

# Missouri Chapter News

Walnut Council: Growing Walnut and Other Fine Hardwoods



## Protecting Trees from Deer -

### Using Tree Tubes, Spiral Wraps, and 3D Electric Fence

**John Kelsey, Life Member**

We have used tree tubes for deer protection on our black walnut plantings for many years. We also use tree tubes on our more recent tree plantings of European hazelnut. The hazels sprout like mad, so at around one inch in diameter we switch to spiral wraps that give access to the stems to control the sprouts. Spiral wraps **at the time** were 1/10th the cost of tree tubes (30 cents vs. \$3 for Tree Pro - **1995 prices**). The tree tubes are used over and over for many years until they fall apart. I have been cutting the tree tubes in half (2 feet tall) which also serve as a shield to avoid possible herbicide damage. We always use nets or make a way for trapped bluebirds to get out. Before winter we raise the tree tubes about 4 inches above the ground to prevent mice from nesting and gnawing.

We bought thousands of 30" spiral tree wraps from [Peach Ridge Orchard Supply](#) northwest of Grand Rapids, MI. The wraps are about 99% effective in stopping antler rub. I have found teeth marks where the deer have tried to pull the spiral wraps off, but they never succeed. However, there is a small brown bird that can easily take them off. She is going after beetles that hang out under the wraps. She starts at the top and spirals down unwrapping, eating the bugs, and the wrap falls on the ground. I just put them back on. This happens on our hazels; not with our black walnuts.

I install the bottom of the wraps one foot above the ground. The bucks do not rub below one foot, but we have had some **sunscauld** on the base of our hazels below the wraps. Sunscald is a problem especially with young fruit and nut trees while the bark is smooth before it starts to fracture. To avoid that, we paint the trunks below the wraps with "High Hiding White" latex cut 50:50 with water in a backpack sprayer. Sunscald occurs more



**Spiral tree wraps protect sapling walnut trees from deer rubbing which can expose enough of the cambium layer to severely injure the tree. Start wrapping 1' above the ground.**

commonly on the south or southwest facing surfaces of smooth bark tree stems. I have not seen the sunscald problem as much on walnut.

One caution with the spiral wraps is making sure they do not overlap. Overlapping prevents their expansion restricting tree growth strangling the tree. By the time the trees are 4" in diameter, the wraps become brittle from ultra violet light (UV) and they lose their spring. Luckily, the bucks lose interest in rubbing smaller diameter trees!



**Photo Above:** European hazelnuts with white spiral wraps to protect tree stems from deer rubbing.



**Photo Right:** Sunscald can seriously damage young fruit and nut trees below tree wraps so we now paint the bark 1' above ground. This tree is an example of why we began painting tree trunks to stop sunscald.



**Photo Left:** Used 4' tall tree shelters are cut into 2' sections, split lengthwise then reused to protect trees from herbicide sprays applied around each tree to control competing grasses.



**This 3D solar powered electric deer fence keeps the deer away from tree seedlings on Blennerhassett Island.**

I have been assisting on a two acre tree planting project on Blennerhassett Island here in West Virginia. The island has a large deer herd which can devastate a new tree planting. To protect our trees, we opted to use a 3D deer fence rather than purchase tree protectors (tree shelters). The cost for this fence was \$300 for the solar charger, about 30 cents per foot of fence material costs, plus two days of labor to erect the fence. No deer damage so far, but some minor rabbit damage on bald cypress trees. **(See the table below for specific fence costs).**

<b>3D Electric Fence</b>					
<i>Item</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Quant</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Parmak Magnum Solar-Pak 12	Amazon	1	\$ 293.52	\$ 293.52	\$ 311.15
T post 6.5' and insulators	Rural King	14	\$ 4.29	\$ 60.06	\$ 81.83
Ground Rods	Rural King	2	\$ 17.00	\$ 34.00	\$ 36.21
Polly Tape 1/2" x 1320' + handles	Amazon	5	\$ 50.67	\$ 253.35	\$ 283.02
Step-in Post 48"	Rural King	100	\$ 1.79	\$ 179.00	\$ 190.64
Deer repellent 1 qt	Rural King	2	\$ 11.00	\$ 22.00	\$ -
tester		1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16.95
ground clamps		2	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9.94
Gate handle	Amazon	6	\$ 1.91	\$ 11.46	\$ -
			sub total =>	\$ 853.39	\$ 929.74