

How to Build a Wick Bait Station Colin Lodge



1. Select a suitable jar (for this tutorial I have used a Mini Marmalade jar) and cut a length of plastic tube (or copper if you have that to hand and can cut it) with a junior hack saw to slightly more than the depth of the jar with lid on.

Tidy up the cut edges with a knife or abrasive paper.



2. On the inside of the lid use the tube to mark out where the hole is to be made. I have used an overhead projector pen as the ink “sticks” to the metal and gives fine line.



3. With a spare piece of softwood under the work (don't drill directly on you table or work top), drill a small hole (4mm or so) and use this hole for a screw to fix the lid to the wood.

This is a safety measure so that in later drilling the lid is firmly attached and you can hold the wood in case the lid is “grabbed” by the drill.





4. "Chain Drill" round the inside of the circle with a small drill. Sometimes the drill will overlap the previous hole. You can also tilt the drill into the previous hole once you have gone through the metal, thus linking the hole into a continuous slot.

Once you have drilled all the way round the ring the lid will (with luck) come away from the centre. If not you should be able to break it free by grasping the rim and "working" it.



5. Drill one more hole just outside the main hole with a 2 or 3mm drill. This acts a pressure relief hole when hot sunshine heats air and liquid inside the jar. If there is no hole then liquid is pushed up the tube by the increase in pressure and this spills out all over the lid.



6. You will find you have to tap the drilled edge of the hole flat with a hammer from the inside of the lid on your spare piece of softwood.



7. Screw the lid on to the jar and using a hammer and so long as the hole is close in size to the tube you should be able to tap the tube down through the hole. The ragged edges of the hole will grip the side of the tube so you can adjust how far down the tube goes. Try to get the tube sitting about 5mm from the bottom of the jar.





8. Five minute setting Araldite (or a similar epoxy resin adhesive) is best for the next step so mix up equal parts of adhesive and hardener on a piece of card or thick paper. I use plastic dental picks as mixing and spreading tools.



Use your mixing tool to place araldite around the joint inside and out to fix the tub in place and for a seal round the tube.

Set your work aside for the araldite to harden.

In the meantime find a suitable piece of material to make a wick. I have used paper towel and J cloth but whatever you have at hand that will soak up the bait liquid will do.

9. Roll up a piece of this material into a tight-ish cylinder slightly in less diameter than the inside of the tube. When inserted it should unroll or expand a bit to hold in place - you may have to experiment a bit with how tight you make this roll. Too tight a roll will stop the bait liquid soaking up the wick. Too loose and the wick will flop.



10. Tease out the bottom of the wick to spread across the bottom of the jar and trim the top of the wick to suit.

A long wick at the top will increase the amount of odour emanating from the wick to attract Insects but I have found it can be cut quite short so that the hornets hang on to the side of the tube resting their back legs on the jar top - like this they are quite able to feed from the wick. The whole point of the wick bait station is that the insect will not get sticky from the bait if they can alight on the jar top.



11. All that remains to do is fill your jar about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with bait liquid of your choice and screw down the top. A few drops of the liquid can be poured onto the top of the wick to speed up capillary wick of the bait liquid to the top of the wick



I have found that as the bait evaporates the liquid can be topped up with water a couple of times or refreshed with more bait liquid.

Recipe for bait liquid:

Equal parts sweet white wine
Ale or beer (dark beer is best apparently)
Ribena or Crème de Cassis (is best if you have it)

A little honey as a sweetener and to add the aroma of honey.

A dash of vinegar (probably white vinegar or wine vinegar, which adds a slight aroma of decay which deters bees).

Otherwise use Sutterra (Trappit) wasp attractant if you can get hold of it.