

*“Keep in mind that a cottontail spends its entire life within an area no larger than 10 acres. Providing adequate cover and food is essential to a successful rabbit population. Remember, the diversity of both cover and food is the real key to having more rabbits.”*

## RABBITS: Habitat diversity is key element in promoting cottontail health

### FROM PAGE 31

have more than one entrance and exit. Plastic pipe (not more than six inches in diameter) provides an excellent entrance and exit. Large logs, stumps or large stones can be used to construct the base. Each additional layer (up to three or four layers) is made up of brush and branches creating a tangled pile of brush on the top. Brush piles that are constructed according to recommendations may last up to 10 years.

Just as important as proper construction is placement. Brush piles should be located close to hedgerows, windbreaks, brushy thickets or areas where additional brushy cover is

nearby. Additional cover can be provided by a process known as “live-topping” trees. This is the practice of cutting a tree trunk on a 30-degree angle about three-quarters of the way through and leaning the tree to the ground. Because the tree is not cut all the way through, the branches may provide green cover for several years. “Live-topping” a tree next to a brush pile is even better.

Cottontails are herbivores, which means their diet consists of vegetation. Succulent growth of leaves, stems, plant shoots and flowers are the preferred food of rabbits. As one would expect, food sources (goldenrod, wheat, clover, legumes, soybeans, garden crops, etc.) during

the spring and summer months is usually not a limiting factor to rabbit populations. However, with the approach of winter and the disappearance of the rabbit’s preferred food sources, their diets change to the bark and twigs of plant species such as poison ivy, sassafras, maple, dogwood, sumac and apple. If adequate food sources are not available, quarter-acre wildlife openings can be planted. There should be at least one opening for every two to five acres. These openings can be planted in clovers, alfalfa, peas, rye, wheat or a mixture of annuals.

Keep in mind that a cottontail spends its entire life within an area no larger than 10 acres. Providing

adequate cover and food is essential to a successful rabbit population. Remember, the diversity of both cover and food is the real key to having more rabbits. For more information contact Randy Liles, Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, 4101 Hwy. 21 N., Jacksonville, AL, 36265.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama’s natural resources through five divisions: Marine Patrol, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

 **HUSTLER**

# TOOLS NOT TOYS

- Heavy-duty welded steel deck
- Patented SmoothTrak™ steering
- SmartChoke™ technology for easy starting
- Industry-leading warranty

**TUCKER ATV**

6105 Highway 43 • Jackson, AL 36545  
Phone: (251)-246-3668 • Fax: (251)-246-9515

Hours:

Mon. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. • Sat. 7:30 a.m. - Noon

Email: tuckeratv@outlook.com

**RAPTOR**

THE RAPTOR FAMILY  
STARTING AT

**\$2799**  
42" Deck



Subscribe at [thecallnews.com](http://thecallnews.com) or [washcountynews.com](http://washcountynews.com)