



## Whitetail in My Woods

If you don't have deer in your woodland, or would like to provide better habitat for your current deer residents, there are some simple things you can do to encourage a healthier deer community.

- ✓ **Provide cover.** Resting places are important year round, but cover is especially important during hunting season and when fawns are born. Cover includes stands of trees or dense shrubs.
- ✓ **Provide forage plants:** blackberry, dewberry, greenbriar, American beautyberry are all good options.
- ✓ **Protect water sources:** Conserve vegetation around water sources and protect them from road runoff.
- ✓ **Restore disturbed areas and return natural burn cycles:** Where land has been disturbed or trees removed, make sure it is restored with native plants that provide good forage.
- ✓ **Consult with local wildlife biologists** on special actions for your area. Learn more about the wildlife biologists who are part of the My Alabama Woods Team: [www.myalabamawoods.org](http://www.myalabamawoods.org).
- ✓ **Keep your woodland safe from non-native predators:** Domestic dogs if they are allowed to run loose may hunt or otherwise harass deer. Even deer do not die, harassment can deplete their energy resources at a critical time of year or disrupt breeding.
- ✓ **Avoid habitat fragmentation:** Construct any fencing with deer in mind. Property fences should allow deer to pass over and under. This means a 17-inch gap on the bottom to let fawns crawl under, and no more than 4 feet in height to let deer jump safely over.

### Want To Do More? Create Healthy Deer Habitat On Your Land

Like all wildlife species, deer benefit from healthy habitat. Managing your woodland for forest health will ultimately help all wild species. Here are some specific management actions to consider.

- ✓ **Prescribed burning and thinning:** Controlled burning provides multiple benefits depending on your woodland's historic fire regimen. Thinning your woodland can have

similar outcomes, and both are important for deer because they allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor. New forage growth occurs when more sunlight is allowed in.

- ✓ **Plant native species:** Native plants provide fruit, nuts, berries or browse for wildlife. And these plants can occur in natural meadows, edge habitat, disturbed soil, and open areas within the forest canopy. Get locally sourced native mixes when using a seed mix. Nonnative mixes can contain plants that will not support deer and may take over if they have invasive tendencies. When in doubt, check with a local wildlife or plant biologist. Note: Do not enhance habitat near roads, which will increase deer vulnerability to automobiles.
- ✓ **Control invasive non-native weeds** which will squeeze out native plants.
- ✓ **Consider your seasonal management plan:** Late summer is an important time for deer, when they forage to get enough food to survive the winter. Plan disruptive management activities outside of important seasons like this for deer. During management work, try to protect forage plants.

### Learn More

- Native Vegetation Management for Wildlife: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2\\_002336.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_002336.pdf)
- Effective Food Plots for White-Tailed Deer in Alabama: <http://columbia.ifas.ufl.edu/documents/aldeerfoodplots.pdf>
- White-Tailed Deer Management: <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-0521/ANR-0521.pdf>
- Top Ten Native Plants in Each Region, provided by the National Wildlife Federation: <http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/About/Native-Plants/Regional-Examples.aspx>
- Prescribed Burning: [www.mylandplan.org/prescribed-burns](http://www.mylandplan.org/prescribed-burns)
- Thinning: [www.mylandplan.org/thinning](http://www.mylandplan.org/thinning)