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The Coglans tinder kit fire starter

OldJimbo

- Gear reviews and tests - Emergency and survival -



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Description :

Artificial fire starter

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The Coghlan's tinder kit fire starter

This is the cheapest fire starter of all, at \$5.95 CAN. It's quite different to the other fire starters shown.



The plastic container with metal match, and tinder.



Plastic case open to show goodies.

You get the tiniest piece of ferrocerium mounted on the edge of a plastic block. The block itself is drilled and threaded to accept a neat brass rod with a hardened steel striker on the end. You also get eight pieces of "tinder" which appear to be cotton baton solidly soaked in soft wax.

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You have to be catching on that this is a neat as slave labour can make - and pretty tiny. Notice the gasket to protect steel striker.

Keeping the overall size in mind, notice the recessed ferrocium rod. This will only work with the attached striker or with the tip of a very pointed knife.



Robustness:

This unit appears to be very robust. It is well constructed and given its construction and weight, the metal match part will never break by dropping. The ferrocerium rod didn't fall off the plastic housing either. Naturally the plastic case holding the kit together is pretty weak.. The tinder is very waterproof, and the ferrocerium rod dries quickly. If you like cute but tough - or just very lightweight and tiny - so far so good.

In Use:

I had tried out this fire starter using lamp wick before giving it to a friend's little girl. I had to borrow it back to get photos. So off I went into the bush and prepared for fire. On a bright warm day with tinder I expected to have no problems. Anyway after a few minutes of striking a spark on a little piece of fuzzed tinder I was getting slightly frustrated. Naturally I hadn't read the instructions which came with the kit which tell you to press a piece of tinder into a flattened disk the size of a quarter then pull it into two to get lots of fuzzy edges. Actually I did have lots of fuzzy edges, they just wouldn't catch. I was tempted at this point to apply a real spark from the ANEW rod which wouldn't have proved much for the test. Thinking things through, I guessed that the cotton was so soaked in wax that it couldn't get started. I rubbed the tinder with some fireweed fluff (well dried after the winter) to distribute the wax, and - - fire! I guess the way to think of this is to be happy to get extra wax to use with natural tinder. The supplied tinder started a piece of resin soaked wood without problems.

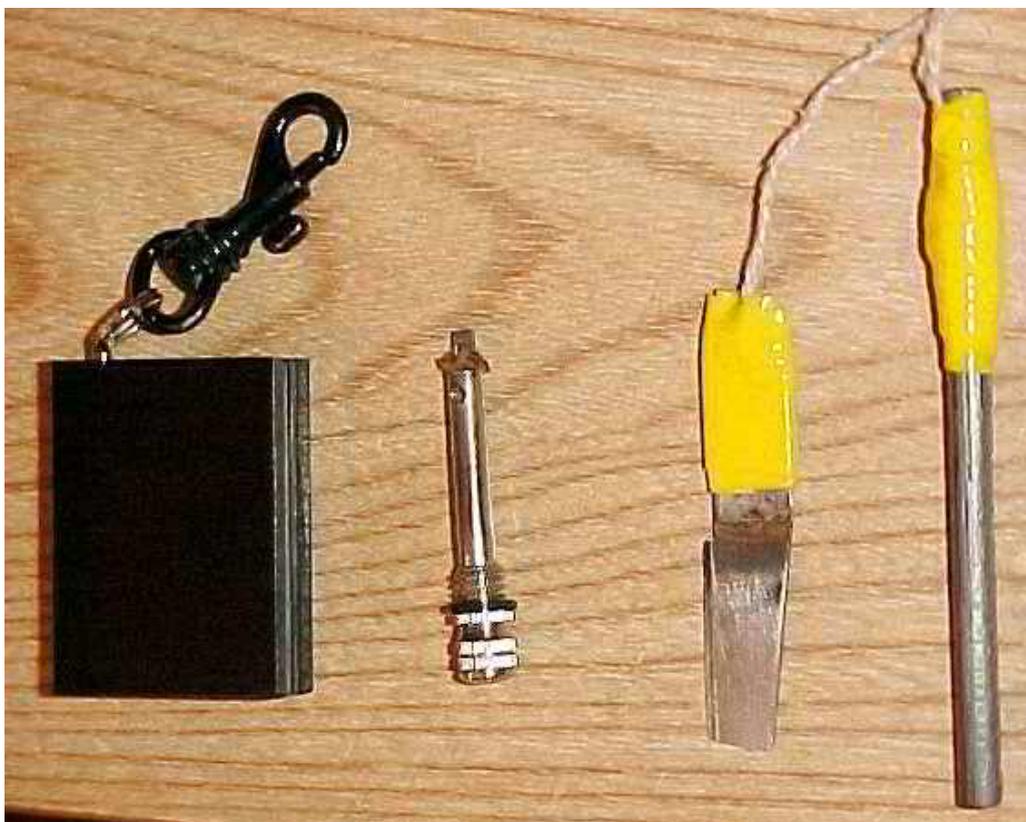
Lacking dry tinder to rub the wax off the cotton with - a knife scraping would have done the trick. Given this and the fact that the unit is durable, it passes! This is the sort of thing for having kids practise with since it will reinforce hand eye coordination to get the tiny spark onto the tinder - the recessed rod will also discourage the use of knives for scrapers.. Other than that - keep that 3/8" rod on the belt, and save this one for a last measure.

Here's some information on getting more out of your fire starter - from Phil:

"I've been spending quite a bit of free time browsing your site, as I'm about as obsessed with basic fire making as most who read this site would be I suppose. One thing I noted while reading the section on Coglan's Tinder Kit is that you fail to notice one valuable thing about that tiny metal match, that is ...at least on the three kits I bought (they were on a going out of business sale at the army-navy store for 50 cents apiece) is that the striker rod HAS tinder material built into it. If you check around the top where the striker is located there is some sort of fuzzy cotton batting type material wound in copper. Basically it acts as a char cloth in it's own right! I was VERY impressed with it, although it doesn't fully explain everything correctly or even at all in the directions. If you char it just slightly,

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whenever you strike the flint with the rod, the small cloth that is seated directly below the striker head catches flame and you can use it to directly light your tinder. I noticed the gasket as well, and after finding that it really served little use other than weatherproofing the unit, although there didn't seem to be good reason to even do that in this case. I took one unit apart and found inside mine, there's a bit of batting and it had a detectable odour to it. As it turns out it was meant as far as I can tell, to be used similar to a "Zippo" lighter. Where as you can add just a small(teaspoon full or less) of lighter fluid directly to the unit and then slide the rod back in, with the gasket keeping the vapours and fluid from leaking out. I've found in every instance, even in adverse conditions that it performs very well, even after being submerged! After you add that tiny amount of lighter fluid, it takes but just ONE quick stroke across the flint to ignite the striker-head(the char cloth type material) and making it possible to light your tinder. I wouldn't suggest that you allow the cloth to burn for more then a minute but it is more effective then simply a spark. I'd be interested to find out after reading this, what your feedback might be if any? After checking yours out again, would you agree with any of this? It's a shame that in the directions they do not outline a bit more of this, as I cannot find any other reason to have the open hollow cavity inside the case as well as being filled with a "Zippo" lighter type of batting, let alone the need for a gasket on the rod. As I said, I've done quite a bit of testing and I've found that I reach for this unit BEFORE I reach for the flint/steel striker and even before I'll reach for a disposable lighter if I'm carrying one. I'll attach a photo or two showing exactly what I mean. I'm also including a photo of the steel/flint I made. I'd also be interested in hearing what you think about it. The flint is from a magnesium bar type setup that I took the flint off of, and used the end of a high carbon steel blade(ground down). I've found I can get an incredibly large spark from it. I also attached some hemp rope with colored electrical tape, and when it's not being used the blade and flint are also covered in tape to prevent rusting and problems with getting the flint wet. This way all I have to do is pull the tape off and it's completely dry. Another tip for tinder I found that works wonders is a non-applicator type tampon. Again, from a "Ollie's Outlet" type of store(they collect merchandise from stores that went out of business and sell it dirt cheap), I found a large quantity of tampons for \$3.00. They are completely covered in cellophane, and when opened up stretch out to about 9' of pure cotton batting about 4" thick! It makes from a very compact fire starter, that's easy to carry. You can cut off various amounts for numerous fires and it also works great for survival situations like pulling water from cracks, pressure bandages for wounds, and of course the obvious use in case of female company. "



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Post-scriptum :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#)