

Autumn is my favorite season. The woods become an exciting place with every tree covered with bright colorful leaves and each leaf seems to be a different color. Hunting season opens and each year I have tried to kill a deer. Most of the land around us is leased, but the guy who leased it gave Grandpa and me permission to hunt. We do not have a deer stand so our luck has not been very good. We hoped this was about to change.

My Mom and I live in an old two story house on a dead end road that borders Little River. In 2016 the river flooded and covered all six acres and the first floor of our house. But when the river water subsided, besides leaving a huge mess, it left a large layer of silt. My mother loves flowers and I am the "shovel man". She points and I dig the hole for some new flower or shrub. This year my Mother ordered some exotic day lilies. They are beautiful shades of red and purple and seem to like our soil very much.

All summer they grew and bloomed. Most hunters know that deer like to eat just about anything, including daylilies. They do not eat the common orange ones but seem to love the red and purple plants. One day when my Mom and I were turning in the drive we noticed some of the daylilies were gone. On closer inspection we saw deer tracks. But it was just a few plants and they had just been eaten down very short so she said no you cannot hunt that deer in my yard. The second day a few more daylilies were gone. On the third day when more daylilies were missing she turned and said, "Now you and Grandpa need to kill that deer. It has thousands of acres to live but it cannot live here and eat my flowers."

Deer are very smart. This one only came at night, but my Grandpa said just wait. As the season progresses and the food supply diminish, it will change the time it forages. He was right. The deer started coming into the yard just as I was leaving for school. It would eat the acorns and then attack the innocent daylilies. My Mom would go out into the yard and shoo it away but she would not let me skip school to shoot the deer. I waited for my opportunity. One Saturday my Grandpa said we should get up early and sit on the top porch and wait. He had a little Buddy heater and an old Stanley thermos bottle of coffee, so we could wait. Just as we were eating our snack the deer sailed over the hurricane fence into the yard and started eying what was left of the daylilies. When it found the last one it bent over and took a bite. I was so excited; I grabbed my gun, aimed carefully and almost fired. A movement on the other side of the yard caught my attention. What was that? Standing there in the tall grass was a baby deer. It was small and still had spots.

Fawns are usually born from spring to early summer. Grandpa said this fawn was a real exception being born so late in the year. He had heard some hunters say they had seen young deer in hunting season but never a fawn. He also said the fawn would not live without its mother and it would not be right to kill her. So we just sat there and watched her mow down the last standing daylily.

After she jumped the fence and walked away with her baby by her side we went into the house to eat breakfast. My mom said she did not hear any shots so she assumed the deer had not come, but when I told her about the fawn she just shook her head and said OK I will look for some deer resistant plants to order.

I guess being nibbled on by a deer wasn't enough to kill those plants. This spring those lilies were more beautiful than ever. Next season it won't be a fawn anymore, so it's free pass is up.