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Intro: Heavy-Duty Papaya Picker

I have made several papaya pickers over the years, and this is my favorite. It is on the heavy side, but it is strong. You get the papaya inside and just twist the picker around until the stem breaks.

The head is made out of a 5-gallon plastic bucket with the bottom cut off. It has a fishnet liner that catches the papaya when it falls, with very little damage to the fruit.



step 1: The Bucket Head

I made this picker years ago, and am not going to deconstruct it to show the individual components, so you will have to use a little imagination.

The full depth of the bucket was more than I needed to catch the fruit. Instead of cutting the bottom off in a straight line, I cut it with the wavy line shown. This let me mount the handle higher on the bucket, and also let me use the wavy line as a sort of hook to hang the picker from a horizontal overhead pipe in my shop for storage.

I used a saber saw to make the wavy cut.



Image Notes

1. This "hook" lets me hang the picker vertically from an overhead pipe, or from a tree branch. I like to hang things for storage.



Image Notes

1. You can see the fruit through the fishnet from below.

step 2: The Fishnet Liner

The fishnet liner is just a flat piece of fishnet that is allowed to sag a little inside the bucket before it is tied to the bucket with a string. I tied it with string twice, using the natural channel on the bucket below where the lid to the bucket would normally lock on.



Image Notes

1. The fishnet is tied on with string.

step 3: The Pole-Bucket Connection

I used thick walled 2 inch diameter PVC pipe for the pole and the section that connects the pole to the bucket. The wall thickness of the pipe is about 1/4 inch. I don't know the schedule number offhand because I always clean the writing off the pipe with lacquer thinner when I make things.

The connecting section is a piece of the same diameter pipe with four "fingers" cut in it and bent to shape using heat. I did the heat forming over a gas stove burner, heating all the fingers at the same time. Other smaller heat sources, such as a hot air gun might work, but you might have to heat the fingers individually.

When you heat form PVC, always keep the material in movement and far enough from the flame to avoid burning the plastic. Take your time. Don't try to rush the process by getting too close to the flame. Fumes from burning PVC are toxic. Make sure you have good ventilation. See <http://www.instructables.com/id/PVC-Its-Great-for-Inventions> for more tips and inspiration.

When the plastic is limp and leathery it is the right temperature to heat form. I did this alone, but since you are heat forming the four fingers at once, a friend to help hold the fingers where they belong might help. When the plastic cools it will keep its shape.

The socket that holds the picker head to the handle was already part of the pipe I used to cut the connector section from. If your pipe doesn't come with a socket, you can always heat form it yourself. If you do that, it helps to trim with a knife a little from the inside of the leading edge of the pipe that will be heated and stretched, and to file some of the outside of the leading edge of the pipe that stays cold and goes inside. That helps the outside pipe mate up and stretch over the inside pipe.

The fingers of the connector section are pop riveted to the bucket.

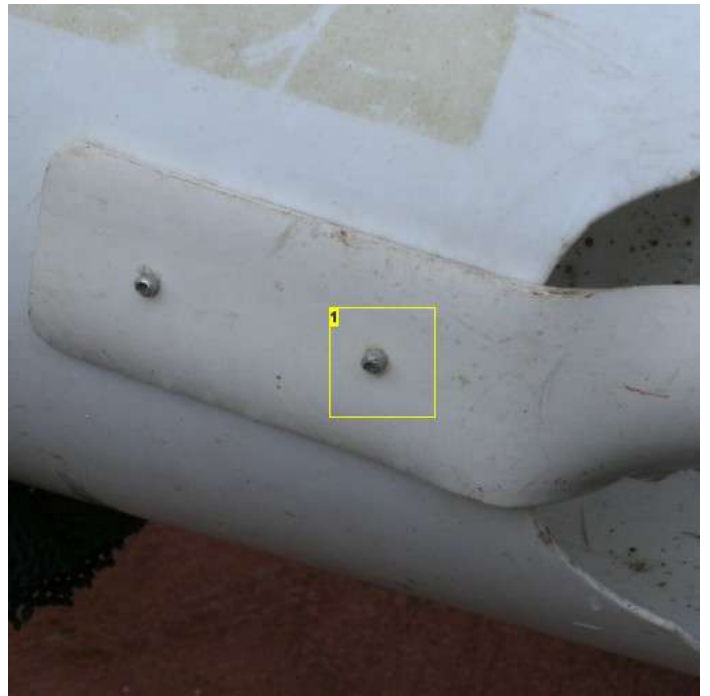
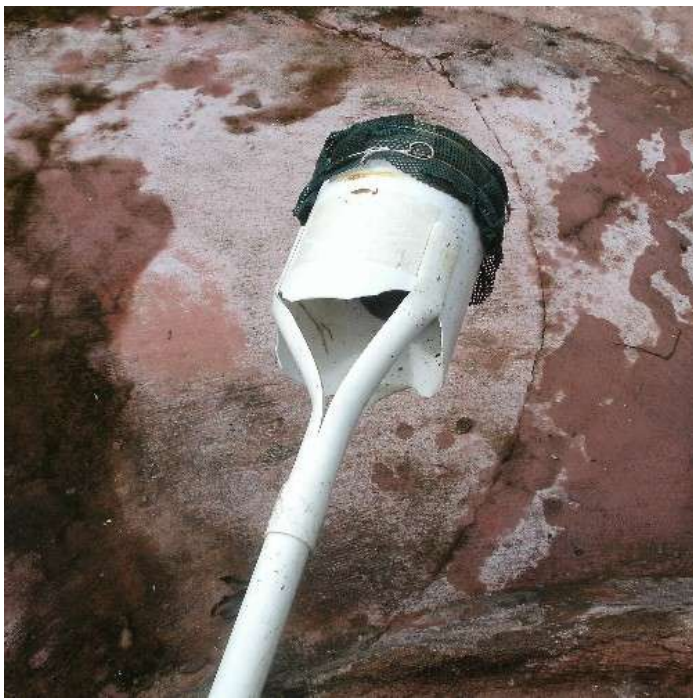


Image Notes
1. Pop rivets.

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