

ITHACA'S MODEL 37: CONFIGURATIONS FOR EVERY HUNT

MODERN PIONEER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER
2016

HUNTING SEASON ISON!

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A NEW MEXICO ADVENTURE
- **THE WHITETAIL RUT**
7 TACTICS FOR PRIME TIME
- **GAME-BIRD ACTION**
FIND PUBLIC-LAND HOTBEDS
- **BUTCHER AND PROCESS**
YOUR OWN DEER

**TOP USES FOR
HONEY AS FOOD
AND MEDICINE**



**RENDERING
BEAR FAT
INTO GREASE**

HOW-TO TECHNIQUES

1 TRAP BEAVER
THROUGH
THE ICE

2 PREPARE
BEAR
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3 CALL THE
ELUSIVE
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**CREATE
YOUR OWN
SURVIVAL
ORCHARD**

**FINGERNAIL
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EVERYDAY USES FOR A
COSMETIC STAPLE

**PIONEER
CANDY**
SATISFY YOUR
SWEET TOOTH

**CANOE
PORTAGE**
IN 6 SIMPLE
STEPS

FROM THE EDITORS OF AMERICAN SURVIVAL GUIDE
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Reap the Rewards

Though I fondly participate in many pioneer pursuits, hunting is at the heart of them. It gets me out of my office and into nature. It shows me things I wouldn't otherwise witness, like unique animal behavior or a brilliant sunrise in some far-flung location.

Hunting represents thrills far beyond the adrenaline rush of taking an animal. I simply love to be outdoors. I enjoy watching and photographing elk, deer, turkeys and antelope as much as I do hunting them. That's partially why I'm selective about which animals I take. If I settle for the first little buck that wanders down the trail, I'll miss what I really love about hunting, and that's being outdoors in absolute solitude.

Even more importantly, hunting represents food for my wife and me, and any family or friends who happen to be around to share it with us. We eat the game we kill. In fact, we haven't bought meat—other than occasional chicken or a restaurant dinner here and there—in years. We love venison and wild turkey, which epitomize the proteins in the healthy diet we strive to follow.

With that comes the pressure to produce. If I don't lay down some fresh venison, we'll face the possibility of buying meat from the store. If you read "How to Butcher and Process Deer" (pg. 104), you'll understand the reasons why I'd rather not resort to that. Simply put, I want to know how the meat I eat is handled from beginning to end, which is the chief reason we process our own harvests rather than drop them off at a commercial processing plant.

Beyond that, wild-game dishes are difficult to beat. Think about it: Wild-game meat is perfectly pure and organic. In the early days, I'm sure pioneers used little more than salt and pepper—if that—to season it. Today, culinary education and unlimited online resources help us cook wild-game meat diversely with decadent results.

For example, have you ever considered making wild turkey chimichangas? How about prime rib using elk or antelope tenderloins? Ever make black bear burgers? These dishes and dozens more are so incredible that even people who've previously experienced poor-tasting game meat love them.

Now, I'm not a professional chef—far from it. I'm simply a hunting enthusiast who also loves to cook and experiment with new recipes using wild game my wife and I harvest ourselves. My point is that if I can make fine meals from wild game, so can you. And, since we're currently in the heart of hunting season, now is the time to secure a red-meat supply, as Mike Yancey did in New Mexico ("Elk Hunt of a Lifetime," pg. 28).

But venison and wild poultry aren't the only options. In "Calling the Elusive Crow" (pg. 62), Jason Houser explains that even crows can be useful for nourishment. He shares his favorite crow recipe



The editor and his wife, Becca, eat meat from the wild game they harvest. Pictured here is a "naked" (no bun) venison burger with caramelized onions and a fresh tomato slice.

and mentions that guests who didn't know they were "eating crow" even went for seconds. Who would've thought?

Granted, hunting isn't for everyone. If that's you, consider planting an orchard, as Larry Schwartz outlines in "Plant a Survival Orchard" (pg. 42). Fruits and nuts—especially of the organic variety—are expensive, and prices will only escalate in times of shortage. A survival orchard not only provides fruits and nuts during shortages or financial crises, but also in times of plenty. With an orchard, you can pick apples or pecans for your next pie rather than buy them from the market or grocery store. How about that?

Fall is now in full swing and opportunities abound. Of course, I'm out hunting as much as possible since this beloved season comes but once a year. I'm greatly enjoying the sights and sounds, but I'm also trying to stock as much meat in the freezer as possible, because it's what my wife and I live on. It's just another way we reap the rewards of the pioneer lifestyle.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Darron McDougal".

DARRON MCDOUGAL

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news

Bovine TB Found in Wild, White-tailed Deer

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) has been diagnosed in a white-tailed deer in Franklin County, Indiana. This marks the first time the disease, formally known as *Mycobacterium bovis*, has been found in a wild animal in Indiana. This finding means significant changes in disease monitoring requirements for cattle owners and deer hunters in the area.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) has been working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to test wildlife on a Franklin County cattle

farm where TB was diagnosed in April. The 2-year-old doe that tested positive for TB was culled as part of the surveillance effort on the cattle farm.

Under federal requirements, finding TB in a free-ranging wild animal means testing of all cattle must expand from 3 miles to 10 miles and surveillance in hunter-harvested deer will intensify.

For cattle owners in Franklin County and portions of some adjoining counties, BOAH staff will be reaching out to determine if cattle in the 10-mile circle are test eligible



and, if so, schedule herd testing. BOAH's premises registration program has approximately 400 farms registered in the 10-mile testing zone.

For deer hunters in the region, that means whitetails harvested in a specific zone must be sampled for laboratory testing. DNR will be providing more information to hunters in the coming weeks.

"This is an enormous undertaking that cannot be completed overnight," said Indiana State Veterinarian Bret D. Marsh, DVM.

"Farmers and hunters in this area have been

extremely cooperative and supportive of our efforts over the years. We need their help now more than ever as we widen our surveillance efforts. If this disease is out there—either on farms or in the wild—we need to find it. Our status as a TB-free state is critical to our growing and thriving cattle and dairy industries ..."

Indiana has officially held a bovine tuberculosis-free status since 1984 with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Under federal guidelines, that status

remains. BOAH has found four individual cases of TB in three cattle herds and a cervid farm in this region between 2008 and 2016.

Hunters should take precautions to protect themselves, including wearing gloves when field dressing animals and fully cooking all meat. Deer can be infected without noticeable signs of disease, like the positive 2-year-old doe. Hunters who notice signs of TB in wildlife should contact the DNR at (812) 334-3795. Hunters who see signs of bovine TB while processing wildlife should contact BOAH at (317) 544-2405.

Threatened Narrow-Headed Gartersnakes Introduced Into Pinetop Wetland

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) has partnered with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to release two male and one female narrow-headed gartersnakes into a newly created wetland adjacent to the AZGFD Pinetop regional office. Narrow-headed gartersnakes are listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The enclosed wetland was created, along with two new fish ponds, on the site of the original Pinetop Fish Hatchery that was built in the '30s. Before the narrow-headed gartersnakes were introduced, the wetland was stocked with speckled dace and blueheaded suckers, to provide a food source for the snakes, and northern leopard frog tadpoles.

NAU provided the snakes that were raised in captivity and supplied valuable input on the wetland's role in maximizing gartersnake persistence, as well as post-release snake monitoring.

The decline of the narrow-headed gartersnake is attributed to nonnative species (especially crayfish), habitat loss and effects from wildfires that have reduced the availability of prey fish.

Narrow-headed gartersnakes can grow to 34 inches in length and feed almost exclusively on small fish. They are usually tan to gray-brown with brown, black or reddish spots, lacking stripes like their more common cousin, the terrestrial gartersnake. Narrow-headed gartersnakes live near mid- to high-elevation streams, using pools and the rocky sides to catch their prey.

A viewing platform was built to allow visitors to view the wetland and ponds at the AZGFD Pinetop regional office, located at 2878 E. White Mountain Blvd, Pinetop, Arizona.

The project is a cooperative effort between AZGFD, NAU, Arizona Heritage Program and the Natural Resources and Conservation Service.

Rick Dahl Joins QDMA Board of Directors



The Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) recently brought Rick Dahl of Missouri on to its national board of directors. Dahl, a 30-year veteran of the investment management industry, served as chief investment officer of the \$8 billion Missouri State Employees' Retirement System from 1995 until his retirement in 2016. Dahl is a Life Member of QDMA.

"I'm at a stage in my life where giving back to organizations like QDMA that have been instrumental in pursuing conservation efforts across our country is important to me," said Dahl. "My passion for conservation and improving habitat for whitetails has brought me much joy in my lifetime, and I have learned many of these practices from QDMA."

Dahl has implemented many of QDMA's recommended practices on his 200-acre farm in Missouri, including extensive deer habitat improvements, herd management aimed at increasing numbers of adult bucks in the population, and much more. He has witnessed great improvements in the quality of deer hunting as a result. His experiences in the financial industry and his service on a number of non-profit foundation committees and boards will contribute critical expertise to QDMA.

"I hope that I can bring innovative ideas and financial management expertise to the QDMA Board of Directors," said Dahl. "As a passionate deer hunter and habitat manager, I look forward to helping QDMA pursue its mission."

Dahl has been on *CIO Magazine's* list of the 100 most influential CIOs in the world. In 2015, Dahl was awarded *CIO Magazine's* Lifetime Achievement Award. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a B.S. in Business Administration. He and his wife Maria have two children ages 22 and 17.

QDMA National Convention 2017

Mark your calendars for the Quality Deer Management Association's (QDMA) National Convention, July 20-23, in New Orleans. The show will be held in partnership with the Louisiana Sportsman Show at the Superdome. Many exhibitors will be in attendance focusing on a variety of aspects of outdoor life, including deer hunting, fishing, guns, duck hunting, archery, apparel and more. Seminars will be offered throughout the three-day event, and onsite entertainment for kids will be available. Visit qdma.com for more information.



RMEF Surpasses 10,000 Conservation Projects

An ongoing aspen restoration effort in Oregon's South Warner Mountains marks the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's (RMEF) 10,000th lifetime conservation project.

"This is an incredible conservation milestone," said David Allen, RMEF president and CEO. "It speaks volumes to the positive, beneficial impact the RMEF has on elk and elk country from coast to coast."

Earlier this year, RMEF contributed \$30,000 in grant funding to the Fremont-Winema National Forest as part of the seventh and final year of landscape aspen treatment in south-central Oregon where elk numbers are below objective. RMEF funded similar efforts in 2014 and 2015 to conserve and restore aspen stands and meadows in the same region. Also in 2016, RMEF awarded \$20,000 in grant funding to begin a similar landscape-scale effort in the North Warner Mountains.

RMEF's first habitat stewardship project was a 1986 prescribed burn in a place fittingly named Elk Creek on the Kootenai National Forest in northwest Montana. The backcountry burn



encompassed more than 1,000 acres of prime elk habitat where shrubs had become overgrown or decadent.

"We are grateful to our many partners who stand shoulder to shoulder with us in making meaningful conservation work a reality. We vow to accelerate our conservation mission of ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage," Allen added.

To date, RMEF completed 10,198 lifetime conservation and hunting heritage outreach projects in 49 states that permanently protected or enhanced 6,883,479 acres of vital elk habitat. **MP**

Simplified Canoe Portage

How to safely carry your canoe to and from the water

> By **Darryl Quidort**

The canoe once played a central role in travel all across the North American continent. In early times, it was easier to travel through the wilderness by water than on foot. River systems were highways connected to one another by portages over the divide to the next river. In lake country, portages connected the dots from lake to lake to form a travel route for people and for commerce.

Canoes were built for the job at hand. They ranged from small, two- or three-man canoes used on small streams and lakes to the 25-foot-long Laker canoe used on large rivers. Let's not forget the big 36-foot-long canoes, which were used by the Canadian voyagers during the fur-trade era.

The Native American canoe, made of birch bark stretched over a white cedar frame, gave way to the cedar-strip canoe, then wood and canvas, aluminum, fiberglass, Kevlar, Royalex and even plastic.

Portaging the canoe has always been a necessary part of canoe travel and a challenging part of the experience. The big, 600-pound canoe was portaged by four men—two in front, two in back—carrying the canoe upside down on their shoulders. The 300-pound Laker canoe was portaged by two men—one fore, one



Figure 1.1



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3



Figure 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6

LET'S PORTAGE!

Follow these six simple steps to safely lift your canoe overhead for portaging.

Figure 1.1: Stand at the center of the canoe and roll it up onto its side with the bottom toward you.

Figure 1.2: Lean over the canoe and grab the center thwart (or shoulder-yoke thwart) with your right hand near you and your left hand as far down the thwart as you can reach.

Figure 1.3: Lean back and roll the canoe up onto your thigh. Position your hands at each end of the thwart, with both palms facing forward.

Figure 1.4: Now, with a little bump of your thigh, push the canoe up with your right hand as you pull it overhead with your left hand.

Figure 1.5: Once you have the canoe above you, ease it down so the center thwart (or yoke) comes across your shoulders behind your head.

Figure 1.6: Move your hands to the gunwales to balance the load and then walk away.

aft—holding the canoe in an upright position over their heads. Smaller canoes were usually portaged by one man holding the canoe upside down overhead, with the weight resting on his shoulders. Various methods have been tried to get the canoe up onto the shoulders, but an experienced paddler knows how to easily lift the canoe into position by himself. If you don't know how to do this without hurting yourself or your canoe, be sure to reference the accompanying photo illustrations and explanations on how to lift the canoe safely overhead, then set it back down once you arrive at your destination.

Even today, canoes are quite useful and help us retain a bit of old-time heritage in our modernized world. A canoe can take you places where a motorboat sometimes cannot. Canoe travel is quiet, non-intrusive, self-powered and rather romantic. The fine lines and smooth curves of a good canoe put a person in the mood for paddling into the wilderness, where the faint smell of campfire smoke still lingers, the startling slap of a beaver's tail on the water still excites, and a loon's lonesome call at sunset can still be heard. I can't think of a better place to be. **MP**



Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2

AFTER THE PORTAGE

Of course, once you reach your destination, you must set the canoe back down. Don't sweat it; follow these three easy steps.

Figure 2.1: To put the canoe down, rest the canoe's back end on the ground behind you. Then, move forward of the canoe's center by sliding your hands along the gunwales.

Figure 2.2: Roll the canoe to the side. Don't let go.

Figure 2.3: Lean over and lay the canoe down.



Figure 2.3

review

Insanely Cold, Uncompromisingly Tough Canyon Coolers Outfitter 125



CANYON COOLERS OUTFITTER 125 Specifications

Capacity: 126 quarts
Ideal Can Capacity: 81 + ice
Maximum Can Capacity: 98
Weight (empty): 40.5 pounds
Color: Sandstone
MSRP: \$429.99
Contact: (866) 558-3267;
Canyoncoolers.com

A COOLER IS A MUST-HAVE ITEM FOR HUNTERS, CAMPERS, PEOPLE WHO FISH AND OTHER OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS. But, few things frustrate like a cooler that can't retain ice and keep contents cold. As a hunter, I know that meat from harvested game must be kept dry and cool in order to avoid premature spoilage.

The same is true of fish, pork, beef and poultry taken along on fishing or camping trips.

Conventional coolers simply don't deliver those results longer than a day or two. Ice melts quickly, and before you know it, the cooler's contents are swimming in water. Talk about a mess!

Fortunately, Canyon Coolers solve those problems.

Built Like a Rock

Canyon Coolers offers several cooler sizes, but the Outfitter 125 is ideal for outdoor trips lasting longer than a day. Many features suit it for wild places.

First, its PE RotoMolded polyethylene plastic shell is durable enough to stand on. Heck, it's even certified bear resistant by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, which means it complies with food-storage regulations in national forests in grizzly country. I find that rather impressive.

This type of rugged construction is a welcome attribute when it comes to pickup-truck beds and off-road adventures. Simply put, the Outfitter 125 can withstand it all. And, the bottom is outfitted with skid plates to make loading the cooler into your truck or boat easier while protecting the bottom.

Beyond that, broken latches are things of the past, thanks to three 100% recessed cam latches. Further, an integrated marine-grade hinge allows the lid to open and close fluidly. Rope handles, unlike plastic ones found on conventional coolers, won't break off, and if the rope becomes old or frayed, replacing it is simple.

Beefy Insulation

The secret to the Outfitter 125's ice retention is in its construction and insulation. It features thick walls on all sides and a sturdy lid and

floor to boot. All are insulated with Huntsman high-density PU foam. Sure, it's considerably heavier than conventional coolers, but its performance proves that the bigger-is-better philosophy has merit. Cheap, lightweight coolers simply don't compare.

What does this mean for you? It means that you get what you pay for. The Outfitter 125, though considerably more expensive than coolers found at department stores, can retain ice for seven to 20 days, depending on climate and, of course, how full it is filled and with what. So, you pay more up front, but it works, and it will probably outlast you, unlike cheap big-box store specials.

The Outfitter 125 is sized perfectly for various uses. It can store a quartered deer on ice, or it can accommodate enough soda and beer for a large backyard party with friends and relatives. I'll be using mine primarily for hunting since I do all of my own meat processing. I'm not always able to cut, grind and package meat immediately after a kill, and I can now rest assured the meat will stay perfectly fresh until I get to it.

Other Notable Attributes

Ever lose or break the drain plug for your existing cooler? My family has lost several throughout the years, but that isn't a concern with the Outfitter 125 since it features a No-Lose drain plug. The plug is threaded, but when it's loosened, a stopper prevents it from coming all the way out.

Most coolers aren't airtight, either. Again, the Outfitter 125 shines; it features a solid neoprene gasket around the lockable lid. By the way, a single cable lock can lock the cooler to your truck to hinder thievery.

I've had issues with residual odors and staining with past coolers. That can be distasteful, even repulsive. Fortunately, Canyon Coolers have non-staining, non-odor-absorbing outer and inner shells. This simplifies care and cleanup, all while ensuring years of great performance.

The Outfitter 125 is also backed by a lifetime warranty. If that doesn't instill great peace of mind, I don't know what will.

—Darron McDougal

gear

SHOWCASE

MAKE IT A QUEST

Quest soft coolers by Canyon Coolers are leak-proof backpack coolers that are rigid enough to withstand virtually any outdoor adventure. In particular, the Quest 32 can easily haul a plethora of food and drinks in its 32x13x11-inch storage, while keeping them cool the duration of your trip, thanks to IceSkin insulation. The Aqua Drain lets users drain moisture from within the insulated main compartment so the inside stays dry. Another drain lets out air and water, or you can thread your Camelback tube through it for easy access to drinking water.

MSRP: \$149.99

> CANYONCOOLERS.COM



COMFORT AND CONTROL

Rocky has long been a leading boot company, and now it offers the Broadhead waterproof insulated boot. Its flexible performance combines with 800 grams of 3M Thinsulate insulation to make it truly versatile and ready to tackle tough tasks. Featuring Venator camo ripstop nylon, abrasions and wicked elements aren't problems for the Broadhead. An EVA/rubber outsole ensures solid gripping in varied terrain, and an EVA footbed and moisture-wicking mesh lining provide long-lasting comfort along the way.

MSRP: \$149.99

> ROCKYBOOTS.COM

TACTICAL KNIFE

Founded in 1889, the Ontario Knife Company needs no introduction. However, it recently partnered with veteran knife designer Bob Dozier to develop the all-new Dozier Arrow BP folding knife. A tactical marvel, the Arrow BP's blade is made of D2 tool steel and measures 3.6 inches. A thumb-stud offers instant blade deployment, and an overall length of 8.2 inches makes this knife a convenient carry for many applications. Its spear-point blade touts a .125-inch thickness and boasts a 56-58 HRC

hardness rating. The G-10 handle material is constructed from fiberglass-based laminate for a durable, lightweight design.

MSRP: \$78.95, Stonewashed; \$81.50, Black Powder-Coated

> ONTARIOKNIFE.COM





ACCURACY REDEFINED

Incline and decline shooting angles won't stop Nikon's ARROW ID 3000 rangefinder from providing the exact shoot-for distance. With angle-compensating capabilities, Nikon's ID Technology eliminates the need to judge distances when shooting at either inclined or declined targets. Tru-Target Technology also provides two mode settings depending on the situation at hand. If your target is partially obstructed by brush or tall grass, simply hold down both buttons for two seconds for an accurate reading. The ARROW ID 3000 is compact, ergonomic and lightweight, plus it features a continuous eight seconds of measurement. Backed by Nikon's two-year limited warranty, bowhunters can now lay worries to rest and shoot confidently knowing, not guessing, their target's true distance.

MSRP: \$199.95

> NIKONSPORTOPTICS.COM



FOR THE TREESTAND HUNTER

Browning Packs has introduced its Buck1700 pack, which showcases useful features for treestand hunters. Aptly named, the Buck1700's storage capacity is 1,700 cubic inches. Baumshell woven fabric is approximately twice as rigid as conventional knitted pack fabrics. A quick-buckle design allows users to hang the pack from a branch or accessory hanger. The exclusive Hypersonic closure is toothless and self-healing for silent access. Internal pockets are part of the Hunter Specific Organization System and provide easy access to gear.

MSRP: \$80

> BROWNINGPACKS.COM

THE POCKET SHOT

The Pocket Shot's patented, circular design allows users to load and shoot different projectiles at two to three times the rate of a regular slingshot. Perfect for hunters and recreational use, this pocket-sized weapon is easily stored or carried, and stores ammo in its watertight compartment. It shoots projectiles at speeds up to 350 feet per second. Recommended ammo includes 1/4-inch to 3/16-inch steel slugs, marbles, small paintballs (0.4 cal) and Airsoft (BBs are not recommended because they will tear the pouch). The newly designed, high-impact inner ring is indestructible and is guaranteed not to chip, crack or break during normal use. The outer ring and cap will handle the harshest outdoor conditions. Created and built in the USA, the Pocket Shot includes one standard pouch and one pro pouch.

MSRP: \$25

> THEPOCKETSHOT.COM



Fingernail Polish: Not Just for the Ladies

EVERYDAY USES FOR A
COSMETIC STAPLE

By *Thomas C. Tabor*

I'm as guilty as the next guy for poking fun at my wife and daughters for their extravagant fingernail-polish collections, but I now find I'm actually using more of it than they are. Nah, I'm not painting my own nails. Instead, I've found uses for nail polish other than as a cosmetic.

Nail polish is little more than an ingenious high-quality thick and fast-drying paint. Those characteristics make it absolutely perfect for various everyday uses.





Paint damage is a common problem with fishing lures. To keep them performing their best, they need periodic maintenance. Nail polish perfectly solves this problem.



Accidentally sticking the wrong key in your vehicle's ignition can result in a costly repair job, but if you color-code the key to the corresponding vehicle, it lessens the possibility this will happen.



If you have a lot of locks and keys, matching those components can sometime be challenging.



The guide wrapping on fishing poles can eventually start to wear. An application of clear nail polish easily repairs those damaged areas and discourages further unwinding.

“If you have trouble threading a needle, you might try putting a tiny bit of nail polish on the end of the thread, then working it to a fine point as it dries.”

An application of brightly colored nail polish applied to your handgun sights makes them easier to see and align.

For the Fisherman

I consider nail polish a fisherman's best friend. Peek into most tackle boxes, and you'll probably find many worn lures. Often, the existing paint has faded or chipped, and the bare metal surfaces are tarnished. All of these conditions can adversely affect a lure's abilities to attract fish.

In this case, a bottle of nail polish not only makes battered lures look new again, but also wards off future damage. Whether you use nail polish to simply retouch chipped areas or to completely repaint faded surfaces, a fresh coating often resists fading and chipping more effectively than the original paint. Paint used by lure manufacturers may have strong eye appeal to consumers, but sometimes that paint isn't nearly as resilient against damage as a coat of nail polish. I frequently use a bottle of clear nail polish to paint over the surfaces of my brand-new lures before using them. It hardens the original paint and

provides a barrier against tarnishing on the unpainted areas.

Though somewhat uncommon, I've found in several instances that a chemical reaction can happen between the nail polish and original paint. When it does occur, the paint usually begins to wrinkle. I use acetone to remove all of the paint from the lure, and then I start over with a fresh coat of nail polish.

Painting clear nail polish over the unpainted surfaces of your spoons and spinners can protect against tarnishing. It will also protect those areas from scuffs and abrasive damage. For any lures that have already tarnished, I polish them with some form of metal cleaner like Brasso, and then apply a coat of clear polish.

The advantages of nail polish for fishermen don't end with lures. Over time, a fishing pole's guide windings can become damaged, but a little clear nail polish carefully applied can stop further unwinding.

For the Shooter

I sometimes struggle to line up the sights on my handguns, which is probably the result of my aging vision. Dots of brightly colored





The tiny screws holding the lenses of your eyeglasses in place can sometimes loosen and become lost. An easy way to prevent this is to remove the screws, and place a dab of clear nail polish on the threads prior to screwing them back into place.



Polishing compounds like Brasso can be used to bring luster back to the bare metal surfaces of fishing lures. After that, applying a protective coat of clear nail polish will help them resist damage and tarnishing.

nail polish added to the existing sight dots makes seeing and aligning them easier. I typically apply a coat of either red or white, or sometimes a combination of both by using one color for the front sight and another for the rear sight. The same technique can be used with open-sighted rifles and shotguns.

The safeties on many firearms are equipped with a red dot or ring that indicates the safety is in the off or "fire" position. That red indicator can wear and become harder to see, but it can easily be retouched with a spot of bright red nail polish.

Worn bluing can significantly diminish a firearm's overall appearance, so I often use a bottle of instant bluing to retouch those areas. Unfortunately, many firearms today come with some parts made of aluminum alloys, and for those areas, instant bluing simply has no effect. For those surfaces, I sometimes apply a light coat of black nail polish, feathering it out in order make the touch-up less noticeable.

Many shooters prefer to use some form of thread-securing component like Loctite on their firearms in order to discourage screws and bolts from loosening. This is particularly important with centerfire firearms delivering heavy recoil and for scope mounts. A dab of one of these products applied to the threads provides just enough resistance to discourage screws and bolts from loosening. But, if you don't have access to such products, a little nail polish, applied the same way, makes a fine substitute. In this case, I usually use clear or black polish.

Color Coding

I have a propensity for collecting keys. Those keys belong to various padlocks, door locks, luggage locks, vehicle ignitions and other locking mechanisms. Matching those keys to their respective locks becomes problematic. A great way to solve this issue is to color-code the keys to the locks using colored nail polish. If you run out of colors, you can always apply a combination of colors to both the key and the lock.

Many vehicle keys look similar, and the confusion can yield negative consequences. If you stick the wrong key in a vehicle ignition, it could damage the lock's tumblers. If this happens, you could become stranded and be served an expensive towing and repair bill. I know this for a fact, because it happened to

POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS

There are certainly differences of opinion when it comes to health risks associated with using chemical products, including nail polish. Animal studies conducted revealed health risks, but the amounts used for those tests frequently exceed that of a human's normal exposure. But, like all chemical-based products, I believe it's best to be cautious.

Even if there is some degree of health risk associated with using nail polish, I personally believe those risks would be much greater when the polish is applied in large quantities, regularly and directly to a person's body, or when breathing in large quantities of the fumes the polish generates. Nevertheless, some of the chemicals used to produce nail polish are considered toxic, and for that reason, you should always use them with common sense and in well-ventilated areas.

NAIL-POLISH HISTORY

Modern-day nail polish was actually inspired by automobile paint. Revlon first made it available to the public in 1932. However, researchers have found that nail polish actually dates back to 3200 B.C.

Excavations of Babylonian royal tombs found that males frequently wore nail polish. The colors used indicated their class. In China and Egypt in 3000 B.C., nail polish was also used for similar reasons. The Chinese made nail polish by combining beeswax, egg whites, flower petals and Arabic gum to create the pigment. After that, the individual receiving the treatment would soak their fingertips in the solution until the desired effect was produced.

“... a bottle of nail polish can not only make battered lures look new again, but also ward off future damage.”

me before I began color-coding my vehicle keys. That little error cost me a trip to the local dealership and a complete ignition-lock replacement. Several hundred dollars later, I was finally back on the road.

Around the Home

If you have trouble threading a needle, you might try putting a tiny bit of nail polish on the end of the thread, then working it to a fine point as it dries. The polish stiffens the thread making it easier to poke it through the tiny eyelet.

Similarly, you can use nail polish on frayed bootlaces or shoestrings. When the little plastic tip comes off and the ends of the laces fray, a coating of nail polish will extend the life of the laces and make threading them through loops considerably easier.

While I don't have any first-hand personal experience with this use, I'm told fingernail polish works great to stop a run in ladies' nylon hosiery.

The tiny screws that hold the lenses of your eyeglasses in place can easily work free and become lost. But, like the screws and bolts on

firearms, a dab of clear nail polish applied to the threads will keep them locked in place.

If you've ever had a hang nail or a split in your fingernail, you know how painful and irritating they can be. Try applying a light coat of clear nail polish over the injured area. A tiny dab will keep the nail from snagging on your clothing and seal the area, encouraging faster healing.

Let's not forget about jewelry. Some costume jewelry has a tendency to turn the wearer's skin green. This is usually the result of poor-quality metal. So, if you have a ring you like to wear, but dread the fact that after only a few minutes your finger will begin looking like it belongs to an alien, try applying a coat of clear nail polish to the area that contacts your skin.

The Way I See It

While it's a little embarrassing to be caught perusing the cosmetics counter at your local drugstore, in the end, you'll likely appreciate what nail polish can do for you in a pinch. I've certainly found many ways to use it for everyday projects, and I'm confident I'll find more in the future. **MP**



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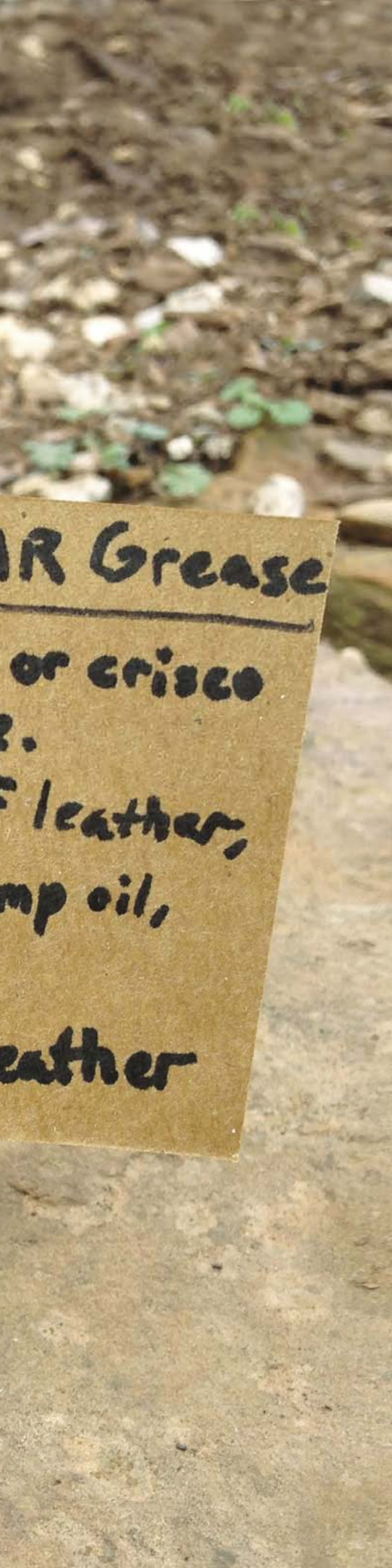
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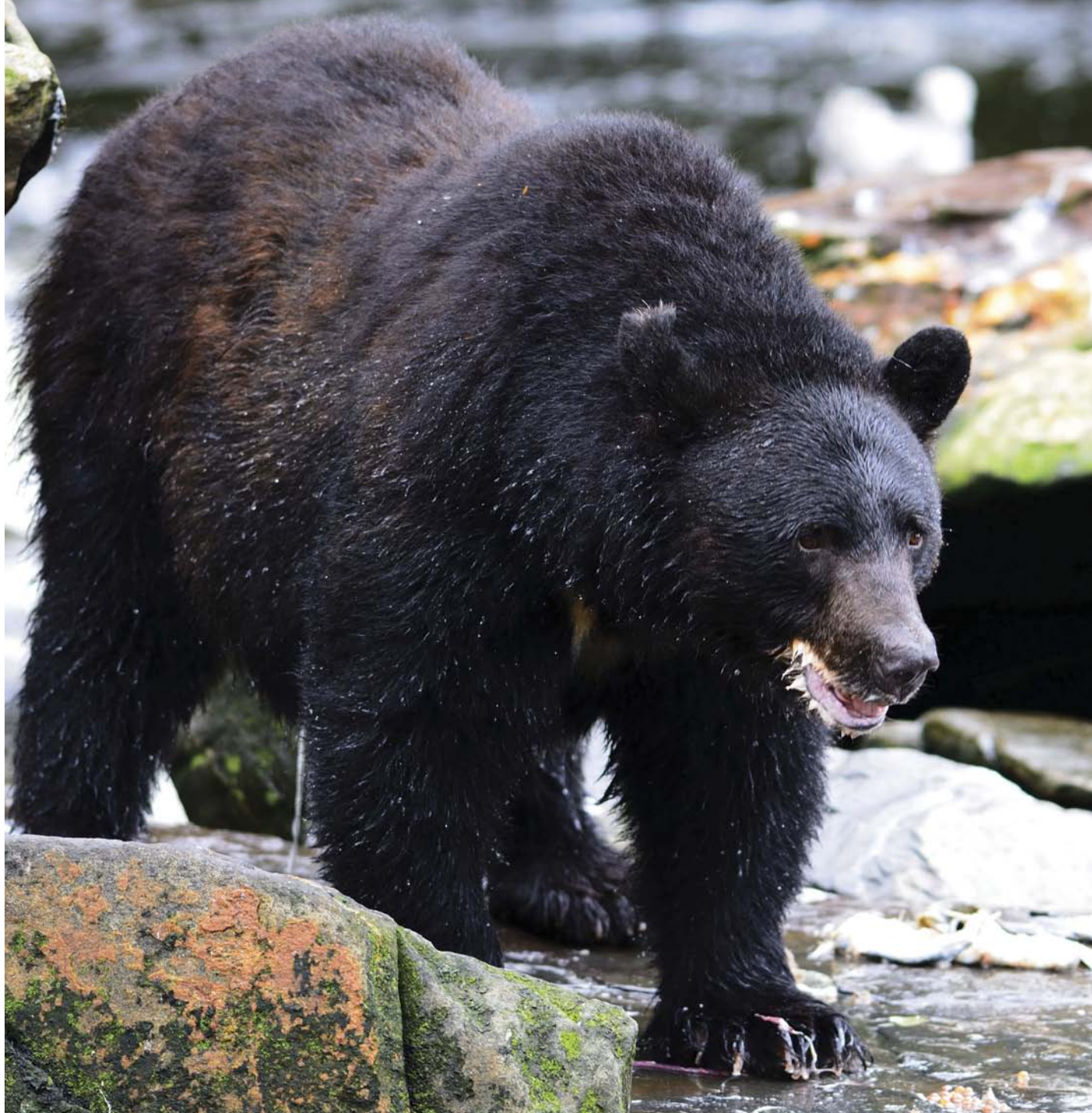
By Clay Newcomb

Rendering bear fat into grease is easy and doesn't require specialized equipment—just a knife, a pot, a heat source and storage containers for the oil or grease. The oil produced is very useful and makes a great addition to any modern pioneer's shop or kitchen. Additionally, the ethical position of using all of a harvested animal's resources just makes sense.

Aside from the various uses of bear fat, rendering it is a virtual history tour. Bear fat was a very valuable commodity in pioneer life across many parts of North America, and rendering fat in modern times is an honorable tribute to our past. The feat of harvesting a bear once meant that your family would be well-stocked throughout the winter. It meant that the challenges of living in the northern hemisphere would be less severe.

Rendering Bear Fat Into Grease

“... rendering it is a virtual history tour.
Bear fat was a very valuable commodity
in pioneer life ...”





Fall bears store a tremendous amount of fat for winter denning. It's a beautiful white fat that makes great oil.

When you hold a slab of bear fat, you're literally holding the assimilated nutrients of the food the bear ate. In Arkansas, when I see a slab of creamy white bear fat, I know that I'm seeing the product of white and red oak acorns. Bears are masters at gathering and storing calories, and those calories can be transferred to the hunter through the ancient ritual of hunting. There was a time when the people in North America were trying to put on calories, not take them off, and bear meat is a rich source of organic, healthy caloric content.

Rendered bear fat, known as bear grease, was once an extremely valuable commodity, both financially and practically. In the 1800s and earlier, there were no regulations placed on hunting in North America, and market hunters harvested bruins in excess. One of the main objectives of these entrepreneurs was to make bear grease. In many regions of the country, bear hunting was a lucrative business, especially where the bear commodities could be exported effectively to

PRESERVING YOUR BEAR HIDE

Bears spoil more quickly than deer because they naturally hold more bacteria in their guts and all over their body.

Hair slippage is what you're battling when trying to preserve a hide, and it can begin to slip quickly if not cared for properly. Bacteria are the cause of decay, and they start acting immediately when an animal dies. It's important to field-dress and cape your bear as quickly as possible.

In many parts of North America, it's customary to let deer hang overnight, or even for a few days in cooler weather. This tenderizes the lean meat by allowing the decaying process to start and the blood to drain. Don't do this with bears unless you can store the carcasses well below 40°F. I've personally seen hunters lose bear meat and hides by waiting to skin and quarter their bear during warmer temperatures. Once you've removed the hide, freeze it immediately, or flesh and salt it (see "Fleshing Your Bear Hide," pg. 24).



❶ The author holds a fillet of fresh bear fat. Bears store most of their fat on the back and rump. ❷ Cut the fat into small cubes on a cutting board. ❸ Place the cubes into a Fry Daddy or another heat source. Don't fill to the top, leave some room for boiling. Add a small amount of water in the beginning so the fat doesn't burn. ❹ Rendered bear fat will last for more than a year at room temperature. It also makes a beautiful kitchen ornament placed on a shelf or windowsill.

FLESHING YOUR BEAR HIDE

If you're rendering fat, you've obviously harvested a bear. The hide is one of a bear's most valuable commodities. It's expensive, sometimes costing thousands of dollars, to get a bear hide made into a rug. However, it's much less expensive if you flesh the hide yourself and send it to a professional tannery. The finished product will be a buckskin-tanned hide that'll last a lifetime.

"Fleshing" means getting the fat and meat off the underside of the hide. Fleshing a bear is best done when the temperature is below 50°F. Using a hide-fleshing tool—available at any trapping-supply store—scrape the fat off the hide. Trappers will also have a fleshing beam, but you can use a piece of 2x6 lumber or anything that gives you a hard surface to press against while keeping the hide off the ground. Additionally, you'll need to turn the lips and ears, and debone the paws.

After you've removed the majority of the fat, use non-iodized table salt to dry the hide. On a slightly sloping surface, liberally coat the entire hide with salt. The salt will pull the liquid from the hide and it will drain off. After a few days, wipe off the old, wet salt and apply fresh salt. Once the salt is relatively dry, it's ready to be shipped to the tanner. Check out a tannery called USA Foxx (usafoxx.com) for further instructions.

urban markets. One small town in Independence County, Arkansas—Oil Trough—received its name because of the volume of rendered bear fat it produced.

A large bear killed in the fall could easily produce multiple gallons of oil. Records show that in the mid-1800s, bear grease could be sold for \$1 per ell, which is roughly a modern gallon. At the time, that was a lot of money. The ells were transported in containers made from tanned deer necks.

Additionally, many cuts of bear meat were sold in commercial meat markets. Today, the sale of wildlife-related products is illegal, but in times past, wild game was a commercial meat source. Bear bacon and smoked bear ham were very common protein sources before the turn of the 20th century.

Bear Grease

Bear grease was useful then, and it's still useful today. It can be used for any type of cooking that involves oil, including pan-frying meat and in bread and pastries. Bear grease can be substituted in any recipe calling for oil or Crisco, and it's renowned for use in piecrusts. Last Christmas, we made an apple



**“Last Christmas,
we made an
apple pie using
bear grease ... the
flavor was
excellent ...”**



“... bear fat doesn’t turn rancid as quickly as rendered pork fat.”

pie using bear grease, and although the flavor was excellent, the sentimental value was off the charts.

Native Americans also used bear grease to waterproof leather and as insect repellent. It was also used to lubricate muzzle-loading ball patches and to oil knives and guns to prevent rust. A primary use was for fuel in oil-burning lamps; it produces a smokeless flame that’ll fill your home with the nuanced scent of past hunts.

Adding to its value, bear fat doesn’t turn rancid as quickly as rendered pork fat. Today, this attribute holds little value, but before refrigeration, it was extremely important. Grease was stored in sealed containers without refrigeration and it had a long shelf life. Bear fat that I rendered and stored at room temperature was edible one year after I made it.

There’s also some folklore associated with using bear grease. It’s said that if you place a jar of bear oil in a south-facing window, you can predict the weather based upon the grease’s changing appearance. The grease emits bubbles and floating particles at different times. Sometimes it’s cloudy and other times it’s a golden amber color. This is

associated with barometric pressure and temperature. Bear grease is even thought by some to be a cure for baldness.

If you harvest a bear in 2016, take the time to render some of the fat. It’s a messy job, but it’s fun. You can use the grease as a substitute for cooking oil in any recipe, and it tastes great. Store the grease in Mason jars to use and to give away as unique gifts to friends and relatives. I believe it’s a commodity every pioneer household needs.

How to Render Bear Fat

Harvesting the Fat

Bears store most of their fat on their back and rump. In the fall, bears reach their peak weight before denning. Using a sharp knife, fillet off the creamy white back and rump fat, and store in a cool place or freeze quickly. Be sure not to get any meat on the fat fillets. I estimate that 1 pound of fat will create roughly ½ pint of oil.

Rendering it Down

Once you’ve filleted the back and rump fat, cube it into small squares. The smaller the size, the quicker it will render. However, 1 ½x1 ½-inch cubes are sufficient. Next, place the cubes into a container over your heat source. I use a Fry Daddy, but any heat source with an appropriate container will work. Use a container with sides that are several inches above the fat because it will bubble and splatter.

Controlling the Heat

Controlling heat is the most important part of rendering bear fat. In a Fry Daddy, heat isn’t adjustable, but with other heat sources, it can be. Be sure to start the process on low heat. I usually turn the heat up once the fat starts to melt down to speed the process. Adding small amounts of water to the mix is advisable in the beginning to keep the fat from charring the pot.

Harvesting the Oil

The fat cubes will begin melting within several minutes of heating. Continue to heat until about 80% of the solid material has liquefied. Typically, when rendering down several pounds of fat, it will take about 20-30 minutes on low heat to melt. Next, use a strainer to collect the solids, and carefully pour the boiling-hot oil into a container with a spout. Then, pour the oil into the containers in which it will be stored. Mason jars work great. Let them cool for a little while, and then put lids on the jars. **MP**



(above) The author carefully pours the strained oil into jars. Hot oil is very dangerous, so be extremely careful. (opposite) After cooling, solids will collect at the bottom of the jar. Author Clay Newcomb uses this the same way as the clear liquid.

ELK HUNT of a LIFETIME

AN ADVENTURE
BOWHUNT IN THE LAND
OF ENCHANTMENT

By Mike Yancey

New Mexico's nickname is the Land of Enchantment, and the sound of a bull elk bugling through its crisp air is enchanting, indeed. From its high-desert plains to its dark, timbered forests, the state offers all of the western hunting opportunities a bowhunter could ever ask for. Whether you want to hunt speedy pronghorns in the dry plains, the trophy mule deer that the state is famous for or the mighty elk, which inhabits many areas across the state, New Mexico has you covered. Quality animals aren't hard to come by, but non-resident tags for coveted units are.





“Nestled along the famous Vermejo Park Ranch, this unit features some of the prettiest country New Mexico offers.”

(above) Author Mike Yancey hunts high country for elk to intercept them as they travel between bedding and feeding areas.

(opposite) John Firestone, pictured here, was the author's hunting partner. (opposite, insert) Firestone made his bow for this hunt, a beautiful Osage orange flatbow.

I went on a New Mexico elk hunt in 2015 in a unit that, once drawn, can't be drawn again. Nestled along the famous Vermejo Park Ranch, this unit features some of the prettiest country the state offers. The Valle Vidal unit in northeastern New Mexico offers some of the world's finest elk hunting—both for resident and non-resident hunters—with several different hunts for different weapon types being offered. Tags are very limited on all of these hunts, so it's almost like hunting on private land; I never saw another hunter, other than on the road, during my entire hunt.

Many people will wonder why I'd write about and give away such a special place, but I can't draw this hunt again, and I can only hope that a friend draws it so I can go along to help out and enjoy the experience again; this time as a non-hunter.

Laying the Groundwork

I drew the tag along with good friend John Firestone of Oklahoma, a skilled traditional bowhunter and up-and-coming bow maker. When we found out that we'd each drawn the coveted tag, we decided to exhaust every

effort to make this truly a once-in-a-lifetime hunt. We made plans for a family vacation in the area that summer, and took our wives and kids out there for fun. While we all enjoyed ourselves, we also spent several days checking out the unit and putting our boots to work in order to better understand the area. The summer trip left us with a better feeling about the hunt. We knew what things looked like, and seeing herds of summer elk only fueled the fire. Additionally, four different friends who live in New Mexico offered tons of information, which helped immensely once we were hunting.

Setting up Camp and Getting Started

Our hunt was the second archery hunt, 10 days of the best elk hunting I've experienced to date. We arrived a couple of days early to set up camp and further scout the area. Sleep didn't come easily the first night we camped in white canvas tents under clear, starlit mountain skies. Elk were bugling in every direction, sending out their taunting, whistling challenges throughout the night.

We rose early that next day to scout and



narrow down areas on which to concentrate the following morning, which would be the season-opener. Elk were everywhere we stopped to scout and listen, but we knew we needed to venture off the main road to avoid pressure.

That night, like the night before, found us trying to sleep after a hard day of scouting and a great meal cooked in Dutch ovens over coals. We struggled to fall asleep while the bulls sounded off literally all night long.

A Close Call

On day one, we climbed as high as we could, trying to intercept the herds as they moved up to the mountaintops to bed after a night of feeding and bugling in the grassy meadows below. Our plan worked because we soon found ourselves surrounded by elk moving up the mountain.

When John began calling, a bull soon started answering back, getting closer with every bugle. Before long, I saw him raking a tree just a few yards out of range. The bull was coming closer, but before he ventured within bow range, the wind currents changed and it was all over.

I rejoined John, and we were talking excitedly about the encounter when a small raghorn bull appeared. Neither John nor I are true trophy hunters, and either of us would've been proud to take this small bull with our primitive bows. As John began to draw on the bull, the howling wind made me question whether he'd make the somewhat long shot, and as I had guessed, the arrow sailed harmlessly past the unsuspecting bull.

The next few days found us near elk, both in the mornings and evenings. The bulls would bugle until around 10 a.m., then quit until around 2-3 p.m. when they'd fire up again. We tried calling, and it brought them closer, but each time the wind betrayed us at the last minute.

A New Approach

After a few days of that, we tried stalking and hunting wallows. We both found wallows high up the mountain close to the bedding areas, and the first night of hunting them found us in the most intense bugling and fighting we've ever witnessed in person.



Unfortunately, I missed a bull by totally misjudging the distance during the final moments of legal shooting hours.

A Change in Weaponry

The next day was the sixth day of our hunt, and John and I both had been hunting with primitive bows when, over breakfast, John said, "I'm taking my Black Widow." Wanting to take advantage of any opportunity that he might have, I said I'd take a glass bow as well. My longbow was one made by my good friend,

(above) Though not a trophy bull, Yancey couldn't have been happier with taking this mature cow using a 60-pound longbow in New Mexico. (opposite, top) A summer scouting trip helped Yancey and Firestine learn the country and find elk ahead of the fall hunting season. (opposite, below) Packing out meat is a necessary labor of love with every remote elk kill.

A TRIBUTE SHOT

Hunting with primitive and traditional archery is a great way to hunt elk. Tackle is lightweight and easily carried while hunting elk in the mountains they inhabit. My first bow for this hunt was a sinew-backed bighorn sheep horn bow made for me by good friends Carl Peterson of Texas and the late Ed Scott of New Mexico, who passed away while I was on this hunt. Friends said that during his last day, Scott was in and out of consciousness, but kept asking about my hunt. In his honor, I launched an arrow into the valley below where my elk fell as they were laying him to rest in the National Cemetery at Santa Fe.

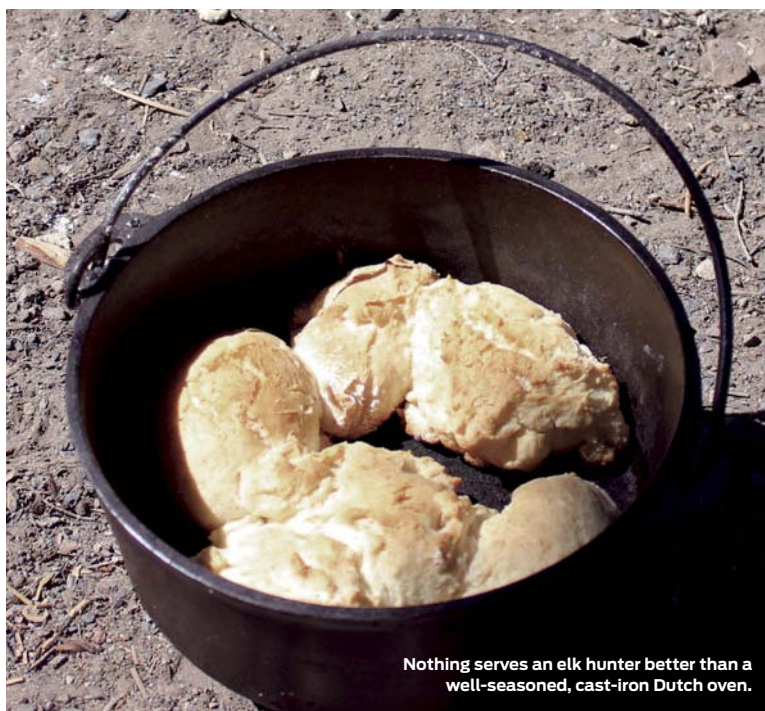


“As John began to draw on the bull, the howling wind made me question whether he’d make the somewhat long shot ...”



ELK IN THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

New Mexico offers great elk hunting throughout the state. Many areas are quality units with high demand, so getting a tag can be difficult. New Mexico's Department of Game and Fish website, wildlife.state.nm.us, will guide you through the application process, which is due by mid-March each year. The Valle Vidal hunts are very limited, with only 25 tags allotted for the hunt that I was on. There are two campgrounds available, and you're not required to have a guide to do this hunt. We did it on our own, deploying a canvas Hunter's tent for our sleeping tent and a Baker Leanto for our cook tent, both made by Panther Primitives.



Nothing serves an elk hunter better than a well-seasoned, cast-iron Dutch oven.

Neal Brown, of Mississippi. I'd previously taken game with it on several different hunts, so I knew that, given the chance, the bow would do its part if I did mine.

Sweet Success

That evening, I guarded an elk trail that connected a bedding and feeding area. About an hour before dark, I heard hooves clicking on rocks as the herd worked toward me. I could see bits and pieces of them as they traveled through the timber. I could also tell that this herd was all cows and calves, with no bull in the bunch. As they filed past, I was able to pick an opening to see the bodies as they came by just before they stepped into a slightly larger opening where I could shoot.

With a big, mature cow picked out, I sent a wooden shaft with a single-bevel broadhead through both of her lungs at what turned out to be 43 yards, about the same distance from which I'd missed the bull the evening before. This time, my shot was true, and I followed the 50-yard blood trail to my prize.

Although John didn't take an elk during our hunt, the experiences we shared made it truly a once-in-a-lifetime hunt in the Valle Vidal. **MP**

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Hard-Water Tips for **TRAPPING**

PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES



Many winter activities are available to outdoorsmen/women, but the author suggests that none are more rewarding than running a beaver-trap line.

BEAVER

NAB'EM
THROUGH
THE ICE!

By Darin Potter



A baited carriage set using a 330 conibear is ready to be lowered under the ice.



(left) Conibears, such as this 330, can stack up flat tails in no time. (below) Constructing a carriage set isn't time-consuming, and it's very effective for nabbing hard-water beavers.



(above) Trapping flat tails in winter requires specific gear. Create a checklist so you don't unintentionally leave items behind.

“Last fall, I set traps in a small lake located on state land and caught three beavers in well-used runs along the perimeter.”

With deep snow and temperatures so frigid that salt has little affect on the ice covering your driveway, few are motivated to head outdoors. For the trapper, however, these aren't challenges to laying down some serious steel for trapping flat-tails through the ice. Ice makes areas that were inaccessible in the fall reachable, increasing beaver-trapping opportunities, which often leads to more prime pelts in the fur shed.

We've developed several tips to help you create a game plan for a beaver trap line that'll yield a load of flat-tails this winter.

Scouting

Before blindly walking into an unfamiliar area with all of your trapping gear, it's important to conduct some scouting before the winter freeze. Doing so will put you well ahead of the game.

Last fall, I set traps in a small lake located on state land and caught three beavers in well-used runs along the perimeter. Beaver runs can be identified by the narrow depression they make along the bottom from swimming back and forth. Because it was early in the trapping season, I easily identified these active runs along with fresh sign, which

included a dammed culvert and several chewed mature poplar trees. Once the lake froze, I easily pinpointed areas to place my 330 conibear traps.

I typically mark these locations in advance by placing one or two sticks next to the run. Because I mostly trap on state land, I prefer to use natural markers, which are more discreet and are disguised from other trappers. However, bright surveyor's tape can be used sparingly. You can also use a GPS unit to record these locations and navigate routes, which is especially helpful in remote locations. Besides runs, you should also mark food caches, den entrances and small openings in the water that beaver are using.

Once you find an area you plan to trap, gather up as many 1- to 3-inch-diameter sticks as necessary to act as supports and dive sticks for your conibear traps or snares. Place these sticks where you can easily retrieve them once snowfall begins and they are covered.

330 Ice Sets

My favorite set through the ice is a 330 conibear trap positioned in a shallow run beaver are frequenting. In order to identify beaver runs, take a solid steel ice spud and tap

it on the surface of the ice; listen for a hollow sound. This signals that beaver have been using the run: As they swim back and forth, they thin the ice. Be extremely cautious when approaching these areas. If you're having a hard time locating runs via tapping, look for bubbles under clear ice or indentations in the snow. These indicate that beaver are actively using the runs.

After cutting about a 2-foot-wide hole in the ice, I place the 330 in the bottom of the run, place two sticks through the trap's eyelets and shove them into the muck until stable. You can also secure the trap using trap stands. If there are large gaps above the trap and to the sides, I add more sticks to force beavers to swim through it. Lastly, I wire the safety chain to a nearby sapling. If none are available, you can place the wire around a 2- to 3-foot stick and position it above the hole perpendicular to the trap so both ends touch the ice. Without proper fastening, a larger beaver could possibly pull your trap, leaving you empty-handed.

When trapping beaver in deeper runs with a 330 conibear, use a carriage-style setup. This can be constructed easily using two straight 5-foot dry branches about 2 inches in diameter and a 4-foot piece of 11-gauge wire to secure the trap chain to the bank. Or, simply place a cross pole over the hole.

To create this type of set, start by making sure the safety clips are in place, then set the trap. Afterwards, take one of the 5-foot poles and place it through the two rings on the same side as the trigger and press the springs up against the pole to secure the trap. Next, take a piece of wire and place it through both springs, then wrap it around both poles. This will prevent your trap from sliding down. Next, slide the other 5-foot pole through the trap's jaws along the diameter on the opposite side. This pole will help stabilize the 330 as the beaver passes through it. Many trappers use a single pole instead of following the second step described above, which can still be effective. Also, make sure both of these poles are even and that enough space is left to shove the set down into the bottom.

To make your 330 sets more attractive to a beaver, place a peeled potato or a partially debarked poplar stick through the prongs on the trigger. This mimics a food cache and can be very effective with under-ice sets. Bait can also be used when setting foothold traps under the ice using the pole-set method.

Footholds

When constructing a foothold set, find a 6-foot pole that is 3 to 6 inches in diameter, and shove it through a hole in the ice to check the depth. Once you know how deep the area is, you can create a small platform using nails or screws to attach short sticks to the pole. Wire the bait about 5 inches above the trap.



After wiring the trap's chain toward the top of the stick or cross pole, it can be lowered to the bottom. The foothold should be positioned about 20 inches below the ice's surface.

Snares

Using snares under the ice is another effective method for stacking up prime beaver pelts, especially if they've become trap-shy. Although 330s are my favorite, they're very popular with other trappers, too. So changing things up and setting a snare can be the ticket to catching older, wiser beavers. A snare should be in every trapper's arsenal.

The number of snares used at a set varies according to the situation. If you plan to place a snare in a confined area, such as a shallow or narrow run or a den entrance, one snare should suffice. On the other hand, if you

(top) The author is all smiles over a beaver he trapped under the ice on public land in Michigan.



ORGANIZE YOUR GEAR

When trapping beaver through the ice, nothing is worse than accidentally leaving equipment behind. I know because I've done it so many times. It's very frustrating, especially when it's cold outside, your hands are freezing, and you're trying to set traps. Trapping flat-tails in the winter requires specific gear, so create a checklist and organize all of your equipment ahead of time.

Before you leave home, lay out everything you'll need, then check off the items as you load them into your vehicle. Besides conibear traps and snares, the most important item to bring along is an ax or ice spud to cut through the ice. Other trapping gear includes: a GPS, bow saw, trap setters, an ice scoop, hand warmers, ice grips for your boots, full-length insulated rubber gloves (gauntlets) and a pair of snowshoes, if trapping in remote locations. A pack basket, 5-gallon pail or a plastic utility sled can be used to transport gear to and from your trap line.

When running a trap line farther away from home, it's always a good idea to pack an extra pair of socks, pants, long underwear and a long-sleeved shirt in case your clothing becomes saturated from sweat or you break through the ice.

discover a wide, deep run that the beavers are traveling, a pole set using multiple snares is the best choice.

To make a snare set, you'll need a $\frac{3}{32}$ -inch cable (about 48 inches long) with a swivel connected to the end. It's essential to use a snare with a washer lock (relaxing lock) to ensure pelts aren't damaged. This type of lock will tighten when the beaver tries to swim away, but relaxes once it stops moving. The opening of the snare loop should be approximately 9-10 inches in diameter. Because their heads are too small to snare around their necks, it's best to target beavers' front shoulders.

Next, secure the snares to a 3- to 5-inch-diameter pole using 11-gauge wire, and position the snare loop in the center of the run (when using one snare). The pole should be

sturdy and long enough to reach the bottom and extend out of the ice. If the main pole you're using isn't poplar, you can wire smaller poplar sticks to the main pole. Expose the bare wood by removing some of the bark with a knife. The light color will grab beavers' attention and direct them through the snare loops as they swim in to investigate. After pushing the pole into the muck, secure the swivels to a second stick, which should be placed horizontally over the hole in the ice.

A Rewarding Diversion

This winter, instead hanging up all of your traps until next season, consider a beaver trap line through hard water. Sure, there are other outdoor activities this time of year, but none are quite as rewarding as hauling up a flat-tail from under the ice. **MP**

· SURVIVAL ·





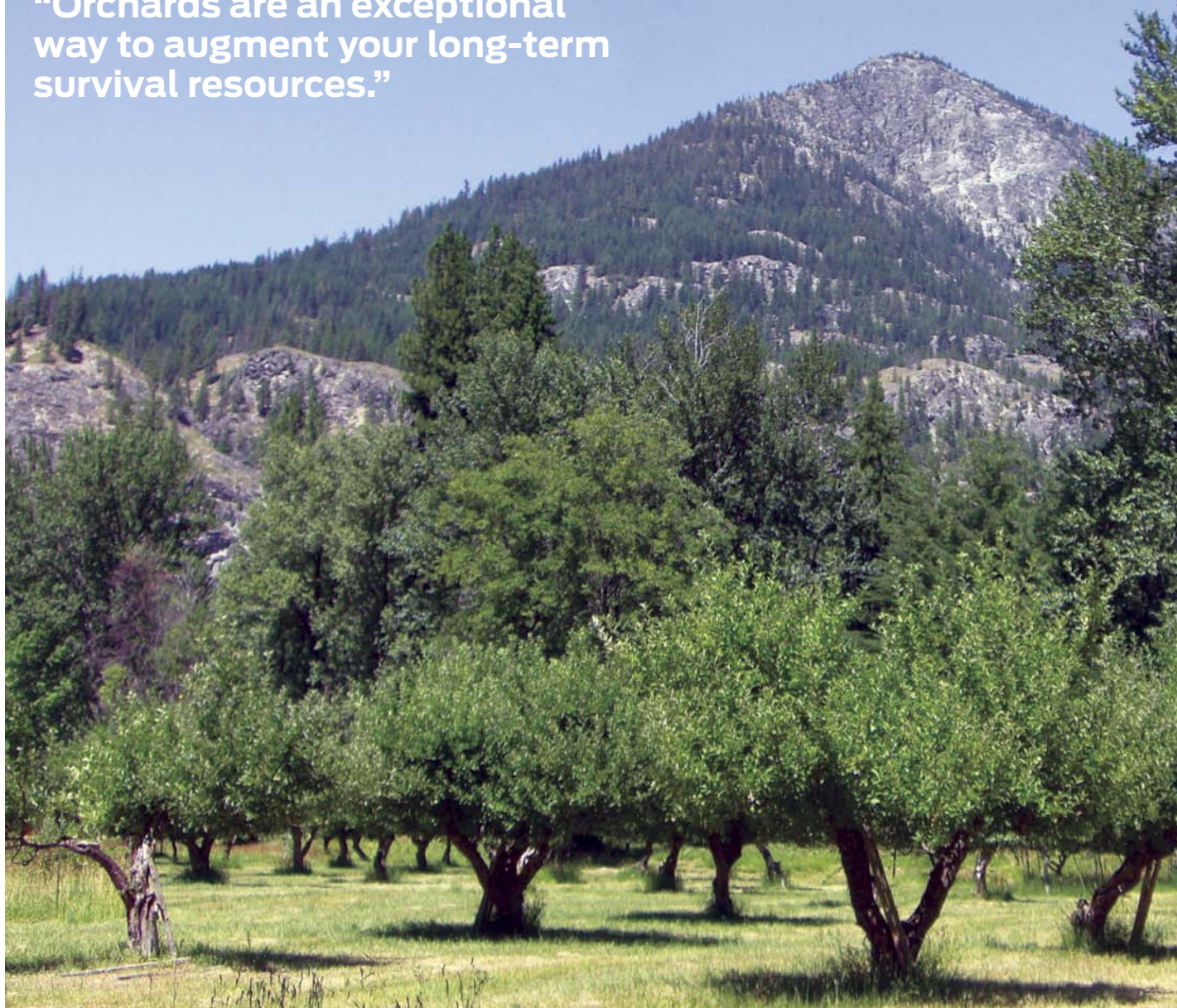
Plant a Survival Orchard

ADD FRUIT AND
NUT TREES TO
YOUR CROP MIX TO
PREPARE FOR
UNFORESEEN
FOOD SHORTAGES

By Larry Schwartz

As a homesteader, you've probably learned that diversification is a great way to ensure success, but have you considered growing anything other than annual crops that must be replanted each year? Fruit and nut trees are perennials that can provide you with excellent sources of food with little effort past the initial planting. These benefits make adding an orchard to your crop mix well worth your consideration should a food shortage occur. Even if no problems arise, you'll still be blessed with nutritious crops throughout the year.

“Orchards are an exceptional way to augment your long-term survival resources.”



(above) Orchards need not be large in order to be productive; just a dozen trees or less, depending on the space you have available for planting, can prove useful.

PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA.ORG

(opposite) The types of trees that will be successful are based in large part on the plant-hardiness zone in which you live. The 13 zones in North America are based on the average temperature range for their locations. PHOTO BY USDA.GOV

Why you Should Plant an Orchard

Adding an orchard to your homesteading plan has many benefits. First, it's an easier way to grow food. Most homesteaders start out—or focus on—planting annual vegetables and grain crops. These provide the nutrients we need in a healthy diet and can be grown in large quantities with little resources beyond the land to plant them, water, and fertilizer to nourish them. Unfortunately, they also must be planted annually from seed you buy or save from a previous harvest.

In contrast, orchards consisting of fruit and nut trees only need to be planted once, and they bear fruit annually or on a regular cycle.

They require little—if any—effort to maintain, especially compared to a garden or crop field. Orchards also help you produce food from land that's otherwise unsuitable for crops but fine for trees.

Fruit and nut trees also add diversity to your diet. They are excellent sources of the sugars, proteins and vitamins needed for a balanced diet. Your canned vegetables can and should be supplemented with dried fruits, fruit-based jams and jellies, and nut butters of all kinds for inclusion in meals during winter's coldest months.

Another, perhaps less obvious benefit, is that because foodstuffs like jams, jellies

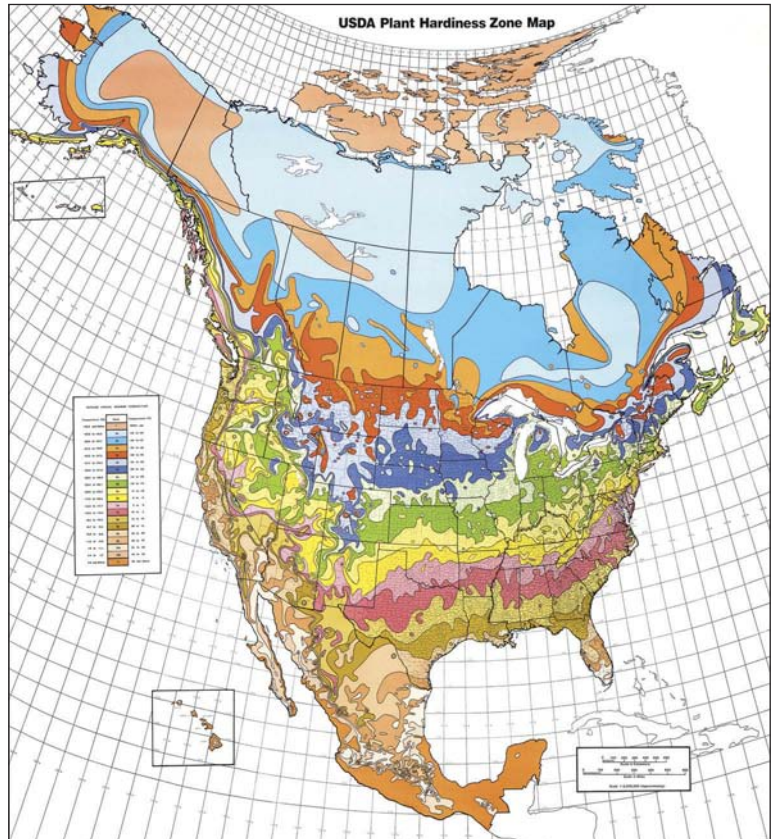


and nut butters are highly desirable, they're excellent items to barter for other goods or services.

Getting Started

Like any project, first decide what you'd like to accomplish. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Why do you want to plant an orchard?
- What do you want it to provide?
- What areas are available where you could plant an orchard?
- Do you want others to know you have an orchard, or is it a secret?
- What will grow well in your region?



MAXIMIZE YOUR HARVEST DURATION

By picking the right mix of trees, you can reap a harvest that begins in late summer and continues through the winter and into early spring.

Citrus Trees	When to Harvest
Orange	Winter
Lemon	Winter
Lime	August through March
Tangerine	Winter
Grapefruit	Late autumn through winter
Fruit Trees	When to Harvest
Apple	August through October
Cherry	Mid-summer
Crabapple	Late September through early November
Peach	Late summer
Pear	November
Persimmon	September through January
Plum	Late summer
Nut Trees	When to Harvest
Chestnut	Mid-September to mid-October
Hazelnut	September to October
Hickory	Autumn
Oak/Acorn	October
Pecan	October
Walnut	Autumn



(above) Nuts, like these walnuts and hazelnuts, grow in most regions of North America and provide much-needed fats and proteins in your diet. Smaller nuts like acorns are also great wildlife attractors. PHOTO BY PUBLIC-DOMAIN-IMAGE.COM *(below)* If your latitude permits, add some citrus trees, like this orange tree, to your mix. Citrus fruits are tasty, and they provide much-needed vitamins during the winter months; plus, they can liven up a meal. PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA.ORG



Start With a Good Plan

Now that you know what you want to accomplish, you can begin researching. Fortunately, the resources you need to develop your plan are free and easily accessible. There are numerous online resources that can guide you as you plan and plant your orchard. Local arborists, garden centers and agricultural-extension agents can tell you which trees will grow well in your region or, more specifically, on the land where you'll plant them. With their help, you can make informed decisions on the types of trees to plant and when and where to plant them.

When we think of orchards, most of us think of fruit trees. But, if you understand that diversification is one of the foundational concepts of successful homesteading, you can see that planting multiple smaller orchards to address various needs is a solid idea. Plant a small apple orchard and another with nut-bearing trees. If you live in a latitude that supports them, add citrus trees to your mix.

As you decide upon a mix of trees, consider how they can provide fruit and nuts for you throughout as many months as possible. For example, lemon trees bear fruit year round, while mandarin oranges have mature fruit in late fall and early winter. Persimmons can put food on the table long into the winter.

The trees available to you are based on where you live. The U.S. Department of



Agriculture has divided the country into 13 plant-hardiness zones and mapped the crops that'll grow in each one.

Order or Chaos

Once you've chosen what to plant, decide how and where you'll plant it. If you simply want to add an orchard to the mix of food-stuffs already growing on your property, deciding where really becomes a matter of where the trees will get the best soil, water and sunlight. But, if you're more focused on preparedness and self-sufficiency, then you may not want your neighbors and everyone who drives by knowing they can come by to get "free" fruit or nuts. In that case, choose an inconspicuous location.

Next, decide on a planting pattern. Here are some considerations:

- An orchard's traditional layout is one or more rows of trees spaced far enough apart so that when they mature their branches won't touch each other and compete for light and water. This, of course, varies by tree type. The rows are normally planted on a north-south axis to give the trees the best sunlight possible.
- Your rows can be in the traditional matrix of rows and columns in a rectangular shape to fill in the area.

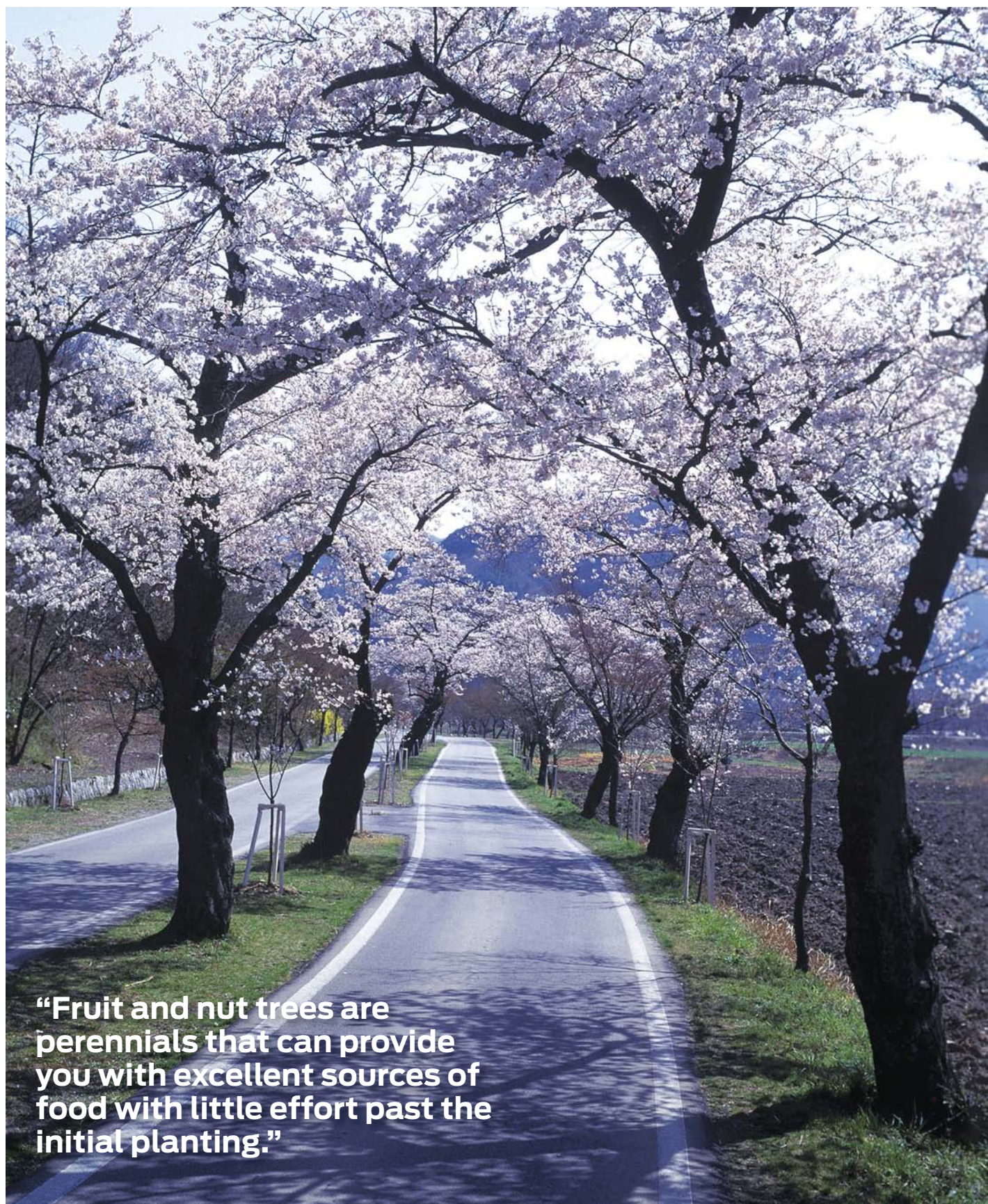
"Local arborists, garden centers and agricultural-extension agents can tell you which trees will grow well in your region ..."

(above) Planting a variety of different trees can provide you with winter delicacies like this banana nut bread covered in apple butter.

PHOTO BY WIKIMEDIA.ORG

(below) Planting the right mix of trees can help draw animals to your property, like the pecans that lured this squirrel. PHOTO BY PEXELS.COM





“Fruit and nut trees are perennials that can provide you with excellent sources of food with little effort past the initial planting.”

- You can also run one or more rows along linear terrain features like a road, stream or hedgerow to help it both blend into the landscape and beautify your property.

If you want to keep your new food source hidden, you can mingle your fruit or nut trees with existing trees, or plant them individually or in small groups. Here are some benefits to this approach:

- It blends your new food source with existing flora.
- It makes use of your entire property in case you don't have large open plots where you can plant a traditional orchard.
- You can use trees to attract wildlife to your property or even specific areas.
- If you're a hunter and want to attract deer, squirrels and other game animals, planting trees like oaks, apple and persimmon is a legal and effective way to attract them without using artificial means.

Beyond the pattern you use, if you expect a sizeable crop, leave space for a vehicle to help haul the harvest back to your homestead.

Orchards and Long-Term Survival

Orchards are an exceptional way to augment your long-term survival resources. This is especially true if you have an emergency retreat that you're unable to spend a lot of time at, either due to its remoteness or not wanting to go there too often and give away its location. The nuts and fruits they produce are excellent sources of fats and vitamins often missing in survival diets. This is especially true if your food stores are based on grains and dried foods.

At some point, your supplies will be consumed, and you'll have to start growing your own food. An orchard, hidden or in plain view, will give you a solid foundation for feeding yourself and your family in times of need, and it's a resource that requires little attention beyond the initial planting. **MP**

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

The best and easiest place to obtain valuable information about what grows well in your region, planting times, necessary soil conditions and when to harvest your fruits and nuts are your state's agricultural extension services and local tree nurseries or garden centers. Lists of these can be found online:

State Extension Service Directors and Administrators Directory;
nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/State%20Extension%20Service%20Directors%20and%20Administrators%20Directory%20%28Dec%202014%29.pdf

National Nursery & Garden Center Directory;
nurserytrees.com/States/National%20Nursery%20%26%20Garden%20Center%20DIRECTORY.htm



(left) Growing your own food is a reward that can be shared with family and friends. PHOTO BY FLICKR.COM

(opposite) Fruit trees, especially those that produce flowers, make an excellent border for roads and walkways.

PHOTO BY THINKSTOCK

· GENERAL ·



For those who need a small flashlight, there are many good ones from which to choose.



Let There be LIGHT

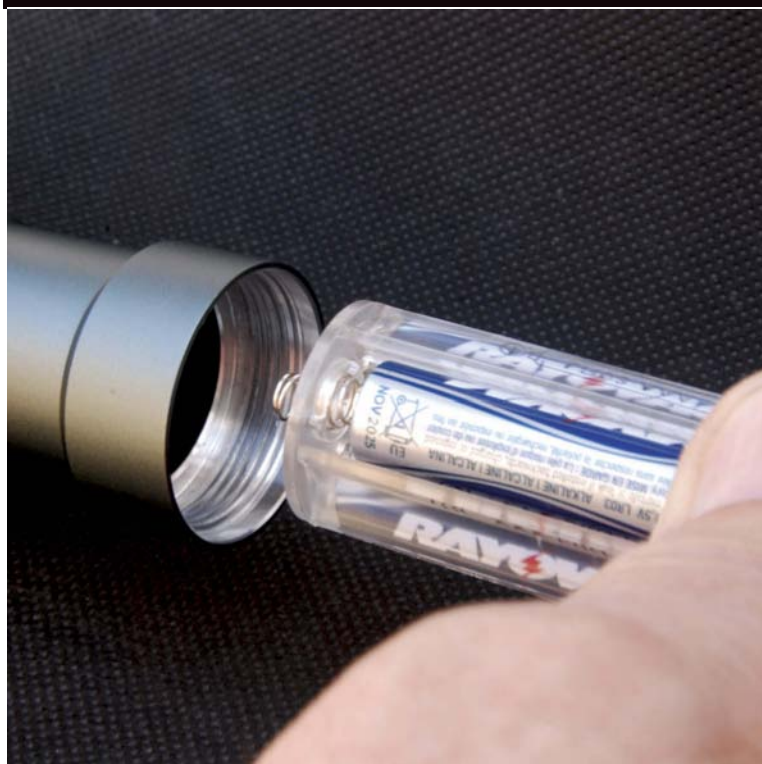
SMALL FLASHLIGHTS
HAVE BECOME MODERN
MARVELS

By James E. House and
Kathleen A. House

“Many small flashlights offer output in the 100- to 300-lumen range.”



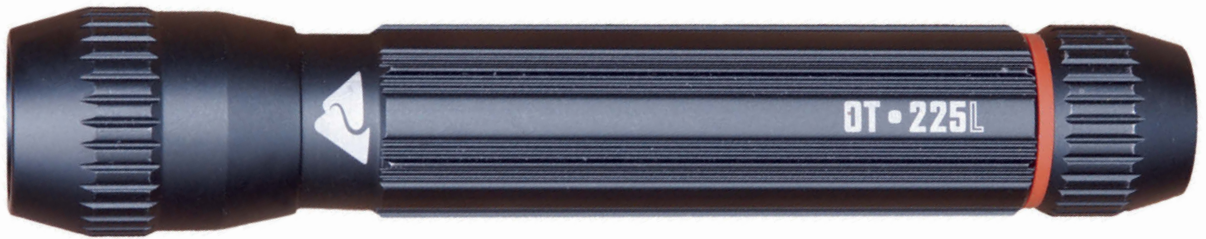
(above) The most effective flashlights use the Cree LED light source. (below) Small flashlights that are powered by three AAA batteries contain the batteries in a holder so they can all be inserted at once.



A light source can be absolutely indispensable. Light helps us avoid hazards, serves as a means of signaling, or simply provides comfort and reassurance, letting us see what made a mysterious noise. In many instances and in remote locations, a flashlight is the most convenient light source, and even a small one can provide enough light to make a difference.

Flashlights come in all sizes and shapes, but for hiking or including in a bug-out bag, a portable flashlight is most convenient.

Light brightness is measured in lumens, and the brightness of most models is printed either on the package or on the light itself. Many small flashlights offer output in the 100- to 300-lumen range. These modern marvels use Cree LED light sources, which are much more energy efficient than models using incandescent bulbs. The result is that some incredibly bright lights are small, and the power source can be two or three standard AA or AAA batteries. This is a great advantage because batteries of these sizes are readily available and relatively inexpensive. Features common to most small flashlights include a bright LED light source, water resistance provided by O-ring seals and, in some cases, impact resistance.



This Ozark Trail OT-225L is a durable and rugged light suitable for general use.

Because we travel a lot and often find ourselves in campgrounds totally devoid of lighting, we've developed great appreciation for small, bright flashlights. Such flashlights are available that sell for much more than \$100, but numerous models sell for less than \$20. Because we have many lights in the more inexpensive range, our experience with several representative models should help you choose one for yourself. We've separated these into two categories—small and smaller—for the purposes of this article.

Small

In this category, we include flashlights that require no more than two AA batteries or three AAA batteries for power and weigh 4-6 ounces. One such flashlight is the Rayovac Model STF (spot to flood). Focusing is accomplished by moving the head forward (spot) or to the rear (flood). On the sample tested, the sliding movement requires so little effort that the beam changes effortlessly.

This light has two power settings: 220 lumens on bright and 65 lumens on energy-saver mode. Therefore, it produces enough light for serious use. The on/off switch is located on the side of the barrel near the forward end. Pushing the switch brings the light on in the bright setting, and pushing it again enables the low-power setting. Battery life is rated at 3.5 hours on bright and 8 hours on low power. The Rayovac STF is an all-metal flashlight that uses a Cree LED.

For those who want a simple on or off but bright flashlight, the Ozark Trail 225L should more than suffice. An output of 225 lumens delivers lots of light for 1.5 hours powered by two AA batteries. The body, head and end cap are made of heavy aluminum, and the light is built to withstand almost anything. The light uses an end-cap switch that works crisply and reliably. This, coupled with excellent brightness, makes the flashlight a solid choice for rugged use while camping, backpacking or in survival situations. The beam is neither spot nor flood in width, but rather a convenient compromise. Moreover, it's available at thousands of Walmart stores for around \$15.

A few models, such as this Rayovac STF, can be focused. Sliding the head forward and backward changes the beam from spot to flood.



The third light in the small category is the Rayovac OT3AAA-BC. This excellent flashlight operates on three AAA batteries. However, it has two output settings, 250 lumens on high or 20 lumens on low, with run times of three hours and 39 hours, respectively. An output of 20 lumens may not sound like much, but it's sufficient for many uses, and on that setting, the light can be operated for a long time.

The package carries the words "virtually indestructible," and they apply to both the light and the package. Advertised to withstand a 30-foot drop test, this is a rugged light boasting a heavy, aluminum body with polymer sections at the head and tail cap. Pushing the power switch located on the end cap once turns on the high mode, and pushing it a second time turns on the low-power mode. This outstanding light can be

Many flashlights employ a push-button switch located on the tail cap.



SPECS AT A GLANCE

Make/Model	Battery	Weight (oz.)	Length	Output (lumens)	Runtime (hours)
RAYOVAC STF	2 AA	5.5	7.1	65/220	8/3.5
RAYOVAC OT	3 AAA	5.9	5.2	20/250	39/3
OZARK TRAIL 225L	2 AA	4.8	6.0	225	1.5
COAST HX5	1 AA	2.7	4.2	130	3.75
SNAP-ON 871371	2 AAA	1.8	5.2	60	6
BUSHNELL TRKR T150L	1 AA	3.6	4.4	13 (red)/150	5.25/1

*Output and runtime for different power settings.

Labeled as indestructible and having two power settings, the Rayovac OT3AAA-BC is a superb light.

found in big-box stores for around \$15—a real bargain. The very long run time on the low-power setting is a real plus, offering usable light for a long time without the need to constantly change batteries.

Smaller

Even though they require only one AA battery for power, some lights produce more than 100 lumens. The Coast HX5 produces 130 lumens and has a provision for changing the beam from spot to flood. Changing the beam is accomplished by sliding the head forward (spot) or to the rear (flood). Battery life is specified as 3.75 hours. The main tube is made of metal with a finely checkered pattern for secure gripping, and a removable pocket clip is provided. The switch is located on the tail cap and is recessed slightly to prevent turning the light on accidentally.

The Snap-on name is widely recognized, and now it appears on a small flashlight (model number 871371). Measuring 5.3 inches long and operating on two AAA batteries, this





The Rayovac STF uses two AA batteries, so it's longer than models that have three AAA batteries held parallel in a holder.

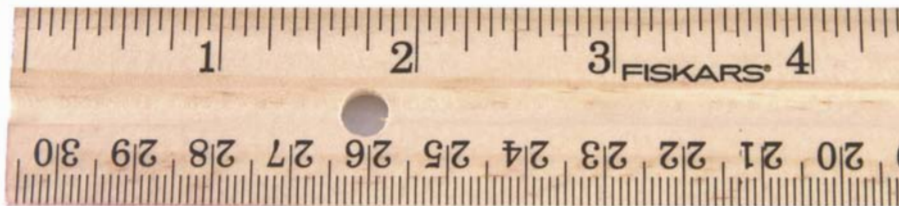
“Because we ... often find ourselves in campgrounds totally devoid of lighting, we’ve developed great appreciation for small, bright flashlights.”

little black tube features a Cree XP-E bulb and produces 60 lumens. Run time is specified as six hours, and carrying for that time will require little effort because it weighs only 1.9 ounces (including batteries). There is no provision for focusing, but the beam provides a flood rather than a spot.

Bushnell is a well-known name in the field of optics. Like many other companies, Bushnell has broadened its merchandise base to include other items, one of which is flashlights. For this article, we selected the Model 20216, also known as the TRKR T150L, which operates on one AA battery. Unique to this light is the fact that it has three modes: white, red and blue (TRKR). The blue mode reveals red liquids such as blood when used for tracking game. When used in the normal white spotlight mode, the run time is approximately one hour, but on the red or blue modes, run time is more than five hours. Although the Bushnell TRKR utilizes a tail-mounted, push-button switch, it operates differently from other lights we tested. When depressed about halfway to the “on” position and held, the white light activates. Releasing the pressure slightly and depressing the button part way a second time activates the red light. The third such action activates the blue mode.

The Bushnell TRKR is a versatile light with durable construction, and it comes with a convenient pocket clip. For those who need the red and tracking modes, this Bushnell flashlight makes an excellent choice.

All of the flashlights we tested performed well. If we had to choose one model from each category, our preference would be the very



(above) When a bright, durable light of minimum size is needed, the Coast HX5 is hard to beat.
(below, right) Some models such as this Bushnell TRKR are fitted with a clip for secure carry.

small Coast HX5, and for a somewhat larger light, the Rayovac OT3AAA-BC. These lights are very sturdy, bright and versatile.

Conclusion

There are some small, inexpensive flashlights that can provide all of the light you need for most situations. Many operate on readily available batteries, and they have no incandescent bulbs to burn out. For any situation, be it general use or survival, there's simply no reason not to have one of these handy little flashlights. It could be a game-changer. **MP**



· SELF-RELIANCE ·

BEAR BREAKFAST AND SUMMER SAUSAGES

CREATE MEAT PRODUCTS FROM
YOUR RECENT BEAR HARVEST

By Bernie Barringer





(above) Many people have had poor experiences with bear meat, but the author enthusiastically butchers even the largest bears and makes them into delicious products. (below) The key to good bear meat is getting the hide off and letting the carcass cool as quickly as possible, which might mean some late nights. Waiting until morning when the weather is warm is a sure way to lose excellent meat.



When it comes to wild-game meat, few types are more polarizing than bear meat. Begin a conversation just about anywhere among a group of people who've eaten black bear, and you'll invariably get mixed opinions. Some love it, while others wrinkle up their noses as they recall less than stellar dining experiences.

I believe there are two reasons for this. The first is the fact that most bear hunting occurs during warm weather. Spring bear seasons run from May through June, and fall seasons run mostly in August and September. Most big-game hunters get their start with deer, which are primarily hunted in late fall when temperatures are cooler. They're accustomed to taking their time processing the meat—even letting it hang with the skin on for a few days—so they overlook the importance of cooling off an animal harvested during warmer weather.

Bears need to be cooled quickly and butchered pronto. A heavy fat layer and thick fur prevents the carcass from cooling, so the hide must be removed as soon as possible once the bear dies. This is an important factor in ensuring quality bear meat.

Another factor relates to the old saying, you are what you eat. Bears that have been eating fish and carrion will have flesh and fat that tastes gamy. It's tough to hide this flavor with seasonings, but it can be done. However, bears that have been baited for a couple of weeks with fruit, grains and sweets will have some of the most delicious, mouth-watering game meat you'll ever taste. We make these into steaks and roasts and put the trimmings into sausage.

In my opinion, fall bears taste a little better than spring bears, so most spring bears will go into jerky and sausage. Our family loves breakfast sausage and summer sausage, and both are easily made.

Summer Sausage

When butchering a bear, there's often a thick fat layer on the back and some fat pockets among the muscle groups. I trim off as much of it as possible before grinding, and then I add fat in the form of bacon ends and pieces back into the mix according to taste. You can buy bacon ends in 3- and sometimes 5-pound packages at most grocery stores. I purchase them when they're on sale and freeze them until needed. Frozen, they'll last for several months.

I dice up the bear meat and the bacon into golf-ball-sized pieces. Then I weigh the bear meat and add about 20% bacon to the lean meat. This 80:20 mix seems to create the best texture and flavor.

Several companies make seasonings for



SAUSAGE EQUIPMENT

Anyone can make sausage with nothing more than a hand-cranked grinder, but having specialized equipment makes the job easier. When I bought my first grinder, I knew I wanted a high-quality model, so I scoured online sources to find a good one. I settled on a small, used commercial model. It cost about twice as much as the larger ones sold in sporting-goods stores, but it'll probably outlive me. I also think it's more cost-effective in the long run to save up for a high-quality version rather than buying a new grinder every few years.

I've used the same strategy with my sausage stuffer, slicer, smoker and dehydrator. Since I annually process three to five deer and bear, I'm pretty serious about stocking my freezer

with high-quality meat, so I want tools that will last. I've waited until I could afford a quality piece of equipment, then added it to my arsenal and began saving for the next piece.

I set up a part of my garage to process meat. I have a 10x10-foot room in the back corner of the garage where I installed a countertop along one wall. When not in use, I cover each piece of equipment with a small trash bag to protect it from dust. I bring hot water from the house for cleanup, and the system works very well. Processing meat is a family affair at our place, and while everyone is pitching in the talk always turns to the anticipation of eating the delicious products we're making.



KITS FOR THE HOME CURER

The Hunter's Blend Summer Sausage Kit from Hi Mountain Seasonings is a popular way to transform up to 30 pounds of meat into mouth-watering sausage. The kit includes two 4.2-ounce packages of Hi Mountain cure, two 10-ounce seasoning packages, one package of mahogany fibrous casings and detailed instructions. MSRP: \$20.99



Why buy commercial breakfast sausage when you can make your own with the Hunter's Blend Breakfast Sausage Kit from Hi Mountain Seasonings? Make sausage out of pork, poultry or wild game with delicious results. Form the sausage into patties or stuff it into links. Once you make and try your own breakfast sausages using Hunter's Blend, you'll never look back. MSRP: \$7.99
For more information, visit himtnjerky.com.

summer sausage, or you can create your own. I've tried several commercial seasoning mixes, and I've settled on the Summer Sausage Mix by Hi Mountain Seasonings. The company offers two variations I use a lot. The Hunter's Blend Mix is fairly spicy, but not hot enough to turn people off. Still, the basic Summer Sausage Mix is my family's favorite. I normally buy the kit, which includes spices and casings.

I sprinkle the seasoning mix on the meat prior to grinding. I add a little water and hand mix everything together so the flavors are evenly distributed. Then, I send it through the grinder once on a coarse setting and a second time on a finer setting.

If you don't have a sausage stuffer, you can use a special attachment to stuff the sausage

directly from the end of the grinder on the second pass. I used that method for quite some time until I decided to invest in a quality sausage stuffer, and now I'll never go back. Soaking the sausage casings in water for half an hour simplifies the process further.

If you want to go the traditional route, you can tie up the end of the casing with string, but I go the easy way and use a zip-tie. One end of the casings that come in the kit is already tied, so it's simple to pinch off the casing's opposite end once it's full and secure it with a zip-tie.

Once the casings are full and tied off, they go into the smoker. You can use an oven if you don't have a smoker, but the smoker cooks the sausages more evenly and provides a good

“... summer sausages are great for snacks while watching sports on TV with friends, when you’re in the deer stand and while entertaining.”

flavor. I like cherry wood, but I’ve had great success with apple and hickory, too.

I set the smoker to 180°F and smoke the sausages for about two hours. This is a long time, and if you like sausage a little moister, you can shorten the time. Just make sure the meat’s internal temperature reaches 160°F or higher before removing from the heat source.

These summer sausages make great snacks while watching sports on TV with friends, when you’re in the deer stand or while entertaining. My friends and family rave about this sausage, and it disappears off the plate unbelievably fast.

Breakfast Sausage

Making breakfast sausage is one of the easiest things you can do with bear meat because you don’t need a stuffer or smoker, just a grinder. You can also easily make it with a hand grinder if you don’t have an electric model.

I start by trimming the meat well, removing any fat and sinew. When making breakfast sausage, I add bacon ends and pieces as I do for summer sausage, but for this mix, I use 25% rather than 20%. The 75:25 mix makes the sausages much easier to fry and keeps them from drying out. Some people I know like to mix the bear meat 50:50 with pork, but I prefer a 75:25 mix.

Just like the summer sausage, I chunk up the meat and mix in the flavorings. Hi Mountain has a couple of breakfast-sausage mixes, and one is quite spicy. In fact, my kids won’t eat it. My favorite is a German sausage mix available from Cabela’s. If you’ve ever had Johnsonville brand breakfast sausage, you have a sense of what this seasoning mix tastes like.

I use a little water to help the powdered mix adhere to the meat, then mix it thoroughly. I toss it around in tubs until the seasoning is evenly distributed, then I grind it using a coarse plate. If you like coarsely textured sausage, you won’t need to grind it a second time. I usually do, but it’s not necessary.

I generally wrap the breakfast sausage into 1 ½-pound packages and freeze. I take one package out of the freezer the night before I plan to use it, then simply shape the meat into patties and fry them up. They fry well in their own juices in a covered pan. I brown them until they’re a little crispy on both sides

before serving, which accentuates the bacon flavor. These breakfast-sausage patties are fantastic, and everyone who tries them just raves about them.

Some might prefer to make the meat into patties with a press before freezing. This allows you to take one or two patties out of the freezer at a time, which speeds thawing and cooking. However, I recommend against dropping a frozen patty into the frying pan; it’s very difficult to cook the meat through the middle without overdoing the outside edges. Like pork, bear meat should always be cooked to at least 160°F.

You can also use this mix to make sausage links. You’ll need to grind it finer, then use a stuffer to fill the tubing and twist it off every 3-4 inches. The flavor will be the same as the patty mixture, but the links remain moister when cooking, which some people prefer. I used to make quite a lot of link sausages, but I now prefer the patties because they’re less work, and the taste of the well-browned patties is hard to beat.

Making Believers out of Pessimists

Once you’ve tried these bear-sausage recipes, you’ll love bear meat as much as I do. Of course, it’s never a bad idea to offer some to that person who’s had a poor experience with bear meat. These delicious sausages will surely change their mind. **MP**

Don’t be fooled into believing that bear meat is poor eating. Bear ribs on the open campfire soon after skinning make for fine eating.





CALLING THE ELUSIVE CROW

HOW TO HUNT “THE SMARTEST CREATURE IN FEATHERS” *By Jason Houser*

Looking for a challenge? Look no further than the elusive crow. The common crow is a migratory bird, and hunters must be HIP-certified (Harvest Information Program) in order to hunt them. They’re also the only migratory bird that can be hunted legally using electronic calls.

“Crows are most prevalent in the scattered woodlots of agricultural country. These timber patches provide protection and roosts with a nearby food supply.”

During the summer, crows are scattered throughout the northern United States and southern Canada, nesting and raising their young that later will travel south with them.

Crows might be present in outrageous numbers where you hunt, but that doesn't make them easy to fool. A crow will always behave like a crow, by itself or with others, no matter where you find it. The crow has been called “the smartest creature in feathers.” Treat it as such, and you're more likely to be successful; be haphazard or careless, and you'll be lucky to get off a shot, period. Crows have excellent eyesight—their primary defense—which means hunters must be thoroughly concealed and not move until it's time to start shooting.

Mock a Flock

Crow decoys combined with calling are the most widely used techniques for hunting crows. Calls range from mouth-blown versions to electronic calls. The electronic type has the advantage of saving lungpower. It's also effective because it plays sounds of actual crows cawing and carrying on.

Placing decoys isn't a science. I like to put three or four decoys in a leafless tree, maybe a few imitating crows and one mimicking an owl. Just be sure the decoys are placed where they can easily be seen. Wear camouflage clothing and crouch by, or even in, a bush and begin calling.

Be Concealed

Pop-up ground blinds—like the ones deer and turkey hunters use—can be deployed. Always remember that the telltale white of a human's face or hands can give you away. Streak your face with camouflage makeup, or cover it with a camo facemask. I always

wear black gloves, too. The movement of black gives the impression other crows are in the area.

Stake a Good Location

Hunt along a flyway where crows travel as they go to and from the roost, or simply drive and look for crows feeding in fields. Most landowners gladly grant permission to hunt crows because they dislike that these birds thief their crops.

Set up your ambush point a reasonable distance from a concentration, then use a call with sufficient volume to reach the crows. If you try to approach too closely, you'll likely be detected before you begin calling. Cautious, suspicious crows rarely make mistakes.

Occasionally, an entire group of crows will fly toward the call, and once they spy the owl decoy, they'll often fly in and start harassing it. Sometimes a lone crow will appear on a recon mission. It's important to shoot this messenger before it sees danger and reports it to others.

Equipment and Techniques

The charm of crow hunting is that it requires minimal equipment. Camouflage clothing, a shotgun and a call are basically all you need. Although it does help to conspicuously place a couple of crow decoys and maybe an owl, decoys certainly aren't mandatory. When crows hear a call, they'll usually respond and fly over to take a look. That one pass is all you can hope for. Sometimes, crows will fly over a second time, but don't count on it.

Any lightweight electronic or mouth-blown call will work, although the electronic caller with authentic sounds is the better choice. Volume isn't all that important since you'll



AN ANCIENT ADAGE

The old saw about eating crow seems to imply that it should taste terrible, but the saying actually means that you've been forced to admit a humiliating mistake.

The phrase's origin has been lost, although one story suggests that it involved a War of 1812 encounter in which a British officer made an American soldier eat part of a crow he'd shot in British territory. Whether or not it's true, the belief persists that crow meat tastes awful.

James Watson writes about it in the fall 1997 issue of *Writer's Block*. “If you're feeling defeated, you simply must eat

crow—a bird that is as tasty as it is melodious. It's one of our domestic dishes from a recipe allegedly discovered during the War of 1812. A Brit had caught an American shooting a crow on the wrong side of the border. He talked the Yank into handing over his gun, then used it to force the fellow to take a big bite out of the crow and swallow it. Needless to say, once the American had his gun back, he forced the Brit to eat the rest of the bird.”

I doubt this was how the term really originated, but it does make for a good story.



A decoy spread can
boost your odds for
success.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

THREE-STEP FRIED CROW

I've tried crow cooked numerous ways, but I'm going to share the recipe my family enjoys most. This might seem strange at first, but if you can get passed your apprehensions, you'll more than likely enjoy this dish.

- ▶ **STEP 1:** Cover several crow breasts in plastic wrap and tenderize them using a meat mallet.
- ▶ **STEP 2:** Dip the tenderized meat in your favorite breading. I use the same breading as I do for fried fish.
- ▶ **STEP 3:** Heat oil in a skillet to 350°F and place the meat in the hot oil. Cook for about 4 minutes per side, or until cooked through. You might be surprised how much you like eating crow.

simply cover a relatively small area before moving on. Plus, it's better to have only a few birds respond rather than an entire flock. A hunter can only get off so many shots before they empty their gun or the flock moves out of range as a result of the gunfire.

Resident crows won't come close and stay around a long time. Instead, they'll probably fly by, see something suspicious and leave. If only two or three crows appear, two shooters stand a good chance of knocking them all down; but, if a dozen or more birds show, you'll be lucky to kill three or four. That said, it's best just to call briefly, shoot at anything that shows up, then move to another location and start over. Mobility is the key to crow-hunting success.

Locate Birds

There are several methods for finding crows to hunt. The easiest, of course, is to simply drive around and look for them. If they're moving, you'll probably see them flying around, and crows rarely sit still for very long. Another method is to drive, stop and listen. If any crows are nearby, you'll most likely hear them. A raucous crow is loud. The easiest method is to just drive, stop occasionally and call. Make sure you're far enough off the road before you shoot to stay legal. If you move and stop enough, crows are bound to respond, as long as they're nearby. Of course, always make sure you have permission to hunt anywhere you shoot.

This is not haphazard shooting. You simply cannot wander carelessly into the woods, call and expect crows to come flying. Crows are much too sharp for that. A successful hunter gets into the woods without alerting crows of their presence, hides effectively and holds still until it's time to shoot.

Crows are most prevalent in the scattered woodlots of agricultural country. These timber patches provide protection and roosts with a nearby food supply. Crows have a varied diet, but they appear to prefer corn and wheat. Locate these fields, and you'll likely find crows.

Vehicles are common around fields, so crows don't necessarily associate them with danger. However, they do keep their distance. A parked vehicle can be left in an open field if the hunter moves a hundred yards into the woods before calling.

Don't Blow It

Crow hunters cannot compromise their concealment. We simply can't be too careful. Many hunters shoot at crows outside of their range, simply because they don't try to bring the crows in closer. As a result, they come up empty-handed.

Though sharp, a crow isn't a difficult bird to bring down. Some hunters recommend modified or full-choke guns with No. 6 shotshells. For hunters who hope to get just one



Downing a crow, especially when other hunting seasons are closed, is an exciting event.

“During the summer, crows are scattered throughout the northern United States and southern Canada ...”

chance at distant crows, this combination will work, but for close-range shooting, it's a poor setup. I prefer a lightweight 20- or 12-gauge shotgun with an improved cylinder choke and No. 8 shells.

Fried Crow, Anyone?

Many people consider the crow a pest. In fact, they would like to see them eradicated. I believe the crow is worthy of more respect than that. After all, any creature that's so much fun to pursue can't be too bad, can it?

But, what do you do with all the crows you end up shooting? If you're anything like me, you hate shooting something and letting it go to waste. For the longest time, I didn't know what to do with all the birds. Then, I fried one up. Don't stop reading. If you like chicken gizzards, then you will like crow (see sidebar, “Three-Step Fried Crow,” pg. 66).

Several people in my family have tried and enjoyed the taste of crow, and some who didn't know what they were eating even passed their plate for seconds. **MP**

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The Sassafras Tree

REAPING TEA, CASH AND ROOT
BEER FROM A PIONEER FAVORITE

By Jason Houser



(top) A bi-lobed leaf is the second formation you'll find on a sassafras tree. *(center)* A tri-lobed leaf is the third leaf formation found on sassafras trees. *(bottom)* When gathering leaves to sell, the cluster of leaves can be broken off where the green twig meets the brown twig.

Sassafras trees grow widely across much of the eastern United States. They can be found from southern Maine and southern Ontario west to Iowa and south to central Florida and eastern Texas. Their oddly shaped leaves are easily recognizable, and all of their parts are unmistakably spicy and aromatic.

Native Americans and the early European explorers of North America used the root and root-bark extracts, and believed them to be miracle cures. They used the essential oils from the twigs and root bark to make tea, flavor root beer and candy, and to scent soap and perfume.

Sassafras leaves are dried and pulverized to make filé, a spice used by Southern folks as a seasoning and to thicken soups, stews and gumbos. As a child, I remember my father and mother making sassafras tea for us while on vacation in Wisconsin. I'll never forget that, and I'm passing down the memories to my own kids and grandkids, not only by making sassafras tea, but also by making root beer from sassafras roots.

Many would never believe something as delicious as tea and root beer could be possible after seeing a sassafras tree's dirty roots. Making tea from sassafras leaves is much less complicated than root beer, but virtually anyone can make either with some know-how.

Identifying the Tree

Sassafras trees are commonly found in the eastern half of the United States. The leaves are unique in that they can have three different formations on a single tree. Some leaves are oval shaped, which means they have only a single lobe. Other leaves are bi-lobes and still others are tri-lobed.

Sassafras saplings are very common in old fencerows and field edges. They tend to be a pioneer tree, one of the first trees to begin growing back in areas that have been cleared and are unmaintained.

As with any wild plant, if you're not sure about identification, get advice from an expert, or consult a good tree-identification guide.

Making Sassafras Tea

A 1-foot-long piece of root, about ½ to ¾ inches in diameter (thumb-sized), is enough to make between 1 quart and ½ gallon of tea. I use a small shovel to dig the roots.

- Step 1:** Cut the roots into roughly 1- to 2-inch sections. You can do this with your trenching spade if you keep it clean and sharp.
- Step 2:** Wash loose soil from the root pieces under running water. A softly bristled brush will help dislodge any remaining soil.
- Step 3:** You can peel the bark from the roots,

though it's not necessary. All of the flavor is in the bark, which slips off very easily. If you peel the bark, discard the wood. I take the easy route and use the entire root. If you peel the bark, cut it into roughly 3-inch pieces and dry it for a few days. You can store this dried root bark in a sealed container for making tea any time of the year. Stored this way, the bark will last for at least a year.

- Step 4:** Place the roots or root bark in a small saucepan and cover with at least 1 quart of water.
- Step 5:** Bring it to a boil and simmer for about 15 to 20 minutes. The water will take on a reddish-brown color and begin looking like tea. It will begin to smell really good while boiling.
- Step 6:** Once the tea has simmered, remove the roots and pour the tea through a strainer lined with a coffee filter or cheesecloth to remove any fragments that'll inevitably be floating in it.

Sassafras tea can be a tad bitter since it contains tannic acid—as most tree bark does—so you'll want to sweeten it a bit with honey or sugar.

1 To make tea, begin by covering the roots with at least 1 quart of water. Bring the roots to a boil, then simmer for 15-20 minutes. **2** A coffee filter will prevent debris from contacting the tea or root beer. **3** After the roots have simmered for 15-20 minutes, remove the roots and strain. **4** A reddish tea is the product of the author's six-step sassafras tea.





ENJOY IN MODERATION

I must add a note of caution. The volatile oils found in the bark of the root of the sassafras plant are 80% safrole, a compound that has proven to be carcinogenic in laboratory animals. In one scientific study, rats that ingested large quantities of sassafras developed liver cancer. For these reasons, in 1960, the FDA banned food additives containing safrole. Health authorities in

Canada followed suit. Knowing this, people might not want to consume large quantities or drink it daily, but a few cups here and there likely won't cause liver cancer. Consuming moderate amounts of safrole in plant products—such as sassafras tea—isn't comparable to injecting large amounts of the pure chemical into the abdomens of rats.



Making Root Beer

Root beer is often fermented, hence the word “beer” in the name. But, this particular recipe doesn’t require fermentation.

Ingredients

- 1 cup roots from sassafras saplings (¼-inch diameter chopped into ½-inch-long pieces)
- 4 cups water
- 2 cloves
- ½ teaspoon anise seeds (fennel can be substituted)
- 4 allspice berries
- 1-inch cinnamon stick
- ¼ cup molasses
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 quarts soda water

Instructions

1. Scrub the roots clean of any dirt and cut them into ½-inch-long pieces. Cut up as many as you need to fill 1 cup.

2. Place the roots in a small pot and cover with 4 cups of water. Add cloves, anise seeds, allspice berries and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 25 minutes.

3. Add the molasses and simmer another 5 minutes.

4. Remove from heat. Strain through cheesecloth or a fine-mesh sieve lined with paper towels.

5. Rinse out the pot and return the liquid to it. Add sugar and heat until it dissolves.

6. Remove from heat and let cool. This is the root beer syrup concentrate that you’ll use to make soda.

7. To make the root beer, fill a glass with ice cubes, add the syrup and soda water in a 1:2 ratio—½ cup syrup to ¼ cup soda water is a good place to start. Add more soda water to dilute further, or add more syrup if you want a more strongly flavored drink.

Medicinal Uses

Besides using the root in beverages, the leaves are valuable when sold for medicinal purposes. I gather mature leaves from the trees every summer and sell the dried leaves for about \$2 per pound, depending on the demand.

When gathering leaves to sell, you can leave the twig with the leaves, as long as it’s bright green. Just snap it off where the green twig meets the brown twig. Harvesting sassafras leaves is one of the easiest jobs in the herb-picking business. This is especially true if you can get a freshly cut sassafras tree. You can pick leaves off the downed tree until

they either start discoloring or become too dry to pick.

The best way to dry the leaves is in the shade or in a shed. When selling the leaves, they must still have their green color. Drying the leaves in direct sunlight will turn them brown. It’s best to lay the leaves out on a screen or tarp. If you use a tarp, turn them often to make sure all sides dry.

Sassafras is used to treat gout, cancer, syphilis, arthritis, bronchitis, skin problems, high blood pressure, urinary-tract disorders and swelling in the nose and throat. It’s also used as a tonic and blood purifier.

Some people apply sassafras directly to the skin to treat stings, sprains, skin problems, achy joints (rheumatism), swollen eyes and insect bites. Sassafras oil is also applied to the skin to kill germs and head lice.

I’m often asked where I sell sassafras leaves. The number of buyers dwindles every year, but they are out there. Oftentimes, a quick Google search for root and herb buyers in your area will produce results. Fur, ginseng and goldenseal buyers will also commonly buy sassafras and other roots and herbs. The number of different barks, herbs, roots and leaves valuable in the medicinal market would amaze most people.

From the roots, herbs and leaves I sell every year, I’m able to fund my Christmas gift purchases with some money left over. It’s a good feeling knowing that money is set aside, and that I won’t be stressing about how I’ll provide for my family during a time of the year that’s often financially tough on many Americans.

Conclusion

Digging sassafras roots to produce homemade tea and root beer might not be for everyone. It’s simpler to go to the local store and hand over some cash for these items. Still, there’s something satisfying about living off the land and doing things the old-fashioned way. Of course, you won’t get rich selling sassafras leaves, but it’s an enjoyable outdoor activity, and earning a little extra money doesn’t hurt either. **MP**

(below) Delicious root beer can be made from sassafras roots. (opposite) A wide variety of illnesses are treated with sassafras, including gout, cancer and swelling of the nose and throat. The plant is also used as a tonic and blood purifier.



The CRACKERS

SELF-RELIANT ENGLISH SETTLERS

By Dana Benner

For the longest time, I thought “Cracker” was a derogatory term used to describe racist white people. In fact, the very first time I heard it spoken, it was articulated that way. Imagine my surprise when I discovered its original meaning. Once I did, I made it my mission to visit Florida to find out more. Why Florida? It’s where the historical meaning of the term originated.

Cracker History

In the 1700s, English colonists used the term to describe Scotch-Irish and English settlers who lived in the fringe areas of the colonies. These people were “ruffians and braggarts” decent English citizens didn’t want hanging around. They were people of lower economic class, like farm laborers. These same people were also long-hunters and frontiersmen, opening the way for westward expansion; and maybe less reputably, they were often moonshiners. These pioneers have become part of the American fabric and are well remembered by most, unlike the well-to-do Englishmen who’ve long been forgotten.



“Averaging about 10 feet deep, the wetlands screamed danger; alligators and snakes were everywhere.”

This is what Central Florida looked like 300 years ago when the Crackers started moving in.

“The first Crackers were immigrants considered undesirable by the Puritans from the more northern colonies.”

Up until the end of the Seven Years War (better known as the French and Indian War), what we now know today as Florida and much of present-day southern Georgia were under Spanish control. During that time, small groups of English settlers began crossing into Spanish territory, in an attempt to live without the English government's control. In 1763, when the Spanish gave up Florida to Great Britain, a large influx of settlers moved into Florida, particularly the northern region and became known as Florida Crackers. The term was later used to describe the descendants of these earlier settlers.

So, why the name Cracker? The first Crackers were immigrants considered undesirable by the Puritans in the more northern colonies. The Puritans mostly hailed from Celtic Britain: Wales, Scotland, Ireland and northern England. They left the more established American colonies and began moving into Florida in the 1700s, bringing with them their music and clan (family) loyalty. Crackers spoke their own language, were superstitious and wary of strangers. Despite any differences they may have had with one another, they all shared a common lifestyle.

The term “Cracker” also developed an association with the cowboys who gathered wild cattle from Florida's swamps; although some of these cowboys were certainly Crackers (descendants of the original settlers), not all of them were. The term was used, because unlike their western counterparts, these cowboys used dogs and bullwhips to coax cattle out of the thick brush. Anyone who's ever used a bullwhip or has been around one is familiar with the cracking sound it makes.

Not all pioneers who ventured into Florida's wilds could be called Crackers. Some people arrived in Florida to clear the way for civilization and become rich. These people weren't Crackers. Most “true” Crackers wanted nothing to do with civilization; they wanted to be left alone. Independence and self-reliance were valued by the original Crackers who had no need for fancy things.





This 1800s house is a good example of simple living practiced by the early Florida Crackers.



“Material riches meant little to Crackers ... A roof over their heads and food in their bellies was enough.”

(above) The Florida Crackers lived a simple and independent lifestyle, and this living-room view exemplifies that.

(opposite) When out on the range, Crackers often set up camps based on the Seminole chickee structure. This is a good example of a Cracker cattle camp.

Self-Reliance

Crackers survived by living off the land. Everyone had a garden where they grew corn, sweet potatoes and greens. Corn was a staple and was used to make grits, hominy, cornmeal and, of course, moonshine. They raised hogs and cattle; hunted and fished; and sold alligator skins, snake skins and bird plumes. Material riches meant little to them. They were happy with what they had. A roof over their heads and food in their bellies was enough. These were simple folk, believing if they didn't have it, nature didn't provide it or they couldn't make it, that they didn't need it. What few things they did have were usually handmade, if possible, and were used until beyond repair.

Housing

Housing was whatever they could cobble together, which was in most cases a small, simple log cabin. Sometimes, two log cabins were joined, connected by a roofed porch called a “dog trot.” Some Crackers learned

how to live as the native people of the area, the Seminoles, did. They built structures called chickees, which were a thatched roof of palm fronds and grasses suspended upon four poles over a sleeping platform. The walls weren't enclosed, which allowed cool breezes to flow through, and the platform kept people up off of the ground, away from snakes and alligators.

Even if they had a proper cabin, Crackers would often construct temporary shelters out on the range called cattle camps. These structures were often made using the same techniques as the chickees. Bottom line, as long as it kept the weather off, it was good enough for the Crackers.

Weathering Adversity

It's difficult to imagine all that these people endured in order to live free and survive unless you experience it yourself. Today, most of central and north-central Florida consists of cattle ranches, housing developments and amusement parks, but there are still a few



• CRACKER CATTLE •

Nature allows only the hardest and smartest to survive, and such is the case with Cracker cattle. A very rare heritage breed, Cracker cattle are remnants of the past.

The cattle are descendants of Andalusian cattle brought to Florida from Spain in the 1500s. When the Spanish returned to Spain, they left behind hogs, cattle and horses. These animals



learned to either survive or die. The ones that survived passed on genetic traits, creating a “wild” population of cattle, horses and hogs that could face the hardscrabble life in Florida head on. Cracker cattle can tolerate heat, resist diseases and parasites, and can survive on poor forage and scrub.

When compared to modern beef cattle, Cracker cattle are small. Cows only weigh 600-800 pounds, and bulls range from 800-1,200 pounds. Common English cattle, like Shorthorns, were imported, but were unable to survive the conditions.

Most ranches housed and bred Cracker cattle exclusively, but in the early part of the 20th century, Zebus were imported from India, and everything changed. The heat-tolerant, much larger Zebus were bred with Cracker cattle, and the crosses soon became good beef producers. By the '60s, there were very few genetically pure Cracker cattle left. Since the '70s, there has been a concerted effort made to bring these cattle back from near extinction.

Sources:

The Livestock Conservancy
livestockconservancy.org

Cracker Cattle Association
floridacrackercattle.org



• CRACKER HORSES •

Like Cracker cattle, the Cracker horse is a remnant of the Spanish occupation in Florida. Similar to the mustangs of the American West, Cracker horses are a genetic mix of Iberian, African Barb, Spanish Sorraia and Spanish Jennet. When turned loose by the Spanish to make room for cargo going back to Spain, these horses soon developed into the Cracker horse.

Due to the harsh conditions of Florida's wilderness, these new "wild" horses evolved through the process of natural selection. They became extremely strong and intelligent, having to outwit or outrun predators like bears and panthers, or avoid dangers like snakes and alligators. They became pest- and disease-resistant, and due to the lack of suitable forage, they gradually became smaller. Found wherever the Spanish left their mark, these horses are also known as Chicksaw Pony, Seminole Pony, Florida Horse.

By the 1800s, thousands of these horses roamed free in Florida. These tough little horses soon became the backbone of the growing Florida ranching industry. They could go into areas where other horses couldn't. They were agile and smart, something that was needed to control the Cracker cattle, which were also agile and smart.

Things began changing in the 1900s, though. As the cattle became larger, a horse was needed that could control them. The American Quarter Horse was the answer, and soon, the Cracker



horse was phased out. Thankfully, there were a few farsighted people who saw the value of these American horses and have kept the Cracker horse from becoming extinct.

Sources:

Florida Cracker Horse Association
floridacrackerhorses.com



areas that remain as they were 300 years ago. To access one of these places and see what the conditions were like, I enlisted the aid of Boggy Creek Airboats in Kissimmee, Florida.

The area consists of miles upon miles of grass and water. Even areas that looked like dry land were covered by water. Averaging about 10 feet deep, these wetlands screamed danger; alligators and snakes were everywhere. The marshes were a breeding ground for ticks, leeches and mosquitoes. This is what the Crackers dealt with every day. The area that provided for their way of life one minute, could easily

take it the next. They were a hardy group of people.

A Cracker was a strong-willed person. They were, and are, people who just want to live their lives independently. After doing this research, I now understand the term, and would be proud if someone called me a Cracker. **MP**

SOURCES:

Boggy Creek Airboats
bcairboats.com

Historical Society
osceolahistory.org

(above) Here's a look inside a typical 1800s Cracker house. These houses weren't fancy, just functional.

(opposite) Alligators were just one danger the Crackers faced.

· SELF-RELIANCE ·





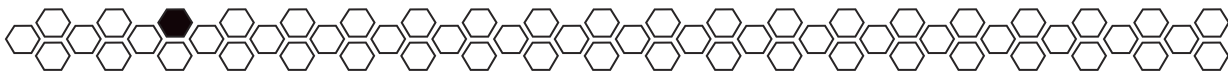
Add HONEY to Your PREPAREDNESS PLAN

USES FOR HONEY AS
FOOD AND MEDICINE

By Kristi Cook



Comb honey is as effective for medicinal uses as other forms of raw honey.



Whether you're an outdoorsperson exploring the wilds or a homesteader striving for self-sufficiency, stocking your pack or pantry with life-supporting essentials is necessary. Trusted by the ancients as far back as the pharaohs, raw honey is a vital addition to any preparedness plan. Loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and antimicrobial properties, honey serves many purposes both nutritive and medicinal. And, should you wish to indulge in a bit of TLC along the way, this golden elixir performs triple duty as a natural skincare aid, too.

Nutritional Supplement

Perhaps the most basic reason to keep honey on hand is its nutritional value. Unlike highly processed granulated sugar devoid of healthful benefits, this "food for the gods" contains naturally occurring vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6 and vitamin C, along with iron, calcium, potassium and magnesium, to name several. Honey also provides various flavonoids that have anti-inflammatory effects on the body, all of which are needed during times of physical stress.

Energy Boost

While natural vitamins and minerals are reason enough to include honey in your arsenal, its ability to provide quick energy during periods of elevated physical activity also should be considered. Sugar and high-fructose corn syrup are often chosen for quick energy bursts in the form of drinks, gummies or energy gels. However, honey stabilizes blood-glucose levels by combining fast-acting

glucose for immediate use, as well as slow-absorbing fructose for long-lasting fuel. Honey's lower glycemic index (55), as compared to table sugar (68), also makes it a more suitable choice for those with diabetes—with caution, of course—particularly during emergency situations.

During energy-depleting activities or when carrying heavy loads, keep lightweight honey pouches readily available by pouring a desired amount into snack-sized zip-top bags prior to your activity. When you need an energy boost, simply snip off a small corner and squeeze the contents into your mouth or into a water bottle for an instant energy drink. Just remember that the warmer the water, the easier the honey dissolves, although vigorous shaking will dissolve even the most stubborn honeys into cold liquids.

Another easy method for transporting honey is in the honeycomb. You can pack the entire block and bite off small amounts as needed. Alternatively, stash bite-sized honeycomb pieces in zip-top bags or small plastic containers, substituting one or two at a time to chew in place of energy gummies.

Honey as Medicine

Although honey's nutritional value is obvious, its medicinal qualities make it essential. While once common knowledge to past pioneers, honey's antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties are slowly being rediscovered as interest in alternative treatments for common ailments grows. Even modern science has begun studying honey's curative effects, with research verifying honey's efficacy in treating everything from burns to inflamed gums to

"Trusted by the ancients as far back as the pharaohs, raw honey is ... loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and antimicrobial properties ..."

Select the Right Honey

Raw honey is full of pollen, yeast, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that work together to provide medicinal/nutritional qualities. This material lends liquid honey a cloudy appearance and is a desirable quality. Raw honey may be liquid, creamed or crystallized—all forms are suitable for medicinal uses. Look for "raw, unfiltered" on the label.

Commercial honey is almost always pasteurized and filtered to create an appealing, clear product. It may be liquid, creamed or crystallized. This honey has no medicinal value and should never be used for medicinal purposes.

Comb honey comes straight from the hive with raw honey encapsulated within the cells. It has the same medicinal qualities as any other form of raw honey. Beekeepers may include a piece of comb in a jar of raw honey or sell the comb on its own.

Note: Children 1 year of age and younger should never be given honey due to the possible presence of *Clostridium botulinum*, which can cause botulism, a rare but serious disease that affects the nervous system of infants. However, adults, children over 1 year of age and pregnant or lactating women may safely consume honey.



“Because each honey type has varying antibacterial effects, make sure you’re packing the best variety possible for serious burns and wounds.”

infected wounds.

Honey’s most vital use is to treat deep wounds and burns, particularly when faced with the potential for infection or delayed medical treatment. Honey’s low pH and high sugar content hinder, if not prevent, the growth of several bacteria species. Honey also pulls moisture from the wound environment, dehydrating any existing bacteria. Most honey types even produce hydrogen peroxide—that same chemical you have in a little brown bottle in your medicine cabinet—through the action of enzymes once it contacts wound fluids (Manuka is an exception). Honey’s antimicrobial effects are so powerful that researchers have found it keeps sterile wounds sterile, while gradually sterilizing infected wounds over time.

Because antibacterial effects vary according to the type of honey, make sure you’re packing the best variety possible for serious burns and wounds. Manuka honey, which hails from New Zealand, is the honey of choice whenever possible, and is used in many hospital burn units and wound centers due to its high level of efficacy and ability to treat and/or prevent the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria such as MRSA.

While it’s rather pricey and difficult to find at brick-and-mortar stores, online sources offer several selections with varying degrees of antimicrobial potency. Just be sure to purchase Manuka honey that displays a UMF or MGO rating, which are rating systems that indicate the particular batch’s antibacterial strength—the higher the rating, the higher the effectiveness.

Other less extreme ailments can also be alleviated with honey. Symptoms from common colds, such as coughs and sore

throats, are often eased with 1 or 2 tablespoons of raw, unfiltered honey, taken as needed throughout the day. However, buckwheat is the preferred variety for calming coughs, as research shows it works as well as, if not better than, the common cough suppressant dextromethorphan and the antihistamine diphenhydramine. Again, this type of honey may be difficult to find locally, and will likely need to be purchased online. However, any good quality, raw and unfiltered honey may be used, often with the same results. When making your selection, choose the darkest variety you can find, as these typically have the highest antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects.

Two other ailments that tend to hit explorers, as well as kiddos and parents at home, are vomiting and diarrhea. When caused by bacteria, honey is a good remedy, at times completely eliminating the illness through its antibacterial properties. Due to the potential severity of symptoms, if you have Manuka or Tualang honey available, use that first, as both have proven effective against gastric (or foodborne) illnesses such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella* spp. and *S. flexneri*. Dosage will vary, of course; however, it’s important to consume the honey raw and undiluted for the best chances of a fast recovery.

Fortunately, it’s unnecessary to use the highest-priced honey for more minor conditions, although you certainly can use Manuka or Tualang if that’s all you have available. Most varieties of raw, unfiltered honey—clover, wild flower or others—often work just as well for sore throats, infected gums, minor wounds and burns, insect bites (almost instant relief), poison ivy and many other conditions due to their anti-inflammatory qualities.

Sweeter Than Sugar

Of course, the purely utilitarian use of honey shouldn’t minimize the simple pleasure of eating this heavenly food. Incorporating it into everyday fare is a simple matter of experimentation.

Honey is significantly sweeter than sugar, so you’ll usually need at least a quarter less honey to obtain the same sweetness level. When first testing a recipe, consider substituting only half of the sugar with honey, and go from there to achieve the desired taste.

Remember that the richer your honey’s flavor, the more prominent it will be in the finished product. You’ll also find that baked goods tend to brown faster and more unevenly, so reduce oven temperatures by at least 25°F and add ½ teaspoon of baking soda for every 1 cup of honey to help slow and even out browning. You’ll also need to reduce the amount of liquids by approximately ¼ cup for each 1 cup of honey, although I’ve found this isn’t a hard and fast rule.





At times floating in raw, gold honey and other times nearly naked on the outside but filled with succulent sweetness, honey-filled comb offers all of the benefits of pure liquid honey with a bit of chew to go along with the sticky.



“Honey’s soothing, anti-inflammatory and moisture-attracting properties work particularly well for cracked fingers, chapped lips and wind-burnt skin.”

Application is identical in most cases, regardless of severity or condition. For internal issues, take 1 or 2 tablespoons (smaller quantity for children) at least twice daily, more often, if needed. Even taking a big dose of honey in hot tea works well most of the time. For external troubles, dab, smear, pour or otherwise apply directly to the affected site, and cover with a non-absorbent material to keep it in place, off of clothing and hidden from hungry bugs. Change dressings at least twice daily, more often for severe wounds.

NOTE: Never hesitate to seek medical care if your condition is serious or life-threatening, as this information is for informational purposes only and not intended to replace professional medical services.

Natural Skin Care

Once you have your belly full and your wounds dressed, use whatever honey is left to pamper yourself. Honey’s soothing, anti-inflammatory and moisture-attracting

properties work particularly well for cracked fingers, chapped lips and wind-burnt skin. Apply a thin layer to the affected area, cover with bandages (if necessary) and leave overnight (if possible). When ready to remove, rinse with warm water. Should you have larger areas that need care, pour ½ to 1 cup of honey into warm water and soak. If you have powdered oats on hand, including them with the honey will maximize the skin-soothing qualities of both.

While certainly not a cure-all or silver bullet, raw honey’s ability to heal, comfort and nourish warrant it an almost sacred place in any preparedness plan. As research continues to discover the validity of “old-fashioned” uses for honey, it’s very likely modern medicine will continue adding this liquid gold to its everyday practices, and not just in burn- and wound-care centers.

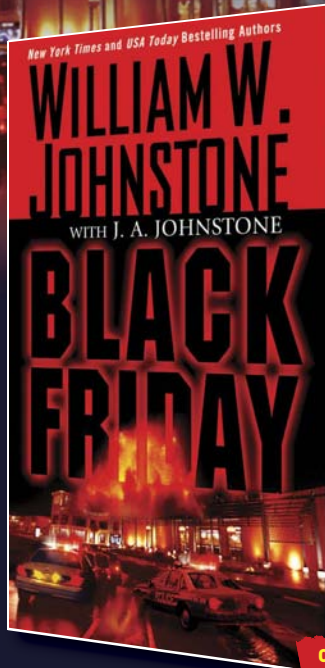
In the meantime, keep some stashed away, and try a dab whenever you feel under the weather or just need a little boost. If that doesn’t work, try a bigger dab. **MP**



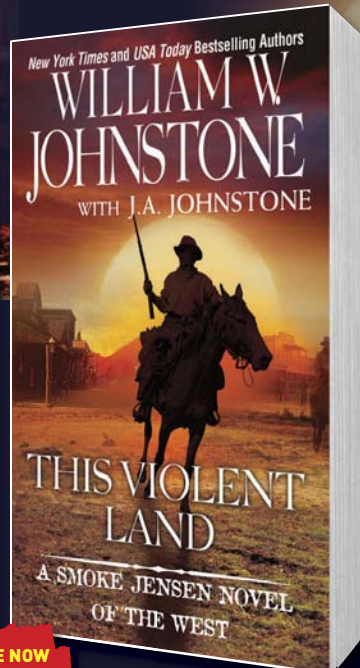
Pour raw honey into a small, reusable container to be used for skincare or to store in a first-aid bag. Only use dry fingers and utensils to remove honey since moisture can cause it to spoil. Alternatively, pour honey into a squeezable bottle to avoid touching it at all.

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7 TACTICS for PRIMETIME

EXPERIENCE
AN ACTION-PACKED
WHITETAIL-RUT HUNT

By Randy Templeton

It was the first weekend of November, and I was traveling to southwest Iowa for an annual hunt with friends Travis Paul and Andy Timmerman. Throughout the 250-mile journey, I counted more than a dozen ruby red smears across the highway and several carcasses, including a 180-class buck that a hunter from Missouri sideswiped on his way home. Sights like this aren't usual, but it was a fair reading of the rut's intensity.



Don't be afraid to pull out the stops during primetime. Grunt calls, estrous-doe bleats or rattling sequences could draw a buck within range.



For many Midwestern hunters, the November rut is clearly the whitetail season's most popular phase, and rightfully so, considering one minute the woods can be dead silent, and the next, a rut-swollen buck could appear from just about anywhere. It's also the time when big-buck dreams become reality for thousands of hunters each year.

No single strategy guarantees success, but I'll share several tactics that've helped my friends and me score during primetime's golden weeks. With any luck, you'll glean the winning combination and score big this year, too.

1 Timing is Everything

If you were to strike up conversations with a dozen hunters you've never met and simply mention the word "rut," the entire afternoon will be consumed with sharing photos and stories of seasons past. At some point, the conversation will likely turn to opinions regarding the timeframe when the rut occurs. Some might claim it occurred a week earlier or later, while others will say it was spot on with the previous year.

No doubt hunting pressure, buck-to-doe ratios and warm temperatures can affect the

rut's intensity and the amount of daytime breeding activity that occurs. The truth is research shows that the rut transpires at approximately the same time—give or take a couple of days—every year in a given geographic location.

In Midwestern states like Iowa, Illinois, Kansas and Missouri, the hard pre-rut activity begins to intensify around Halloween, and the throttle tweaks open a little further with each passing day. Bucks actively work scrapes during the first week of November, and a fair number of does come into estrus. By the end of the second week, the throttle is cranked wide open, and the once-silent woods turn chaotic. The lion's share of does are either in heat or coming into heat, and every buck in the neighborhood is either searching, or has found one to breed.

Activity begins tapering off the third week, but that's not to say you can't kill a big buck late in November. The bucks my friends and I have taken throughout the years prove that.

2 Transition Routes

Whether it's the primary trail traveled from food to bedding areas or the trail that links

one bedding area to another, all could be considered transition trails. Unlike some, I prefer hunting the transition trails both morning and afternoons. Why? In short, deer typically leave the fields just before or after first light and transition toward their bedding areas. Likewise, deer commonly begin the transition from bedding to food an hour or two before sunset. Whether it's morning or afternoon, transition trails make great ambush sites when the rut starts rocking.

3 Funnels

During the rut, funnels are great places to ambush a hormone-hyped buck searching for a hot doe. Any natural terrain feature that restricts, redirects or forces deer to move through a specific place could be considered a funnel. They come in many forms, both natural and manmade. Narrow ridges, saddles, break lines, pinch points, bottlenecks, deep ravines, creek bottoms, inside/outside corners and fingers of cover (points) that extend into fields are just a few natural funnels. Likewise, hedgerows, fence lines, brush piles, field gateways, fallen trees or a row of round hay bails are also funnels, but of the manmade kind.

The key to hunting funnels is stand placement, and that's normally where the majority of trails junction or crisscross in wagon-wheel fashion. The classic bottleneck is a good example of that. In many cases, you'll be able to set up the ultimate ambush within range of every trail that passes through the narrowest point.

My wife, Pamela, is a big advocate of hunting funnels, and it's paid off more than once for her. The wide 8-pointer she arrowed a few seasons back is one great example.

Her stand was at the head of a deep ditch where the timber narrows to a point and ends at the edge of a cornfield. Deer seldom cross the ditch. Instead they follow the path of least resistance along the edge.

The afternoon before Halloween, Pamela made her way to the stand a good three hours before sunset. She took the long route through the standing corn to conceal her approach.

A half-hour after settling in, a doe meandered through. A short time later, two more does walked up the edge and eventually disappeared into the cornfield.

Around 4:30 p.m., a young 8-pointer walked up the tree line and offered a shot. Knowing there were much larger deer on the farm, she



(above) Few things are more exciting than finding a pile of fresh shavings beneath a big rub. An area with several of these can be a great stand location. (below) The author's wife, Pamela, arrowed this wide 8-pointer on Halloween weekend from a funnel and staging area.



GO GUIDED

A&A Outfitters operates in southwest Iowa and has more than 5,000 acres of private land in both Adams and Taylor Counties. They take a limited number of clients each year to ensure each one has the best chances of shooting a

trophy buck. For more information on booking a hunt with A&A Outfitters, contact Andy Timmerman at (712) 370-3878 or Travis Paul at (712) 621-0914, or connect with A&A Outfitters on Facebook.

“No doubt hunting pressure, buck-to-doe ratios and warm temperatures can affect the rut’s intensity and the amount of daytime breeding activity that occurs.”



(right) The author arrowed this mature 10-pointer along an old logging road between two bedding areas using a combination of calling, scent and a decoy. (below) Loitering areas are great places to use scents and decoys. The author likes using a standing buck and bedded doe along a food-source fringe. A few drops of fresh estrous scent behind the doe decoy can add realism to the setup.



didn't shoot. Minutes later, she heard a grunt from below, and a wide 8-pointer soon appeared. When the buck stepped into the clearing, Pamela settled the pin and shot. Her 42-pound Diamond bow drove the Muzzy-tipped arrow completely through both sides, sending the buck racing down the tree line and out of sight. Seconds later, she heard sticks breaking, then silence. Her trophy was down.

An hour later, we found Pamela's buck buried beneath a brush pile. To say she was excited is an understatement; it was her second largest buck to date.

During the rut, bucks are likely to cruise through funnels at any time, so pack a lunch and hunt from dark to dark.

4 The Scrape Set

The first week of November is likely the best time to hunt scrapes, but I'll continue hunting them as long as they show signs of activity. This was the case with an old codger I killed a few years back on the hunt mentioned at the beginning of this article.

After a little light scouting, I'd found the ultimate ambush on an overgrown logging road. My stand hovered over two scrapes and was sandwiched between two bedding areas, one on each end of the logging road.

I slipped in the next morning before sunrise and set up a decoy, then dripped buck urine in one scrape and doe-estrous scent in the other.

At first light, a doe came running over the ridge and stopped dead in her tracks when she spotted the decoy. Seconds later, a heavy 10-pointer appeared. His swayed back and sagging

belly indicated he was old. His rack wasn't the biggest, but a trophy nonetheless. As I attempted to draw, the doe became nervous and split the scene. As you may have guessed, so did the buck.

Over the next two hours, several does meandered across the ridge. Although they seemed a bit leery of the decoy, they were more intrigued with the scent I'd put in the scrapes. A couple of them even urinated in the scrapes.

During the next hour, three different bucks followed the ridge to the scrapes. None were shooters, but it was interesting to watch their reactions to my decoy. Two of them laid their ears back and cautiously walked by. The third circled the decoy before continuing to the scrapes and making a deposit.

It was around 10 a.m. when a scuffling noise drew my attention toward the heavy 10-pointer following a trail behind me. I grunted twice and made a snort-wheeze, and he started heading my way. When the old boy cleared the ridge, his neck and back hair bristled up, and he postured toward the decoy. As he circled to make eye contact, I settled the pin and touched off the release. Surprisingly, he leaped forward, then staggered sideways and tipped over.

5 Calls, Scents and Decoys

As you can see, calls, scents and decoys can tip the odds in your favor, so don't be afraid to use them. Whether I'm using a decoy or not, I like mixing up rattling sequences with grunts and doe bleats. Depending on the situation, I sometimes use tending grunts and an occasional snort-wheeze, too.

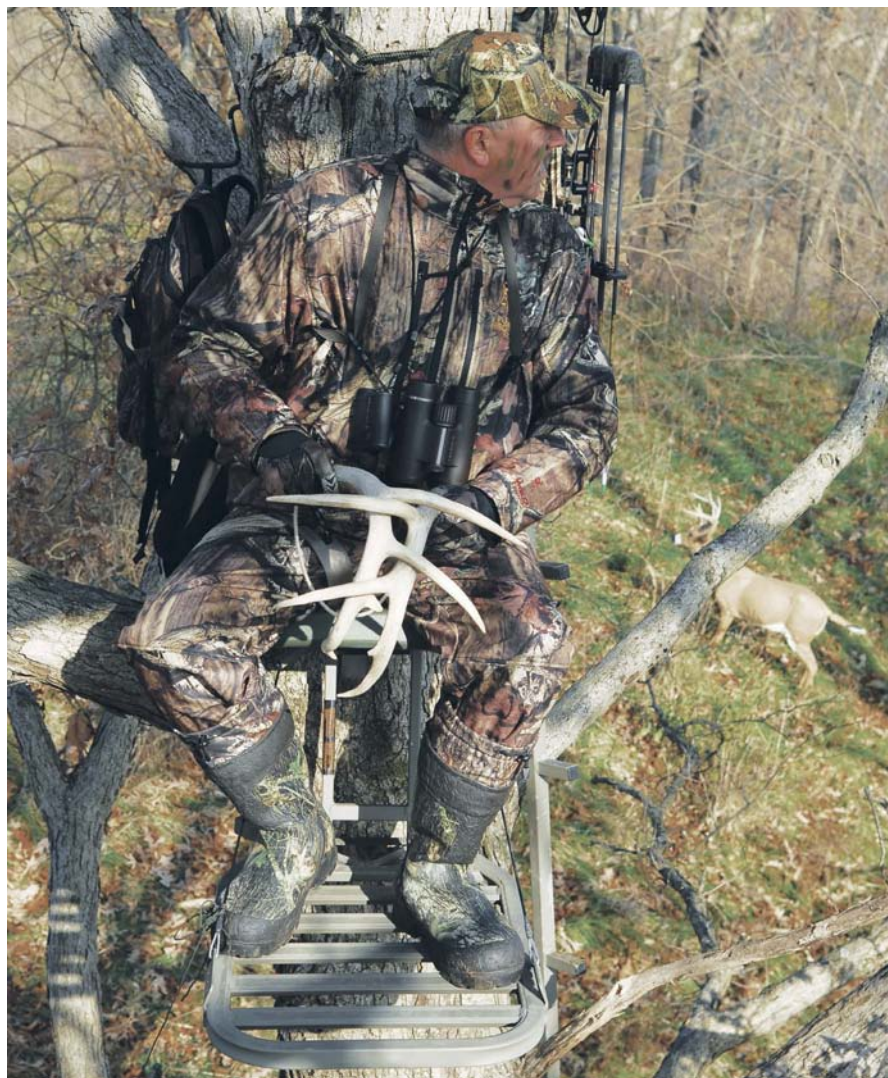
My favorite decoy setup is this: I place an antlered decoy where it's most visible from multiple angles and directions. When a buck approaches, he'll most often circle it to make eye contact. For that reason, I position the decoy parallel or quartering toward my stand. This usually causes the approaching buck to offer a broadside or quartering-away shot.

Conversely, bucks often approach a doe decoy from behind or circle downwind. For this setup, I position the doe decoy quartering away for a better shot angle when a buck approaches.

6 Bedding Areas

Doe bedding areas are great places to catch bucks trolling for does, but hunting these spots too early could ruin your best rut stands before primetime begins. Experienced hunters reserve these stands until they observe the rut's first signs getting underway.

Although some might be inclined to snuggle up close to a doe bedding area, I learned years ago to stay at least 75 to 100 yards away to avoid spoiling a good thing.



SCENT SMARTS

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(above) Rattling over an antlered decoy can be an effective calling tactic, especially when you periodically mix in doe bleats and buck grunts. (opposite, top) The wind can be your best friend, but becomes your worst enemy the moment it changes direction unexpectedly. In such cases, it might be wise to abandon the stand until the wind cooperates. (opposite, below) Trail cameras are great scouting tools, but frequent trips also educate the deer you're hunting. Minimize your trips for the lowest impact.

Hunting between a food source and doe bedding area can be good, but a stand sandwiched between two bedding areas is even better. Bleats and grunt calls work great here, as do decoys and scents. These stands are liable to produce action from sunrise to sunset, so pack a lunch and hunt all day as the rut intensifies.

7 Loitering Areas

Bucks and does alike loiter around the edges of primary food sources before first and last light. Unless there's a foolproof route that



allows slipping in undetected, staging areas are best hunted in the afternoons. If you hunt wisely, these stands can be hot throughout the entire rut.

Since south or southwest winds generally prevail during early season and north or northwest winds later in the season, wind direction is well worth noting when determining stand locations on or near food sources. To cover both wind scenarios, it's ideal to set up two stands—one on each side of the field—if possible.

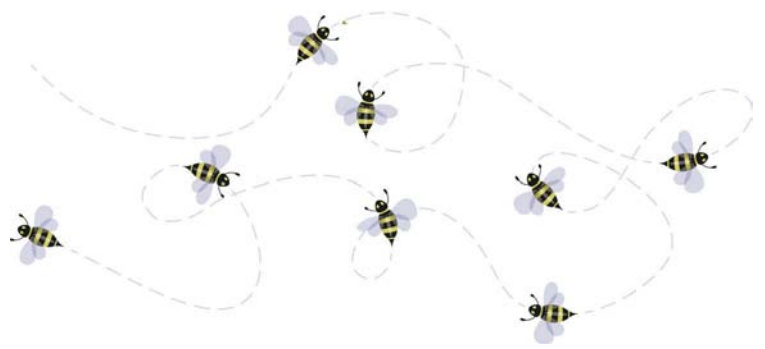
Conclusions

Past experience proves that it's best to steer clear of primetime stands until there's evidence the rut is underway, like finding active scrapes or seeing a doe being chased by one or more mature bucks. Whatever the case, create a game plan using the aforementioned tactics and tip the odds in your favor right from the get-go. **MP**





A nest can be hidden in trees. Be sure to do a perimeter check of your property to avoid an unwanted surprise.



8 Ways to *Bee* CAREFUL

AVOID AND ESCAPE
A RELENTLESS ONSLAUGHT

By Michael D'Angona

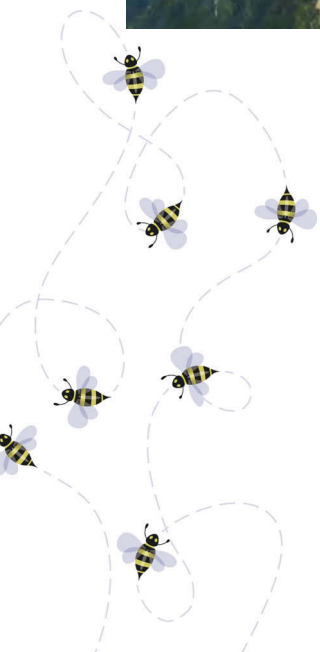
Strength in numbers is a clichéd expression, yet it's still vitally important when discussing organisms that can possibly kill you on contact. The enemies in question are bees, and they can be one of the most underestimated adversaries you face in the great outdoors or even in your very own backyard.

Bees generally do not intend to seek and attack. Instead, they're driven to mind their own business and focus on their mission: to collect pollen from nearby flowers and convert it to honey. However, things don't always go as planned for bees just trying to do their jobs. They may find themselves without a queen for one reason or another, which can cause restlessness and, ultimately, extremely "bad" behavior. Bees can also have insufficient nectar from surrounding plants, which causes them to seek out other hives where they invade and loot. This creates hostilities between the two factions, and any humans, pets or other animals caught in the crossfire become collateral damage.





PHOTO BY BIGSTOCK



Environmental conditions can increase bee aggression. Rainy weather coupled with high heat and sticky humidity can make bees irritable and ready to take out their frustration on anything or anyone in their path. Finally, the odor of dead bees and honey can create a virtual battleground where wasps, hornets and yellow jackets enter the fray to collect the carcasses of fallen bees and honey. That convergence can create a dangerous situation for anyone nearby who's unaware of the volatile situation unfolding.

The effects of bee stings vary greatly from person to person. The severity of the symptoms also depends upon the number of stings a person receives, the individual's physical make-up and, most importantly, allergies the individual may have to bee venom. A bee-sting allergy can be life-threatening, even with very few stings spread across an individual's body. In this case, the venom causes an allergic

reaction, which in turn can produce numerous noticeable symptoms, including rapid swelling of the eyes, lips, tongue and throat. Other symptoms are hives, rashes, itching, dizziness, breathing difficulties, loss of consciousness and even death.

There are ways to minimize a bee attack, and with a little know-how and common sense you can make it out of a dangerous swarm alive and ready to continue your trek through the wilderness. Let's review eight practical tips for avoiding and escaping a bee onslaught.

Don't attract unwanted attention.

Your first line of defense against bees is to avoid attracting their attention. Avoid wearing perfumes or colognes. Detecting strong scents is a trait most bees and wasps share. Once they identify your sweet-smelling fragrance, they swarm around you as if you were a giant



A fun fishing trip can be disrupted by bees, but think twice before you jump into the water to escape them, as they're known to hover above until their prey resurfaces.

flower. Also, wear clothing that is neutral and absent of brightly colored prints. White, khaki and beige-colored clothing decrease your chances of being eyed by curious bees.

What you eat can hurt you.

Not directly, but sweet and sugary foods are a target for hungry bees, wasps or other stinger-armed flying insects. The sweet fragrance of an opened can of soda pop or fruit wedge attracts them, and when they make contact, the signal goes out that dinner is served! To avoid unwanted guests, cover your opened soda can, or you risk pouring a bee or two into your mouth. Completely finish your fruit snack and discard the skin in the proper receptacle. Always close garbage cans and recycling containers tightly when not in use. Opened, they provide a buffet for these dangerous insects and allow them to come closer to homes and small businesses nearby.

CUT THE STING: First-Aid Relief

A bee sting can be one of the most unpleasant, even downright painful, experiences a human can have with one of nature's smallest creatures. As little as they are, bees pack a wallop of pain when their venom hits your skin. However, there are remedies that can ease the pain. Some are found in local drugstores and some, believe it or not, are probably in your kitchen cabinets. Try the following remedies to make your bee sting buzz off.

Calamine lotion: This easy-to-find, creamy liquid quickly eases burning stings. Apply to the affected area, and you'll feel a soothing tingle. Its effects last only about four hours, then the stinging pain reemerges in full force. Add another coat for continued relief.

Hydrocortisone cream: Another drugstore staple, simply apply this white cream to the affected area for relief. Although not as effective as other treatments, hydrocortisone works in a pinch.

Antihistamines and benzocaine sticks: Both can help relieve bee-sting pain, yet their soothing effects are short-lived. Lasting anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour, these two remedies make great temporary medical aid until a more effective solution can be found.

Ice: Ice can be a great remedy to calm a bee sting. Just wrap some ice in a cloth and hold in place for about 20 minutes. The cold will constrict blood vessels, which slows down the flow of the bee's venom in the bloodstream. The ice also numbs the pain and itching to the area where it's applied.

Toothpaste: Believe it or not, toothpaste can relieve stings. Coat some on the skin's surface and wait about an hour and a half for your symptoms to alleviate. It's well worth the time because you'll have nearly five hours of continued pain relief before reapplication is necessary.

Meat tenderizer, baking soda and vinegar: Mix these kitchen items to create a pain-relieving paste. Meat tenderizer contains an enzyme, called papain, which breaks down toxins



(above) A full-sized human can withstand nearly 10 stings per pound of body weight, but if allergic, one sting can be fatal. (below) A bee sting to the hand can cause an allergic reaction, manifested, in this case, as a swollen hand.

contained within bee venom. The downside is that the vinegar smells bad.

Honey: This simple remedy alleviates pain for about 30 minutes. Just apply to the site of the sting, and enjoy its cool and soothing pain-relieving sensations.

Raw potato: Another home remedy that can be found in nearly anyone's pantry is a potato. Cut a raw potato in half and apply it directly to the affected area. This simple fix not only provides instant temporary relief, but it can also help the sting heal more quickly.



Believe it or not, potatoes can help ease the pain of a bee sting. Just cut one in half and apply directly to the affected area.



PHOTO BY THINKSTOCK

A relentless swarm of bees can inflict excessive stings.



PHOTO BY THINKSTOCK

Dress for an attack.

Avoid wearing loose-fitting clothing when venturing outdoors. You can't always avoid dresses or short pants, but when hiking or exploring outdoors, you're better safe than sorry. Loose-fitting clothes allow bees to find their way to your tender skin, and when you react to their movements, you naturally swat or scratch the area, inviting a nasty sting. Also, wear appropriate footwear. Walking barefoot can cause an instant defensive sting if a bee is trampled underfoot or disturbed. In this case, the bee doesn't have to travel far to find an appropriate target.

Flee when attacked.

If you encounter one bee that flies around you, remain still and allow it to leave once it realizes that you aren't another flower. However, when a swarm or even a few dozen



bees head your way, run! Don't bother swatting the bees around your head; you'll only incite them to attack. Instead, save your energy and run as fast as possible to a sealable shelter. Cover your face with your shirt to protect this vital area, but don't stop to do it—running fast is your top priority.

Although it may sound cruel, don't head back into the swarm to help other able adults, or the bees will only overcome both of you. Shout forcibly for other people to run. If small children or elderly people are present, help them move quickly to evade the swarm, and head for the nearest shelter.

Find adequate shelter.

Your intended shelter must be sealable so bees can't enter and cause havoc. Buildings and automobiles work well, as do zippered tents or even a nearby park restroom. Avoid

jumping into swimming pools or lakes. Bees have been known to wait above the surface until a person comes up for air and viciously sting. In a pinch, a heavy comforter, blanket or sleeping bag will create a barrier between you and the bees' stingers. Just be sure openings aren't exposed. Wait until you can't hear them flying about, then cautiously get up and run to safety.

When safe, remove stingers.

When safely away from the attacking bees, it's important to remove the stinger(s) if you've been attacked by a honey bee. They leave their stingers in a person's skin and die in the process. Removing the stinger quickly decreases the amount of venom that enters your bloodstream. Don't use tweezers or try to pinch the stinger out with your fingers; this will only inject more venom. Instead, scrape the stinger out with a credit card or dull knife blade. However, if you have nothing to use, get the stinger out any way possible. Removing it quickly always supersedes the risk of accidentally squeezing more venom into your skin.

Get medical help if stinging is severe.

The basic formula for living through a massive bee-sting attack works out to about 10 stings per pound of body weight. Translated, people who aren't allergic can tolerate nearly 1,000 stings. However, if allergic, a person can suffer crippling symptoms from a single sting.

If a bee allergy is known prior to a sting, an individual should carry an EpiPen in case of an emergency. If anaphylaxis—an acute allergic reaction to which the body becomes hypersensitive—occurs, this immediate lifesaver can be administered until professional medical attention is available. If a sting victim shows signs of a reaction without prior experience, reaching immediate medical assistance is absolutely a must.


Perform regular perimeter inspections.

During seasonal times when bees are most active—early spring through the end of summer—it's best to scout your property's entire perimeter, outside your property lines (if possible) and every nook and cranny of each structure present on your land. These could include sheds, tall or thick-leaved trees, roof overhangs or anywhere a bee nest could be created (just about everywhere). By regularly surveying your land, you can limit the size of a continuously growing bees' nest, and ultimately decrease your chances of hurtful stings in the future. However, even when dealing with a seemingly small nest, take precautions and safeguards when ridding yourself of these buzzing bullies. **MP**


"The enemies in question are bees, and they can be one of the most underestimated adversaries you face in the great outdoors ..."



· SELF-RELIANCE ·

A man in camouflage clothing and a baseball cap is skinning a large deer that is hanging vertically by its hind legs. The deer's head is at the bottom, showing large antlers. The man is standing in front of a weathered wooden building. In the background, another person is partially visible, and more deer are hanging nearby. The scene is outdoors in a rural setting with bare trees and a cloudy sky.

While many hunters hang their deer outdoors for days on end, the author believes skinning and butchering a deer quickly prevents the venison from contracting unwanted flavors.



How to Butcher & Process Deer

ENSURE GREAT-TASTING VENISON WITH
A STREAMLINED FIELD-TO-FREEZER
PROCEDURE

By Darron McDougal

Harvesting a deer, or any game animal, secures a sizeable supply of precious red meat. How that meat is handled and by whom determines how well it will serve up as the main entrée when your dinner guests arrive.

Of course, few hunters are experts at butchering and processing deer. So, most take the easy route, dropping their harvested game off at a local meat locker or processing plant. In the past, I've done this myself, but questions invariably linger. How is the meat handled? How sanitary are the tools and surfaces the meat contacts? Is the meat processed along with other hunters' venison, or is each deer handled one by one? For that matter, am I even getting my own deer meat back, or am I simply getting "venison?"

The thought of getting another hunter's venison, or even a portion of it, repulses me. I take pride in handling my deer meat as carefully as possible because, again, how meat is handled ultimately determines how it will taste.

If the questions I referenced above haunt you every time you drop a deer off at a processing plant, as they have me, perhaps you should consider butchering and processing your own deer going forward.

“The thought of getting another hunter’s venison, or even a portion of it, repulses me.”



If you'll be transporting your deer to a suitable skinning and butchering location, remove the entrails by field-dressing your deer immediately after the kill. Of course, field-dressing is unnecessary if you'll be packing out the meat.

Make a Good Shot

Believe it or not, proper meat care begins before a game animal dies. A well-placed shot—through the heart and/or both lungs—will always yield the best results. Hit elsewhere, game can inherit a skunky or gamey flavor, or it can incur a tough texture. For example, a gut-shot deer gasses up internally during the six to eight hours it takes to die, which taints the meat. Another

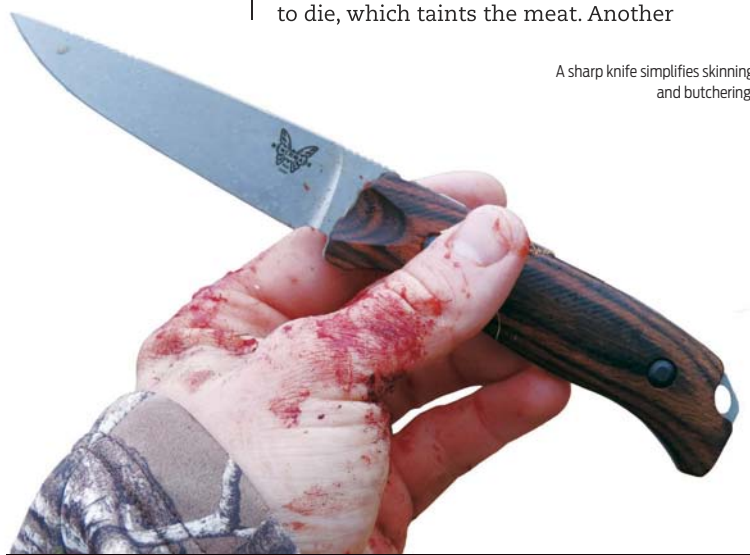
example is a deer hit anywhere else requiring pursuit and follow-up shots. The farther they run, the tougher the muscle tissue (meat) becomes. Knowing this, do your part to take deer with a single, well-placed shot.

Field-Dress and Cool

Once a deer hits the dirt, the adage, now the work begins, hits home. If the deer you shot isn't accessible by vehicle, and dragging it to a road or vehicle isn't possible, you'll need to pack the meat out, either boned or in quarters. Since you'll be harvesting meat immediately, field-dressing the deer is unnecessary in this case. You can get usable chunks—even the tenderloins—from the carcass without field-dressing.

In contrast, if you'll be dragging the deer or otherwise moving the entire carcass from the field to a suitable skinning and butchering location, immediately remove the entrails to ensure the meat isn't tainted with a gassy flavor. Do this carefully and avoid contaminating the meat with urine, gut or fecal matter or intestinal fluids. If your knife contacts any of these bacteria-filled substances, be sure to wash it before continuing.

A sharp knife simplifies skinning and butchering.





Drain as much blood from the chest cavity as possible. Then, when you get the carcass to a suitable skinning location, hang the deer and wash the chest cavity with cool water to rinse away any remaining blood or entrails before skinning. If skinning must be postponed, shove two bags of ice into the chest cavity to cool the meat from the inside out.

Skin and Bone or Quarter

Some hunters, especially in cooler weather, hang their deer for a few days before skinning, butchering and processing. This aging technique uses naturally occurring enzymes in the meat to tenderize muscle fibers. However, I believe the meat can inherit unwanted flavors if hung outdoors, even in fresh air. If you don't believe me, place some Christmas cookies in an ice-cream pail. Set the pail on a snowbank for a couple of weeks, and then taste one of the cookies—freshness is definitely lost. With that in mind, I skin my deer as soon as possible, unless a walk-in cooler is available.

Once a deer has been skinned, rinsing the carcass with cool water to remove hair and dirt is optimal; this helps prevent bacteria from contacting the actual meat fibers. Further, you won't have to wash each cut to remove hair and debris before packaging, which only waterlogs the meat and changes its color from dark red to dull brown.

When I debone the meat, I have three large white or clear plastic bags designated for different cuts. The first is for loins and tenderloins, the second for roasts and steaks and the third for scrap meat or lean trimmings—odds and ends to be ground or made into jerky. Once the carcass is trimmed clean, I transfer the bags to a large cooler packed with ice. I prefer to finish caring for the meat within two days to avoid spoilage, although a quality cooler can keep ice and meat longer.

Becca McDougal, the author's wife, cuts venison into chunks sized appropriately for the McDougals' Weston meat grinder.

Author Darron McDougal wraps a venison loin in Reynolds freezer paper, which will help prevent freezer burn.

CUT MEAT INTO USABLE CHUNKS

If you've never done it, removing usable meat chunks from a deer carcass can seem confusing. However, you need not be an expert to do it. First, you must know which cuts are good for specific dishes in order to harvest them correctly and in the right proportions. Next, study the discrete lines that separate meat cuts from one another on the front and hind quarters. Then, begin by cutting along those lines to harvest each chunk. It takes most hunters several deer to master this, so you might find books, DVD tutorials and online articles and videos helpful.

The most tender cut is the aptly named tenderloin. Two of these are located within the chest cavity on either side of the spine. Simply run your knife blade along the spine the length of the tenderloin, then lightly pull the meat as you cut it free. Repeat with the second tenderloin. The loins—often called backstraps—are the second most tender cut. These run between the rump and the front shoulders on the back along the spine. As with the tenderloins, run your knife blade along the spine the length of the loin. Then, make a cut 90 degrees from the spine where the loin ends at the rump and again where it ends at the front shoulders. Now, you can basically peel it away from the ribs and spine, working your knife along the bones to free the loin as you go.

Within reason, I harvest as much lean scrap meat as possible, which can be ground or turned into jerky or sausage. Most of it comes from the neck, brisket and front shoulders. Remember, any red scrap counts toward the final weight of meat harvested.

As a final caution, I trim fat, tendons and silver skin from all cuts (even the scrap meat). This avoids a tallow-like taste and ensures the meat is as tender as possible.



(top) A plastic stuffer tool is used to push meat chunks down into the grind shaft.

(below) The McDougals use ground venison for burgers, taco meat and meatloaf. These 12 packages of ground venison were used up within a few months.

(opposite) The author sends chunked venison through a Weston meat grinder and directly into a 1 ½-pound Cabela's burger bag.

Package and Freeze

Properly packaging and freezing your deer meat will prolong its edibility. I package burgers in 1 ½-pound burger bags, which are available at farm-supply or sporting-goods stores that sell meat-grinding equipment. I package loins, steaks and roasts in Reynolds freezer paper, which protects against freezer burn. I carefully label each package for easy reference later on as I make routine trips to the freezer.

Once the venison has been packaged, I place the packages into the freezer, turning them every few hours—if packages must be piled on top of one another—to ensure even freezing. Once the packages are frozen solid, there's no need to turn or rotate them further.

Eat it Up!

Even properly packaged venison only lasts so long in the freezer. If you have a freezer designated specifically for meat, it will likely maintain its excellent flavor longer. If you have other items in the freezer, the venison may contract off flavors after a while.

Either way, I like to use up venison within one year, if possible. This generally isn't a problem since my wife and I don't buy beef, and during years when I harvest several



ELECTRIC MEAT GRINDER

Hand grinders had their heyday long ago, although a few hunters still use them. Electric grinders make grinding effortless and even pay for themselves after you've run the first few batches of meat through. Good ones cost several hundred dollars, but a processing plant will charge \$100 or more to process a deer. If you do the math, you'll technically have your grinder paid for after two to four deer.

Commercial-grade grinders will last longest, but for the layperson, a consumer-grade grinder costing \$200-\$400 should last indefinitely. I actually purchased a nice little rig from Weston called the Heavy-Duty Electric Meat Grinder and Sausage Stuffer. When I bought it several years ago, I was working part-time for an archery pro shop and got it at a reduced price. Still, its retail price at the store was only \$105.99. It handles jobs quite easily, grinding 2-3 pounds per minute, and has a #8 ¾-HP motor. It came with three grinding plates: fine, medium and coarse. With meat grinders, clogging works the motor harder than it should, but the Weston grinder is equipped with a reverse feature to avoid buildups within the grind shaft.

Overall, the grinder is sufficient for deer- and antelope-sized game, if a bit small for elk and moose; though I'm sure it would work fine if put to the test. My parents have a more commercial-grade grinder produced by LEM that cost more than \$500, and it worked fabulously on an elk I harvested last year. I elected to use it since it's designed for bigger jobs. Keep in mind that a smaller grinder like mine requires smaller meat chunks, whereas a larger grinder like my parents' will accept larger meat chunks, therefore requiring less slicing and dicing.

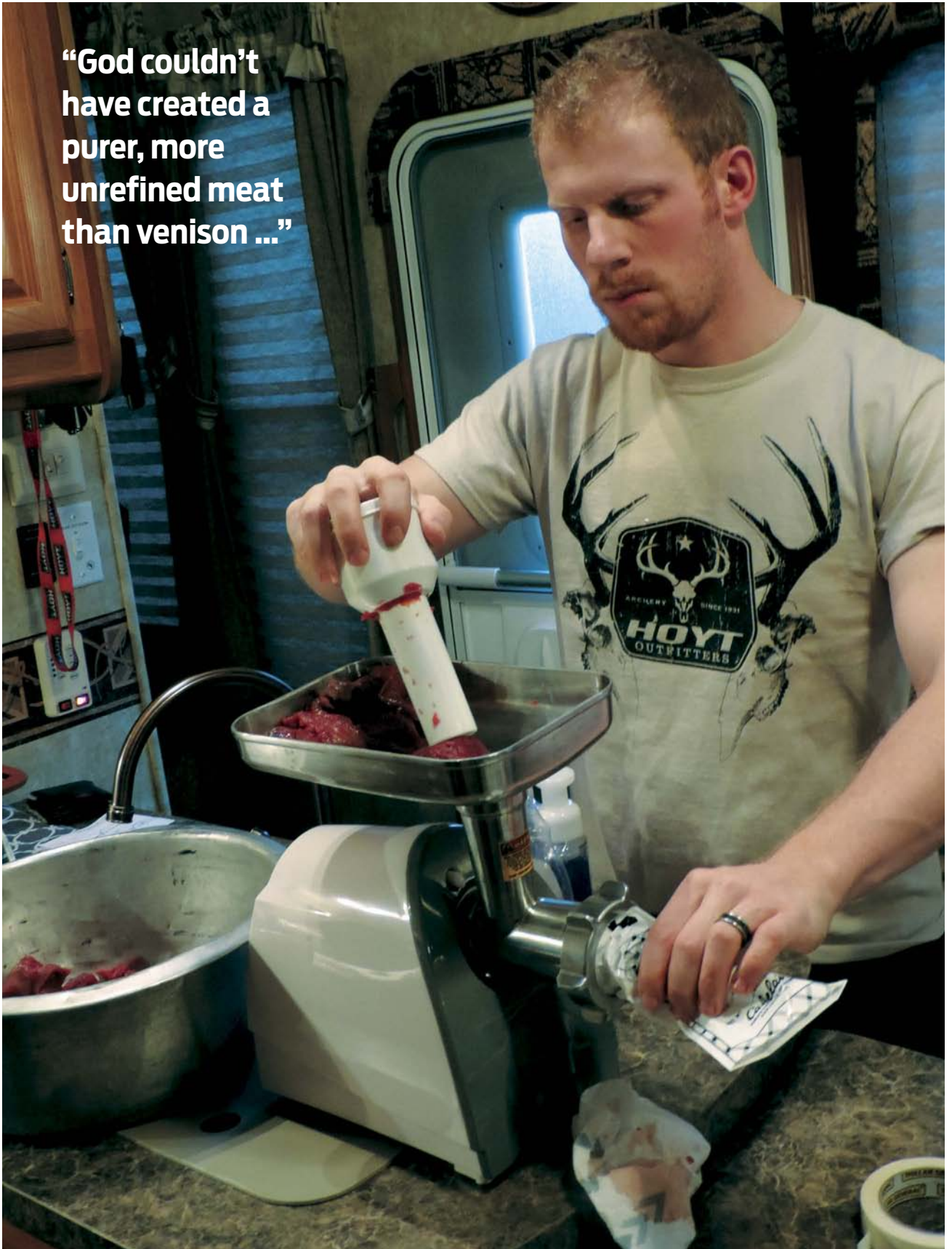
animals, we bless family and friends with some of the meat.

Closing Thoughts

I'm a provider, and that's why I don't leave hard-earned meat to the questions that invariably linger when dropped off at a processing plant. My wife, family and I handle my deer and other game meat from start to finish. We take pride in every facet, and the result is delicious red meat devoid of skunky or gamey flavors. We don't eat venison I harvest merely because it's the right thing to do; we eat it because we prefer it to beef. Through trial and error, we've perfected recipes using deer to the point where guests don't even realize they're eating venison.

God couldn't have created a purer, more unrefined meat than venison, and I'll happily partake in the spoils of successful hunts as long as I live. It's a reward well worth the effort. **MP**

**“God couldn’t
have created a
purer, more
unrefined meat
than venison ...”**







Ithaca Model 37

LONG LIVE A CLASSIC

By Thomas C. Tabor

In 1883, William Henry Baker and his partners began constructing side-by-side shotguns under the business name Ithaca Gun Company. From that point forward, various firearms issued from the company, establishing Ithaca as one of the most influential gun makes in America.

During World War II, Ithaca joined the war effort by constructing firearms like the M1911A1 semi-auto pistols, M6 survival weapons and M3A1 sub-machine guns (sometimes called Grease-Guns) for our military troops.

OTHER DESIGNS

Ithaca wasn't the first firearms manufacturer to produce shotguns based on this same John Browning bottom-ejection design. Remington Arms produced one beginning in 1921 called the Model 17A. But unlike the Ithaca Model 37 produced later, the Remington Model 17A never really caught on, and in 1933, Remington dropped it. Four years later, Ithaca picked up the design and began producing the Model 37. While both of these shotguns were quite similar, there were a few differences, most of which were largely external.

In 1977, John Browning's namesake, the Browning Arms Company, began producing its own version of this same basic design, marketing it as the Model BPS (Browning Pump Shotgun). The BPS and the Ithaca Model 37 also share many traits, but in my opinion, the two shotguns each have their own unique feel. The BPS is still being produced today, and Japanese-based Miroku Corporation builds it for Browning, while Ithaca builds every part of its firearms right here in the U.S.A.



"Ithaca's bread and butter has always been its shotguns. Of those, none have garnered more acclaim than the ... Model 37 pump-action."

Following that, at the beginning of the '60s, Ithaca even produced a few centerfire and rimfire rifles, but arguably, Ithaca's bread and butter has always been its shotguns. Of those, none have garnered more acclaim than the John-Browning-designed Model 37 pump-action. Its unique and simplistic design has proven one of the most reliable and effective pumps ever built, which accounts for its survival through nearly eight decades.

But even as successful as Ithaca appeared on the surface, the company suffered internally from financial strife. Those problems ultimately became too much to bear, and in 2005, the company declared bankruptcy. All of Ithaca's assets were sold off to the highest bidders, but thankfully, the story doesn't end there.

A New Era of Ithaca Model 37s

The saying, you can't keep a good gun down, certainly applies to the Ithaca Model 37. For various reasons, gun manufacturers sometimes cease to produce a particular model. In this case, Ithaca was forced out of business for a couple of years before new ownership revamped and restarted the operation.

After acquiring production rights to the Ithaca brand in June 2007, the investors formed Ithaca Guns USA LLC, and a slow restructuring began. At the heart of that initial movement was the Model 37's rebirth, and a year later, two versions were offered: a new Featherlight and the Ultralight, both of which were available in either 12- or 20-gauge chambering. These new 2008 models were



(left) The current Model 37 28-gauge A grade combines old-world gun craftsmanship with 21st century art. (right) The hand-craftsmanship inherent to the new Ithaca Model 37s is quite attractive.



Ithaca currently offers a 16-gauge Model 37.



The Ithaca Deerslayer Model 37 is a great choice for hunters looking to pursue deer and similarly sized game with a shotgun.

remarkably similar to the earlier 37s but included a few modern improvements.

Since those initial offerings, Ithaca has continued expanding its line to include many sub-model choices. Adding to its line of upland-bird guns, there are 37s specifically intended for the deer hunter called the Deerslayers, models for defense, a trap-shooting model, turkey guns and designs geared for waterfowl hunting. Further, many of the sub-models are now offered in 12-, 20-, 16- and even 28-gauge chambering.

Because soldering tends to warp gun barrels and solder joints occasionally fail, these new-generation Ithaca Model 37s are completely free of soldering and brazing. All peripheral barrel components are now secured by lugs and pins, which are machined out of the same parent material as the barrel. A single screw attaches vent ribs. This allows the rib to be easily removed and replaced, if necessary. In all cases, the receivers are machined from a single metal block. Interchangeable screw-in choke tubes have been added on many of the 37s, particularly the models designed for bird hunting. With these, three choke tubes are included: full, modified and improved.


The Ithaca Model 37's Unique Design

Unlike pump-action shotguns that eject empties through a side port in the receiver or, in a few instances, out the top, the Ithaca Model 37 drops shells directly out the bottom. This constitutes an ambidextrous design, and is likely safer than other designs. If a shooter should encounter a bad shell, this bottom-ejection design directs any flying debris downward rather than into the shooter's face. And, if you reload your own ammunition, it's pretty darn convenient to find your empties



(above) Model 37 barrels can be easily and quickly removed by loosening the magazine nut, then rotating the barrel 90 degrees. (below) Down through the years, one of the most common modifications found on the Ithaca Model 37 was the forearm design. In this case, the forearm on the top was manufactured in 1939, while the one on the bottom was made in 1952. This latter version was likely the most common style used by Ithaca.



Three Ithaca Model 37 shotguns are leaning against a rough stone wall. The shotguns have dark metal barrels and receivers, and light-colored wooden stocks and forearms. The barrels are pointed upwards. The shotguns are arranged in a slightly staggered line from left to right. The background is a rustic stone wall with a wooden beam visible at the top.

Author Tabor currently owns three Ithaca Model 37s, all of which are older versions that span the years of production from 1939 to 1952, in 12- and 20-gauge chambering.

“Unlike pump-action shotguns that eject empties through a side port in the receiver ... the Ithaca Model 37 drops shells directly out the bottom.”

piled up rather than spread far and wide.

Beyond its unique action design, the Model 37 boasts other characteristics worth considering. One is its light mass weight. A classic example is the 12-gauge Featherlight sub-model, which weighs 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds.

Another feature I personally favor is that by simply reaching into the bottom ejection port and pushing in on the positive shell stop the loaded shells can be removed from the tubular magazine quickly and easily. This allows the shells to pop free from the magazine tube, right into the shooter's hand. Obviously, removing shells from the magazine this way leaves a round in the chamber. The shooter must mash the slide stop, located in front and to the right of the trigger guard, then bring the forearm stock rearward to eject that shell.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of the early Model 37s came with no rib on the barrels; that feature didn't become popular until later years. And, the barrels on the Ithaca Model 37 didn't become interchangeable until 1973. After that date, when serial numbers became greater than 855,000, the barrels could be easily switched from one shotgun to another.

New or Used?

When Ithaca was reformed, the characteristics that made the Model 37 popular were retained. While some changes have been implemented in the newer versions, like the solderless ventilated ribs, screw-in choke tubes and more attractive finishes, etc., those changes have only helped enhance this fine shotgun and align it with the 21st century. Nevertheless, there's absolutely nothing wrong with Model 37 shotguns built prior to the company's 2005 collapse. In my opinion, whether built in the 20th or 21st century, there isn't a finer shotgun than the Model 37. While the vast majority of older versions lack modern appeal, they remain elegant in their own way.

JOHN MOSES BROWNING

Few could argue that John Browning wasn't the world's most influential and noteworthy firearms inventor. Beginning with his very first patent, the Winchester 1885 single-shot falling-block rifle, Browning continued developing new firearm designs for decades, as well as making important improvements on existing designs. His work included virtually every firearm action known to man, including single-shots, lever-actions, slide-actions, semi-automatics, fully-automatics, handguns, rifles and shotguns.

His accomplishments are far too many to adequately cover here, but some of his most noteworthy include the Winchester Model 1894 and many other Winchester level-action rifle models, Browning Auto 5 shotgun, Browning Superposed Over & Under, Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) and the M2 Browning .50-caliber machine gun.

Today, many of our current best-made firearms are those designed by Browning himself, or they've been used as the parent design from which other firearms are built. A fine example of this latter case is the ultra-popular Model 1911 semi-auto handgun, which actually stemmed from the Browning Colt Model 1905. Another noteworthy surrogate was the Winchester Model 12 pump-action shotgun, which was developed by T.C. Johnson, a Winchester engineer, using the Browning Model 1893/97 design.



These older 37s are usually available at reasonable prices, too.

Prior to Ithaca ceasing operations in 2005, Model 37s were available in 20-, 16- or 12-gauge chambering. Aside from those models designed for bird hunting, there were various sub-models intended for skeet shooting, trap shooting and a slug gun for deer hunting. A few fancy models were produced, but are rarely seen today. There was a supreme grade, a deluxe grade and a few bicentennial commemoratives made, but the most impressive and beautiful was the \$5,000 grade. During World War II, it was renamed the \$1,000 grade. Largely, those shotguns are now in collectors' hands and are seldom seen on the open market. Usually, the older Model 37s found on used-gun racks at sporting-goods stores and pawn shops are standard grades. Regardless, all of these shotguns share the common traits of being extremely reliable, well-built firearms any shooter can proudly own and shoot.

The Way I See It

When I think of Ithaca Model 37 shotguns, the features I find most enduring are these: the bottom-ejection system; the ability to easily and quickly break the shotgun down by simply loosening the magazine nut and twisting the barrel at a 90-degree angle; the ease of which the shotshells can be removed from the magazine tube; the 37's overall smooth-handling and quick-swinging abilities; its light weight, which makes it an absolute joy to carry in the field; and the general smoothness of its action.



(top) Tabor's first glimpse at the new Model 37s was at a SHOT Show a few years ago. (below) Ithaca's Model 37 offers time-tested attributes that make it one of the most reliable shotguns of all time. The new Model 37 can be purchased in either AA or AAA grade.

I'm unsure exactly how many Ithaca Model 37s I've owned throughout the years. Let's just say that I've owned more of these than any other model of firearm, and I still own three today. When it comes to purchasing a used Model 37, I personally feel there isn't better value to be found anywhere, and if you're considering one of the new models, you'll surely get all of the proven features with modern styling in one great package. **MP**

Contact Info

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420 N. Warpole Street
Upper Sandusky, OH 43351
(877) 648-4222
ithacagun.com

Pioneer Candy

3 RECIPES TO SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH

By Charles Witosky

Hunting for your own meat, growing your own vegetables, storing supplies for the winter and building your own tools are all very useful and practical activities. Sometimes, though, it's pleasant to just relax and enjoy something sweet. Early pioneers were known to make candy that was simple, natural and delicious.



“In the early-1900s, a trade magazine was published known as The International Confectioner, which detailed the candy industry’s goings-on.”

Hard Candy

INGREDIENTS

5 to 6 cups confectioner's sugar
2 cups granulated sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup light corn syrup
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
Lemon extract to taste (start with 3 teaspoons)
Yellow food coloring, optional

The flavor extract and food coloring can be substituted with other flavors and/or colors. Mint, orange and vanilla are popular hard-candy flavors. Anise, which tastes like black licorice, is another popular flavor. Food coloring is not required, but if you choose to use it, any color will work. We used yellow to identify the candy as lemon-flavored.

TOOLS

15x10x1 baking sheet
2- to 3-quart saucepan
Wooden spoon
Glass measuring cup
Candy thermometer (see sidebar if you don't have one)
Kitchen shears



You can use a baking sheet of any size. The only requirement is that it must be at least 1-inch deep.

1 Coat the baking sheet with a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch layer of confectioner's sugar. Spread the sugar evenly over the entire sheet, making sure the center of the sheet has a solid $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of sugar covering it. The sides don't need to be as full, but still properly covered. Next, use the handle of a wooden spoon to carve a wide, serpentine line in the sugar down the center of the sheet. Make sure you don't reach the bottom. If you do, re-cover the area with sugar. Carefully make the line as defined as possible; you'll pour the liquid candy into this indentation later, and you don't want it to overflow the line.

2 Pour the granulated sugar, corn syrup and water into the saucepan. Cook this mixture over medium heat, stirring occasionally, while it comes to a boil. Once boiling, cover for 3 minutes to cook off any sugar crystals that have formed. Uncover the pot.

3 Place the candy thermometer into the mixture. Do not stir. Watch the thermometer until it hits 300°F (or hard crack stage, if you're measuring manually). Once it reaches 300°F, remove from heat. Stir in the flavoring and food coloring of your choice.

4 Working quickly but with care, pour the mixture into a glass measuring cup. Then, pour the mixture into the indentation you made in the confectioner's sugar, taking care to stay within the lines. If you have excess mixture after pouring into the pre-drawn lines, draw more. Be sure that the new lines don't touch the ones you've already used. Once you've used up all of the mixture, sprinkle more confectioner's sugar on top of the lines of candy.

5 Let the mixture cool until it is safe to touch, but don't let it cool so long that it becomes hard and unable to bend. Once it's safe to touch, use kitchen shears to cut it into bite-sized pieces. Roll the pieces around in the sugar one more time.

You've made hard candy! Put it into bowls around the house and have a piece whenever the urge strikes.

HOW TO TEST CANDY TEMPERATURE WITHOUT A CANDY THERMOMETER

Candy thermometers often list stages that correspond with certain temperatures. That's because recipes often instruct you to cook the mixture to a certain stage, rather than temperature. If you don't have a candy thermometer, there's a method to manually test the temperature.

Fill a cup with water and drop a few ice cubes into it. Remove the ice after 10 minutes.

Once the candy mixture has cooked, covered, for 3 minutes, you can begin testing its stage.

Spoon out just a little bit of the mixture periodically and drop it into the ice-cold water. As soon as the mixture hits the water, it will solidify. Pull the solid candy out and roll it around in your hands. How it feels determines the candy mixture's stage.

230°F Thread stage: When it solidifies in the water, it forms a thread and does not ball up

240°F Soft-ball stage: Forms a soft, malleable ball

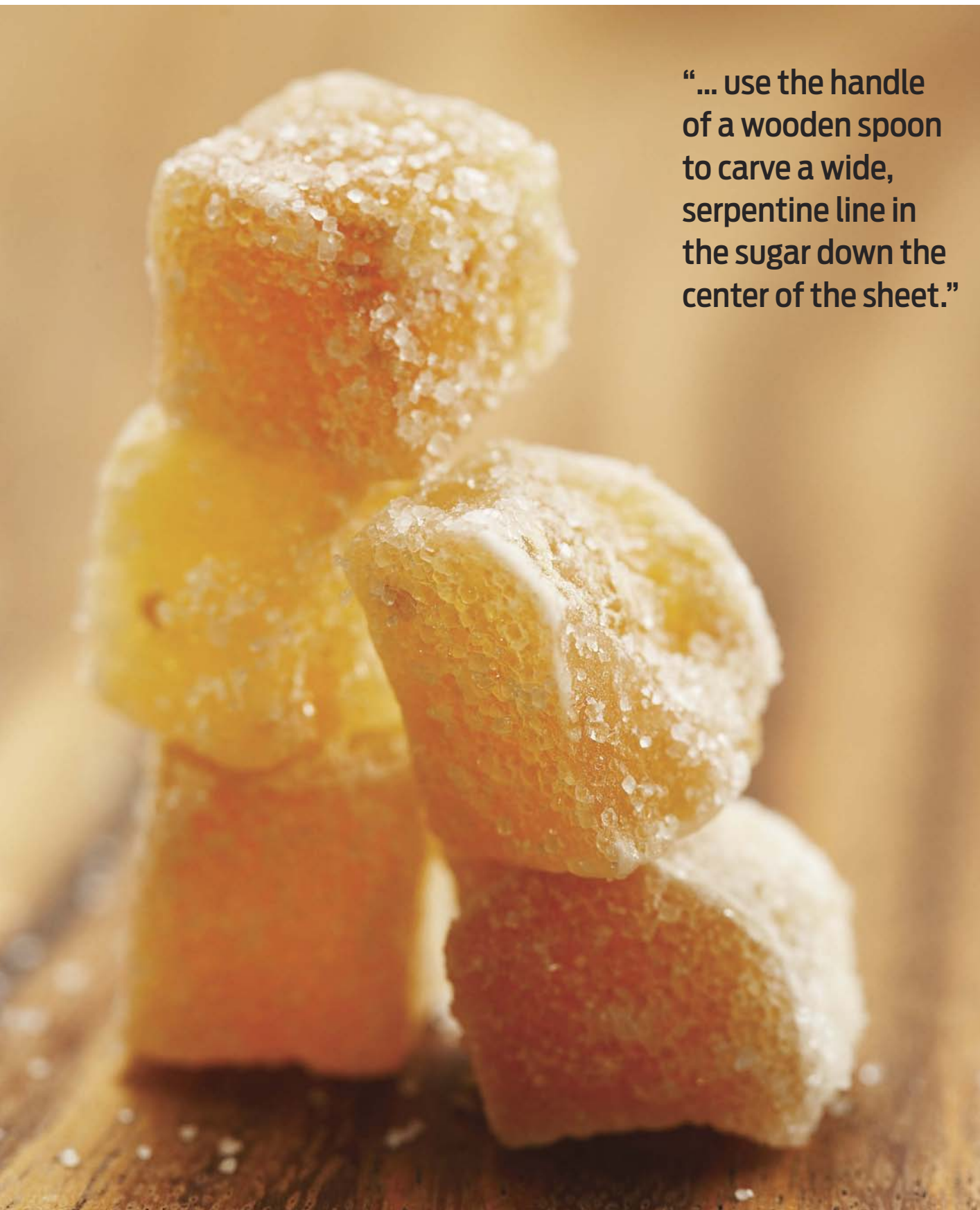
250°F Firm-ball stage: Forms a soft, solid ball

265°F Hard-ball stage: Forms a hard, solid ball

285°F Soft-crack stage: Forms a hard, solid ball; string will bend, but then crack

300°F Hard-crack stage: Forms a hard, solid ball; string will crack easily

“... use the handle of a wooden spoon to carve a wide, serpentine line in the sugar down the center of the sheet.”



Divinity Candy

Another simple, old-fashioned favorite is divinity candy. It's made using a process similar to hard candy, and is a delicious treat to serve at parties or to take camping.

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, whites only
3 cups granulated sugar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
Pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup finely chopped pecans

TOOLS

2- to 3-quart saucepan
Large mixing bowl
Whisk or electric mixer
Spatula
Waxed paper

- 1** Separate the egg whites from the yolks. If any yolk gets into the whites, remove it. Whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks. Set aside and reserve yolks for another use.
- 2** Pour the granulated sugar, water, corn syrup and salt into a saucepan. Cook this mixture over medium heat, stirring occasionally, and bring to a boil; cover and cook for 3 minutes to boil off any sugar crystals that have formed. Uncover the pot.
- 3** Place a candy thermometer into the mixture. Watch the thermometer until it hits 240°F (soft ball stage, if you're measuring manually). Once it reaches 240°F, remove from heat.
- 4** Pour the mixture and the vanilla into the beaten egg whites. Use a whisk or electric mixer to mix it all together until it's thick and beginning to harden, but still very malleable. This may take up to 15 minutes.
- 5** Once it begins hardening, mix in the chopped pecans. Fold the nuts into the candy mixture until the pecans are mixed throughout.
- 6** Drop spoonfuls of the mixture onto waxed paper. The pieces will harden quickly, making divinity candy.



MARTHA WASHINGTON CANDY

Depending on whom you ask, you'll get different answers about how the name "Martha Washington Candy" originated. Most will say that Martha Washington herself made it, some will say she enjoyed it, and other people will mention a store that existed from the late-1800s until the Great Depression. I was determined to find an answer, so I did some research.

In the early 1900s, a trade magazine was published known as *The International Confectioner*, which detailed the candy industry's goings-on. It featured technological advances, reported on the successes of candy companies, and had advertisements targeted at the average consumer for machines that claimed to make candy by the bucketful. Many issues of these magazines can be found on the web.

Near the back of each issue, there are small blurbs of information about many different candy-related companies and how successful (or not) they were at the time. In many, there's a section about Martha Washington stores. Martha Washington stores, according to my grandfather, were ice cream and treat shops that made their own products in-store. My grandfather was unable to confirm whether or not they sold what's now known as Martha Washington candy.

While that's not the answer I was hoping for, it's the most plausible. Regardless of how the name originated, the candy itself is delicious. If you're looking for a chocolate treat instead of plain sugar, try this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

7 cups confectioner's sugar
14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
½ pound butter, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup chopped and drained cherries
2 cups sweetened flaked coconut
2 cups finely chopped pecans
24 ounces chocolate chips
Paraffin, optional (see note for more information)

TOOLS

Medium-sized mixing bowl
Whisk or electric mixer
Spatula
Double boiler

Note: Paraffin wax for use in cooking can be purchased at most grocery stores. A common brand in the Mid-Atlantic is Household Paraffin Wax from

Gulf Wax. To give chocolate extra snap and shine, melt paraffin wax with the chocolate. Cut off a chunk of the wax about the size of a bite-sized candy bar. Add the wax to the unmelted chocolate, then melt the two ingredients together. Mix every 30 seconds or so, until they're completely blended and melted.

- 1 Mix together the confectioner's sugar, milk, butter and vanilla. Cream well, whisking or mixing until a creamy, almost dough-like batter forms.
- 2 Mix in the cherries, coconut and pecans. Make sure that the cherries are completely drained. You can use whatever kind of cherry you like; we used maraschino cherries because they're so sweet.
- 3 Drop spoonfuls of the mixture onto waxed paper and freeze for 1 hour.
- 4 Pull the candy out of the freezer. Re-form the spoonfuls into round balls. Place the balls back into the freezer.
- 5 Melt the chocolate and paraffin wax (if using) together using a double boiler.
- 6 Remove the pre-formed balls from the freezer. Roll the balls in the chocolate and set aside. When you've rolled them all, refreeze for 10 minutes to set the chocolate.

While no one would call these recipes healthy, they don't include preservatives like commercial candies do, although they'll still last a long time. Enjoy these candies anytime, anywhere. **MP**



· HUNTING/SHOOTING ·



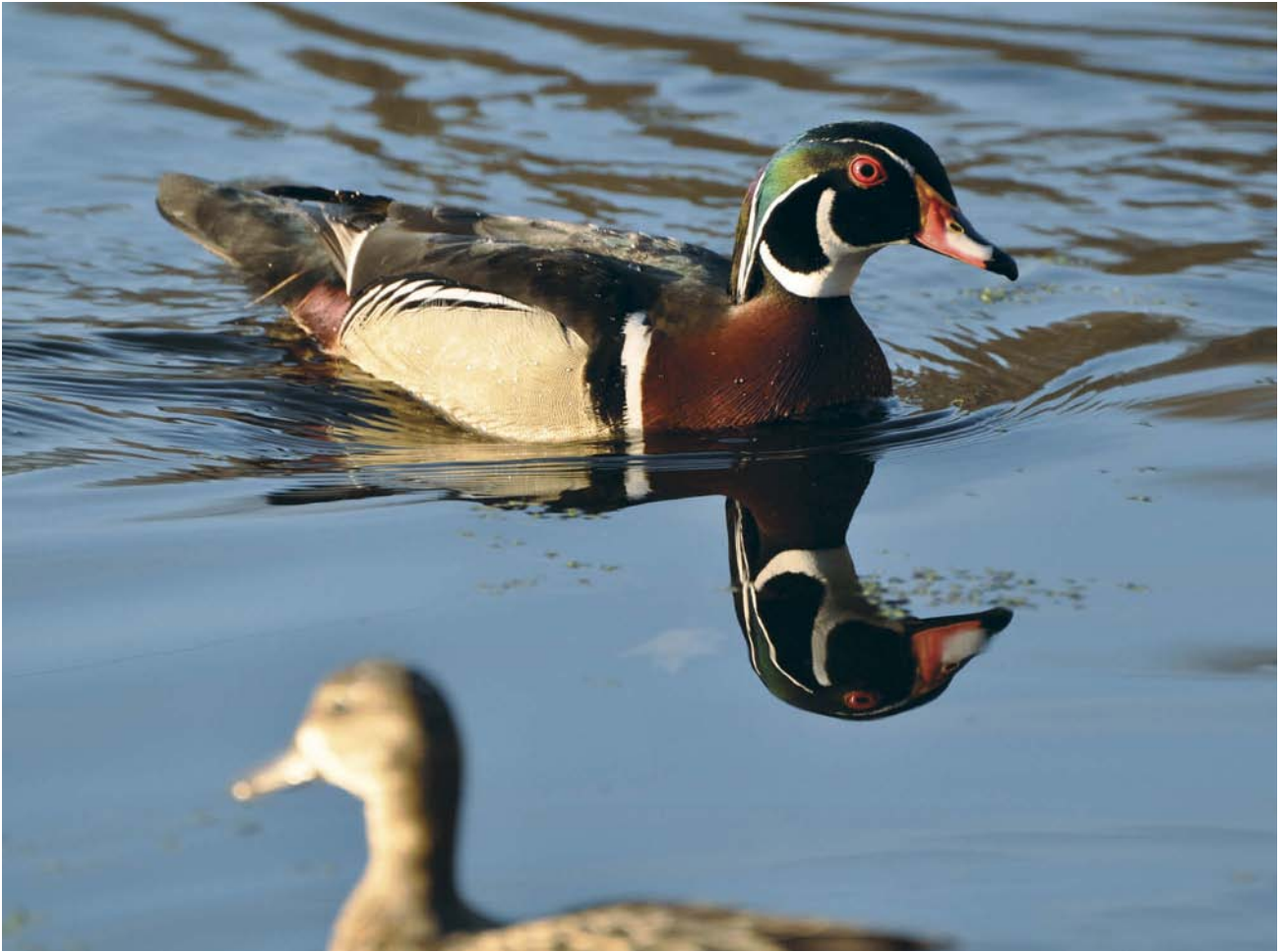
With some extra work, a DIY hunter can find great success hunting gamebirds on public lands. Plus, it's a great way to spend time with friends or a four-legged companion.

Public Protein

UPLAND- AND WATERFOWL-
HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES
ABOUND ON UNCLE
SAM'S GROUND

By Tony J. Peterson

Hunting anything on public land can be an exercise in futility. This is especially true in the world of deer and other big game. Many parcels of land open to anyone feature plenty of hunters and little, if any, game. That's reality, but it doesn't always ring true when dealing with feathered quarry. In fact, some of the best public-land hunting in the country involves waterfowl and upland birds, and it can all be had by anyone willing to do the work.



“The more people you have to compete with, the fewer birds you’ll kill, and more importantly, the less you’ll enjoy your time afield.”

(above) Finding waterfowl on public land usually begins with some time spent studying aerial photography for secluded water sources.

(opposite) If you’re hunting huge tracts of public land with little to no hunting pressure, cruise logging roads for grouse. In areas with greater pressure, seek areas with tough access where other hunters don’t go.

Few things are more rewarding than obtaining several meals of nutritious quail, pheasant, ruffed grouse or waterfowl the old-fashioned way. Naturally, it helps if you’ve got a bird dog, but opportunities exist that don’t require a four-legged companion. Whether you have a dog or not, there’s always the first step, which is simply identifying a few places to hunt. Depending on where you live, this might be simple, or it could prove rather difficult.

For example, I live just north of the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Hunting opportunities close to home on public lands are tough to come by but not impossible. A couple of hours from my home, however, lay vast tracts of national forests dotted with duck-filled beaver ponds and walking trails frequented by ruffed grouse. For anyone who would like to bird hunt on public dirt, it’s best to first

identify where your greatest chances will occur, then look a little more closely into those parcels.

Scouting

I’ve been a whitetail bowhunter ever since I was old enough to buy a license, so scouting comes naturally to me. For most bird hunters, it might not. That’s OK as long as you’re willing to take a walk or three to determine what your chosen property offers.

But first, study aerial photos on Google Maps or Google Earth to see a bird’s-eye perspective of any potential hunting spot. This will reveal several important points, including any agriculture on or near the public piece, along with access points and water. The agriculture might be a safe bet to find a few pheasants, or it might host daytime flights of doves as they swing through to feed.





(above) The author switches between an over/under 20-gauge for smaller birds and thick early-season cover, and a 12-gauge for larger, spookier late-season birds.

Access points tell you exactly where the hunting pressure will start on any given property, and also highlight the spots you should probably avoid. My general rule is to get as far away from easy access as possible. This is especially true on smaller properties closer to large populations of people. Conversely, if I'm hunting grouse in northern Wisconsin where I might have thousands of acres to myself, I don't mind hiking a trail that provides an easy walk.

Weapons of Choice

I keep two guns in constant rotation for bird hunting. The first is an over/under 20-gauge shotgun, which is lightweight and balanced just right for fast shouldering. This is a major advantage in early season when the woods are thick and shot opportunities fleeting. I also like the 20-gauge for smaller birds like doves.

When I'm dealing with the foliage-free late-season woods, as well as the late-season survivors, I like a semi-automatic 12-gauge shotgun. When the season is winding down, birds are far more likely to flush farther out, which necessitates longer shots. Of course, I also like the 12-gauge for birds like pheasants and mallards, which just happen to be larger and built to survive. A little extra wallop can go a long way with certain birds and will greatly cut down the chance of crippling.

If you're thinking a mallard breast might be tasty, you'll want to focus on the water available on your chosen ground. Aerial photos are invaluable for locating small ponds and creeks, which are perfect for pass-shooting ducks without the hassle of throwing out dozens of decoys or using a boat. Whatever bird you're targeting, narrow down your list of potential hotspots by studying aerial photos.

Resident or Just Passing Through?

While map work is important for finding good places to fill your game bag, there's more to the process. You'll also want to understand the kind of game you're pursuing: their habits, travel routes and feeding areas.

This really boils down to migrating birds versus non-migrating birds—the passers-through versus the homebodies. If your hunting area is located close to a major city or is afflicted with massive doses of hunting pressure, focus on the migrators. These include ducks, doves and woodcock.

Throughout the fall, each of these species flies through, offering fresh birds to hunt. This is not the case with non-migrators like grouse or pheasants, which live year round in specific areas, and thus are more prone to being shot



“If your hunting area is located close to a major city or is afflicted with massive doses of hunting pressure, focus on the migrators.”

out. This is also why I spend so much of my time hunting migrators randomly throughout the season on properties near home.

More than a million people live within an hour of many places I hunt, which means pressure on public land is intense. Birds that just happened to be flying through, however, don't know that. Take the woodcock, for example, which is a bird that migrates just ahead of the frost. This diminutive gamebird will show up in flights that can make for excellent days afield, while just a few days later it'll be tough to flush even one. This action is completely unrelated to hunting pressure because of the amount of birds coming through. The same goes for doves and many species of waterfowl.

Bust More Birds

There are a few ways to increase your odds of filling your freezer with migrators. First, pay

attention. Woodcock, with their choppy, erratic flight, are highly visible at first and last light. If you're driving to work early in the morning or taking a walk at sunset, keep an eye on the sky. If you see a few woodcock, or even just one, you'll know that they're probably starting to come through. The same goes for doves sitting on a telephone wire near a recently picked agricultural field. When the numbers go from a couple to several, wing shooting might get hot really soon.

For ducks, just watch the water. Where six resident mallards might paddle around a neighborhood pond all summer, there might suddenly be twice that many, or some teal or wood ducks might have joined them. When they show up in that pond, they're showing up in other places where you can hunt, too. Count on it.

It's also a good idea to note where you find birds while hunting. A patch of sumac and

If you must travel to get to decent public land, consider a multi-species trip. While roving for ruffed grouse, watch for woodcock or other species.



(above) Some gamebirds, like pheasants and ruffed grouse, are homebodies. They don't migrate, which means you might need to work harder to find huntable populations of birds. (below) While the hunting is certain to be tougher than on private ground, public lands can yield hard-working bird hunters a good day afield and a tasty dinner to boot.



raspberry vines where you flush a woodcock today will probably hold birds tomorrow and next season. The empty pond you've checked every week that suddenly fills up with wood ducks the moment acorns start dropping will likely offer a repeat performance next season. Migrators are often very reliable this way.

This is not to say you should focus solely on birds that are flying through, because you can find homebodies like quail, grouse and pheasant on public lands. You'll just have to find birds that other hunters haven't, which can be more difficult and require some travel.

Right Place, Right Time

No matter which bird you choose to hunt, always plan your time in the woods accordingly, if possible. Most people assume that weather conditions favorable for bird hunting are the best litmus test for when to actually hunt, but on public ground, that's not always true, for a simple reason.

Good weather equals more people. Just as there'll be more hunting pressure on a Saturday morning versus a Tuesday morning, so too will the woods be more packed when conditions are calm, cool and beautiful. The more people you have to compete with, the fewer birds you'll kill, and more importantly, the less you'll enjoy your time afield.

Study your schedule and figure out when

[PUBLIC PROTEIN]

you can hunt during off times. Midweek is always more productive than the weekend, just as a spell of unseasonably warm weather can provide excellent hunting, while cooler days draw crowds.

Multi-Species Bonanza

It might be necessary to hit the road in search of upland or waterfowl opportunities due to a host of reasons. In this case, while conducting your pre-hunt map work, consider broadening your focus to include multiple species.

When I travel to northern Wisconsin each fall, my main focus is ruffed grouse, which spend their days on public grounds. That doesn't mean I don't hunt woodcock during my early-season grouse hunts; I do. If duck season is open, I also usually spend a few morning hours sitting next to a beaver pond, staring skyward in search of teal, woodies or mallards. After the sun is fully up and ducks are loafing for the day, I switch guns and get after upland birds. There are plenty of times each season where my hunting partners and I grill up three or four species of gamebirds in one day.

Conclusion

If hunting wild game is your thing—or you want it to be—but you're short on private hunting grounds, don't fret. Opportunities abound for the willing bird hunter to procure some protein from the wild while spending fall days trekking land open to anyone. If that's not a satisfying way to spend your time, I don't know what is. **MP**

Know the Laws

Often, public lands are designated in so many ways that things can get confusing. You might find a well-marked piece of state-owned land that's open to hunting with easy-to-understand regulations, or you might find something else. Many states offer Walk-In programs, which turn private land into public for specific uses. Other states offer tax incentives to landowners to open up their land, but there's usually a bevy of regulations.

Before setting foot on any public lands, understand the laws governing usage and hunting. They vary greatly from parcel to parcel, and you don't want to find yourself on the wrong side of the law. This is no different than brushing up on what stamps and licenses you need to hunt waterfowl versus pheasants. It's your responsibility, so dedicate yourself to becoming well-versed in the laws.

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Ephraim Brank (1791-1875)

A dead-eyed Kentucky rifleman

> By Darryl Quidort

As the red-coated British soldiers advanced, marching in straight-line formation toward the American fortifications at the Battle of New Orleans, they witnessed a lone rifleman standing atop the breastworks. Before they even reached effective musket range, the sharpshooter calmly began to aim his flintlock rifle and fire over the foot soldiers' heads. He was systematically shooting British officers from their horses as they rode behind the advancing troops. Already known as a "crack shot," Ephraim Brank earned his fame as a sharpshooter that day.

Born Aug. 1, 1791, in North Carolina, Ephraim McLean Brank moved to Greenville, Kentucky, as a young man in 1808. There, he practiced law, farming and surveying. During the War of 1812, Brank served as a lieutenant in the Kentucky Detached Militia.

When General Andrew Jackson called for militia to defend New Orleans from British General Pakenham's troops, 55 men from Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, answered the call. Joining other Kentucky and Tennessee militia, they marched to New Orleans and barricaded themselves behind a strong breastwork to await the British attack.

On Jan. 8, 1815, General Pakenham marched his redcoat army against the Americans. As the British approached, Brank stood alone atop the breastworks from where he fired his Kentucky longrifle to pick off several British officers from their horses. His success in making shots thought to be beyond rifle range helped to create chaos among the British troops. In disarray, and without leadership, the British were defeated.

Lieutenant Brank's feat of marksmanship has been recorded in several history books. However, the most interesting, and chilling, report of the battle was a letter sent back to England written by an unknown British officer who fought in that campaign. It reads:

"We marched in solid column in a direct line, upon the American defenses ... with that intensity an officer only feels when marching into the jaws of death ... We could see the position of General Jackson, with his staff around him. But what attracted our attention most was the figure of a tall man standing on the breastworks dressed in linsey-woolsey, with buckskin leggings and a



broad-brimmed hat. ... He was standing in one of those picturesque graceful attitudes peculiar to those natural men dwelling in forests. The body rested on the left leg and swayed with a curved line upward. The right arm was extended, the hand grasping the rifle near the muzzle, the butt of which rested near the toe of his right foot. With his left hand, he raised the rim of his hat from his eyes and seemed to gaze intently on our advancing column ... he seemed fixed and motionless as a statue. At last he moved, threw back his hat rim over the crown with his left hand, raised his rifle and took aim at our group. At whom had he leveled his piece? But the distance was so great that we looked at each other and smiled. We saw the rifle flash and very rightly conjectured that his aim was in the direction of our party. My right hand companion ... fell from his saddle. The hunter paused a few moments without moving the gun from his shoulder. Then he reloaded and resumed his former attitude. Throwing the hat rim over his eyes and again holding it up with the left hand, he fixed his piercing gaze upon us, as if hunting out another victim. Once more the hat rim was thrown back, and the gun raised to his shoulder. This time we did not smile, but cast our glances at each other, to see which of us must die. When again the rifle flashed another of our party dropped to the earth.

There was something most awful in this marching to certain death ... every time that rifle was leveled toward us, and its bullet sprang from the barrel, one of us must surely fall; to see it rest, motionless as if poised on a rack, and know, when the hammer came down, that the messenger of death drove unerringly to its goal, to know this, and still march on was awful. ... Again did he reload and discharge and reload and discharge his rifle with the same unfailing aim, and the same unfailing result. ... We lost the battle, and to my mind, that Kentucky Rifleman contributed more to our defeat than anything else ... we were in utter confusion and unable, in the extremity, to restore order sufficient to make any successful attack. The battle was lost."

General Pakenham was killed in that terrible battle, along with several of his fellow officers. British casualties were more than 33%. General Pakenham had 291 men killed, 1,262 wounded and 484 captured. U.S. General Jackson had only 13 men killed, 58 wounded and 30 captured. It was an overwhelming victory for the Americans.

However, the War of 1812 was technically over before that battle was fought on Jan. 8, 1815. Peace between the U.S. and Great Britain had been restored 15 days earlier by the Treaty of Ghent on Dec. 24, 1814. Word of the treaty hadn't yet reached the U.S. on the day of the battle.

After the Battle of New Orleans, Brank returned to Greenville a hero, and lived the rest of his life there. He passed away Aug. 5, 1875, and is buried at the Old Greenville Cemetery.

On May 17, 2014, a life-sized bronze statue of Lieutenant Brank was unveiled at the Muhlenberg County Courthouse in Greenville. The statue of the Kentucky rifleman is aiming his flintlock rifle in the direction of the New Orleans battlefield in honor of all veterans of the War of 1812. **MP**

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NAVY ARMS

PARKER-HALE ENFIELDS UNQUESTIONABLY THE BEST

NAVY ARMS PARKER-HALE WHITWORTH RIFLE

What first made this gun famous was the iconic sketch in *Battles and Leaders* of a Confederate sniper positioned in a tree branch with his trusty Whitworth rifle. Since the 1970's when Navy Arms first began producing the Parker-Hale Whitworth, the gun has been used by skirmishers, precision target shooters and hunters alike, all to great effect. Val Forgett, Jr., used a Parker-Hale Whitworth big-game hunting in



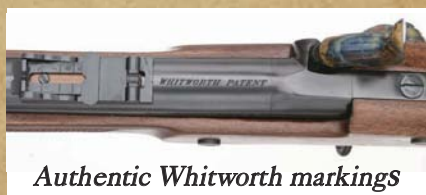
Africa, taking numerous plains and dangerous game. Parker-Hale Whitworths have been used by countless competitors in international championships and at North-South Skirmish Association shoots. The Navy Arms Parker-Hale Whitworth features an American walnut stock, checkered at the wrist and forend, sporting the famed round "Parker-Hale" cartouche. Bone charcoal color-case hardened hammers, locks and barrel bands, and a hammer-forged .451 hexagonal-bored barrel ensures unparalleled accuracy at the farthest distances. The result is a rifle, in look and function, that is worthy of the Parker-Hale name and, as it has been since the 1970's, superior to any Enfield replica made. Caliber - .451

NAVY ARMS PARKER-HALE VOLUNTEER RIFLE (Not Shown)

This round-bored cousin of the Whitworth is also made in .451 caliber and has all of the features specified in the Whitworth. The Volunteer is better suited for shorter range accuracy (under 200 yards) as its round bore allows for instant stability of the projectile out of the bore. Caliber - .451



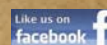
Stock cartouche



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