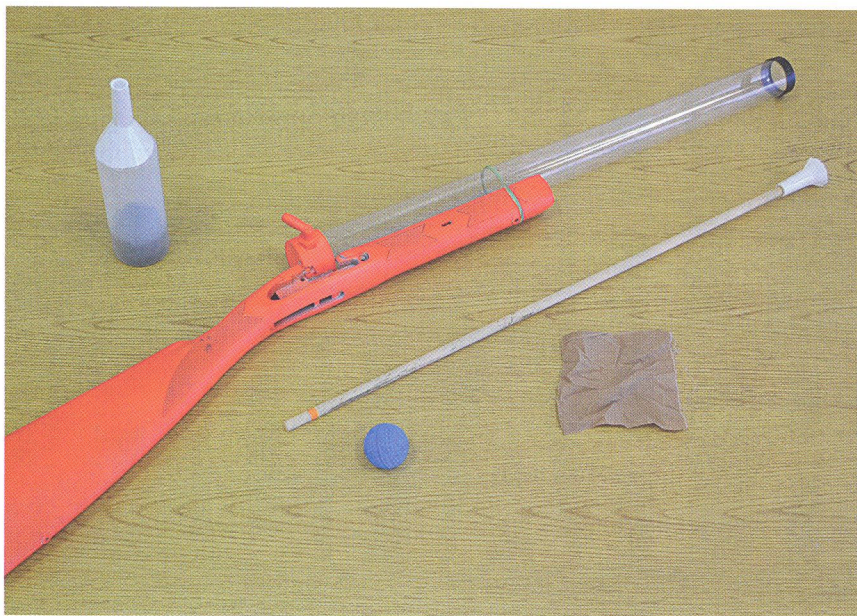


# Visible Muzzleloader

By Scott Beam, *Indiana Hunter Education Instructor*



I put together a new prop for Hunter Education. I call it the Visible Muzzleloader and use it to teach proper loading of a traditional sidelock muzzleloader.

## Parts Needed:

- muzzleloader stock, surplus or handmade
- fluorescent tube guard
- 1-1/4 PVC cap
- 1/4 nylon barb
- dowel for ramrod
- 1/4-inch copper cap

## Assembly

I used a surplus synthetic stock (though even a 2x4 could be used). It is painted blaze orange to match the other training guns we use in class. Paint the barrel white before painting it orange to match blaze orange. The barrel is a length of fluorescent tube guard which is a clear protective sleeve for long fluorescent light tubes. These are available in most hardware and building supply stores. Tube guards come in 8-foot lengths, but are easily cut to length with a power saw. It snugly fits in a 1-1/4 PVC cap, which will capture the tube barrel at the breech.

Shape the PVC cap for a snug fit to

the barrel and screw or epoxy glue it to the stock. I suggest adding a nipple to also use in safe habits demonstrations. Drill the cap for a 1/4 nylon barb hose fitting and screw into place. A 1/4-inch copper tube cap fits just right as a percussion cap. A rubber band holds the barrel to the stock since it is easiest to unload by removing the barrel.

## Loading

Black beans are my black powder, pre-measured in a ketchup squeeze bottle. The patch can be anything as long as it is a color easy to see. I found a sponge ball the right size to be my round ball (next I need to make a sabot bullet). The ramrod can be any dowel that will reach all the way in. I attached a small funnel to my ramrod to better push the sponge ball down the barrel. Notice the ring mark on the ramrod. We teach using the ramrod as a measuring stick to check if it is loaded or not. The ring marks how far the ramrod goes into the barrel when empty.

This can be as simple or fancy as you like. I have had many students volunteer to be the loader. They all wanted to try it when formerly, they admitted to being a little intimidated by traditional muzzleloaders. ■

