

May. But in all this there is much variety, for old stags sometimes shed their horns later than those which are young; besides they are more forward in casting their horns when the winter has been mild, than when severe and of a long continuance.

After the stags have cast their horns they separate, the young ones only keeping together. They remain no longer in deep covert, but seek the beautiful part of the country, and continue among the coppices during the summer, and until their antlers are renewed. In this season they carry their heads low for fear of rubbing their horns against the branches, for they are very tender until they arrive at perfection. The horns of the eldest stags are not more than half renewed by the middle of May, nor acquire their full growth and hardness before the end of July; the younger stags are later both in shedding and having them renewed; but when completely lengthened and hardened, they rub them against the trees to clear them from a scurf with which they are covered; and as they continue this practice for several days successively, it has been said their horns receive a tint from the juices of the trees against which they are rubbed; that they derive a red cast from the beech and birch, a brown one
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