



# Belle Terre Times

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE INCORPORATED VILLAGE

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[www.belleterre.us](http://www.belleterre.us)

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## THE DEER EDITION

### The History

Several years ago the Village Board recognized that the overabundance of white-tailed deer in our community was reaching a critical point. The number of deer-vehicle collisions increased from one every few years to 23 in a two-year period. Decimation of ornamental and vegetable gardens was out of control with sprays, noisemakers and other tactics all but useless. The increase in tick bites and tick-borne diseases was rising at an alarming rate. Overgrazing of our natural forest species was permanently altering the forest understory from ground level to five feet high while also preventing seedlings from growing, enabling invasive species to take hold and destroying the native habitats of birds and small mammals.

While a committee was formed to study all of the possible alternatives to reducing the deer population it became clear that the only immediate and effective solution to control and diminish the size of the herd was the introduction of hunting in the Village.

Almost a year ago the Board announced that Chapter 95 of the Village code that states, "No person shall hunt, trap or discharge firearms within the territorial limits of the Village of Belle Terre." was in conflict with New York State Law. It was further stated that the Village would seek an "opinion letter" from the State Attorney General clarifying whether or not the Village code could alter the State hunting regulations administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). That letter was received in February 2018 and stated that the local law regulating hunting was unenforceable and, in response, the Village announced its intention to repeal Chapter 95 at a public hearing. That hearing and action was held on January 15, 2019.

As a result, homeowners have been contacted by various hunter groups through the use of direct mailings. These groups indicate that they are insured and give special training and certification to their members. Homeowners who have availed themselves of these services have reported positive experiences.

### What you Should Know

With hunting now being conducted in the Village it is important to understand the regulations and conditions that are set and administered by the NYS DEC.

- Hunters must obtain a license from the DEC.
- The regular hunting season begins on October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Homeowners can apply for and obtain a "nuisance permit" from the DEC to extend the hunting season on their property.
- Hunters can only use long bows and arrows to hunt. No firearms or crossbows are allowed.
- Hunters must have permission from homeowners to hunt on their property.
- Hunters must be more than 150 feet from the nearest dwelling.
- Hunters cannot "bait" deer.
- Hunting can only be conducted from sunrise to sunset (No nighttime hunting is allowed.)
- Properties marked with "Posted" or "No Trespassing" signs are off limits to hunters (although the 5<sup>th</sup> point above makes this redundant).
- Hunters can take one "Antlered Buck" per season and as many "Antler-less Does" as they want using a Deer Management Permit (DMP).
- All deer taken must be properly "tagged" and reported to the DEC. The DEC compiles annual hunting statistics each year by region.





### What is a Deer Stand

Tree **stands** or **deer stands** are open or enclosed “platforms” located at the top of various kinds of ladders used by archers. The platforms are secured to trees in order to elevate the hunter and give him or her a better vantage point from which to aim **downward** at their target. Tree stands are ideally set up 15-20 feet above the ground and are attached to hefty trees.

Hunters may set up more than one stand on a piece of property, analyze wind conditions, and place themselves **downwind** from where they expect deer to be found on a given day. Deer will smell a hunter before hearing or seeing them. The deer stands may be set up for use for only a few days or for the entire hunting season.



### When are Deer Most Active

White tailed deer's eyes are located on the sides of their heads and give them about 310 degrees of peripheral vision (as opposed to humans 180 degree maximum).

Deer see green colors as shades of gray; reds as yellow tones; and blues in much more intense shades of blue than we see them. Unlike humans that have UV filters in their eyes, deer do not and can see ultraviolet (UV) light. **Deer are most active at dawn and dusk when the greatest amount of light is in the blue spectrum and their sight is most acute.**



### Some Sobering Statistics:

- A collision with some form of wildlife occurs, on average, every 39 minutes somewhere in the United States.
- According to the New York State DMV, two-thirds of all deer-vehicle collisions occur during the months of October, November and December. This is also the time when deer breed and when they travel the most.
- 1 out of every 17 car collisions involves wildlife.
- 89% of all wildlife collisions occur on roads with 2 lanes (one in each direction.)
- 84% of all wildlife collisions occur in good weather on dry roads.
- The average repair cost of a car-deer collision is \$2,800.
- Approximately 200 motorists die in the United States each year from car-wildlife collisions.

### How to Avoid Collisions with Deer:

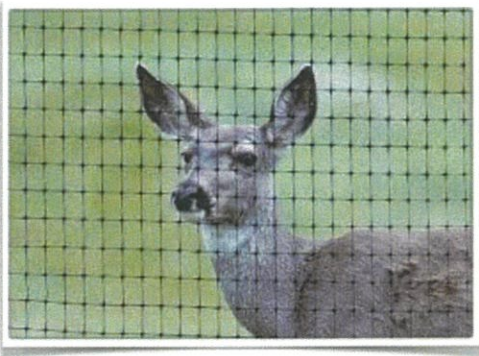
- Slow down when passing yellow deer-crossing signs.
- Wildlife is most active during dusk, dawn, and night. Deer are most frequently hit during dusk and dawn.
- Headlights have an illumination range of 200 to 250 feet. To allow for sufficient brake time, reduce your speed to 45 mph at night on secondary roads and 30 mph on local roads.
- Pay attention to shoulders. Even though wildlife may be off to the side as your car approaches, animals may suddenly attempt to flee by **inexplicably leaping into the road**.
- Look for reflecting eyes.
- Keep in mind that deer wander in groups. If you see one crossing, more are bound to follow.
- If you drive after we have applied road salt in winter, keep in mind that wildlife embraces salt as a condiment. Roads may be drier but deer more numerous.





## Deer Fencing

At its October meeting The Village Board voted to change Chapter 170 of the Code to allow for the installation of "deer fencing". By so doing, the following definition was added to the fencing code: Deer Fence – a fence, no greater than eight feet in height as measured from the prevailing natural grade of the property, the sole purpose of which is to exclude deer from the enclosed area. Such fence shall be made of any number of black plastics, usually polypropylene, products with square openings between  $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 2" wide, designed to be "invisible" when viewed from a distance. No other material such as wood, metal, wire or solid plastic may be used as "deer fence".



It must be noted that a deer fence can **ONLY** be installed in places where conventional fencing is allowed by Village code (i.e. pools, backyards). Under no circumstances can fencing be installed forward of the building line (front yard) without specific permission from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA.)

## Don't Feed the Deer

As temperatures drop and snow deepens, you may notice deer digging around in your yard in search of food. While you may be tempted to feed the deer, in reality, deer are well adapted to our winter conditions and, along with being illegal, feeding deer may actually do more harm than good.

White-tailed deer go through both physical and behavioral changes that improve their survival odds during winter. Deer spend much of the fall season building up fat stores that will provide them with warmth and energy throughout winter. Externally, deer develop a thick winter coat of fur that helps them absorb more sunlight and traps in more body heat. They have special glands that secrete oils that make their hairs water repellent, keeping them warm and dry.



Although providing deer with additional food in winter may seem like a good idea, there are negative consequences of doing so. The natural winter diet of a deer consists of leaves and twigs, but when deer are introduced to large amounts of grains (i.e. wheat, oats, rye) or corn, the influx of carbohydrates can result in acidosis, which can be fatal. Another concern is that by feeding deer in winter, you habituate them to your presence and make them less reliant on natural forage.

### •EHSR (Emergency Hazardous Situation Registry)



The Village has established a **EHSD** to assist residents when they feel uncomfortable being alone at home due to power outages, snow storms, hurricanes, etc.

By registering you will be placed on a list of people that the

Constabulary will check in with, during what are considered to be "hazardous" situations.

Several individuals and families have already registered for this service. If you are interested and have not already done so, please call the Belle Terre Office at 631-928-0020 and the staff will assist you in filling out the necessary form.

### •New 2019 Recycling Information

Glass bottles and jars are no longer accepted with curbside recyclables. You can drop glass bottles off (free of charge) at the Rose Caracappa Sr. Center: 739 Rt. 25A, Mt. Sinai (intersection with CR 83-in the northeast corner of the parking lot.)

✓ Recyclable	⊗ Not Recyclable
 • Empty aluminum, tin, and steel cans	 • Other plastics (#3-7), Styrofoam, plastic bags
 • Empty plastic bottles and jugs (#1 and #2)	 • All Glass
 • Coated paper containers	 • Garden Hoses
 • Clean paper and cardboard	 • Soiled paper & cardboard
	 • Toys