



Quail Times



Spring 2021

Invasive Species Spotlight

Autumn Olive and Thorny Olive

By: Jeff Fellers – Clemson Extension

Lately, I have noticed thickets of Thorny olive (*Elaeagnus pungens*) and/or Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) throughout woodlands when I visit landowners. It was introduced from China and Japan in 1830's and was widely planted for wildlife habitat and ornamental purposes. While animals do like the fruits from these olives, they do out compete our native plants and they are listed as a non-native invasive species. American Beautyberry is a good native alternative for the olives and benefits the wildlife.



Thorny Olive in April

Thorny olive and autumn olive can look similar to one another but do have some differences that help with identification. Thorny olive is an evergreen shrub that will grow between 3 to 25 feet in height. The branches have thorns scattered with thick leaves that will be silver brown on the underside of the leaf. Autumn olive is a deciduous shrub that grows 3 to 20 feet in height. It will also have scattered thorns along the branches with silvery color underneath the leaf.

Leaves of the thorny olive will be alternate and are shaped oval to elliptic. Size of the leaves range from .4 inches to 4 inches long. The margins will be irregular and wavy. Autumn Olive will have leaves that range from 2-



Autumn Olive in April

3 inches long and all the leaves will be elliptic in shape.

Timing of the flowers and fruit can also help in identification. Thorny olive flowers from October to December where Autumn Olive flowers from February to June. Fruits of the Thorny olive will set from March to June where the Autumn Olive sets it fruit from August to November.

Control Methods:

Control methods for both Thorny Olive and Autumn Olive are similar and listed below.

- Foliar – Thoroughly wet all leaves. Arsenal AC or Vanquish – 1% solution in water applied April to October. Nontarget plants may be killed or injured by root uptake.
- Basal Bark – For stems too tall for foliar sprays. Apply to young bark as a basal spray January to February or May to October.
 - Garlon 4 – 20-percent solution in basal oil, vegetable oil, crop oil concentrate, diesel fuel, or kerosene (2.5 quarts per 3-gallon mix)
 - Pathfinder II – undiluted
- Cut Surface – large stems and immediately treat the stumps.
 - Arsenal
 - AC – 10-percent solution in water (1 quart per 3-gallon mix). Nontarget plants maybe killed or injured through root uptake.
 - Glyphosate – 20-percent solution in water (2.5 quarts per 3-gallon mix).



Thorny Olive in March

Native Species Spotlight Coneflowers

By: Gary Peters – NRCS

Coneflowers, a group of plants that I'll bet you can immediately recall having seen all your life.

Characteristically unique in their design with yellow to orange showy petals radiating from a dome or 'cone' shaped center (hence the name coneflower). It's easy to see when traveling anywhere, the blooms command your attention near or far in the fields and along the roadsides. But, did you know what



Black-eyed Susan



Brown-eyed Susan

you were seeing? There are no less than 25 different species of coneflowers native to North America. The most recognized ones are the most showy; black-eyed (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and brown-eyed susans (*Rudbeckia triloba*).

A species or two of coneflower will grow on just about any soil, in any sunlit location, is resistant to deer and rabbit browsing, and are readily used in prairie restoration and native plantings throughout the southeast and beyond. FYI, the 'susans' are in every native seed mix available through NWF and the Conservation District.



Field of Susan Coneflowers

Because of its showy nature, the "susans" attract every kind of pollinating insect you can imagine. It also serves as a larval host for three specific species of butterfly; [bordered patch](#) (*Chlosyne lacinia*), [gorgone checkerspot](#) (*Chlosyne gorgone*), and [silvery checkerspot](#) (*Chlosyne nycteis*).



Bordered patch butterfly

Rudbeckia plants were used as a common component in herbal medicines by native Americans for a variety of ailments such as the common cold, flu, infections, etc. It was also used for treating sores, snake bites, and worms in children. But it is not without negatives, it is toxic to cats if ingested.

A bit of trivia, one of the genus name of coneflowers, "Rudbeckia", is derived from the last name of the family of the tutor of the children of Carolus Linnaeus (the world-renowned botanist), their last name was Rudbeck.

To complete the picture, you should know that there are at least 18 other species in three other genera of flowers commonly referred to as 'coneflowers'; *Echinacea*, *Dracopis*, and *Ratibida*.



Smooth Coneflower, federally endangered

For more detailed information on all the coneflowers visit <http://namethatplant.net/>, or <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/java/> and, there is always <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> available on any search engine for the internet. For Wikipedia, just add the genus name at the end of the web address, example: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudbeckia>.

We Need Your Help: Come Help with Quail Monitoring in June

By: Jacob McClain – Quail Forever Biologist

We are looking to improve our quail population monitoring efforts this year by recruiting volunteers to participate in whistle counts across the Indian Creek Wildlife Area. Whistle counts are one of the best ways for us to take the pulse of the population and determine which management strategies are working. If we consistently hear more quail every year, we can assume that the population is increasing and vice versa. Over the years, SCDNR, the US Forest Service, and Quail Forever have monitored the population to some degree, but more data is needed to clearly understand the distribution and trajectory of the local quail population. For that, we need more folks like yourselves to lend us a hand (and an ear, two if you've got em...) to help us fill in the information gaps.

Here's two ways you can help:

1. If you own property within or adjacent to the Indian Creek Wildlife Area (see map below), please take the time to **conduct spring whistle counts on your land**. One listening point should be established for every 100 acres. No worries if your property is less than 100 acres, just establish one point at the center of your property. Try to space points evenly across your property. Observations should occur during the month of June between 30 minutes before sunrise to 3 hours after sunrise to correspond with the peak whistling time. Listen at each point for 5 minutes and record the location of each whistling quail and the time each bird was heard. Each point should be surveyed on three separate days during the month of June.
2. **Volunteer to adopt a quail survey route along public and Forest Service roads**. Set points have been established that we will need help monitoring. Each route consists of 10-15 points and should take 2.0-3.5 hours to complete. Survey routes should be completed during the month of June.

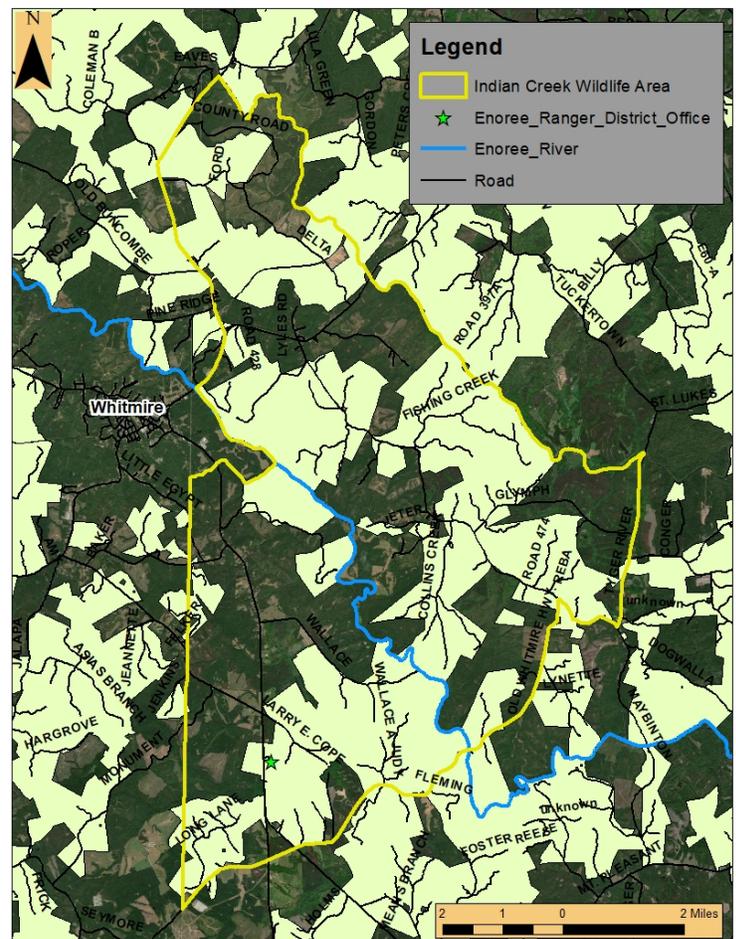
If you are willing to participate in either of the above two ways, please contact Jake McClain with Quail Forever at jmccclain@quailforever.org or at 803-321-2995.

Don't worry if no whistles are heard. From a habitat management perspective, it is important to know not only the locations where quail are present, but also the

locations where they are absent. A lack of whistling quail usually means that something is wrong with the habitat. Knowing these locations can help us pinpoint where management needs to be improved.

And even if you are not interested in quail (even though you should be!), quail are an indicator species. And what does the presence of quail indicate? A whistling quail indicates that there is some form of early successional habitat (grasses/wildflowers/shrubs/brambles) on the landscape, which means higher rabbit, deer, turkey, and songbird populations.

I'd also argue that the presence of quail is an indicator of good land stewardship. It means that somebody around cares about the land and the critters that live on it. It means that there's hope that the next generation will get to spend Spring/Summer mornings picking berries while listening to that sweet whistle... and Fall mornings meandering through the open pine woods with a good friend and a good dog.



2021 Indian Creek Management Activity Update

By: Tarri McKinney – US Forest Service

There has been a lot going on in Indian Creek since January. After two years of shortened prescribed burn seasons, 2021 is off to a good start. As of mid-March, there has been 9 units burned on Forest Service lands. Eight of these burn units have averaged 50 acres, with one burn unit of 456 acres. This total of 854 acres is a little less than one half of the planned burning in this area.

The Forest Service has also signed three Wyden Agreements with private landowners in the Indian Creek area. These agreements allow the USFS to burn these land-owners' land. To be eligible for this agreement, there must be some mutual benefits. The most common benefit is the ability to include private lands to reduce the complexity of burn units as well as the reduce of distance of fireline needed. In the Indian Creek area private lands are critical to create habitat connectivity.

In addition to prescribed burning in Indian Creek, there has been winter disking and other ground disturbance activities. There has been a concerted effort to plant some of the firelines during the winter/early spring seasons. Plantings have included partridge pea, ragweed, and Illinois bundle flower.

We are midway through the spring fire and planting season and there is much more to accomplish. It is time to start site prepping Delta South for the annual small grain crops as well spraying tall fescue and Bermuda grass. Take the opportunity to ride through Indian Creek and watch spring unfold.

Growing Season Burns

By: Gary Peters – NRCS

We're right in the middle of one of the best times of the year to burn for controlling woody growth and improving the quality of habitat. Growing season burns are the most effective treatment without chemicals for taking out sweetgum seedlings and saplings. It also is the most appropriate burning technique that will promote native grasses and forbs so important to our songbirds, quail, and small mammals.

If you are not experienced at burning, attend a 'Learn to Burn' workshop, or any of the Certified Prescribed Fire Managers courses offered by the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Check out the South Carolina Forestry

Commission website or contact Stephen Patterson at (803)896-8810 for further information.

As for equipment, all the basic hand tools that you will need to safely implement a prescribed burn are available from the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District prescribed fire trailer. To reserve the burn trailer simply email: NewberrySWCD.com/Burn or, call the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District at 803-597-3160.

The burn trailer is stocked with basic firefighting tools and equipment available for landowners, practitioners, and professionals to use in Newberry and surrounding counties.

There is a daily fee of \$50 for the first day, and a \$10 fee for every day thereafter. A damage deposit of \$50 will also be required.

Don't need a whole trailer full of supplies? Call us and we'll work with you to meet your needs on a case by case basis.



Due to Funding we do not know how long we will be able to continue to mail this newsletter out by paper mail.

If you receive this newsletter by paper mail and would like to continue to receive it, please sign up for our email list serve.

Please send your name, mailing address, and email address to fellers@clemsun.edu and be sure to include Indian Creek email list serve in the subject line.

Quail Forever Food Plot Seed Program

By: **Jacob McClain – Quail Forever Biologist**

Quail Forever will once again be distributing food plot seed to SC landowners this spring. There is no doubt that the importance of food plots for wildlife has been exaggerated over the years. Here in the Piedmont of SC, thinning timber and regular prescribed fire are far more effective ways of improving quail, turkey, rabbit, and deer habitat. However, food plots are a good way to boost food resources, concentrate activity, and improve your chances of bagging some game.

How the Program Works

Each spring Quail Forever in South Carolina receives a shipment of corn, soybeans, and grain sorghum from Bayer/Monsanto to be distributed to landowners within the state interested in planting food plots. Timing of the shipment is not certain, but the seed usually arrives mid-April. This seed must be used for food plots only. It is illegal to sell the seed or harvest the grain from planted food plot seed.

Landowners interested in participating in the program should fill out an application and return it to Quail Forever Biologist Jake McClain via email or snail mail. The application will be posted to the Quail Forever in South Carolina Facebook Page. An application will also be included with the mailing of the Quail Times.

Once the seed arrives, each participant will be contacted and assigned a date and time to pick up the requested seed at the Enoree Ranger District Work Center: 20 Work Center Rd, Whitmire, SC, 29178.

Planting a Good Food Plot

You can improve your chances of establishing a beautiful food plot by first getting a soil test done for each of your fields. Soil tests will tell you how much lime, fertilizer, etc. is needed to suit the crop you are trying to grow.

Another way to improve your chances of growing a bumper crop of corn or sorghum is to pay attention to your planting rate. It is all too common for folks to just throw some seed out into a disked field and hope for the best. Planting too little or too much seed yields unimpressive results. In my experience most folks are planting too much seed, causing plants to compete for sunlight and nutrients, resulting in stunted growth or limited seed production.

Sorghum: Plant at 5-7 lbs/acre drilled OR 10-12 lbs/acre broadcast.

Corn: Plant at 10 lbs/acre with rows 8-12” apart drilled or planted.

Soybeans: Plant at 50 lbs/acre drilled or planted.

And finally, don’t ignore the weeds! Prior to planting use cultivation or herbicide to control weedy competition. Additionally, the corn and soybeans are both Roundup Ready varieties, so weed control after planting is possible.

Return Applications to:

jmccclain@quailforever.org

OR to...

Jake McClain
20 Work Center Rd
Whitmire, SC, 29178



This photo from late-June 2020 shows how one SC landowner used his free QF seed. By planting sorghum on the edges of his timber he provides good cover for wildlife at the forest-field interface. The more palatable soybeans were planted in the interior of this field, giving them a chance to mature.

Forest Management Calendar SC Forestry Commission

| Forest Management Calendar Provided by SC Forestry Commission | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Treatment | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Request A Forest Stewardship Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Apply For Equip Or Cost-Share Programs With NRCS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Apply For Cost-Share Assistance with The SC Forestry Commission | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Road Maintenance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site Preparation Burning | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Insect & Disease Inspection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chemical Herbaceous Weed | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chemical Site Preparation/Release | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fire Breaks | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Food Plot Planting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Harvesting (Includes Thinning) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mechanical Site Preparation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Order Seedlings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prescribed Burning | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tree Planting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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■ Indicates appropriate month for technique



Quail Forever Seed Program Application

As part of our partnership with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the US Forest Service, Quail Forever offers free seed to private landowners in South Carolina. This seed is intended for establishing wildlife food plots only and cannot legally be harvested or sold. Return to Jake McClain at jmccclain@quailforever.org. or mail to 20 Work Center Rd, Whitmire, SC, 29178. You will be contacted to schedule a pickup at the address above.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____ County: _____

Phone # _____ Email: _____

Acres to be planted: _____

#Sorghum bags: _____ #Corn bags: _____ # Soybean bags: _____

Pickup Availability:

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| A.M. | | | | | | |
| P.M. | | | | | | |

Wildlife Species Interests (circle all that apply):

Quail Deer Turkey Woodcock Rabbit Squirrel Furbearers
Dove Songbirds Other: _____

Would you be interested in a site visit from a Quail Forever or SCDNR Wildlife Biologist?

Yes No