

By Slade Priest for the Enterprise Journal



On Nov. 15, 1998, I killed a very nice deer on our place, but this is not the day that really counted. All the hours of getting ready for hunting season and all the years of deer management helped me kill this buck.

Early that year, I was riding my motorcycle on our place and saw something running ahead of me; it was six bucks. I knew they were good ones, but I didn't know how good. They were all rack deer but the two lead deer were "wallhangers" for sure.

So when bow season came, you can guess where I headed. I hunted in the area for a few days with no success. I was kind of disappointed until I went back one more time.

I got in my climbing stand, and the deer were already moving. Two does came out right across the plot. A few more fed out, and then through some limbs I saw a rack; it was a small eight-point.

The deer behind him was larger-bodied, but I could not tell how big the rack was. Another eight-point stepped out and then, finally, the "Wallhanger" stepped out.

I could tell he was one of the deer I had seen earlier. He had at least 10 points with over a 16-inch spread and very long tines. He fed in the field about 100 yards away from me for 30 minutes or so.

My heart pounded; my palms were sweating. I didn't know if I would have the strength to pull my bow back.

He fed within about 50 yards, just beyond my shooting range, and I blew my grunt call; he picked up his head but did not pay much attention to it.

Then the two eight-points started sparring; the big buck just stood there and kept eating. They fed in the plot until dark, and I did not get out of my stand until my daddy came to get me. I did not want the deer to know where my stand was located. I told my daddy I had seen a big deer, but I don't think he really believed me. Daddy did say that if he was big as I said he was, he didn't want me wounding him with my 35-pound draw bow. I did not go back to that spot because I did not want to disturb the deer.

On the Saturday of youth gun season, I hunted there and saw nothing but does and yearlings. The next day I went back to the same stand and sat for a couple of hours without seeing anything. I was getting tired of not seeing anything.

Suddenly I saw some movement, but it was only a doe and two yearlings.

Right before dark, I saw something coming out of the trail where the "Wallhanger" had come out. It was a doe followed by an eight-point.

When I saw them coming, I got my gun ready and, sure enough, it was him. With no hesitation, clicked my safety off and fired; he dropped.

I was so excited! I hurried down to him and looked. He was bigger than I thought, a 10-point with three or four "kickers."

I went to my four-wheeler to get my cousin and met my daddy on the road. He helped us load him up.

None of this could have been possible if we did not have the quality deer management program. We took seven quality bucks that hunting season, but mine was the biggest, scoring 152.