

## BUILDING A WICK HERBICIDE APPLICATOR



The wick applicator pictured here is designed for applying water-soluble herbicide products to cut stem surfaces. It can be assembled from commonly available PVC plumbing fittings and pipe. Starting at the top (right side of photo) and working down, the parts needed to build an applicator are:

- 3/4-inch threaded male plug
- 3/4-inch ball valve (threaded)
- 3/4-inch male thread to smooth female adapter
- 3/4-inch pipe (approximately 20 inches long)
- 3/4-inch smooth female to male thread adapter
- 3/4-inch ball valve (threaded)
- 3/4-inch male thread to smooth female adapter
- 3/4-inch pipe (approximately 5 inches long)
- 3/4-inch smooth female to male thread adapter
- 3/4-inch threaded female to 1 1/2-inch smooth male hex bushing
- 1 1/2-inch smooth female to male thread adapter
- 1 3/4 x 3-inch cylinder of dense open-cell foam (cut from foam block with hole saw).
- 3-inch piece of malleable wire (approximately 14 gauge)
- 1 1/2-inch threaded cap
- PVC primer and cement
- Teflon tape

The pipe section between the valves serves as the reservoir. It's loaded at the top (using a funnel). The upper valve serves as an easy leak-proof seal. The threaded plug keeps dirt out. Flow of herbicide solution to the wick is controlled with the lower valve. If the wick gets too wet and begins to drip, the valve can be opened and excess liquid can be dumped back into the reservoir. When the wick is not in use, both valves should be closed and the threaded cap can be put on to protect the foam tip and minimize any leakage. The slightly oversized foam wick is retained in the female end of the 1 1/2" fitting by skewering a piece of wire from one side of the threaded portion of the fitting, through the foam, and out the other side. The wire can be heated to do this or a drill can be used (be sure to place the holes near the base of the threaded portion so the threaded cap will still screw on). Insert the wire and bend the ends over to keep it in place.

Open cell foam is available at fabric stores but you may need to go to a foam and upholstery supplier to find dense good-quality foam.

Threaded pipe fittings are used so repairs can be made quickly if necessary. The applicators have been quite durable so far.