

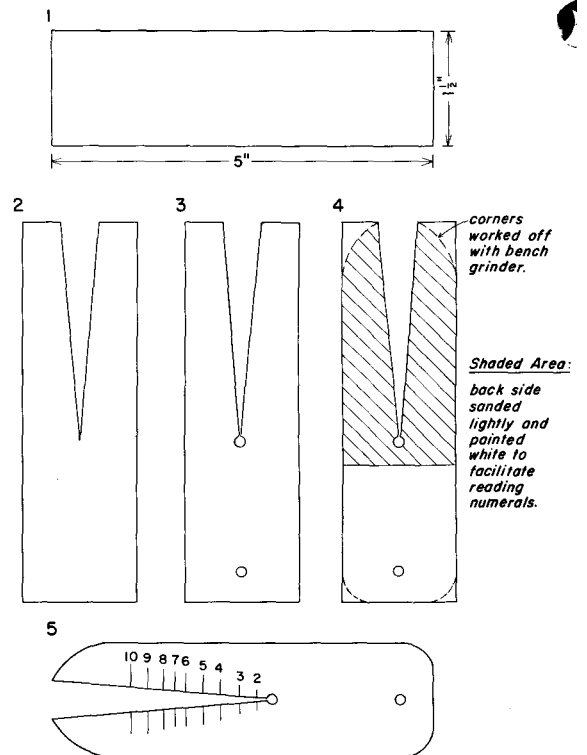
A USEFUL HOMEMADE PLASTIC TREE CALIPER FOR SEEDLING INVENTORIES

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A handy and useful tree caliper for measuring seedling diameter for nursery seedbed inventories can be constructed from scraps of plastic. One square foot of Plexiglas about 1/10 in. thick will produce about a dozen of these calipers. The pattern for the caliper is similar to that used on many wire gages.

Rectangles of an approximate size 1-1/2 in. x 5 in. are first cut out with a fine-tooth coping saw, holding the plastic firmly and evenly on a table with a large wood clamp or heavy weights. However, this size can be varied to suit individual needs. A long narrow vee slit is then cut in to an intersecting point. A small hole (1/8 in. diam. or less) is then drilled at the point of intersection to help prevent splitting. Also a hole can be drilled at or near the back for a string. A slow speed drill should be used for all drilling operations (375 rpm or less). The right-angle corners can easily be worked off with a fine grit wheel on a bench grinder.

Calibration is made in 32nds of an inch, from 2 to 10, to fit any particular inventory system but again could vary to suit individual needs. This is



accomplished easily by using an indexed set of steel drills, a very sharp pointed scribe, and a good steel straight edge.

The numerals to identify each measurement graduation are printed on freehand with a small pencil-type soldering iron in the 50-watt capacity range. Then the scribed calibration marks and accompanying figures should be filled with some type of permanent black ink. After drying, any excess

can be wiped from the smooth surface with a small amount of alcohol on a cotton cloth. To facilitate reading the caliper, the back side under the figures and graduated marks is sanded lightly with fine sandpaper and painted white.

A graduated inch-type ruler could also be incorporated on the side of such a caliper if the size was large enough to warrant it. This may add to the usefulness of the tool for some.