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For Killing Weeds:

The Tongs of Death

**Steve Maassen Announces
the New, Improved L-O-N-G Tongs of Death**

In the January/February, 1998 issue of the *Journal*, Steve Maassen, member of the Fox Valley (WI) Chapter and currently on the national Board of Directors, introduced his "invention," the Tongs of Death," an easy-to-make tool that users could dip into a solution of Roundup or other herbicide and apply to various weeds. It was easier to use than the "gloves of death" (cotton gloves worn over rubber gloves, dipped into a Roundup solution, and used to kill individual weeds while not harming the neighboring "good" plants).

Now Steve is thrilled to announce the even better, easier-to-use LONG Tongs of Death which, according to Steve, "allows you to 'tong' with less bending over."

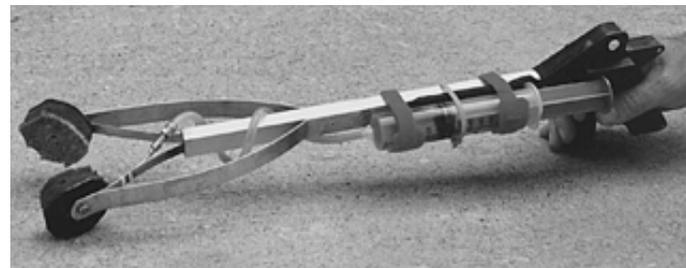
The original version (which still comes in handy) was made from a stainless steel, scalloped, 9-inch Ecco kitchen salad tongs and a plastic-backed paint pad. To assemble the Tongs of Death, cut two small, tapered pieces from the paint pad and fit them onto the last inch of each of the "gripper" ends of the tongs. Fold the last three scallops over the pad to hold it, then flatten the opposing ends so the pads meet squarely.

To use, simply dip the paint pads into a solution of Roundup appropriate for your particular weed removal project and close them around the undesirable plant. The Long Tongs can use a more concentrated Roundup solution, typically around 15%, which allows you to "tong" only a few leaves and kill the whole plant. The pads hold enough liquid to treat about 10 plants between dips.

It's only slightly more complicated to build the Long Tongs of Death. First purchase an E-Z Reacher and then replace the rubber cups

with sponge paint pads. You can use it like this by dipping the pads into a Roundup solution, or you can make a self-wetting Long Tongs of Death.

You will need some plastic tubing connected to the type of needle normally used to fill footballs, basketballs and soccer balls. The needle is inserted into one of the plastic pads and connected to a syringe at the top by some



**The Tongs of Death,
designed by Wild Ones
member Steve Maassen**
Easy and inexpensive to
make – and very effective
in controlling those pesky
weeds.



plastic tubing. Be sure to wrap the tubing around the shaft a few times to keep the liquid seal in the syringe. If air can easily reach the syringes, too much herbicide will flow out through the sponge. The syringe is fastened to the E-Z Gripper handle; cable ties work well to hold the parts together. (Suitable syringes can be found at stores which sell large animals supplies and medicines; 60 cc is a good size.)

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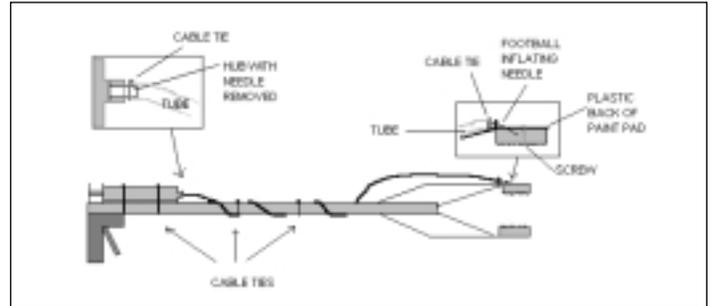
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To fill, dip the sponge end into the herbicide and use the syringe to “suck” the herbicide up through the sponge. Herbicide is stored in the syringe and tubing. Push the plunger to re-wet the sponge as needed.

You can store the Long Tongs of Death without rinsing by putting the sponges inside a plastic cup, which you can make by cutting off the top one third of a 16-ounce soda pop bottle. Steve says that neither the tubing nor the sponges will plug up, at least with a Roundup solution, and it’s easy to get the Long Tongs of Death out to use again. (Of course, the Long Tongs of Death must be stored safely, out of the reach of children and pets. And they should be clearly marked “POISON.”)

Necessity really is the mother of invention. ❁

Steve Maassen is the Director of Seeds for Education Grant Program and Coordinator of the Fox Valley Area Chapter Seeds for Education Committee. He is a member of the Fox Valley Area (WI) Chapter.



The Tongs of Death shown in schematic view.