Blood Tracking Made Easy

Here's a tip that makes a great visual aid in the classroom.

Tracking a wounded deer can be difficult at times, even for the most experienced hunters. Bowhunters must frequently follow a drying blood trail that might consist of nothing more than an occasional droplet on a leaf. To make blood trailing easier, use a small spray bottle filled with hydrogen peroxide. The hydrogen peroxide is inexpensive and foams vigorously when applied to proteins and blood.

This can be demonstrated in class with a piece of tree bark or a branch that has been prepared before class by dripping a bit of juice from a steak or other blood source on it. Pass the bark or stick around the class. Students will find it difficult to see the blood stain, but a quick spritz with the hydrogen peroxide will foam and reveal the presence of blood.

Lee Ashford
Bieber, California

More Blood Tracking Tips

We have found a very useful training aid for a field exercise in blood trailing — medical tongue depressors.

Spray both sides of a tongue depressor with fluorescent orange paint. Mark every other blood spot by inserting the depressor into the ground next to the blood. New students will be able to backtrack immediately should they lose the blood trail. With this method, students can also determine the direction the wounded animal is heading. As the student becomes more proficient in tracking a blood trail, he can place the depressors farther apart.

The use of a flashlight in low-light conditions will enable the student to continue tracking in the dark. It's easy to pick up the blood trail early the next day by hanging extra depressors from bushes or tree branches. I drill a small hole at the end of each depressor and hang them with a string.

Bill Spadafora
Stony Brook, New York

Make A Lasting Impression

Here are two tips that help convey strong safety messages. In my class I show the students a simple 1-2-3 step process on how to take a gun out of a case. 1) Cradle the case in your left arm with the muzzle pointing up. Unzip the case with your right hand and then reach in and grasp the firearm firmly. Pull the gun out of case and let the case fall to ground. 2) Open the action while pointing the muzzle in a safe direction. 3) Look into the chamber to make sure the gun is empty. I use a pump shotgun to demonstrate this process.

My next tip keeps the class very alert. Prior to class I put a dummy round in the firearm's magazine. Then I use the firearm while discussing pointing the muzzle in a safe direction. I hold the gun so the students can't see into the action when I open it. I close the action, put the gun back in its case and lay it on the table in front of me. Later, I use the shotgun I put back into the case as I stress always making sure firearms are unloaded when you pick them up. When the action is opened, the dummy round comes flying out and skips across the floor.

I stand in total silence for 5 to 10 seconds then ask calmly, "Raise your hand if you thought this gun was empty." Believe me, you'll get the desired long-lasting effect you want.

Greg Wilcox
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