



A Simple, Quick, Inexpensive Peanut Blaster E. Jay Williams, Extension Engineer

Peanut pod blasters are used to strip away the outer pod layer to expose colors indicative of the stage of pod maturity. Blasters save considerable time, as well as improve the accuracy over hand-scraping for determining the pod maturity profile. A high pressure washer and an easily fabricated basket can serve as an inexpensive, quick, simple alternative to blasters that use glass beads, water, and compressed air.

The key to the pressure washer's effectiveness for blasting peanuts is the new rotating turbo nozzle. A turbo nozzle takes a 0-degree jet stream which has the highest stripping power of any nozzle, rotates it, and spreads it out over a wide area. It provides superior stripping action compared to a flat fan nozzle at a pressure low enough not to damage the pods. An electric pressure washer providing 1.5 gpm at 1300 psi is quite adequate. In higher capacity, engine-driven models, the pressure should be reduced to approximately a 1000 psi with the pressure regulator or by throttling down the engine.

A basket to hold the pods for blasting may be quickly made from 1/4 inch mesh hardware cloth. The model shows a basket 24 inches tall, which is the width of the roll (Figs. 1, 2). The diameter of the basket is 9 1/4 inches, which is 1 inch smaller than the bottom of the bucket. Thus, 29 inches is required, plus 1 inch for overlap. Cut a circle the diameter needed. Roll the rectangular piece into a cylinder and secure with fine wire or plastic ties. Measure 4 inches from the bottom edge of the cylinder and mark around it with a dark marker. This will be the position of the bottom of the basket. Anchor the bottom of the basket at the mark. This will provide a sturdy basket and keep the pods inside when being blasted or agitated.

Place the pods in the basket. Place the basket in a 5-gallon bucket to prevent splashing. The bucket should be equipped with a drain to prevent water build-up. Hold the pressure washer nozzle approximately 12 inches away and blast while vigorously shaking the basket. Watch the pods carefully. Stop in approximately 30 seconds and remove the immatures (yellows) before they disintegrate. Place the more advanced pods (orange to black) back into the basket and blast until the entire outer pod layer has been removed. The entire process should be completed within three minutes or less.

The uniqueness of this method is its versatility. Growers can blast peanuts almost anywhere quickly, then classify and rank the fields to harvest. Plus, the pressure washer also can be used to clean the digger to prevent disease transmission between fields.



Figure 1. Bucket, basket, and high pressure washer with turbo nozzle.



Figure 2. Pods blasted in basket with turbo nozzle.