

# HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES AT RATHBUN LAKE

## DEER, TURKEY AND OTHER WILD GAME

### SMALL FOOD PLOTS CAN YIELD BIG BUCKS

The 2007 bow season was very good to me. I can give the "Whitetail Institute of North America" much of the credit for this. I have planted these "food plot" products for at least the last twelve years and owe the institute many years of thanks for helping me manage my father's properties for quality bucks. Well, anyway, let me tell you about my 2007 bow season in Iowa and Missouri:

I normally start my vacation each year on my son's birthday, October 26. My wife does not really appreciate the fact that I save most of my vacation time for fall hunting instead of taking off more time in the summer for the family vacation. Luckily, I have been able to do this now for several years without a divorce. This year, I was able to start my vacation a little earlier than usual on October 22. By this time I had already captured some very nice bucks on my digital scouting cameras in and around various Imperial Whitetail Clover fields. I have approximately 15 to 20 acres of this clover growing in several areas of my father's property with the largest continuous

plot being about three acres in size.

On October 25 I decided to check one of my scouting cameras after the morning hunt; before coming home for lunch. The first picture on this camera was an exceptional typical ten point with stickers. This deer was obviously a mature buck and a "shooter". From the picture, I guessed this deer would score somewhere in the 160's. Unfortunately, I was not going to be able to hunt that evening due to "parent-teacher conferences" scheduled for all three of my kids. Well, as it turned out, I was back home that afternoon about an hour earlier than expected. As we pulled in our driveway, my wife looked at me and asked "are you going hunting?" My wife knew what the answer would be and before I could reply she said "good luck". I broke a few minor traffic laws on my way to my father's property and arrived in time to spend a little more than an hour in the stand. I chose a stand set about 75 yards off an Imperial Whitetail Clover field and near a well used bedding area. I hoped bucks would be cruising this area in search of the first hot does; it was also very close and I could quickly sneak into this stand. Many deer had been using this clover field all summer and were continuing to arrive

there in the evenings.

As I entered the timber, I quickly realized I was too late. Several deer were already on their way to the field and, of course, I spooked them. I kicked myself in the butt every step of the last fifty yards until I arrived at the tree stand. I settled into the stand and thought to myself "at least it's a nice evening and I get to watch the sunset". I was not expecting much activity after alerting all those deer. After about a half hour I noticed a small buck had returned; he worked a scrape about fifty yards from my stand and continued on his way. About ten minutes before the end of shooting light I watched a young doe headed my way. This doe continued on her route and walked directly beneath my tree stand. As she was about twenty yards past me, I watched her come to an abrupt halt. I could tell she had spotted something. I hoped it was a big buck and immediately caught sight of a recently familiar deer. It was the ten pointer I had just examined earlier that afternoon on the digital scouting camera. I instantly recognized him and did not have to determine if he was a "shooter". The big ten lowered his head and came after the young doe, who, quickly retreated back towards me. This put the big boy within bow

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