

Scent for a Late Season Buck

By Myles Keller

Even in our northern latitudes, some years you may have rut activity that lasts through the month of December and even in to January. On the other hand, some seasons they go into "winter survival mode" early. Late season offers us the opportunity to use scent in many ways, but during this time it's very important when choosing a scenario to present to the deer, that you know which "mode" they are in at that time. This will determine what scent to use, and possibly how to present it to the deer.

How do you know which mode they're in? - Read the sign. If they are still rutting, you should see more sign than in winter survival mode. When in winter mode whitetails expend much less energy, and a very clear pattern starts. Most of their travel is done from bedding area to food source and straight back, unless they're spooked. If there is still some breeding yet to be done, aside from more sign, you'll probably see some fresh rubs and scrapes too.



If all the does are not bred, you're probably better off using the same scent tactics you did the first part of November. Breeding or competition scenarios will work. Breeding scents like Special Golden Estrus®, Active Scrape® or Excite® will produce, or Mega-Tarsal Plus® can work to create a competition set up. It all hinges on the "breeding status" of the does.

If the breeding is through, you're better off using their curiosity or hunger to your advantage.

Plain urine can work. However, my favorite late season scent is Trails End®

#307®. This scent appeals to a deer's sense of hunger and curiosity, as well as sex urges. You can't go wrong.

Although there are many scent scenarios you can create, during late season your application methods are a bit more limited. "Cool tools" like an Ultimate Scrape-Dripper®, now can freeze up in the late season temperatures, and in deep snow scent trails are more difficult to create.

With minimal snow, scent trails will still work great. Wicks are another option. Simply soaking some Key-Wicks® and placing them up-wind of a target area can do the trick too. Speaking of "cool tools", late season is a great time to use Super-



Wicks® or Quik-Wicks®. With both of these units you can fill them back in your nice warm camp and simply hang them at your hunting site. Both designs will shed rain or snow and are great tools for using scent during late season.

Scent can also be used to "light a fire" in your hunting area. Every so often, conditions pending, I may decide to hunt a stand for multiple sits in a row. In these cases, I'll often use a Key-Wick® to disperse some Golden Estrus® on the way out of my site in the evening. Several times, the next morning there's been bucks crawling all over the place. With the atomizer they can't pin-point exactly where the smell is coming from. I use the scent to lure them into the area. The next morning I would suggest dragging a trail

to your site with the same scent you used the evening before. The trail will then give them something to hone in on.

As with all scent set-ups, you need to keep things clean. No foreign smells, especially human scent. Whitetail communicate through "smell" more than any other sense. Their olfactory system is many thousands of times more precise than ours. I would guess, that if God gave us the ability for one day to smell things as acutely as a whitetail, most of us would just "freak out" from the sensation! Scent Killer®, rubber gloves and rubber boots will help keep your set-up free from foreign odor.



It seems many post rut hunters have trouble getting close to whitetail. Some even say the deer they were hunting in November just disappeared. Fire-up your hunting area with some scent! It can

hold deer in an area longer, bring them in close for a shot, and scent can do the trick on a late season buck when nothing else will.