

Saint John's Abbey Arboretum Archery Deer Hunt 2025

Welcome to Saint John's for the 23rd controlled deer hunt since 1933.

July 5, 2025

The following rules apply to all hunters allowed on Saint John's Abbey property.

GENERAL INTENT OF ABBEY ARBORETUM ARCHERY DEER HUNT:

Saint John's 2,944-acre Abbey Arboretum is private property. Hunting on Saint John's Abbey property is a privilege not a right. Preserve that privilege by respecting all property and hunting safely. As owners of private property, Saint John's Abbey reserves the right to refuse any hunter permission to hunt or to continue to hunt at any time for any reason.

All hunters must follow the Minnesota State Big Game Laws. This is not a MN DNR special hunt. Hunters must bring and use their own archery deer license. The Collegeville State Game Refuge (established in 1933) mostly coincides with the boundaries of the Abbey Arboretum and special rules can apply to hunting on the refuge. Due to Refuge status, all wildlife species other than deer (including coyote) are protected and may not be taken.

Saint John's Abbey's intent is to reduce the deer population to a level that allows natural regeneration of the forest ecosystem that is essential to the long-term habitat of deer and other components of the ecosystem. Harvesting primarily antlerless deer is the best method for controlling the deer population.

2024 MN DNR Population modeling for our area estimates 39 deer per square mile. Each year the hunt will be reassessed once a total of 50 deer are taken. If Saint John's decides to end the hunt at that point, hunters who have not taken a deer will not be able to continue hunting at Saint John's this deer season, nor have any priority for future seasons.

Archery hunting will be the only option for taking a deer in the Abbey Arboretum this year. Archery hunting allows Saint John's to extend the season, avoid conflicts with other campus events (like hikers and football games), allows more hunters to participate, allows hunting closer to campus, and reduces the need for security personnel.

Hiking, teaching, field excursions, races, and other land use activities will continue throughout the hunting season. Hunters must be flexible in respecting campus events (i.e., 5K fun run through your hunting district). NOTE: Any non-hunters who intentionally or otherwise needlessly disrupt hunting as determined by Saint John's will be asked to leave. The same is true for any hunters who disrupt campus events.

Enforcement officers will be patrolling Saint John's occasionally by truck, ATV, and foot. Contact them if you need assistance. You may also call 320-363-2144 to reach Saint John's Life Safety and be referred to the field officers. During the Saint John's hunting season, please check with Life Safety if you have any questions or concerns about the hunt or other hunters. Prior to that date, check with the Abbey Arboretum at 320-363-3163.

Saint John's Abbey will annually review and adjust the deer hunting goals and rules as needed.

ELIGIBLE HUNTERS and HUNTER RESPONSIBILITIES:

All hunters must understand and obey the Minnesota Deer Hunting Rules and Regulations. All hunters must have valid MN DNR archery deer license and must be able to take an antlerless deer in a zone covering Saint John's (218 south of I-94 and 215 north of I-94). Party hunting is allowed at Saint John's within the rules set by MN DNR for party hunting.

Youth less than 18 years old may hunt if they have both a valid MN DNR license and a qualified adult supervisor. The adult supervisor must also possess a valid license or have completed a MN DNR hunter education/safety course. The adult supervisor is not required to hunt and must be in very close proximity (< 50 feet) of the youth at all times. If the adult supervisor intends to hunt, they must apply as a party. There must be one adult supervisor over 21 assigned to each youth under 18.

Only hunters with valid Saint John's Abbey hunting permits are allowed to hunt in the Saint John's Abbey Arboretum. Permits are non-transferable.

Hunters must only hunt in the hunting districts assigned to them by Saint John's. Hunters may move into a different district which has vacancies after requesting such a change and being approved by Saint John's.

Prior to putting up stands or hunting, each hunter must complete a safety training arranged by Saint John's Abbey. The 2024 safety training will be conducted in person. (Scouting and hiking are allowed prior to completing the safety session.)

Hunters who do not complete the safety training and who also fail to watch the recorded video by the end of the first day of the hunt will lose their reserved hunting districts. In the case that these hunters later complete the safety training, they will be allowed to request any hunting district open at that time.

Hunters who do complete the safety requirement but fail to check-in and hunt at least once by November 18 will lose their reserved hunting districts. In the case that these hunters choose to hunt after Nov 18, they will be allowed to choose any hunting district open at that time.

No fires are permitted anywhere except in an emergency.

Alcoholic beverages and/or drugs are not allowed. Any hunter suspected of being under the influence will be escorted from the property, possibly cited, and not allowed to return.

Hunters must always be aware of other hunters and users of the Abbey Arboretum. Non-hunters have priority and hunters must assure that non-hunters are not needlessly affected by hunting.

As a private landowner, Saint John's Abbey reserves the right to terminate any hunter's permission to participate without prior notice or cause.

APPLICATION AND FEES:

There will be a \$5 non-refundable application fee per person. Application deadline date and times are listed below. Applications must be received prior to deadline.

If selected, an additional non-refundable payment of \$35 per person will be required by the date and time listed below.

Hunters may apply singly or in parties of 2 to 4 people. Parties will each receive only one "lot" in the lottery, but if it is drawn, all party members will be allowed to hunt.

PRIORITY FOR LOTTERY:

About 100 hunters will be allowed to archery hunt in 2024. A priority system is in place this year based on four factors:

- 1) Hunters who have completed the MN DNR [Bow Hunter Education](#) course prior to application will

be given priority in the lottery. This is done to acknowledge the extra skill and safety training that these hunters have taken. The class is available online.

- 2) Priority will also be given to hunters who applied in the past but were not selected.
- 3) Priority will also be given to those hunters who took an antlerless deer the previous year at Saint John's. This rewards the hunters who came out enough (or were lucky enough) to help us meet our harvest goals.
- 4) Finally, Saint John's Abbey wants to encourage young hunters, especially those enrolled at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. CSB/SJU students are away from home and their usual hunting bases but have easy access to the land here. A bonus point for currently enrolled students creates a better chance of earning enough points to hunt before graduation.

1 Point for having completed MN DNR Bow Hunter Ed course (or equivalent in another state.)

1 Point for each year applicant applied but was not selected.

1 Point for each antlerless deer taken the previous hunt. (Awarded to whoever tagged the deer.)

1 Point for being a currently enrolled, full-time CSB or SJU student.

Parties will be prioritized using an average of the total of the party members' points divided by the number of party members. As such, parties and individuals will have an equal chance of being selected. Applicant scores are kept individually by Saint John's. Therefore, parties can change over time as desired.

Within groups of applicants with equal point scores, random drawings will determine the priority. The same lottery ranking will be used to assign hunting districts within Saint John's Abbey Arboretum. Once a district has reached its limit of hunters, archers will be assigned to a second-choice district.

EARN-A-BUCK:

To encourage hunters to apply and to help balance the gender ratio of the herd, individual hunters (or parties) who successfully take 3 antlerless deer from Saint John's will earn the opportunity to take an antlered deer in the current or future hunts. Saint John's will keep a record and the opportunity rolls forward. Note: a party of four hunters who took 3 antlerless deer between them during the season could take a buck yet that season or it would roll over to future seasons.

Note that Saint John's Abbey does not imply or guarantee that it will hold a hunt in any given year. Saint John's may alter, suspend, or end hunting in general, and the "Earn-a Buck" program in particular, at any point in time with no obligation to participants. Saint John's Abbey may also limit the type of buck harvested to meet specified management goals.

THE ARCHERY DEER HUNT:

General:

Bring only legal archery equipment. Crossbows are allowed with valid MN DNR permit. No firearms are allowed to be in possession or used in relation to the hunt.

An article of blaze orange must be worn while traveling to and from the stand and while tracking deer. It may be removed when on the stand. Note that because Saint John's is private property, the DNR's blaze orange requirement will apply all day when the archery season overlaps the firearms season.

As we are a college campus, bows must remain cased until the hunter has reached his/her hunting district.

Due to hunters being restricted to specific districts, making deer drives will not be possible or allowed.

Hunters will not pursue wounded game into districts closed to hunting at Saint John's or onto

neighboring private property. If a wounded deer goes into a closed district or on a neighbor's property, contact Saint John's Life Safety at 320-363-2144.

Legal (and non-legal) baits are not allowed. Scents are allowed. Trail cameras are allowed.

Impeding vegetation: No oak tree may be cut in any way. Any side tree limbs of other species less than $\frac{3}{4}$ -inches may be cut, but no tree main stems of any size may be cut.

Per state law (M.S. 97B.085, Subd. 1) radio devices, including cell phones, may not be used to assist in taking game. However, use of 2-way radios and cell phones for safety is allowed & encouraged.

Stands and Ground Blinds:

Each hunter is allowed to have up to 2 stands/ground blinds that may be left in the field during the hunting season. Only the stands/ground blinds and ladders may be left overnight. (No water bottles, packs, trash, etc.)

No flagging or tacks are allowed. (For example - to mark routes to stands or stand location.)

All stands/ground blinds must be clearly marked with hunter's assigned number on tags provided by Saint John's. Those not marked with the Saint John's tag will be confiscated.

Building permanent stands/ground blinds on Saint John's property is not allowed. Due to the high-quality wood and our active logging program, no screw steps, nails, equipment hangers, or metal fasteners of any kind are allowed. Hunters may use bungee cords or rope to secure stands or to create a hanger for their equipment. Saint John's will not provide any permanent stands/ground blinds.

Safety harnesses are required to be used in stands.

Stands/ground blinds are not to be shared without permission of the owner.

No stands/ground blinds are allowed within 100 yards of the property boundaries in some zones. If not shown on map, property line no hunt zone is 50 yards. It is the responsibility of each hunter to know his/her location and the boundaries at all times.

No stands/ground blinds are allowed within 50 yards of another hunter except for hunters in the same party. The first hunter to erect a stand/ground blind has the priority for that location.

Stands/ground blinds may be moved within a hunting district without permission of Saint John's. Hunters may move stands/ground blinds into a different district which has vacancies after requesting such a change and being approved.

Saint John's has no responsibility for any equipment left in the field.

Access and Vehicles:

This is a walk-in hunt. Passenger vehicles may be used on specified dates to carry deer stands/ground blinds closer to hunting districts and to retrieve harvested deer with Life Safety notification and approval. No driving off existing roads and trails.

ATVs are not allowed on Saint John's property except for enforcement and fire protection purposes.

Prior to hunting season, several days will be designated and roads opened for driving to locations to erect

stands/ground blinds.

Hunters will only park in designated locations. A dashboard hunting/parking authorization card will be issued and must be displayed with name visible on the dash. The speed limit is 20 MPH.

Hunters who take a deer must contact Life Safety (320-363-2144). If requested and road conditions allow, permission will be granted and gates unlocked to allow the hunter to drive closer to the pick-up site. Hunters should never drive off trail. Permission to drive a vehicle to remove the harvested animal may not be granted during prime hunting in consideration of other hunters.

At no time will hunters drive through the main part of campus. Harvested deer shall be transported in the most discreet method possible.

Once ski trail grooming has begun later in the season, NO vehicles will be allowed to drive on groomed ski trails to pick up deer or pick up stands. Walking on groomed ski trails is also not allowed as footprints create hazardous dents.

Daily check-in and check-out:

Prior to hunting each day, each hunter (or hunting party) must notify Saint John's Life Safety Dispatch office as they arrive on campus. This can be done with a phone call to Life Safety at 320-363-2144. This includes hunters setting up or removing stands after that is allowed. Special permission is not needed to walk the woods or scout.

Hunters may check out by phoning Dispatch when they leave the woods or campus (320-363-2144).

Even if they plan to return, hunters leaving the woods for any reason must also notify Life Safety by phone when they leave. When returning and checking in again, hunters may do so by phone.

Hunters must be checked-out within one hour of the close of the hunt each day. Searches for unaccounted hunters will commence 1 ½ hours after sunset.

Hunters who are tracking wounded deer outside their hunting district, but inside Saint John's must call Life Safety first.

If a wounded deer leaves Saint John's property, you must call Life Safety before pursuing to make sure we get neighbor permission to enter their land.

Successful hunts and registration:

Successful hunters must follow all DNR rules of tagging and registering a kill. Archers must have a plan for removing a harvested animal prior to the harvest. Note that due to weather-related trail conditions, ski trail grooming, snow depth, and time of day, pulling a harvested deer some distance to a vehicle may be required.

Hunters who take a deer must also contact Saint John's Life Safety before transporting the deer in a vehicle (320-363-2144).

Saint John's staff will meet the hunters as they exit to estimate the age, gender, and size of the deer for our records.

Vehicles are subject to search upon entering and exiting Saint John's property.

2024 HUNTING SCHEDULE and IMPORTANT DATES:

- July Applications are open.
- Aug 1 Approx. date MN DNR announces deer hunting regulations.
- Mon, Aug 4 Deadline for applications. Must be received by 4 p.m.
- Aug 6-15 Saint John's verifies applications and conducts lottery.
- Aug 15 Notify applicants of status.
- Aug 29 \$35 fee for selected hunters due.
- Week of Sept 15 Deer Hunt Safety Training – In person (recording will be made available).
- Sept 13 Start of MN archery season (Not the start date for Saint John's).
- Sept 20 First day hunters allowed to set up stands/ground blinds.
- Wed, Oct 1 Start of Abbey Arboretum Archery hunt. Stands released if safety training not yet completed.
- Oct 16-19 MN DNR youth firearms deer season and early antlerless deer season.
- Nov 8-16 MN firearms season (200 series permits).
- Nov 17 Stands released if not yet hunted at least once.
- Dec 31 End of MN archery season.
- Jan 12, 2026 Deadline to remove all stands/ground blinds,

Archery hunting will be allowed from **Wednesday, October 1 through December 31, 2025**. Note that some districts may occasionally be closed due to other events on campus using the district for a day.

Each hunter who has completed the safety training will be allowed to erect and leave up to two portable stands/ground blinds starting Sept 20 once safety orientation training and waiver have been completed online. All stands/ground blinds must be removed within 7 days after tag(s) are filled or by January 12, 2026 whichever comes first. Hunters should notify Saint John's when done hunting for the year so stands can be released to other active hunters.

Hunting times must follow DNR regulations – 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

The website and email are our methods of communication about the hunt. Please take the initiative to [sign up for our email list](#) so you are aware of deer hunt announcements.