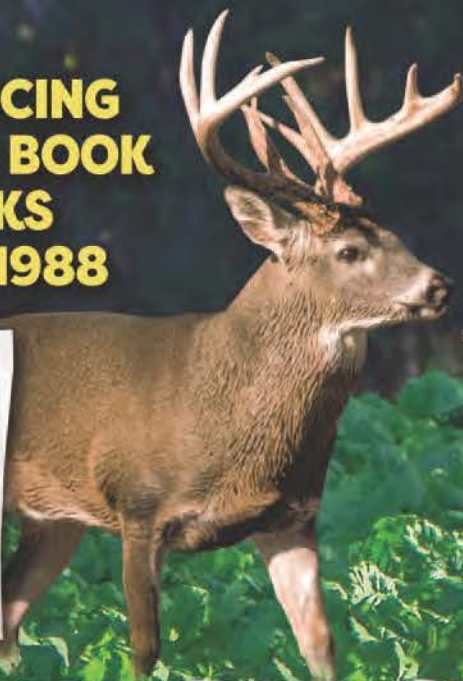
The Broad Spectrum That is Habitat Management

For some, simply raking up a few hundred square feet of ground and throwing a bag of No-Plow, Secret Spot or BowStand in the exposed soil can be a game changer. These mini hot-zones are extremely effective and can provide the opportunity to shoot a deer during the small window of time you might have in the woods.

An added bonus to these relatively small investments is the practice of including a mineral supplement. For about \$1 a day, property owners can initiate a site (or two, or 10) of 30-06 mineral/vitamin supplement, which requires little maintenance. From green-up in spring through fall, these mineral sites typically only need recharged every month or two (depending on usage), and if you miss a month, no worries. It's not like a half-acre food plot that could be overtaken by weeds or grasses if you're not tending to them. Deer will still be conditioned to visit the site regularly if you miss a recharging date. The small

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monthly investment is extremely beneficial when coupled with hot-zone style plots and can yield significant results by opening day. Be sure to check local game laws, though, with regard to using or hunting near mineral sites.

The next level of habitat management requires a little more time and effort but can improve your overall experience exponentially. With a rototiller, you can turn a bit more dirt and open the range of crop options you can plant — or as I like to call them, croptions. If you have access to an ATV, your level of success increases tenfold. Whether owned, rented or borrowed, ATVs can make short work of soil preparation and remove the back-breaking strain of working soil manually. Soon, small hot-zone plots turn into lush half-acre fields of premier whitetail food sources.

Depending on the acreage you can plant, you must decide whether you want to secure the short-term goal of planting a crop simply to hunt over, or if you're committing to the long-term goal of providing for deer outside of hunting season. Early- and late-season annuals such as Beets & Greens, Winter-Greens, Pure Attraction or Whitetail Oats Plus are synonymous with hunting success, and perennial crops such as Imperial Whitetail Clover and Fusion — also great to hunt over — provide long-term sustainable forage during the critical fawn and antler-growth periods of spring and summer.

Astute habitat managers fold everything together and work to develop a year-round program. The financial and personal commitment to such an endeavor can run a broad spectrum, with equipment costs and availability controlling the scope of most year-round habitat-management programs. Although an ATV is quite capable, the investment in a small to medium-sized farm tractor will save you long-term and is better suited for such a demanding task.

What Does a Year-Round Program Look Like?

For those of us in the North, we'll kick things off at the close of hunting season in January, as hunters sadly pack their gear away. For many, this can be a disappointing time, but for land managers like me, it's the perfect opportunity to begin reviewing what happened on our property the previous 12 months and focus on what we intend to do during the next 12, 24 and even 36 months, in some cases. A small notebook is important. In it, we'll log various considerations, such as planting dates, soil conditions and monthly weather conditions, and what crops were planted where and how deer used them. Speaking of usage, we also maintain our mineral sites year-round, and courtesy of trail cameras and a database I set up,

we monitor and track the ebb and flow at each location.

After Pennsylvania's muzzleloader season closes in January, we re-establish mineral sites that were temporarily suspended with 20 pounds of Whitetail Institute 30-06 mineral, but more on that later. We'll do this again in March, because mineral usage isn't as significant in winter. With the ground frozen, we also take advantage of that time to spread any lime required based on the results from recent soil tests. Beginning in April, we recharge our mineral sites at 30-60 day intervals.

April is also when we start preparing soil for planting. Assuming we had an annual crop the previous year, we'll begin turning that dirt to work organic matter and lime into the soil. Any perennial crops, such as Imperial White-tail Clover, will be frost-seeded to fill in light areas and rejuvenate the overall stand from a three- or four-year crop to one that can potentially last many more years.

Through April and May, we work our soil on a fairly consistent 14-day regimen of light disking. Doing so allows dormant weed seeds in the soil to germinate and subsequently terminate after being disked again. With our seedbed ready, we plant spring/summer annuals such as PowerPlant or establish new perennial plots using Imperial Whitetail Clover or Fusion.

In June, July and August, we're focused on two things: maintaining our perennial plots and prepping other plots for the late season, which will carry our herd through winter. Quarry crops such as BowStand and Pure Attraction are proven winners to hunt over, and winter carrying crops such as Beets & Greens, Winter-Greens and Tall Tine Tubers — also extremely effective to hunt over — will provide your deer with a nutritious food source as winter sets in.

We still recharge our mineral sites monthly. However, in September, we temporarily suspend our mineral supplementation program at some sites on the property because of Pennsylvania hunting laws about hunting around them.

October, November and December are magical months for most deer hunters in the North, and although tree-stand time is important, so too is attention to your overall property. Recording weather conditions since the start of the year, monitoring the perennial crops that might need attention come spring and following through with an overall review of the previous 12 months will yield a much clearer picture of the progress you've made and where you're headed.

There's never a dull moment with a year-round habitat management program, and although the rewards are plentiful, don't write off the option of dialing it back to a level you're comfortable with. You don't have to hit it out of the ballpark your first time at the plate. All it takes is a base hit to get in the game. From there, you simply need to strike that elusive balance, and before you know it, you'll soon find yourself in the woods with mature, healthy whitetails taking full advantage of the improvement projects you've nailed. 🍷

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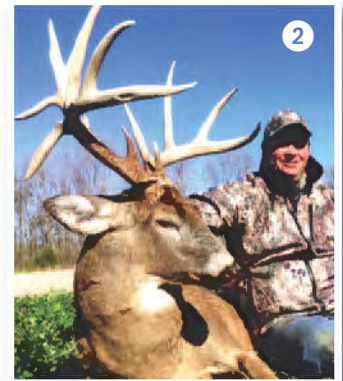
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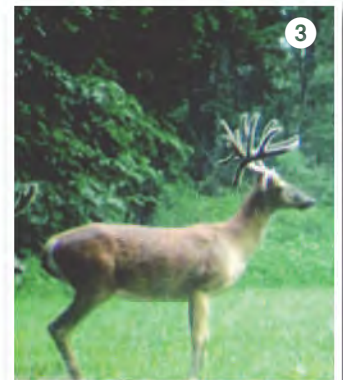
Jon Sharp – Tennessee

After spending time and effort preparing a food plot during the off-season, I was very grateful to see it pay off! I was fortunate to harvest this awesome 146-inch main-frame 10-point during bow season. This buck showed up an hour before dark and passed multiple oak trees with a heavy acorn crop just to feed in the Whitetail Oats Plus food plot. I can't express enough how impressed I am with this product and Whitetail Institute. Thanks for everything, Whitetail Institute!



Matt Day – Ohio

I've been using Imperial Whitetail Clover since the mid-1990s. I absolutely love the results. The first photo is a plot I put in last spring of Imperial Whitetail Clover. My friends tell me it looks like a magazine cover, so I thought I would send it to you. The second photo is a 189-inch deer I harvested two seasons ago in another Imperial Whitetail Clover plot with a crossbow. Photo 3 is a trail camera picture of the buck I killed in an Imperial Whitetail Clover field the summer before I killed him. I'm a diehard fan of Whitetail Institute and Imperial Whitetail Clover. The clover stays green and is extremely drought resistant. Thank you Whitetail Institute for helping make my dreams come true!



Justin Paulsen – Illinois

I live in East-Central Illinois and have three farms. I have been using Whitetail Institute products for 13 years. I use Imperial Whitetail Clover and Alfa-Rack Plus to push protein in early spring till November and then the Winter Peas Plus, Pure Attraction, Tall Tine Tubers, Whitetail Oats Plus and Winter-Greens to keep the herd fed the rest of the year. These products help attract and produce heavier and healthier bucks, does, and fawns. This fall in a 24-hour period, we harvested three great deer. Left to right, my buddy with a gross 159-inch 9-point; me in the middle with a gross 175-inch 10-point; and my cousin with a gross 199-inch 16-point. I will continue using these products and can't thank Whitetail Institute enough. My motto: "If you plant it, they will come and be bigger." Thanks, Whitetail Institute!



Seth Hubbard – Minnesota

We have tried a handful of products from different companies over the years on our property, but once we tried Whitetail Institute products, the search was over. By far the best seed we have ever used! The first year we planted Winter-Greens was three years ago, and we immediately noticed an increase of deer on our property, and I was able to harvest a 145-inch buck (photo 1) the first week of November as he was headed up a trail to one of the Winter-Greens plots that he used very often. We were all excited because that was the first Pope and Young buck we had ever taken off the property. Little did we know what the future had in store for us.

The very next fall, I was able to harvest a 193-inch buck, known as “Can Opener” in the area (photo 2). He spent his entire summer on the neighbor’s property until one of our Winter-Greens plots was too much for him to resist. We have pictures of him at noon feeding in the plot. That’s how much he loved the stuff. Definitely a buck of a lifetime. The day before that my wife was able to harvest her first ever deer over that same food plot. It was a 115-inch buck (photo 3). After that she was hooked and last year she set her sights on a stud of a buck we called “SOCO.”

In the fall two years ago, my Dad was also able to take his personal best buck during the firearms season. A 135-inch 8-pointer (photo 4) known as “Sidekick” when he was chasing a doe from a Winter-Greens plot and ran her within 20 yards of him and he put him down! Last summer “SOCO” spent all his time on the neighbor’s property until about a week before bow season, when one of our Winter-Greens plots was just the way he liked it. We sat in blind that was over a soybean field that had a 30-yard half circle in front of the blind of Winter-Greens

and I couldn’t believe what I saw. That buck came out at 200 yards and walked straight across a lush green soybean plot to get to what he really wanted and that was the Winter-Greens. He gave her the perfect shot, and she put him down. He scored 166 inches (photo 5). Such an amazing hunt and I truly believe that if it wasn’t for the Winter-Greens plots we had, those bucks would be hanging on somebody else’s wall. Thank you, Whitetail Institute, for making these great products. They will be the only seed to hit the dirt in our kill plots on our property! In three years of planting Winter-Greens we were able to harvest five bucks that added up to 754 inches of bone!

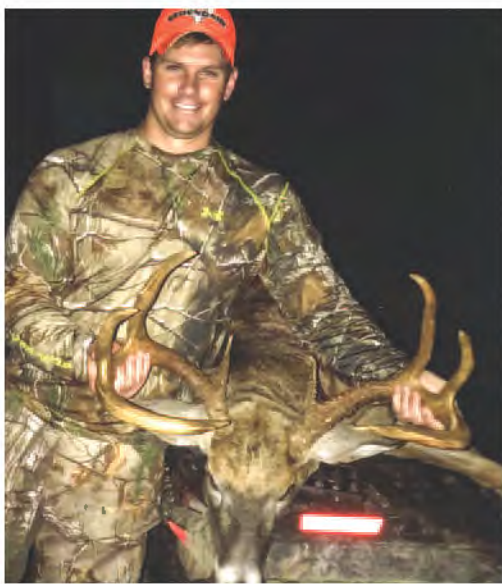


Phil DeWire – Pennsylvania

I was lucky to harvest this deer in mid-October last year. I purchased our property five years ago, it had been subject to heavy hunting pressure and almost no upkeep. Since that first year, I have been using Whitetail Institute products in our food plots spread throughout the property. In just that short period, we have seen a large increase in deer numbers and antler quality — to the point that our neighbors have been wondering where all of the deer have gone.

Two years ago, we had this deer on trail camera before the season, but once the season came around, and we finally laid eyes on him, he had broken of an entire beam. Since there were other nice bucks around we decided to see if he would make it to the next season. We saw him numerous times throughout the season hitting the Imperial Whitetail Clover and Winter-Greens food plots. Last August, we got the first trail camera pictures of him, and he had exploded in size but kept the same basic point configuration, so we knew it was the same deer. The deer net scored 158 inches, qualifying for P&Y and the Pennsylvania record books.

We attribute the deer surviving through the entire Pennsylvania hunting season to the quality food from our Whitetail Institute food plots keeping his home range to our small area. 🦌



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, Pintala, AL 36043

CROP ROTATION

A Best Management Practice

Photo by Charles J. Alsheimer

By William Cousins

Designed to last for years from a single planting, Whitetail Institute perennial food plot products should most often be the backbone of your food plot system. If you choose a Whitetail Institute perennial designed for the soil conditions of the site, follow the planting and maintenance instructions and get a little cooperation from Mother Nature, you will produce a lush, thick stand of highly nutritious food that will attract and hold deer year-round for up to five years. Eventually, though, there may come a time when you may need to do a crop rotation even after the best perennial food plot crops.



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What is “crop rotation”? Crop rotation is a best-management agricultural practice for the soil in your food plots. Specifically, any soil that is asked to grow the same crop year after year, whatever the crop, eventually may require a break. After removing the existing crop, it may help rejuvenate the soil in some cases by planting different forage types in the site for a growing season (“rotating” out of the old crop and into one that’s totally different). This is generally true of long-term perennial crops, and it’s also true of annual brassica. One perennial — alfalfa — bears special mention. I’ll cover brassica and alfalfa separately later.

Soil-borne diseases and pests can build up in any soil that’s asked to continually sustain the same crop for years. That includes perennial food plot plantings, even though in some cases it may be less of a problem with Whitetail Institute forages that are blends of multiple different forage types, which may delay the need for crop rotation.

When is crop rotation necessary? Determining if and when a crop rotation is needed is usually fairly simple. The biggest clue that you might need to rotate is noticing that the existing crop just isn’t growing as well as it should and has in the past, even though you planted and have maintained the forage according to directions (including making sure soil pH is neutral, and soil fertility is optimum). If the weather conditions are similar to the past and you see that, then diagnosis is usually straightforward.

First, pull up some of the plants, and look at the roots. The roots should be firm and healthy looking. If they are soft, spindly or weak looking, there’s a good chance that the soil has a build-up of root-rot organisms like fungus, which can cause poor crop yield or even complete failure.

Second, while you’re digging around in the soil, look for root-eating insects and their larvae, which can also build up over time. Either of these also indicates that it is time to rotate.

What should I plant as a rotational crop? When deciding what to plant as a rotational crop, select plant types that are different from those you had growing in the site. Most Whitetail Institute fall/winter annuals are good rotational crops after Imperial Whitetail Clover, Alfa-Rack Plus, Fusion, or Vision. If you had Tall Tine Tubers or Winter-Greens growing in the site during the fall and winter, rotate

into PowerPlant the following spring and summer. The key is that the plant types in the rotational crop should be different from those in the existing crop.

Brassica and alfalfa: Each situation is different, but due to unique characteristics of brassicas it’s generally recommended that you not plant brassica back-to-back in the same site for more than a year or two in a row without a break. The issue can be reduced if the seedbed is correctly prepared prior to planting, including ground tillage, and if tillage is started several months before replanting. To clean the soil as quickly as possible following a brassica crop, though, plant the site in a completely different type of annual during the spring and summer. As I mentioned, PowerPlant is an excellent choice. Plan ahead with plot locations so that you can plant your brassica in different plots every two years. Alfalfa’s autotoxicity property can inhibit the growth of a new alfalfa crop that is seeded into or planted immediately after an existing alfalfa stand in the same site.

Final thoughts. Keep in mind that the most important factors to ensure food plot success are:

- (1) Select a Whitetail Institute perennial food plot product that’s designed for the conditions of the site,
- (2) Prepare the seedbed and plant
 - a. during the Whitetail Institute’s recommended planting dates for the product, and
 - b. according to the Whitetail Institute’s published instructions for the product you have selected
- (3) If you’ve selected a perennial, also perform the simple maintenance steps the Whitetail Institute recommends.

The foregoing steps should keep your Whitetail Institute perennials in top shape for three to five years or longer. After the existing planting has run its course, consider planting an annual Whitetail Institute product that has completely different plant types in it from the existing planting for a season. After that, the soil should be ready to be worked up again for another long-term planting of your favorite Whitetail Institute perennial.

If you have any questions about crop rotation, give the Whitetail Institute’s in-house consultants a call at (800) 688-3030. 🐾



This is a 3-acre plot where different annuals are planted but always has Imperial Whitetail Clover in the rotation.

Photo by Matt Harper

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A large buck with impressive antlers stands in a field of green vegetation. The buck is facing right, looking back over its shoulder. The background is a dense forest with trees showing autumn foliage in shades of yellow and orange. The sky is visible through the trees, showing a clear blue color.

Searching for the correct mix of annuals and perennials in your food plot plan? Consider these suggestions.

By Scott Bestul

Photos by Charles J. Alsheimer



It's a happy problem. With almost a dozen food plot sites to manage every year, I face the questions of what to plant where. It seems every year I'm torn between falling back on tried-and-true favorites but sorely tempted to try a new product. And then there's the endless annual-versus-perennial debate that rages in my dimly burning noggin. Coming up with the right mix can be challenging.

Fortunately, I have enough gray in my sideburns that the decisions get a little easier every year. But when I'm scratching my head in confusion, I do what we all should: pick up a phone and shout at an expert. For this story, I went straight to the top, chatting with Whitetail Institute's Steve Scott about general guidelines on how to decide how much food plot acreage should be planted in perennials and how much in annuals.

"I recommend folks consider a 50-50 split between annual and perennial plantings as a starting point," Scott said. "But of course, every property and situation is different. A lot depends on whether the manager lives on or close to the land, the size and location of the food plots, timing and what has been planted in the past. There are a lot of things to think about when you're doing your planning for the year."

With that in mind, here are some ideas as you consider your annual versus perennial plots this season.

Perennial Power

Perennials — such as clover, chicory and others in the Whitetail Institute lineup — should be a staple in every food plotter's plan. I've talked to whitetail experts who've told me they'd put clover into every non-row crop food plot they could. Such is the power of a high-protein, green food source. Clover is good for deer, and they crave it, kind of like that miracle child who prefers Raisin Bran instead of Cocoa Puffs. Imperial Whitetail Clover is extremely high in protein and is one of the first things to green-up each spring (critical for nursing does and antler-growing bucks) and it maintains its attraction to deer until it's buried deep under snow. And a good plot can last up to five years saving you money from having to plant more often. So why not plant it everywhere?

Like so many good things, clover comes with a catch. It

grows much better in soil that's been prepped properly. It can require some extra attention when it comes to weed control, and even the best clover plot needs mowing from time to time. None of these requirements demand a degree in rocket science or tools a farmer would envy, but they demand time and, in many cases, timing.

"Imperial Whitetail Clover is ideal for food plotters who live on or close enough to the property to do the maintenance required in spring and summer which can include occasional mowing and spraying Arrest Max and Slay if needed," Scott said. "If you live a long distance away from your property, those things can be more difficult to do." For folks that live close to or on their hunting property and don't mind the little extra effort, they can plant even more than 50 percent of their plots in long-lasting perennials.

"Most broadleaf competition can be handled with mowing," he said. "But again, this requires the proper equipment and, of course, timing. You want to mow the plot before broadleaf weeds start to head (seed out), or you're simply setting yourself up for more future competition."

Most broadleaf competition can also be mitigated with Slay, but again, timing and proper application are important.

Grass competition can require more commitment and aggressive treatment, as mowing only retards its growth yet does not eliminate the problem. Fortunately, the Whitetail Institute's Arrest Max herbicide is the perfect answer, knocking back most types of grass before it can overwhelm a potentially healthy clover plot.

"Again, time and timing are important," Scott said. "When I think

about doing perennial plots well, I believe the personality of the plotter is important, too. Some guys don't mind and even enjoy the work that goes into a perennial plot. Other guys just don't like the extra effort, which is fine. You just have to learn what you like to do and, maybe even more important, what your schedule says you have time to do."

That concept extends to plot site and preparation. Clover does best on good soil that holds moisture and there's no doubt it flourishes in soil that's nutrient-rich and contains the proper pH. Again, that requires soil testing, applying lime to reduce soil acidity and fertilizing to recommended levels. Scott recognizes that although this is the ideal course of action, not every plotter has the time or mindset to do all these things.

Annual Answers

Although Scott believes a 50-50 mix of perennials and annuals is close to ideal, he also recognizes the realities of the modern-day food plotter. Time and other constraints can reduce the amount of perennial plantings we can muster, and in such situations upping the percentage of annuals is a good idea. Besides, today's annuals are so good I consider them a vital part of my food plot plan. There are three plot situations for which I consider annuals ideal.

For starters, any plot that presents difficult access is perfect for annuals in my book. Remember, planting killer clover (or other perennials) most often requires hauling in lime and fertilizer and then planting. Then it requires a commitment of re-visits for weed control





Whitetails love brassicas like Winter-Greens, Beets & Greens and Tall Tine Tubers when the snow flies and during cold snaps.

in the form of mowing and possibly spraying. Remote plots make this difficult, to say the least. Two of my favorite plots every year are log landings surrounded by timber and are tough to reach, even with an ATV. In a pair of visits to each plot, I can work and prep soil, and then return and plant. These little plots are some of my favorites, year in and year out, and I don't think it's a mistake that they've also produced some of the best bucks we see or harvest each fall.

Timing is another major factor in opting for an annual plot. Many times, I've received access to hunt a property in mid to late-summer, and although that late planting window doesn't rule out a perennial planting, I typically choose an annual. My main reason is I usually want to get food on the landscape that will benefit me immediately. I want to create hunting opportunities as quickly as I can manufacture them, and a quick-growing annual puts food in front of deer right away. That pulse of new food can attract area deer in a hurry, and with a properly set camera, I can inventory deer and hunt anything that catches my eye.

There's another reason for choosing annuals in this situation. For starters, I don't like rushing a perennial plot. I want to do my soil prep and planting right, and those steps can take planning or watching the weather. Also, the growing season in the upper Midwest can close in a hurry, with first frosts coming as early as mid-September some years. Getting a nice annual plot going gets the food plot established more quickly than a perennial, and breaks ground and preps soil for a perennial plot the next year if that's your goal.

Finally, annuals are a top choice whenever I want to create a food source for post-rut and into winter. Clover will trump most anything as long as deer can get to it, but whitetails are mega-shrewd about when a food source requires too much effort for the calories acquired. In other words, digging through a foot of snow may not make energy sense for a buck, especially when he can grab a tall-growing brassica (such as Winter-Greens) standing tall in the snow. If I have a small

plot close to a late-season bedding area, I'll opt for an annual almost every time.

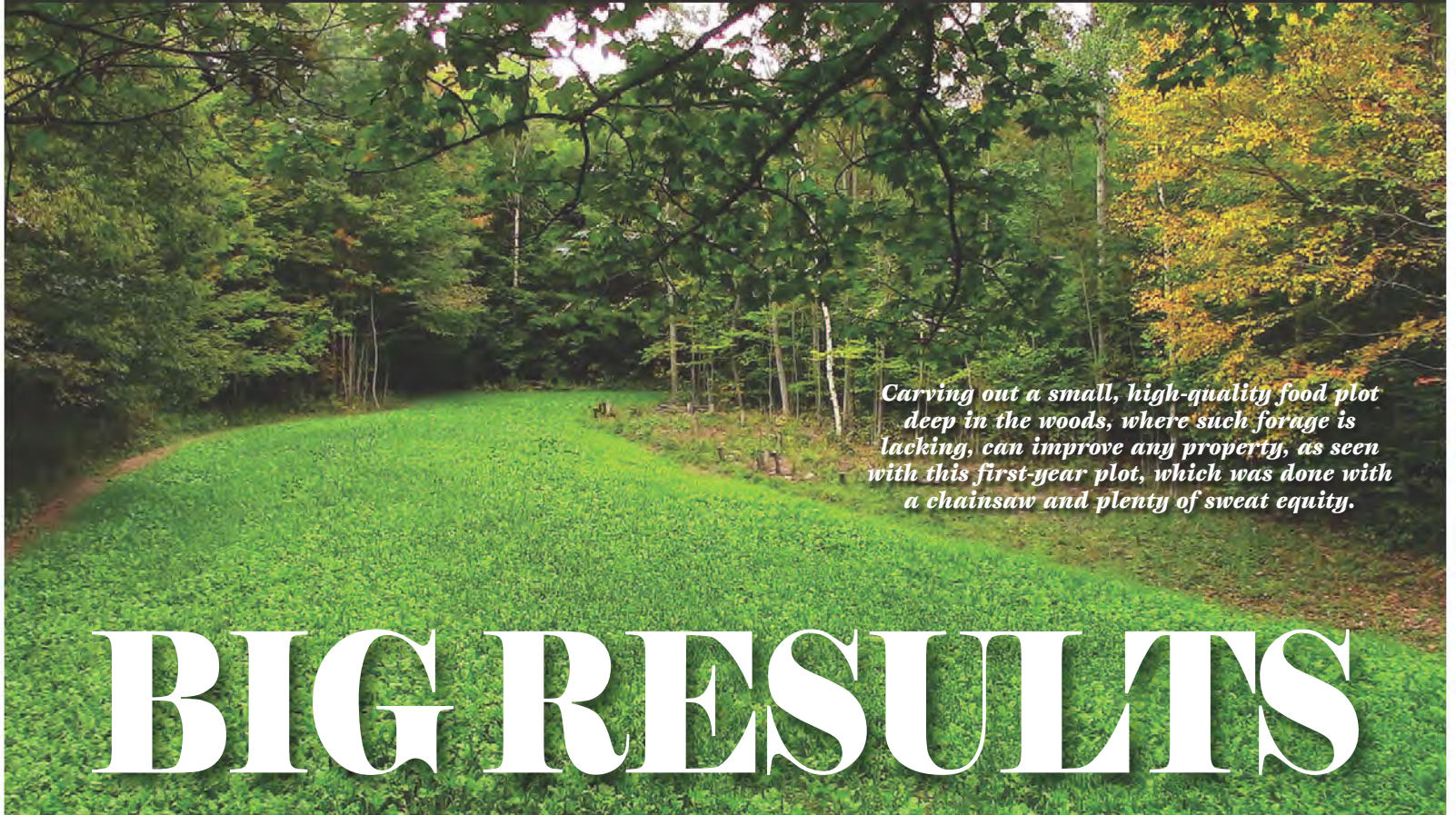
Stirring the Pot

I've come to view devising a food plot plan each year as a sort of living document. I typically go into the growing season with a rough idea of what I'll plant where and when. But hey, I don't grow deer or deer food for a living, and sometimes weather, my schedule or just me being a scatterbrain conspire to toss my plans into a blender. In an ideal world, I'd have a 50-50 mix of annuals and perennials, but as an insurance plan, I tend to stock heavy on the annuals, which have bailed me out of a tight spot more than once. This past year is my latest case in point.

I had planned to extend a tiny but popular clover plot. The 1/8-acre dogleg-shaped patch was met by a 40-yard stretch of logging road that led to a 1/4-acre log landing I'd always had in annuals. Wouldn't it be great, I thought, to make that red-hot clover plot significantly bigger while saving myself the decision of which annual to plant?

Of course, by late summer, my best-laid plans had disintegrated like a cobweb in a hailstorm. It was time to abort the clover mission and find a Plan B. This time I decided to try something new, and I had the perfect candidate: a bag of Whitetail Institute's new Beets and Greens, which were happily sitting in my shed and offered plenty of seed to cover the landing. Shrugging and desperate, I sowed the seed and walked away. And of course, you can probably write the ending to this tale of ineptitude: The landing turned out to be the hot plot of the year, responsible for more activity (and more big buck pics) than any of those I'd carefully planned. So sure, become a mix-master whenever you can pull it off, but don't despair when you're forced to go with a backup plan. 🔥

Small Properties...



Carving out a small, high-quality food plot deep in the woods, where such forage is lacking, can improve any property, as seen with this first-year plot, which was done with a chainsaw and plenty of sweat equity.

BIG RESULTS

By Kristopher M. Klemick

Photos by the Author

Wouldn't it be nice to have a vast tract of land with which you could do whatever you desired? Imagine endless acres where you could hike half the day and never reach the interior of the property.

It would hold one sanctuary after the next, a tangled glory of prime bedding and thick cover. Mature woodlots would produce immeasurable hard-mast crops year after year. Established orchards of soft-mast trees would bear fruit by the truckload. And if that weren't enough, you'd also have the tools, equipment and premier soil profile to grow lush, nutritious food plots. Oh, the possibilities and good fortune of being able to manage and hunt such utopian ground.

In reality, few people hold the deed to countless acres. However, if you're fortunate to own a little slice of heaven — as I suspect most *Whitetail News* readers do — chances are you can't hit every major feature that's important to whitetails out of the park. You should,

however, position yourself for success.

Unfortunately, many people try to do so much on their property that their efforts don't produce the results they hope to see. That's why stepping back and evaluating the broader picture is an essential part of managing small tracts.

What's considered small by one person might spell limitless possibilities to another. Size is purely subjective, and because of that, we won't postulate to which degree you might label a parcel as being small. For this article, we'll consider a small parcel as anything a landowner might believe isn't large enough to make a positive impact on the herd or hunting experience.

As mentioned, people often believe they need to tick off numerous checkboxes to make a difference, including food plots, mineral sites, bedding and fawning cover, water sources and multiple stands for several weather variables. They overthink it, wanting to nail it all. Soon, however, they find themselves over their heads, awash in the stress that goes with biting off more than you can chew.

You've likely heard, "Go big or go home." Forget it. Such philosophy has no place with small properties. Another misguided concept is rationalizing how or why you must outdo your neighbors to be successful. "Bill plants four food plots over there each year. I've gotta get at

least five or six in the ground.”

Hunting is a sport, but there need not be winners and losers among our ranks. The whitetails we pursue are the captains of the team. We wear the same camouflage uniform as the next guy, collectively working together to do what’s best for the animals we pursue with unwavering passion and commitment. If you don’t — or can’t — have a mutually rewarding relationship with your neighbor, use topo maps and Google Earth to see what’s going on around you. Determine what’s missing or what you can do to best complement the surrounding landscape.

For example, if one property after the next consists of rolling ag fields or food plots carved out of mature timber, focus on what’s lacking. Identify where deficiencies exist, and work to eliminate them. By ensuring your property fills a void and complements its surroundings, it stands to be favored above others. After all, your goal is for deer to spend as much time as possible inside the property lines as opposed to just cutting across a corner of your property from time to time.

In such a scenario, adding Whitetail Institute’s newest product, Conceal, into your plan can enhance your property and provide the edge you and your deer need. Conceal is designed to complement all aspects of deer management by rapidly producing tall stands of thick cover when and where it’s needed most. It can also create a visually impenetrable wall that’s perfect for bedding areas. It can also produce much needed security around food plots to help keep deer in them more often during daylight.

“The varieties of seed in Conceal grow to different heights helping ensure the plot is dense, and the shorter plants offer support to the taller varieties as the planting develops and matures,” said William Cousins, general manager of the Whitetail Institute. “Two of the main keys to using this product successfully are seeding at the correct rate and applying proper fertilization. The plants can grow up to nine feet tall but need sufficient fertility to accomplish this. Also, too much seed per acre or square foot will also create crowded root space, which can lead to shorter overall plant height.”

In a world with scarce thick cover because of aging forests and in-


creasing predator populations that continue to threaten fawn recruitment, the possibilities with Conceal are limitless.

Mineral sites are another huge benefit to landowners and deer. Food plots are often the vehicle by which minerals from the soil are transferred to deer, but deficiencies in the soil can often limit mineral and nutrient uptake, resulting in inferior antler development. This is especially true in areas not conducive for farming or deep forests where smart bucks grow old. The annual cycle of antler development depends strictly on a buck’s ability to maintain his skeletal structure first. Minerals beyond the skeletal requirements can then be put toward antler growth.

The Whitetail Institute’s 30-06 mineral products are the gold standards in the industry. Check the guaranteed analysis on each package, and you’ll find the correct micro and macro minerals in proper ratios needed for a healthy herd.

We’ve been using 30-06 on our property for years, and deer have benefited significantly from it. Does can produce more milk for their fawns, weights per age class continue to increase and bucks are putting more mass on their racks. And for our area, deep in the mountain country across the northern tier of Pennsylvania, we’ve been fortunate to consistently harvest best-in-class bucks year after year.

Establishing a 30-06 site is as easy as pouring it on the ground and walking away. First, though, test a few spots off a well-worn travel corridor by raking a 2 to 3 foot-diameter area clear of branches, leaves and vegetation to bare dirt. Then pour 5 to 10 pounds of mineral in the center of it and mix it in with the soil. After a few weeks, you should be able to tell which sites deer prefer and you can continue recharging it based on the ebb and flow of usage. Using trail cameras at those sites can assist tremendously. We use them year-round for site-specific statistics, inventorying deer numbers and much more.

Ultimately, you must make every acre count. Hunting smart becomes more critical on smaller properties. Hunting smart means hunt while keeping your presence known to deer at a minimum. Work with your neighbors to develop and improve your hunting, and make the most of what you’ve been blessed with. 



This is one of the 30-06 Mineral sites we’ve had established for several years. You can see where the soil line used to be — more than six inches higher than where it’s at today. Deer devour the soil and the slowly disappearing stump. We maintain sites like this almost year-round.

When is the Best Time to Perform A Laboratory Soil Test

By Jon Cooner

When is the best time for a soil test? The answer to such a broad question is easy: Perform a laboratory soil test any time you want to make sure your food plots have the opportunity to perform their best. If you're asking more specifically about timing soil testing during a specific process such as seedbed preparation and perennial food plot maintenance, the answers are different, at least if you expect optimum results.

Perform a Laboratory Soil Test to Be Sure that Your Food Plots Will Have Unrestricted Access to Essential Soil-supplied Nutrients

Your immediate reaction to the heading above might be, "When wouldn't I want to be sure that my food plot planting has unrestricted access to all the essential nutrients it needs?" If that's your response, then good for you. It shows that you're already thinking in terms of getting maximum performance from your food plot plantings by making the soil as fertile as you can. Fortunately, most food plotters think that way. Unfortunately, though, some still don't. They cut corners on soil pH, soil-supplied nutrients, and their food plots and hunting suffer as a result.

The interdependence of soil pH and soil-supplied nutrient levels is arguably the most important thing to understand and address if you're going to ensure food plot success. Most of us have heard the term soil

fertility, but do you know what it really means? Soil fertility describes the quality of soil as a medium for growing plants, and it is determined by a host of variable soil conditions. Some of these conditions can be determined visually, such as if the soil contains substantial levels of organic matter, how well or poorly it drains, and whether it's compacted or well aerated.

Other conditions, though, cannot be determined visually and must be calculated through scientific analysis of the soil. Two extremely important factors are in this category: nutrient levels in the soil, and soil pH.

The need for optimum levels of essential nutrients in the soil is obvious; like all living things, plants need to take in essential nutrition if they are to grow and flourish. Less obvious, though, is the role soil pH plays in the ability of plants to access nutrients in the soil. Most high-quality food plot plantings can only freely access nutrients in the soil when soil pH is within "neutral" range (6.5-7.5). Most fallow soils, though, are acidic (soil pH below 6.5), a condition that restricts the availability of soil nutrients to the growing plants.

While it's important to make sure soil-supplied nutrient levels and soil pH are within optimum range before planting, making sure soil pH is neutral is the more important, since without that, the plants can't access all the nutrients they need from the soil anyway. Adding more fertilizer won't fix the problem, and it wastes even more money. Adding lime to the seedbed removes the restrictions so plants can freely access the needed nutrients. That's why soil pH is the most important factor you can control to ensure food plot success. It can make the difference between the best food plot you can imagine and total failure.

The Case for Laboratory Soil Test Kits

Precision! Let's summarize some of the main things that make laboratory soil test kits the only way to go for folks who want to ensure optimum food plot growth and not waste money taking a shotgun approach to buying lime or fertilizer:

- As we discussed earlier, soil pH and soil nutrient levels as factors in soil fertility
 - are widely variable and
 - cannot be visibly determined.
- Soils also differ widely in their capacities to react to and maintain the effects of lime and fertilizer

Once you take all that into account, you can see that the only practical way to tell exactly what the soil pH and levels of essential nutrients in your soil are and, if any levels are deficient, how to determine the exact lime and/or fertilizer requirements to bring deficient levels to optimum is to have a qualified soil-testing laboratory scientifically analyze a sample of your soil.

Next, we'll look at when to perform a laboratory soil test as a matter of timing, based on whether you've prepared the seedbed for planting or maintaining an existing perennial stand.

Timing the Laboratory Soil Test During Seedbed Preparation and Perennial Forage Maintenance

The Whitetail Institute publishes seedbed preparation and planting instructions for each of its food plot products, and forage-maintenance guidelines for each of its perennial products. You can find them on the back of the product bags and at whitetailinstitute.com. While the

instructions and guidelines aren't identical for all Whitetail Institute food plot products, they do all have one thing in common: they all recommend that the seedbed be limed and fertilized according to a laboratory soil test.

Soil Testing as Part of Seedbed Preparation

The seedbed preparation instructions recommend that the soil test be performed several months in advance of planting if possible. That's because fallow soils are most commonly acidic, and lime doesn't raise soil pH overnight. Lots of variables affect how quickly lime works, such as characteristics of the soil, the form of the lime used, whether or not the lime is incorporated (disked or tilled) into the soil and, if so, how thoroughly. In all but the rarest cases, though, performing a laboratory soil test and incorporating any lime recommended in the lab's report several months in advance of planting is sufficient time to allow soil pH to rise enough by the time your planting dates arrive.


A quick note about timing fertilization: Keep in mind that here we're talking about liming as part of seedbed preparation. While lime should be worked into the soil by disking or tilling, and preferably several months in advance of planting if possible, fertilizer should be put out just prior to when you plant the seeds. This is reflected in the planting instructions for each Whitetail Institute food plot product.

Soil Testing as Part of Perennial Forage Maintenance

The Whitetail Institute's maintenance recommendations for its perennial forages also suggest that a laboratory soil test be performed every year or two to monitor soil pH and fertility. However, there is no recommendation that the test be performed several months in advance of when you plant to add any lime or fertilizer to the standing forage. The reason is that it is assumed that the seedbed instructions have been followed prior to planting, including raising soil pH to neutral.

Over time, naturally acidic soil will move back toward an acidic condition due to a wide variety of causes such as decomposition of organic matter, growing crops, and the application of certain fertilizers. Generally speaking, naturally acidic soil that has been adjusted to neutral soil pH tends to return to acidity from the surface down. Top-dressing the seedbed with lime every year or two can help slow the rate at which the soil pH returns to its natural level.

The Bottom Line?

For best results, eliminate all the negative variables you can. A laboratory soil test kit is the best tool for doing that. As is the case with most of life's endeavors, our odds of success with food plots are maximized when we leave as little as possible to chance. The good news is that with Whitetail Institute food plot products, it's easy to eliminate as many negative variables as possible. Just follow the planting dates, and seedbed preparation and planting instructions for each Whitetail Institute food plot product, and the maintenance instructions for Whitetail Institute perennials. That includes performing laboratory soil tests anytime you're considering buying lime and/or fertilizer, and a few months early if possible if you're testing the soil as part of seedbed prep for a new plot. 

EXCLUSIVE FROM THE WHITETAIL INSTITUTE



Attraction and Nutrition SAMPLER PAK

Now you can try all these supplement products for one low price and get a free DVD plus a 2-year subscription to "Whitetail News."

ALL YOURS FOR ONLY \$34.96
(FREE Shipping — Add 7% Sales Tax)

- Imperial 30-06® Mineral one lick (5 lbs.)
- Imperial 30-06® PLUS PROTEIN® one lick (5 lbs.)
- Kraze® one site (5 lbs.)

• No partial orders can be accepted • No substitutions please • Orders filled on a first-come, first-served basis
• Offer may be withdrawn without notice • Limited quantities available
• Special discount prices are also available on bulk orders of Imperial Whitetail 30-06® Mineral/Vitamin Supplement — Call 800-688-3030 for details.

Plus... FREE DVD "Producing Trophy Whitetails"
48 minutes on how you can produce top quality deer on your hunting land and a 2-Year Subscription to "Whitetail News"



Whitetail Institute
239 Whitetail Trail | Pintlala, AL 36043
(800) 688-3030 | www.whitetailinstitute.com
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Whitetail Institute SOIL TEST KITS



Professional laboratory soil testing is one of the most important things you can do to ensure the success of your food plots. The Whitetail Institute offers professional laboratory soil test kits which provide results and recommendations for all Imperial Whitetail products or any other type seeds. (Complete instructions and all related information will come with each kit.) Test results include pH, phosphorus (P) and potassium (K). Specific and accurate fertilizer and lime recommendations for maximum performance from your plantings will be provided. The average turnaround time is 24-48 hours after our lab receives the sample. Another huge benefit to soil testing is, it can save you a lot of money by helping you avoid unnecessary fertilizer and lime expenses.

Please send _____ soil test kits at \$13.95 each. FREE shipping and handling — Add 7% Sales Tax. Cost of kit includes test results and phone consultation.

SHIP TO:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payment: ☐ Check or Money Order enclosed

Charge to: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

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

Signature _____

**Mail to: Whitetail Institute • 239 Whitetail Trail • Pintlala, AL 36043
or CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-688-3030**

Imperial Whitetail “CHIC” MAGNET

The most versatile Whitetail Institute perennial of all?

Most Whitetail Institute forage products are blends of multiple plant varieties. So, why does “Chic” Magnet include only Whitetail Institute perennial forage chicory? The answer is simple: customer demand.

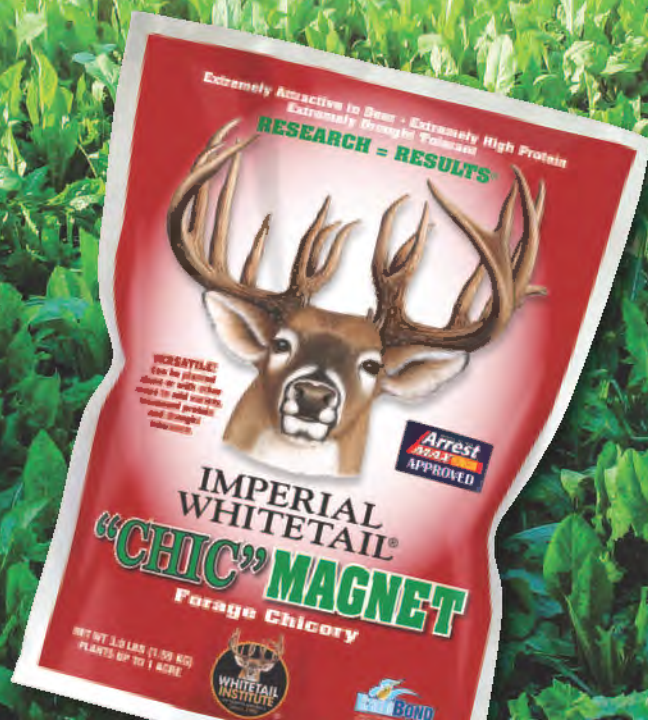
Chic Magnet is different from most other chicories, and it's those differences that make it vastly superior as a food plot planting for deer. The most important is Chic Magnet's palatability. Whitetail Institute testing on free-ranging whitetails from Florida to Canada continues to prove that deer find Chic Magnet vastly more attractive than any other chicory variety the Whitetail Institute has ever tested. And that stands to reason — as small-ruminant animals, deer simply don't prefer and can't digest stemmy, waxy chicory varieties nearly as well as Chic Magnet, which remains more tender and succulent even as it matures.

Whitetail Institute perennial forage chicory has been a component in other Whitetail Institute perennial food plot products since before the introduction of Chic Magnet, and it remains so today. Currently, the Whitetail Institute's Alfa-Rack Plus, Edge, Extreme, Fusion and Vision all contain Whitetail Institute chicory as one of each product's multiple forage components. In those products, Whitetail Institute chicory acts as a complement to the other forage components, increasing attraction, nutrition and drought resistance to the stand.

It was not until later that Whitetail Institute perennial forage chicory was offered by itself as Chic Magnet. The reason? Customers demanded it because, in addition to its superior attractiveness, Chic Magnet is also very easy to establish, even by simply broadcasting Chic Magnet seed directly into existing perennial stands to increase attraction, protein and drought resistance.

When you also consider the fact that Chic Magnet adapts well to a wide range of soil types and drainage conditions, you can see why it's arguably the most versatile Whitetail Institute perennial food plot product of all. You can use it in lots of different ways to increase the attraction, nutrition and drought resistance of your food plots. You can plant it by itself or mix it with whatever you decide to plant. And that's true even if you already have other Whitetail Institute perennials on your property. Including a stand of straight Chic Magnet in your food plot system can add variety, which boosts the attractiveness of your property even further.

Additional information about Chic Magnet can be found at www.whitetailinstitute.com, or by calling (800) 688-3030. 



Antler Building SUPPLEMENTS

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.

Caution: Because 30-06 products are so attractive to deer, some states consider them bait. Check your local game laws before using or hunting over 30-06.

ATTRACTION & NUTRITION



Antler Up D₃

Antler Up D₃ increases calcium and phosphorus uptake to promote growth and development of antlers. Promotes heavier body weights and improves the overall health of deer.



Whitetail Institute

239 Whitetail Trail | Pintlala, AL 36043
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How to Handle an Encounter With a Conservation Officer

By Bob Humphrey

By Bob Humphrey

The morning hunt is finished, so you pack your gear and head for the truck. No shots were fired, but it was a glorious fall day nonetheless, and as you stroll along, you take in the brilliant foliage and crisp, cool air while recalling the morning's events. Two fawns amble by carelessly, followed by a long-nosed doe that seems constantly on alert. They'll learn much from her. That little forkhorn buck gives you a quick start until you realize he doesn't meet your mandatory minimum. "Maybe next year," you think.

As you approach the vehicle, your daydreaming is interrupted by the sudden and unexpected appearance of a uniformed figure who identifies himself as a conservation officer. After the initial

surprise subsides, your mind starts reeling as you go over a mental checklist: "Is he after me? Did I do something wrong? I have my license, permits and permission to be where I was hunting. I

**PRODUCING
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BUCKS
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Imperial Whitetail PERENNIALS



Scientifically developed and designed to attract, hold and grow bigger and better deer. Whitetail Institute perennials are the gold-standard of the food plot industry for quality and performance in the field. Designed to last up to 5 years from a single planting.

Includes seeds only available in Whitetail Institute products.

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Products FOR FREE!
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All you pay is shipping and handling!

Offer 1: Only \$9.95 (s/h) Add 7% Sales Tax
FREE Producing Trophy Whitetails DVD, plus samples of Imperial Whitetail Clover®, Tall Tine Tubers®, Fusion®, No-Plow®, CHIC Magnet®, and Winter-Greens®. Each sample plants 100 sq. ft.

Offer 2: Only \$19.95 (s/h) Add 7% Sales Tax
Everything in Offer 1 plus 5 lbs. each of Imperial Whitetail 30-06® and 30-06 Plus Protein® Mineral Vitamin Supplements.



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haven't unloaded my gun yet, but I didn't think it was necessary."

The reaction is not unusual. The unexpected appearance of a conservation officer can rattle even the most ethical hunter. But if you've dotted all the I's, crossed all the T's and followed the letter of the law, you should have nothing to fear. Still, how should you behave?

Things You Should Know

Volunteer hunter safety instructors do an exemplary job of teaching new hunters much of what they need to know before going afield, but they're only as good as the curriculum they're provided. That's well-researched and important material. But if I have a criticism, it's that there is nothing in the curriculum about how to handle an encounter with a game warden or conservation officer, and it's something every hunter should know.

Think about it. In most cases, you and they are carrying loaded firearms. The officer might not know whether you're a safe, ethical hunter or a dangerous poacher, representing a potential threat. And though you shouldn't, you might feel a bit intimidated, particularly if you've never been checked before or you're in a new area. How you handle yourself and, more important, your equipment is important.

Handling Firearms

Your initial reaction might be to unload your gun, which isn't always the right move. The officer might want to determine that your weapon and ammo comply with whatever seasons and regulations are in effect, or that you have the right caliber or gauge and the right num-

ber of shells in your weapon for the game you are pursuing. A better initial course of action is to make sure the gun is on safety and remains pointed in a safe direction. Then wait for instructions (see the sidebar on page 66).

The officer might ask you to set your gun down or lean it against a tree. Or he might ask to see it. Safe handling guidelines recommend you open the breech before handing a gun to anyone but ask the officer if it's OK before doing this. If he says no, advise him on whether or not the gun is loaded before handing it to him.

Be Respectful

Treat the officer with respect, and he will do likewise. Remember, he's just doing his job. "Why are you bothering me? I'm not doing anything wrong," is probably not a good way to open the conversation. He might be investigating some illegal activity in the area or responding to a complaint and merely wants to know if you saw or heard anything. Or, he might simply be conducting a routine compliance check, which is part of his duty.

You have the constitutional right to own a firearm, but the ability to use it for hunting is a privilege that comes with certain conditions. The fact that you're in the woods with a firearm is considered *prima facie* evidence that you are hunting, and therefore, you are required to prove that you meet those conditions by presenting a license or other required permits. You might also be required to show some other form of identification to verify that the license is yours.

You should also be aware that because of the nature of their duties, conservation officers have extended search and seizure powers. They might ask to search your pack, jacket or vehicle, though they can do

(Continued on page 66)

TIPs

In addition to following the letter of the law and being cooperative, you can assist conservation officers in their efforts to protect your fish and wildlife resources by reporting violations. Every state and province has an Operation Game Thief (OGT) or Turn In Poachers (TIP) line you can call should you witness a violation. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation offers this advice:

Do not attempt to stop a violation yourself or to detain those responsible. Be safe, and be a good witness.

When reporting a violation, please note as many facts as possible. You will be asked a variety of questions, and the more information you can provide, the better chance the violator can be caught and the case successfully prosecuted.

What happened? What type of violation was it? When and where did it happen? Give the date, time and location, number of shots and other information. Give as much information as possible about the suspect or suspects, including name, address, telephone and physical description, such as age, weight, height, clothing, hair color, eye color and any other pertinent information.

Were firearms involved in the violation? Was the firearm visible or concealed in some way? Describe the number and type of weapons. Describe the suspect's vehicle — make, year, color and style. License number and any other distinguishing features, such as rusted spots or mismatched paint and dents?

What animals or fish were involved, how many and where are they now? Do you know about any other physical evidence, such as hides, entrails, guns, knives, cartridge cases and such?

Has the illegal game or evidence been moved, or will it be moved soon? How is it being transported, and where is it being stored? Were there other witnesses? Give their names and any other information about the violation, suspect or violations that you might have noted.

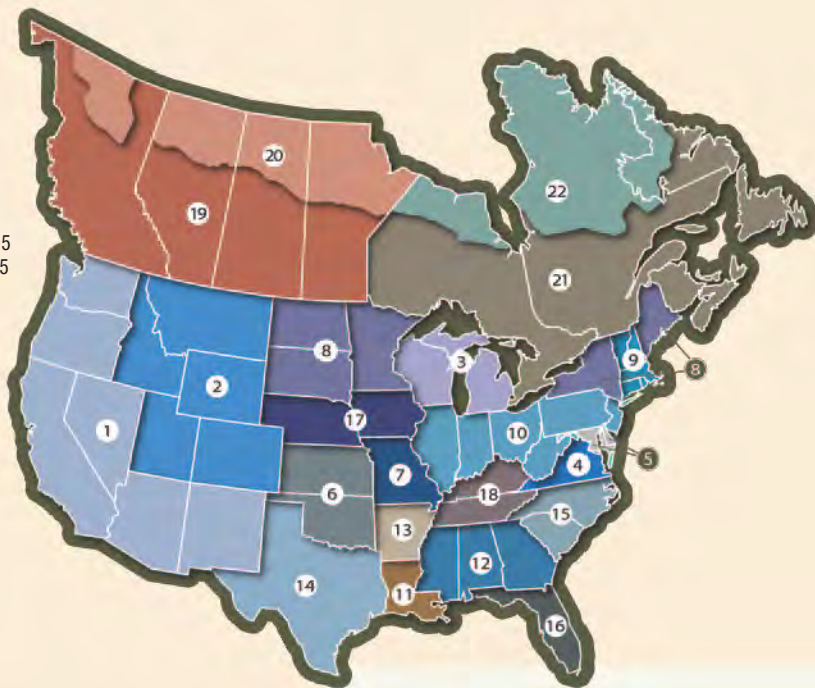
You might not be able to remember everything, but the more information you supply, the more likely there will be an arrest and conviction. It's always better to call the game warden stationed in the county in which the violation occurred. Their numbers are usually listed in the printed regulations or online. You can also report a violation by calling an 800 number, which is often printed on your license.

Food Plot Planting Dates...

PLANTING DATES FOR IMPERIAL WHITETAIL CLOVER, ALFA-RACK PLUS, EXTREME, NO-PLOW, FUSION, 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 VISION, 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 | | |

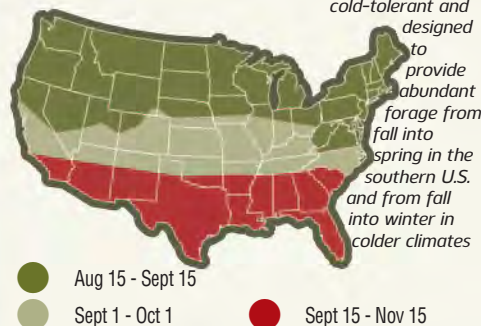
PLANTING DATES FOR WINTER-GREENS, TALL TINE TUBERS AND BEETS & GREENS

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| 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 | | |

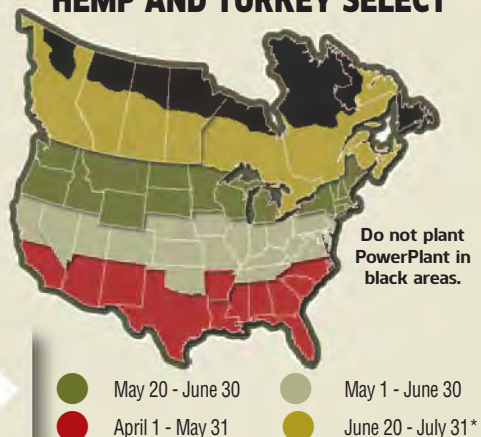
***Do not plant PowerPlant, Conceal or Sunn Hemp until soil temperatures reach a constant 65 degrees F.**

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 POWERPLANT, CONCEAL, SUNN HEMP AND TURKEY SELECT



Do not plant PowerPlant in black areas.

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IMPERIAL WHITETAIL® CLOVER YOU SAVE \$55.00



Suggested Retail: \$279.96 (36 lbs. - 4.5 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$224.96

Please send _____ 36 lb. quantities of Imperial Whitetail Clover.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.*



IMPERIAL VISION™ YOU SAVE \$55.00



Suggested Retail: \$279.96 (36 lbs. - 4.5 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$224.96

Please send _____ 36 lb. quantities of Imperial Vision™.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.*



IMPERIAL NO-PLOW® YOU SAVE \$40.00



Suggested Retail: \$149.96 (50 lbs. - 3 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$109.96

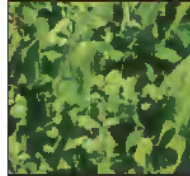
Please send _____ 50 lb. quantities of Imperial NO-PLOW Wildlife Seed Blend.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 50 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) *Please enclose with shipping and payment information.*



IMPERIAL EXTREME® YOU SAVE \$65.00



Sugg. Retail: \$289.96 (46 lbs. - 2 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$224.96

Please send _____ 46 lb. quantities of Imperial EXTREME Seed Blend.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 46 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) *Please enclose with shipping and payment information.*



IMPERIAL ALFA-RACK PLUS® YOU SAVE \$65.00



Suggested Retail: \$289.96 (33 lbs. - 2.5 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$224.96

Please send _____ 33 lb. quantities of Imperial Alfa-Rack PLUS Alfalfa-Clover Blend.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 33 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) *Please enclose with shipping and payment information.*



IMPERIAL FUSION® YOU SAVE \$65.00



Suggested Retail: \$289.96 (27.75 lbs. - 4.5 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$224.94

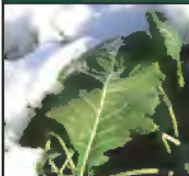
Please send _____ 27.75 lb. quantities of Imperial FUSION.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 27.75 lbs. ordered. (Canadian residents call for shipping charges.) *Please enclose with shipping and payment information.*



IMPERIAL WINTER-GREENS® YOU SAVE \$70.00



Suggested Retail: \$239.96 (24 lbs. - 4 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$169.96

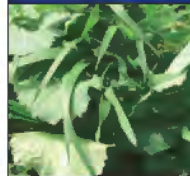
Please send _____ 24 lb. quantities of Imperial Winter-Greens.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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

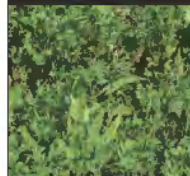
Please send _____ 24 lb. quantities of Imperial Tall Tine Tubers.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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

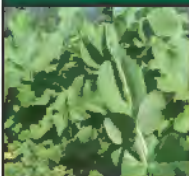
Please send _____ 52 lb. bags of Imperial Edge.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 WINTER PEAS PLUS® YOU SAVE \$10.00



Suggested Retail: \$120.00 (44 lbs. - 1 Acre Planting)

Price with coupon: \$109.96

Please send _____ 44 lb. quantities of Imperial Winter Peas Plus.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

Please add \$18.00 for shipping and handling for each 44 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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.*



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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 Whitetail Oats Plus.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 BEETS & 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 Beets & Greens™.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 MAGNET MIX 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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.



IMPERIAL 30-06® THRIVE™ YOU SAVE \$25.00



Suggested Retail: \$90.97 (60 lbs.)

Coupon Price: \$65.97

Please send _____ 60 lb. quantities of Thrive.

TOTAL Including shipping and handling \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.



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 \$ _____ (Add 7% Sales Tax)

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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.



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 \$ _____ (Add 7% Sales Tax)

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



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 \$ _____
(Add 7% Sales Tax)

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.



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



FREE FREIGHT!

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

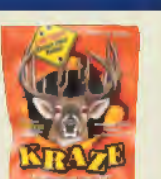
Coupon Price: \$54.96 or \$29.97

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

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

TOTAL \$ _____ (Add 7% Sales Tax)

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



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

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

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Email: _____

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COUPON PRICES NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

How to Handle an Encounter with a Conservation Officer

(Continued from page 62)

so without your permission if they have reason to suspect a crime might have been committed.

Be Forthright

One of the intangible skills of a good conservation officer is the ability to judge people. Like a parent, they can usually tell if someone is guilty or hiding something by their body language and mannerisms. Just knowing this might be intimidating to some folks, and they start acting nervously, even though they've done nothing wrong. Relax.

Good conservation officers also understand that we all make mistakes. Maybe you forgot to sign your license, or you left it at home. Let them know up front, and they'll be more inclined to show leniency. If you did something wrong and they suspect it, they're going to find out anyway, so you might as well come clean.

Don't Be Intimidated

Conservation officers are human beings with different personalities. They might come off as being stiff and formal, but that's just part of being professional and sizing up the situation. When they realize you're an OK person, they might loosen up a little.

Conflict Resolution

One of the things any law enforcement training stresses is conflict resolution, and it can work in both directions. Maybe you got off on the wrong foot in your initial interaction. A good officer will try to resolve that, but you can as well with a simple apology. "Look, I didn't mean to be difficult, you just startled me."

And remember, conservation officers are human. They have good days and bad days, just like us. If an officer seems a bit too harsh or aggressive, make an extra effort to diffuse the situation. If that doesn't work, be compliant and respectful.

Attitude

All law enforcement officers use something often referred to as the attitude test. They have a fair amount of discretion, and how far they decide to push an issue often hinges on a subject's attitude. If you are friendly or at least cooperative, they're far more likely to cut you a break, even if they identify some type of violation. A good attitude might get you off with a verbal or written warning, whereas a poor, uncooperative or combative attitude will only prompt the officer to look harder for violations and charge you to the maximum extent on each. And comments such as, "I pay your salary," are not going to win you any lenience.

If you're not doing anything wrong, you shouldn't have anything to worry about. Just remember another popular idiom that ignorance of the law is no excuse. The onus of knowing the rules and regulations lies with you.

In fact, being intimately familiar with the laws can sometimes come in handy, as even conservation officers can make mistakes. A conservation officer once stopped me as I headed out to the duck marsh. He

informed me that because it was muzzleloader season for deer, I was required to wear the requisite 500 square inches of blaze orange while hunting. I politely offered that I didn't believe that was the case if I was hunting waterfowl from a blind over decoys. After further calm and cordial conversation, he excused himself and made a radio call to headquarters. He returned a few minutes later, allowed me to continue on my way and even wished me good luck.

Eyes and Ears

If you're on the right side of the law, you and the officer should consider one another allies rather than adversaries. You can be an extra set of eyes and ears for them and let them know if you see anything wrong. When I encounter a conservation officer, he often gives me his business card, and if he doesn't, I ask for it. I keep it in my truck and don't hesitate to call if I see something amiss. It has earned me a couple of favors in the way of tips about where I might find good hunting.

Nobody's Perfect

Certain topics are timeless among deer hunters, like the best cartridge or action for deer, or whether perennials are better than annuals for food plots. And if you bring up the topic of conservation officers, someone is bound to share a story about a negative encounter they had. It happens, but as we often tell non and anti-hunters, you shouldn't let the actions of one person tarnish your impression of the group.

I've encountered conservation officers who might have seemed a bit overzealous and perhaps overbearing on occasion. But most have been respectful and professional. When you encounter a conservation officer, give him the benefit of the doubt, just as you would want a non-hunter to treat you. Theirs is not an easy job, but the easier you make it for them, the easier they'll make it for you. 🔥

Bob Humphrey is a certified wildlife biologist who worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and, while in graduate school, assisted in teaching a course on wildlife law enforcement.

Handling Firearms

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife offers this advice for handling firearms when approached by a conservation officer or game warden.

Game wardens are concerned with firearm safety and compliance with hunting regulations when checking hunters. When approached by a warden, you are expected to follow all basic firearms handling rules.

- Do not attempt to load or unload your firearm while being approached by a game warden.
- Point the muzzle of your firearm in a safe direction away from the approaching warden.
- Make sure your safety is on. Keep your finger away from the trigger.
- Comply with all instructions directed to you by the warden.

REAL HUNTERS DO THE TALKING

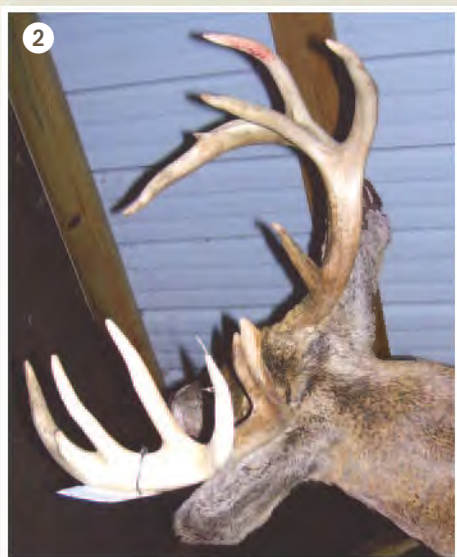
(Continued from page 29)

about Whitetail Institute products...



I put in my first food plot of Imperial Whitetail Clover about 20 years ago. It was highly successful at attracting deer, so the next year, I expanded by adding more clover plots and Chicory Plus (now Fusion). Today, I am at 15-plus acres and have included many more Whitetail Institute products including Fusion, Winter-Greens, Tall Tine Tubers. I have noticed a big difference in the health and size of the deer here, and over the years, our buck harvest has been really good. But last season was beyond outstanding. On Nov. 3 I managed to harvest my largest ever bow/crossbow buck (photo 1) and then on Dec. 5, I shot my largest ever rifle buck, a massive 13-pointer (photo 2). In addition to my own personal best season, we managed to take six more shooters on my 220 acres, including another large 9 -pointer taken by my friend Jerry Hares (photo 3). So, our camp had its best season ever, too.

Gene Crane — New York



I thought I'd let you see what Imperial Whitetail Clover did for me this past season. I've enclosed a picture of the 12-point I got over an Imperial Whitetail Clover plot the end of this past November. I believe the additional protein the deer are getting from Imperial Whitetail Clover is showing up in bigger racks. Additionally, I believe the bucks are getting bigger bodies here in Tennessee.

Barry Stultz — Tennessee



We have used Whitetail Institute products for years. Whitetail Institute might have outdone itself with Vision. I just planted it two days ago, and I have them waiting in line, like a bunch of women on Black Friday at Walmart. Keep up the good work.

Joe Flinn — Wisconsin

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

info@whitetailinstitute.com

or send them to:

**Whitetail News, Attn: Field Tester Response
239 Whitetail Trail, Pintola, AL 36043**

Richard Saalborn – Illinois

I generally plant about 10 acres of food plots. Imperial Whitetail Clover has been our best product. We have attracted more deer, and the quality of the bucks is improving every year.



I can best show you the quality of our deer by showing a picture of my 7-year-old grandson's first buck. He was very proud of his first deer three years ago (picture 1). He did not shoot a buck two years ago because he was looking for a larger deer. He hit the jackpot this past season at age 9 when he killed this 10-point with one shot from his 20-gauge Remington (picture 2). I was in the stand with him when he shot it. I was unbelievably proud of his accomplishment. I had more enjoyment



watching him shoot it than if I had.

Next year, he will be looking for a bigger deer. I can assure you that it will be over a Whitetail Institute product.

Charlie Massey – North Carolina


I have been planting and using Whitetail Institute products on my small farm for the last ten years. The number and quality of deer I now see has improved considerably since I began using them. Last year's deer season provided my best hunting experience to date, when my son, Tanner took his first deer. Tanner has hunted with me for several years, but last season was the first season he was big enough to shoot my 20-gauge slug gun.

Tanner and I hunted a number of times and saw deer each time, but Tanner was determined to take a mature buck as his



first deer. I explained that most people take does for their first deer, but Tanner is a patient and determined boy. On Nov. 16, Tanner and I climbed into one of our favorite stands for an afternoon hunt. We saw deer almost immediately, as the rut had the deer moving. About an hour into the hunt, we had a nice young 8-pointer come into the field

we had planted in Winter Peas Plus and Whitetail Oats Plus. I thought for sure the young 8-pointer was going to be Tanner's first deer, but after a short conversation regarding the age of the buck and the knowledge of older deer in the area, Tanner chose to pass on the young 8-point.

I think he was starting to second-guess his decision as the afternoon hunt was starting to come to a close, but then out of what seemed like nowhere appeared a large-bodied, heavy-horned 8-point. I instantly recognized the deer from trail camera pictures we had gathered earlier in the season, and I told Tanner this was the deer he had been waiting for. Tanner calmly raised the 20-gauge slug gun and got the sights on the buck. I nervously told him to wait until the deer stopped before shooting, and just then, the buck stopped as two does made their way out of the woods and into the food plot. Tanner took the shot and the deer ran about 40 yards before piling up just off the edge of the food plot. I was more excited about Tanner's first buck than probably any buck I have ever taken, and I wanted to say thank you to the Whitetail Institute for helping make that memory for Tanner and me. 



Grandpa Bob Lloyd – Minnesota

13-year-old Evan was on his first deer hunting trip with his dad on one of Grandpa Bob's food plots. We had 6 inches of snow come down opening morning. The first two days, Evan saw several does and fawns come into the snow covered plot that had been a mix of 3/4 Imperial Whitetail Clover and 1/4 Tall Tine Tubers. The deer had been hitting the plots hard with the 1/2 foot of snow. The turnips were what they were coming in for. They would paw through the snow and dig up the big turnips. On the third morning, this nice buck came trying to sneak across the far end of the food plot, but Evan got his first deer with a shot of just over 100 yards

First Deer is presented and sponsored by TRACT OPTICS.

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Email your First Deer photos and story to info@whitetailinstitute.com or send them to: Whitetail Institute of North America, 239 Whitetail Trail Pinilala, AL 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 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

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

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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

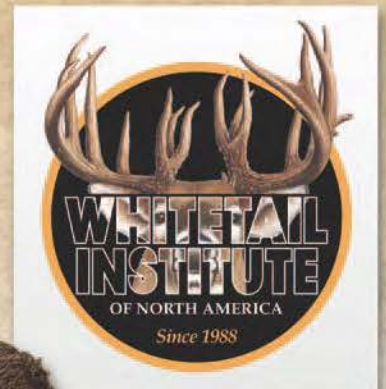
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Front Chest Design



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Upper Back Design

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Imperial Whitetail Clover

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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.

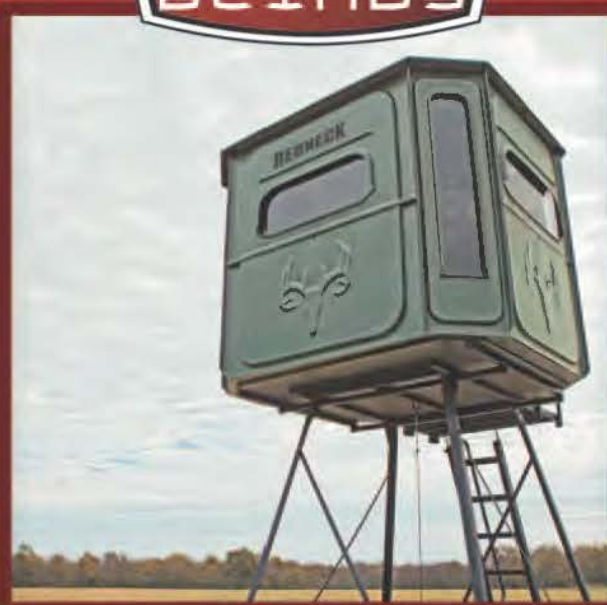


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