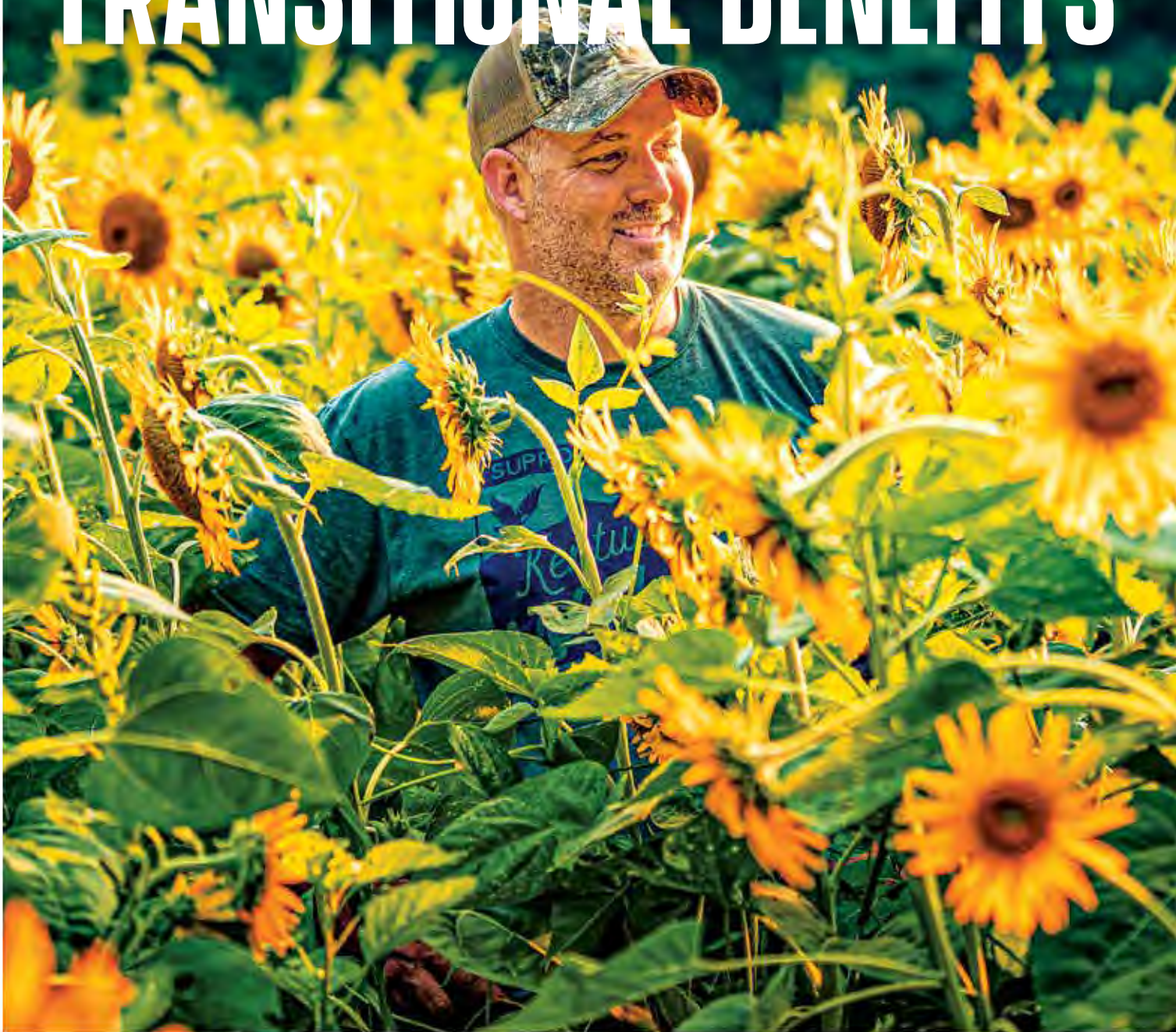


This annual blend provides deer with many obvious — and some lesser-known — advantages.

■ by *Jon Cooner*

**IMPERIAL WHITETAIL POWERPLANT:**

# SEASONAL AND TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS



PHOTOS BY JASON SKY



Imperial Whitetail PowerPlant is a spring and summer annual mix designed to provide whitetails with massive amounts of highly palatable, high-protein forage when they need it most.

PowerPlant is so good at fulfilling that role it's the only strictly spring/summer annual for deer Whitetail Institute offers. But don't overlook the additional benefits PowerPlant can provide beyond summer and into fall.

### SEASONAL BENEFITS (SPRING AND SUMMER)

PowerPlant provides abundant protein, which is vitally important for deer during spring and summer. Mother Nature generally provides enough protein for deer to survive, grow antlers and reproduce, but she doesn't produce enough for deer to maximize the health, body weight and antler size their genetic blueprints will allow. PowerPlant is designed to help make up that shortfall.

Protein is extremely important for many physical processes in deer during spring and summer, including fawn growth and the production of milk, which is extremely high in protein. The most cited example is antler growth in bucks, starting in early spring with the formation of the velvet antler, which is about 80 percent protein. Later, bucks deposit minerals on that velvet matrix, hardening it until it's solid. Protein is important throughout the antler growing process, especially to maximize the size of the velvet antler.

Folks debate exactly how much protein deer need during spring and summer, but it's generally recognized that bucks require about 16 percent protein when building antlers, does need about 18 percent when they're lactating, and fawns require up to 20 percent, some of which they get from their mothers' milk. Those are the optimum levels — amounts required for deer to reach their genetic potential.

Unfortunately, natural forages in spring and summer can be comparatively low in protein, and their availability to deer decreases sharply as August approaches in most areas. Commercial plantings developed for grazing by cattle are often not much better in terms of protein content. Even in areas with low protein levels and

lack of availability, deer can survive, but a manager who wants to push deer as far as their genetic blueprints allow must supplement the protein shortfall. PowerPlant is designed to do that.

PowerPlant is also highly palatable and can keep up with consistent grazing pressure. The palatability requirement is because of the nature of the small-ruminant digestive system. Unlike large ruminants such as cattle, which are grazers and can use even tough, stemmy forages, whitetails are concentrate selectors, and they seek the most easily digestible, nutrient-dense plants and portions.

The forage soybeans included in PowerPlant are an excellent example of its high palatability and graze-tolerant characteristics. Although agricultural soybean varieties offer high protein, they quickly become stemmy and unpalatable to deer as they mature and the amount of lignin in their stems increases. They also don't tolerate grazing well, often being wiped out quickly or dying when bitten off by deer. Those are not necessarily flaws but products of the purpose for which they were engineered: optimum bean production, not high-protein grazing sources. In contrast, the forage varieties of beans in Power Plant grow as highly succulent vines. They're also much more graze-tolerant than agricultural beans. When established, they can continue to grow after being bitten off by deer.

PowerPlant also includes vining peas and structural plants for the vining forage beans and peas to climb and maximize production instead of growing along the ground. Those include sunflowers and sunn hemp, a legume that does double-duty as a tender, regenerating forage and structural lattice. As a result, Power Plant grows to a thick mass of high-protein forage, in which deer will bed and feed, and in which turkeys often nest and raise their poults.

### TRANSITIONAL BENEFITS (FALL AND WINTER)

The seasonal change from summer to fall isn't immediate but happens during a period of weeks or months, depending on the region. PowerPlant continues to produce until it's subjected to a hard freeze, at which point it dies. That might happen in September in the far North but not



### IMPERIAL WHITETAIL POWERPLANT®

UP TO 38 PERCENT PROTEIN

- Available in 25 pounds (plants .75 to 1 acre).
- Spring and summer annual.
- Produces several tons of highly attractive, highly nutritious forage, even during the hot summer months. Contains forage beans, peas, sunflower and sunn hemp.





until December in the deep South. (I'll refer to the period between summer and the first frost as early fall and the period after frosts as late fall.)

**Early fall:** This strategy assumes that your PowerPlant plots are at least as large as the minimum Whitetail Institute recommends for PowerPlant to reduce the chance of early overgrazing.

**Areas of high deer density:** Plant a minimum of 1.5 acres with 50 pounds of PowerPlant.

**Areas of low to medium deer density:** Plant at least ¾ to 1 acre with 25 pounds of PowerPlant.

Most areas have a common prevailing wind direction during hunting season. In central Alabama, for example, the wind usually blows out of the northwest during the season. After you determine your prevailing wind direction, locate a permanent stand at the downwind corner or edge of a PowerPlant plot. Then, three to four weeks before your anticipated fall planting date, mow lanes through the PowerPlant, and wait a few weeks for the clippings to dry. When your fall planting dates arrive, disk or till the mowed Pow-



■ Mother Nature generally provides enough protein for deer to survive but not enough to maximize their health, body weight and antler size. PowerPlant helps make up that shortfall.

erPlant clippings into the lanes. Then plant the lanes in an Imperial Whitetail annual, such as Pure Attraction, Beets & Greens, Winter-Greens or No-Plow.

You want enough lane area to keep the plot attracting deer even after frosts but not so much that you destroy the feeling of safety deer have in the tall, thick PowerPlant. If you do it right, you'll likely find that deer continue to bed in the PowerPlant and step in and out of the lanes throughout the day. The lanes are skinny and provide a feeling of safety for deer.

**Late fall and winter:** After frosts arrive,

PowerPlant will die, but it doesn't disappear. Instead it continues to stand for another month or two. Deer will also eat any residual beans and peas, but the primary benefit of post-frost PowerPlant is to act as cover. Combined with that, fall annuals planted in the lanes will continue to make the plot an even more attractive forage source that deer should feel safer using during daylight.

For information on PowerPlant, visit [whitetailinstitute.com](http://whitetailinstitute.com), or call (800) 688-3030.



# PLOTMASTER™

THE ULTIMATE PLOT PLANTING MACHINE

**Plants ALL types of seed  
Including Seed Blends!!!**



**DISC, PLOW,  
PLANT, COVER  
AND CULTI-PACK  
"ALL-IN-ONE"**

3 FT. / 4 FT. / 6 FT. / 8 FT.  
ATV & Tractor Models Available!

888-MAX-GAME  
[www.theplotmaster.com](http://www.theplotmaster.com)

**FREE**

**HOW TO DVD**

