

## Deer Control Ideas

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I had noticed a few nurseries had strung a white, flat tape or ribbon around individual blocks of nursery stock, to keep deer out, I assumed. I really had no idea how well it worked, until I was asked about it. I spoke with those using it and those selling it.

A constant response I received was, "It works!" A smell repellent is applied to the tape. I heard 3 points: keep it nose level on the deer, allow passage thru the farm, and reapply it every month. No negatives were mentioned and I asked.

Producer #1 erected it to be nose level, cut it to enter to dig, retied it and learned it was no longer at nose level due to the knot taking up some of the slack. He learned how critical the height issue is because deer entered the block. Readjusting the height to nose level stopped the problem. The smell reminds him of turpentine.

He also pressed the point that deer must be allowed to cross the field. You cannot erect this tape around a 40 acre field and expect them to go around. Do not attempt to block the deer. Producer #1 suggested using it around blocks less than 3 acres in size. Allow passage.

Several producers have tried the nylon Mule tape that is commonly used to secure the wire basket across the top of machine dug balls. It works decent for most, but it gets wet and sags with the added weight. It is 5/8 inch wide and comes on 20 lb. spools. Producer #1 stressed buying the lighter weight tape because of less sag.

The original tape that producers started with is called Plot Saver Deer Barrier Ribbon, 3/4 inch wide. It is not absorbent and does not sag after a rain. It appears to be woven strands of plastic.

There are 2 commercial repellants that can be used to wet the ribbon being sold locally that I know of, and there may be more. Underwood True Value Hardware in McMinnville Tenn. offers Liquid Fence for \$35/qt. that will make 4 gallons of solution at \$8.75 per gallon. The Co-op offers Deer Stopper for \$125/gal. that will make 10 gallons of solution at \$12.50 per gallon.

The staff at both told me how good their product is. The producers I spoke with had only used the Deer Stopper. Both should be re-applied monthly. There may be a better method of making the application, but one method is to slide a soaked rag along the tape or ribbon, while wearing a rubber glove. A bucket of the solution was carried for re-wetting the rag.

Another idea was to carry a backpack filled with the solution. Wear a rubber glove while sliding a rag along the ribbon. Wet the rag within the left hand almost constantly with the nozzle also being carried within the left hand and rag. The right hand operates the trigger.

Realize that hunters or dogs may force deer to cross the ribbon, but they keep going. Several producers learned that grass string did not work. Producer #2 has been using the method for about 3 years. He states that it still works, but perhaps not as well, because the deer have gotten somewhat accustomed to it.

He says, "If it were not for Deer Stopper, I would be out of business. The product used to cord balls is better than the Plot Saver Deer Barrier Ribbon for two reasons in my opinion. It is more absorbent and it does not break down in sunlight as does the plastic tape. I've observed the deer are becoming increasingly accustomed to the smell. We are now applying it every 14 days. This seems to help." He grows tree liners.

Timely re-application is critical. So is weekly maintenance to keep the ribbon at a constant nose height on adult deer. The deer were here first. They are creatures of habit. They follow the paths their parents used. Allow deer lanes across your fields.

I have heard some very positive success stories about this method. No failures. The producers I listened to had wanted it to work very badly. I learned years ago when dealing with deer, many things work for a short period of time, regardless whether you attempt smell repellants or fences. It is critical that you become committed and repair or replace daily to enforce the method. Do not erect and forget.

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A fruit tree producer has had success in growing scattered small patches of corn to bribe the deer to eat rather than his young tender crops.

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The use of human or wild animal scent (hair, urine) is frequently reported to work for a period of time. An acquaintance had success placing a double handful of human or dog hair (collected by barber shops, hair dressers, pet grooming over time) into women's knee high stockings. Place them on the ground every 10 feet around the crop. They flip the bags over and fluff them after every 3<sup>rd</sup> rain. Temporary methods should only be used during the time that control is needed worse.

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