



ASK BIG JON

By **Jon Cooner**, Institute Director of Special Projects

Common Questions — Straightforward Answers

Q: I am just learning about food plots, and I have a question. It seems to me that the more seed I put out on my plot, the more plants I'll have growing there, and so the more forage the deer will have. That would be a good thing, correct?

A: Great question! It's one I hear a lot, and the answer is, "probably not — it might even REDUCE the performance of your planting!"

Think about it — let's consider just one square yard of plot. Within that area, you only have one square yard of seedbed to sustain forage plants. That's all the room the plants you'll be growing there will have in which to sprout, grow, and become as healthy, vigorous, and as drought, heat and cold-tolerant as they were designed to be.

If you try to grow too many plants within that one square yard of seedbed, the plant roots won't have enough room to grow as big as they otherwise might have. Smaller roots can result in LESS heat and drought tolerance, and because smaller roots can inhibit the growth of the forage plants, perhaps even

LESS available forage.

For optimum results, stick to the recommended seeding rates as closely as you can. Our forage blends are so efficient that with many of them it takes a very small amount of seed to plant a plot. Imperial Whitetail Clover, for example, should be planted at a rate of only eight pounds per acre, and "Chic" Magnet at as little as three pounds per acre. Obviously, these forage blends are extremely efficient, but that can make it hard to stick to the correct seeding rates and not run out of seed for the plot too quickly. Here's a tip to help you be efficient in seeding these blends.

Start by determining the size of the food plot you will be planting (e.g.: 1/10th acre, 1/2 acre, 3 acres, etc.). Next, choose the correct Imperial forage for your application based on anticipated rainfall levels, intended planting method (with or without ground tillage equipment), how heavy the soil is and the plot's drainage characteristics. Once you decide on what forage you'll be planting, you can look right on our website, on the front of our forage bags, or call our consultants to determine how much seed you'll need for that plot.

Once your seedbed has been prepared according to our recommendations for planting the product you have chosen, plan on planting the seed with a shoulder-type broadcast spreader if possible. Unlike other spreader types, a shoulder-carried broadcast spreader will allow you to keep your hand on the spreader bag as a constant gauge of how much seed the spreader is putting out, and how much you have left in the bag at any given time.

Also, consider only putting 1/2 the amount of seed required for the plot into the spreader and trying to cover the whole plot with it. Then, put the other 1/2 of the seed in and cover the whole plot with it again, but from a different direction on the second pass. That may be the best way to ensure that you get broad, even coverage without overloading the plot with seed.

Again, seeding rates for Imperial forage blends are shown right on the front of the forage bags and are also listed on our website, www.whitetailinstitute.com. Our highly trained, in-house consultants are also standing by to answer your calls at (800) 688-3030, ext 2, any time between 8 a.m. — 5 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday.



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