# **The Whispering Shaft**

Quarterly Newsletter of the

July/Aug/Sept 2012



#### CAROLINA TRADITIONAL ARCHERS

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Carolina Traditional Archers is the preservation and promotion of the ancient art of traditional archery through club activities and educational interactions with others. Members will adhere to the highest ethical standards in their support, practice, promotion and preservation of traditional archery and bow hunting. The Carolina Traditional Archers support sound wildlife management principles and seek opportunities to aid conservation efforts.

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Cover: Archers try their hand at the Long Distance Buffalo Novelty Shoot at NCTAC.

Photo by Joe Henz



## Letter from the President

CTA Members,

Many thanks to all that attended NCTAC. Special thanks to the more than 20 members that assisted with the many aspects of the event and to our club officers who worked countless hours to ensure NCTAC was a success. Bottom line: we could not have pulled off an event of this size without this commitment from our members.

We have been blessed with great weather, and attendance at our monthly shoots is at an all-time high. I have said it many times before but it's worth repeating: a great meal along with several hours of entertainment for ten bucks is hard to beat!

CTA continues to make improvements at our facility. Most recently we had a Port A Jon installed. This unit will be at the facility year-around, and will be serviced prior to each shoot. Plans are also being developed to do a major refurbishing of the practice bales and cleanup around the clubhouse. This is in direct response to the comments we received from the latest survey.

One concern I have had over the years is that very few CTA members attend NCTAC. We have developed a survey that will be distributed at the next few shoots in an attempt to learn the reason(s) for non-attendance and address them. It is our hope that all members will attend NCTAC in the future. Please take a few minutes at the next shoot to share your thoughts.

As always, your attendance at CTA events is greatly appreciated but please don't hesitate to assist. Lending a hand at our events goes a long way in making the shoots more enjoyable for everyone.

Best regards,

Dave Haggist



Slinging arrows at the Running Javelina at February's Monthly Club Shoot.



W. Kerr Scott Reservoir in Wilkesboro proved to be a delightful location for the North Carolina Traditional Archery Championships. We had over two hundred archers register, and received many compliments on the range and the campgrounds. The Boomer Fire Department provided drinks, BBQ, hotdogs, and burgers for lunch throughout the weekend, and the Boy Scouts cooked a delicious Saturday chicken dinner.







### Food Plots for the Carolina Piedmont

By Rock Branson



Food plots not only provide nutritional benefits, but also can increase and enhance hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. Planting and managing food plots also provides recreational activity, and the satisfaction of working with the land often exceeds the value of hunting and wildlife viewing.

Wildlife habitat is composed of three basic elements – food, shelter, and water. The quality, quantity, and seasonal availability of these three elements will influence the number and types of wildlife species that your land will be able to support. What is a food plot? A food plot is a planted area set aside to act as a food source for wildlife. Food plots generally consist of but are not limited to legumes (clovers, alfalfa, beans, etc.) or forage grasses. I've heard the phrase that food plots are "Bubba Biology", where you are farming for wildlife.

The truth is that foot plots provide a food source that is naturally grown beyond what is there today, and can result in producing that trophy buck or turkey.

There are 3 Ps to developing successful foot plots: Plan, Prepare then Plant.

### I) Plan

What is your goal for the food plot? Do you want to develop a viewing plot, or a killing plot? If you want to develop a viewing plot, you will need to have larger areas to develop for your food plot, areas of 1-2 acres. For a hunting plot, you can go with smaller plots, 1/8 to 1 acre in size

What is your budget? Food plots can be expensive, with equipment being a big investment. Much of this can be done with a 4-wheeler, but implements such as plows, disc harrows, cultipackers, spreaders and sprayers are necessary. And the costs to fertilize and lime can exceed \$200 or more an acre. Most hunters don't have the land or means to develop and maintain large food plots, so developing smaller plots are easier to establish and less costly to maintain. And leaving edge cover along the plot will provide a sense of security to deer or other wildlife.

Where to plant? First survey your location. Find an area where the soil is adaptable to the type of food plot you want to put in and make it accessible during the hunting season. The best sites are generally flat, often located on openings between areas of trees and shrubs. You may find a suitable opening (grid roads, log decks, utility right-of-ways) available for planting. If not, you may need to create a new opening by clearing out an area. North and east facing slopes and bottomlands hold more moisture than south and west facing sites. South and west facing slopes also receive more sun and wind.

What size and shape? Rectangular and linier size plots work best. Relatively narrow strips may be planted for small game in early successional fields and firebreaks may be seeded as well. Where larger plots are warranted and distance to cover is a concern, rectangular plots provide an advantage. Food plots with irregular edges make it difficult to maneuver equipment when preparing the seedbed, planting, fertilizing, liming, cultipacking the plot. Wildlife instinctively stay close to the edge of a plot or field for protection, so the most important consideration is distance from the edge, not amount of edge.

What type of soil are you working with? Take soil samples from the areas you've chosen. You need to understand what kind of ground and soil you are working with. Send the sample to the North Carolina Agricultural Office (http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/sthome.htm) or county extension office. These services will typically give you a list of the crops that will best be suited to your land. And they will tell you what nutrients you need to achieve that optimum yield. Soil in the Carolinas is often very acidic, so balancing the acidity is crucial. A pH of 6.5 - 7 is optimal. The results of your soil test will help you in determining how much lime to apply. The test will also help to determine what type and amount of fertilizer to use.

### 2) Prepare

Control Weeds and Natural Grasses - For new plots, spray the designated food plot area with the appropriate herbicide to kill the native weeds and grasses that will compete with your planted crops. Preparing the plot by plowing and disking does not get rid of these grasses! If you do not kill them by spraying before planting, many of the root systems will remain alive, and you will have to fight them later. Perennial weeds are best controlled with a post emergence herbicide which is sprayed on top of the growing plant. The most widely used herbicide is glyphosate, which is available under several under trade names (is Roundup™) with various formulations.

Allow a week or so and bush-hog the grasses. This will make it easier to plow with smaller equipment like ATV pull-behind disks, etc. Disk the area thoroughly; smooth the area with a harrow.

**Prepare the seedbed** – If you plan to plant with a no-till drill, you may need to burn or mow the dead vegetation. Burning thatch and other dead plant materials is a great way to prepare the area for plowing and disking. Plowing, disking and tillage will incorporate the lime and fertilizers and create a clean and fertile seedbed. I like using a chisel plow, which helps to break up the hard clay that is so prevalent in North Carolina, followed by tilling.

**To till or not to till?** If you don't have the resources to plow and till the soil, top-sowing can be an option when planting small seed crops. You still need to kill existing weeds and vegetation, and then top seed with small seed crops such as clover and alfalfa. You will need to increase your seed rate and apply the correct post emergence herbicide with the seeds. So your material costs will increase, but it will require less time and cost in preparation. Cultipacking will improve the germination rate of topsown seed, especially small seed that lack firm seed-to-soil contact after sowing.

Cultipacking is necessary prior to seeding small seed if the seedbed is fluffy and is always recommended after seeding small-seeded species. If you leave a boot imprint deeper than an inch, the seedbed should be cultipacked before planting.

### 3) Plant

In the next Newsletter we'll talk about what crops work best in the North Carolina Piedmont.



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