## 15. Pre-Planting Deer Exclusion:

John Kelsey - - - 2024 May - - - Rev 3

Between 1980 and 1982 we planted 18,000 white pines on our property with no protection and had about 95% survival. Results like that are no longer possible. We tried another small planting in 2005 and the deer destroyed every seedling. Anyplace that will grow black walnut will surely grow a booming deer crop. It is unfortunate, but we have no choice but to spend some money to protect our new plants. The alternative is probably a failure.

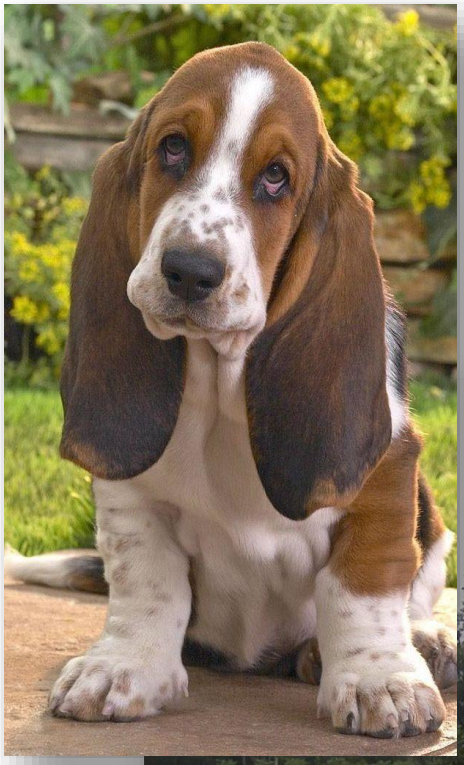
There are a few choices for protection from deer. As you probably guessed, the better the protection, the higher the cost. I'll start with the most effective and highest cost and work my way down.

1. At the top of the list is the 7-foot-high well-constructed plastic deer fence. The method and its results are clearly described in this link: fnr-486-w.pdf (purdue.edu)
The cost is about $3/foot for materials and also involves a lot of labor.

**Warning!** We built such a fence on Blennerhassett island and high water cleaned it out.

2. A 3D electric deer fence is almost as effective for half the cost and labor. If a solar fence charger is not required (you have power nearby) the material cost is halved again. The downside is that weeds will need to be controlled or they will short out the fence. Also, an untrained scared deer might plow through the fence at high-speed requiring periodic inspection and repair.

**Warning!** We built such a fence on Blennerhassett Island and after 2.5 years the deer learned to jump it



3. Some breeds of dog will not tolerate deer on their turf. This approach is 100% effective. That's probably not true, but it made me feel good writing it.

4. Tree shelters are very effective. We have used 4-inch tree tubes 4 feet tall with 100% success. The cost is about $5 per tree. We hold them up about 4 inches above the ground to keep mice from building a nest and chewing the bark. Also, the gap lets a trapped bluebird escape. When the trees reach 1 inch in diameter the leaves we want protected are out of reach for deer. We take the tree tubes off and use a 30-inch spiral wrap to protect from antler rub. The tree tubes pack all the branches upward inside the tube, and may not be practical for conifer trainers. A test with bald cypress and 5" x 5' tubes is under way.


Commercial repellants get all kinds of reviews from perfect to worthless. A hungry deer can get used to about anything. My take is, that hair, soap, noise makers, scent stations, repellants, reflectors, sprinklers, etc. all have an effectiveness time limit. The trick may be to keep changing.

5. Hunting comes in dead last. It's like trying to bail out the ocean. A dent in the population is soon leveled.

<u>HOLD UP!!! - - -That's a Herford!</u>

WV Black Walnut News #19b

We had several nice comments about protecting young plants from deer. (and a few “it-won’t-work”)

1. Dan Matesich from PA Has had problems with rabbit chewing holes in his plastic fence and deer crashing through. I guess that is why steel wires are added, and the plastic is more visual than physical.

2. With the electric fence T post, Dan also says not to buy the yellow insulators. UV soon breaks them down. Buy the black ones. Michael Williams from MO says to train the deer, smash a Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup in your hand and spear it on the electric wire (with the charger off).

4. Rather than tree tubes, Ann Bonner from OH and Jim Ball from MO both like wire cages around each tree. Ann uses 2” x 4” welded fencing and Jim uses concrete reinforcing mesh. I looked up the price of the welded fencing - $65 for 4 feet by 100 feet 14 gauge at Tractor Supply. That would make 30 some cages at about $2 per cage. I have done the same thing successfully with chicken wire to protect my champion sunflowers.

This from John Ouellette

Hi John….I certainly appreciate your deer concern…I have tried everything, and if I had to do it again, I would use the special electric fence that is uses at the experimental tree farm a West Lafayette…and if in the woods, one of my friends have good luck with solar for the electric fence..For scattered trees, not an orchard, which is all I do at the moment, I use what I call is “tree guards”….two or three six foot black locust stakes surrounded with plastic snow fence, stapled together…that last until the tree gets four foot tall, then we pull the staples and push the fence up to 5-6 feet high and that will allow them to grow protecting the lead shoot, and then we have got it made..By the very same token when the trees no longer need the guards to prevent the feeding on the young tree or the tree was a single tree seedling, For deer rub protection, I use a beer can, a 24 inch piece of baling twine, a knot at the tab, have the can hang where the deer would rub, hang the can with a slip knot about 16 inches above the potential rub area (the slip knot will not strangle the tree and will get larger as the tree grows in diameter)..I HAVE NEVER HAD A DEER RUB WHERE THE CAN(S) HANG..ABSOLUTELY FOOL PROOF….The problem with this, and my tree guards and beer cans are far too simple, much less expensive than tree tubes which I have used thousands, I make my own stakes with a band saw, and I can purchase a 100 feet of snow fence for $30.00 and reuse over again..- that they are simple and very effective for that less than 100 trees per acre…I realize the value of 4-500 trees per acre when looking at individual soil sites and the genetics of the trees..I suppose that much of my tree planting now is fill in rather than growing orchards…if each tree has their 37 foot diameter , that makes for less than 30 crop trees per acres and that is what I target at this stage of my tree growing. For the most part, my future crop trees are spread over 230 acres and I have over 500 trees with diameter over 15-16 inches mixed in with a variety of trees. These trees are or will be soon have GPS markings when they get to that 15 inch size..most of those trees have an aluminum tag diameter and year designations…I do have a topo map with the many gps marked trees superimposed that was done in 2014. I like to know where my larger trees are and be able measure the growth rate…some of my larger trees now are. In the 24” inch range…but damn that logger who talked me out of my 20-24 inch trees in 2008…I would have had a good share of high 20”s trees now and looking for a nice crop of 30”s...

I am 86 years old and have for the most part, handed such jobs to my children who “plan to continue” such progress…I have just “direct seeded” seven acres that they will be able to “play with”…so the beat goes on…..good luck with your deer control….I have no significant deer damage on my walnut or oak trees, and the tree guards and beer cans have served us well…JJO