



MY TROPHY WHITETAILS



HARD WORK PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR ALABAMA HUNTER

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■ Three years ago, my friend Kolton Atchley and I began traveling to Easton, Illinois, to hunt with our buddy Gavin Urish. The first two years, we used a week of vacation to hunt. But at the end of the 2019 deer season, we decided it was time to put some work into the farm. Naturally, the first item was to determine how we could plant food plots and provide deer with more groceries.

Gavin had all the equipment we would need for planting. We just had to get there in August to complete our work. We only had three days to travel to Easton from Mobile, Alabama, plant our plots and return home. However, we were determined to increase our odds that fall, so I left home on a Friday, drove 11-1/2 hours to plant Saturday, returned home Sunday and was back to work on Monday.

The products we used were Imperial Winter-Greens, Whitetail Oats Plus and Imperial No-Plow. We planted those to

cover every stage of the season in the Midwest. Each plot was 1/2- to 1 acre to an acre, which provided deer food for the entire season. The theory was that deer would hit the Oats Plus and No-Plow first, and as the season progressed, they'd begin hitting the Winter-Greens. The plan worked perfectly, and deer began to use our food plots heavily early and continued to do so through the season.

Hunting season finally arrived, and it was time for our hard work to hopefully pay off. Kolton and I sneaked away for a three-day hunt during the opening weekend. Deer used our food plots every morning and evening. Kolton and I saw multiple hit-list bucks, but they stayed just out of bow range.

Fast forward to Oct. 30, when we were to head back up to hunt for a week. I received the awful news that Kolton, who had been there every step of the way, could not make the trip. After a long talk,

Kolton convinced me to go without him.

While hunting a food plot we called the Football Field, at the northern end of the property, does and small bucks funneled through all morning. At about 8:30 a.m., I looked to my right and saw a deer emerging out of the CRP. I did not recognize it, but my brain told me the buck was the type of shooter you come to the Midwest to harvest. It worked out well, as he stepped into our food plot at 32 yards. He then ran off two smaller bucks and stopped at 38 yards, and I made a good shot on him. Given the circumstances, we decided to give the buck plenty of time before trying to recover him.

This was the most memorable hunting trip of my life, and I owe it to my good friends Kolton and Gavin. We had not seen such results until we started planting Whitetail Institute food plots.