

The Sweet Smell of Spring

Another sure sign that Spring has arrived is with the number of road kill skunks. With the warm weather that we have been having this winter, those rascals seem to be venturing out even earlier. I hate skunks!

About a month ago grandson Noah talked me into going coyote hunting. The dark of the night was being pushed back with a full moon rising when we climbed the small ridge behind our cabin. "What are you going to use for a coyote call?" Noah asked. "I've got my wood duck call with me." I answered. I explained in detail how I can make my wood duck call sound like a screaming rabbit in distress. "Are you sure?" he questioned. "No problem," I chuckled.

As we broke out of the woods into the field I spotted some movement nearby and with my flash light lit up the back end of a skunk scurrying away. "How come you didn't shoot it?" Noah asked. I explained that it might scare away any coyotes in the area and secretly thought that I didn't want to deal with the smell.

It seems that I have been cursed most of my life with the presence of skunks and I have eliminated a large number of them. Terminated with extreme prejudice would be a better description. Most have met their maker at the end of a variety of weapons. Twelve gauge shotguns, 22 caliber rifles and pistols, a Winchester 30-30 model 94 carbine. That last weapon happened to give me my cleanest kill.

On a warm winter day a skunk was wondering around outside on the snow and I dropped it with one shot from that Model 94. It went clean through, the slug didn't even expand. I hate skunks!

Our milk house on the farm had small holes all over the outside of it from me blasting away with my shotgun at skunks. One evening I was showing a friend of mine (Lynn B.) the horses that we had in the barn when he remarked about all the cats at the milk dish on the floor. "I know, we have a lot of cats," I quipped. "Look closer," he said. Sandwiched in between the cats slurping up some leftovers was a skunk. We backed out of the barn and later I added to the shotgun holes in the side of the milk house. I hate skunks!

I learned early on that I have a very low tolerance for the odor of a skunk's defense weapon. The human nose can pick up 10 parts per billion of this odorous liquid. I always bury my victims and the process that I use the most goes some thing like this: First I dig a deep hole in the outback. Using a long handle spade with a scoop of barn lime, I approach the dead skunk from the upwind side. I cover up the body with the lime and gently slide the shovel under the skunk. I walk carefully to the pre-dug hole and lay the wretched creature in the bottom of the hole, cover it with dirt and that's it.

Once, just once, I rushed the approach to the hole and dropped the skunk. There is a stink way beyond the first 10 parts per billion and it doesn't have a name. For me it was incapacitating. My nose was running, my eyes were running, I was gagging and drooling and I think even my ears were running. Never ever rush the burial. I hate skunks!

I did use a nonlethal approach with one particular skunk. A friend of mine had stored a Dodge Charger, a rebuilt muscle car in our pole barn. Early in the spring I noticed that some hay was under the car and as I bent down to peer under the car I stared right into the beady eyes of a skunk. There was no way that the car could be moved without setting off the skunk and stinking up the whole car. I decided to use psychological warfare. I turned on the dual 2,500 watt pole barn lights, moved in additional flood lights

and focused them under the car. I brought in a radio, tuned it to a rock station cranked up the volume closed the doors and let the whole “shebang” sit all night. The next morning the skunk was still there just rocking away. I hate skunks!

Plan B: I bought a box of moth balls and threw the entire contents under the car. The skunk vacated the pole barn by the next day.

“Summer time and the living is easy,” the song goes but not with skunks around. A skunk had been digging up our lawn looking for grubs and not being able to get a shot at it I called our neighbor Joe for help. “I got a new system for dealing with skunks; I’ll bring it over,” he said. “It worked a couple of days ago and the skunk never sprayed me.”

Joe set up a large baited live trap in our front yard and said he would be back in the morning. Come morning, the stripped digger was lodged in the live trap. Joe came over on his four-wheeler bringing a large blanket with him. His plan was to slowly walk up to the live trap hiding behind the blanket, lowering it over the trap then bring it back to his place. Once at his farm he would lower the blanketed trap into a stock tank and drown the critter.

Joe got about two feet from the live trap when the skunk started firing away. I ran in the other direction; but Joe being the fearless trapper continued on, covered up the trap with the blanket, loaded it on the back of his four-wheeler and headed home. Before Joe could end the encounter with a dunk in the stock tank, the skunk fired another salvo. What a friend! 😊

I told Joes mother how glad we were to have some one as skilled as Joe is in solving my animal curse. I added with “I don’t know what God was thinking when she invented skunks”. Of course this started a very brief discussion about the gender of God 😊

Geezer (I hate skunks) Bob



