

THE COVEY CALL E-NEWSLETTER
May – June 2017
METRO & SE QF CHAPTERS
“Helping To Bring Back The Bobwhite Quail”



2017 Arbor Day Tree Planting

On Saturday, April 22nd, Houston High School youth volunteered their time to work with adults in planting trees and shrubs at the Houston Nature Center in Houston, MN that will benefit many forms of wildlife including bobwhite quail. Our SE QF Chapter is partnering with the Houston Nature Center in improving the wildlife habitat in that area. We are grateful for the students and their teachers from Houston High School, who are doing their part to help wildlife.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- **Announcement about the upcoming “Metro QF Banquet”**
- **Article on the Benefits of Giant Ragweed for Quail – Part 1 of 2**
- **Weed Creed**
- **Re-opening of our MN Quail Forever website**



SOME IRONIC FACTS OF LIFE!

Some factual things in life are not easy to believe, but they work.

Someone discovered many decades ago that cow manure worked into the garden soil helps to produce a greater yield of vegetables.

Surgical procedures are not situations where people look forward to having; but, if some of them aren't done, many, many people would die.

Fact: Bobwhite quail gravitate to fields of ragweed, especially when brush is close by.

Rule of thumb: Increase your ragweed to increase your quail.



Giant Ragweed



WEED CREED

By Scott Sudkamp, Missouri Dept. of Conservation

- I am a recovering weed hater
- I will no longer view all weeds as bad
- I will embrace weeds for the habitat they provide
- I will not engage in recreational mowing (repeat)
- I will value my quail more than a manicured farm
- I will remember that hay fever means more quail food
- I will learn to love my weeds

Believe it or not, the scientific name for ragweed, Ambrosia, means food of the gods.

By Missouri Dept. of Conservation

Though allergy sufferers everywhere probably have other names for ragweed, quail would probably agree. Ragweed provides something for every stage of a quail's life, from chick to adult.

In early spring when quail hens are busy selecting clumps of grass in which to nest, new plants are just starting to germinate in the surrounding soil. Many of these will likely be ragweed. A couple months later, when quail chicks leave the nest, ragweed offers a dense canopy of foliage that screens the fragile chicks from sun and predators.

Newborn quail feed almost exclusively on insects for the first few weeks after hatching. This provides protein needed for rapid growth. Ragweed, with its lush foliage and abundant flowers, lures countless insects to their demise down the gullets of hungry quail chicks.

By the time they develop flight feathers, young chicks switch from eating insects to eating seeds. By this time, many ragweed plants have gone to seed, providing quail with a bounty of food for the winter. The high carbohydrate content of seeds helps quail maintain their body temperature when the mercury plummets.



The Irony of Giant Ragweed – part 1 of 2

*Article courtesy of Gene Logsdon
Garden Farm Skills.*

If you have never been frightened by a weed other than maybe poison ivy, you have not yet faced a battalion of giant ragweeds (*Ambrosia trifida*) advancing resolutely across your farm. They can grow to a height of 15 feet or more and in a stand so solid as to stop a 200 horsepower corn harvester dead in its tracks. They can overtake a field of knee high corn that has not been sprayed with the proper herbicide and literally choke it to death. In the lexicon of agribusiness, there is no adjective synonymous with ‘vile’ or ‘pernicious’ that has not been used to describe this hated plant of the grain fields. On top of that, it is a major source of irritation for hay fever sufferers. And now on the horizon looms the worst dream of the grain farmer: Giant ragweed is becoming immune to herbicides, particularly glyphosate, the active ingredient of RoundUp. Why the ancient Romans decided to call it ambrosia, that is, gift of the gods, is one of those mysteries that cries out to heaven for explanation.

I have a hunch that sheep could explain the mystery if they could talk. They love giant ragweed. They will go out of their way to eat it, even with a choice of lush fresh clover at hand. Interestingly, while they will nibble on common ragweed, they don’t like it nearly as well.

What is going on here? After spending a long time watching my sheep and reading through the scientific literature, I finally found some clues, the kind that so often leads me to wonder if farmers shouldn’t just take a deep breath, step back, and consider the possibility that they are going in the wrong direction.....

Part 2 will be in the next issue of the Covey Call newsletter



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Registration information will be included in our next Covey Call Newsletter.

Metro Quail Forever Banquet

Thursday, July 27, 2017

At Tinucci's Restaurant

396 21st Street, Newport, MN 55055

5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

This Banquet is a Special Event that benefits Youth and Wildlife!

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MN QUAIL FOREVER WEBSITE

The Website for our two QF Chapters in Minnesota will be re-opening soon at this address:

<http://www.mnquailforever.com/>

WEEKLY FACEBOOK

Visit our Facebook Weekly for Information on Quail and Other Birds:

<https://www.facebook.com/Quail-Forever-Minnesota>

Thurman Tucker, Metro & SE QF Chapters Coordinator

