

Curious About Curiosity Scent

The When, Why, and How

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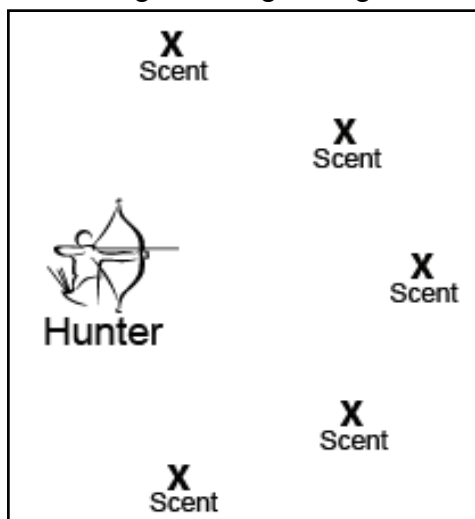
The rut just never seemed to kick in, and there I was, putting in the last few hours of the 2005 archery season going through the “what ifs” in my head. Even though I didn’t want to admit it, I knew that the rut wasn’t in full swing, making the odds of my bagging a trophy buck slim to none as I watched the sun slowly drop below the tree line.

Prior to the evening hunt, I made the decision to abandon the estrous and territorial scents, and leave my grunt call in the truck, since deer movement had been slow and there was no sign of the rut. Instead, I laid out a basic scent drag in a half-circle, about 15 yards around my stand location using my Nosy Whitetail curiosity scent. This is the same setup I typically use in the early season, knowing that it is a killer tactic for does, and possibly even a mature buck if he’s in the mood. The plan was simple. I would simply wait it out and hope for a mature buck to wander within sniffing distance of the scent, and let the chips fall where they may.

About 30 minutes before dark, I caught movement to my left. I couldn’t believe my eyes as I watched the first mature buck that I had seen in days work over the small tree about 75 yards away. Would he catch wind of the scent and work his way into bow range? The minutes seemed like hours as I watched his every move, praying that he’d come my way.

Why Use a Curiosity Scent?

One of the biggest reasons hunters use scent is to lure deer into range while taking their focus off of looking for danger. A good curiosity scent will offer hunters an opportunity to use scent in the early



Typical curiosity scent layout for drags or Q-Tips®.

season, without alarming deer with the out-of-place smells of estrous. Very simply, a good curiosity scent, if applied correctly, can draw deer wandering nearby into range, while making them take their mind completely off of danger as they investigate the odor.

When a deer notices the aroma, it will typically approach slowly with its head down, ears laid back, and tail hanging lifelessly behind the rump. You may also notice continual licking of the nose and even drooling if the deer is fully entranced. I have countless minutes of video footage of deer encountering our Nosy Whitetail curiosity scent, and displaying these characteristics. Most importantly though, they almost never look up, and they typically provide plenty of textbook shot opportunities. Curiosity scent allows you to take the deer’s attention away from you in a non-threatening way, ultimately providing you with easy shots at a relaxed animal.

Basic Tactics

I have a couple of favorite ways to use our Nosy Whitetail curiosity scent. My first choice is to lightly apply the scent to a scent drag, and then pull the drag along in a semi-circle around my stand,

being sure to move through all of the best shooting lanes. When done, I simply hang the drag low to the ground near the base of the tree I'm hunting from, using it for additional cover of human odors.

I also like to clear small patches of earth in my shooting lanes, and either dribble a small amount of scent in each spot, or dab it on one end of a Q-Tip[®], sticking the other end into the ground. The advantage of the Q-Tip[®] is that the cotton will keep the scent from evaporating too quickly, which may happen if applied directly to the ground or on vegetation.

I do not use calls or decoys when using a curiosity scent. Remember, the goal is to draw the deer in naturally, and reduce the odds of it being on high alert. And when deciding how much scent to use, I typically lean toward using smaller amounts – usually no more than half an ounce. Based on my many hours of studying deer and how they react to scents in the wild, I'm convinced that deer are much more likely to have a negative reaction when it is used in excess. Don't forget, the goal is to get the deer to move into areas it may otherwise not, so if the odor is too strong, they won't need to come as close to investigate it.

Conclusion

Finally the buck was satisfied that he won the battle with the tree, and he slowly made his way toward my general direction. About 20 yards out of range, I knew the buck caught wind of the scent by the way he stood like a statue, tossing his head around in every direction to get a better whiff of the odor. Not being satisfied, he made the fatal mistake of moving in to get a closer smell. When he hit the spot where I began my drag, he put his nose to the ground, oblivious to me drawing my bow and taking aim. The arrow passed through him before he knew that he was in danger, and shortly thereafter, my 2005 archery season had a storybook ending.



The author with his 2005 last-minute "Nosy Whitetail."