

# Vine Simulator/Cowboy Curtain

**Golden Cross Ranch, LLC**  
***Having Fun With Your Horse***

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## *How the Vine Simulator/Cowboy Curtain Came To Be*

"In my search for trail obstacles that I might want to include in our portable trail obstacles product line, I was looking around on the American Competitive Trail Horse Association web page at [www.actha.us](http://www.actha.us)

ACTHA has a page dedicated to showing the different obstacles that are approved to use in their competitions. ACTHA looked like a lot of fun so I decided to join. I hopped over to the page that tells of future competitions and found one that is local to us. Saddle Up Cowboy Church was hosting it, so I called up their affiliate and we visited about the upcoming competition. When I found out they needed a vine simulator for their obstacle course, I drafted hubby to help with the design. Since then we have also been blessed to be a sponsor for Craig Cameron's Extreme Cowboy Association that can be found at [www.extremecowboyassociation.com](http://www.extremecowboyassociation.com) and our cowboy curtain, as it is known by the EXCA, is an obstacle that was used at the EXCA World Championship in November of 2010!"

Recommended experience level: Because some horses may find the vine simulator/cowboy curtain spooky and may require some desensitization to it, this obstacle requires solid horsemanship skills on the ground and solid riding skills if continued under saddle. We recommend this kit for the experienced horse person unless under the supervision of a professional trainer.

## Vine Simulator/Cowboy Curtain Item List: (shipping weight 23 lbs.)

### **High Quality Canvas Zipper Duffle Bag**

Duffle Bag Color: Olive Drab

Dimensions: 25" x 42" with strong and durable handles

Material: Heavy Weight Canvas

Our duffle bags with zippers and carrying handles are very sturdy and have lots of room. It is a great way to carry your portable trail obstacle!

### **1½" Furniture Grade PVC Pipes of various lengths and colors**

Lengths are approximate due to cutting.

Colors are guaranteed to match pipe sets as specified below.

Actual colors are not guaranteed for the arena obstacle. We reserve the right to select the color according to availability.

Please inquire if you have any questions concerning color at time of ordering.

**Arena Obstacle Colors:**

Two green 40 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for left side

One green 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for left side

Two blue 40 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for right side

One blue 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for right side

One purple 40 inch length of PVC colored pipe for the top

One purple 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for the top

Three orange 20 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for the left base\*

Three orange 20 inch lengths of matching PVC colored pipe for the right base\*

\*Each pipe will have one 5/16" hole drilled approximately two inches from one end

**Natural Obstacle Colors:**

Two green 40 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for left side

One green 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for left side

Two green 40 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for right side

One green 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for right side

One green 40 inch length of PVC colored pipe for the top

One green 20 inch length of matching PVC colored pipe also for the top

Three green 20 inch lengths of PVC colored pipe for the left base\*

Three green 20 inch lengths of matching PVC colored pipe for the right base\*

\*Each pipe will have one 5/16" hole drilled approximately two inches from one end

**1¼" PVC Connectors**

Two white 4 ways: One to be used for each base (1 opening is on the top for each side to connect to base)

Two white elbows: One to be used for each side to be connected to the top

Five white couplers: To be used to connect side poles and top poles

**Stakes to Anchor Obstacle**

Six 10 inch plated steel stakes are provided with each vine simulator in order to anchor the bases. These stakes penetrate hard ground, are easy to pound into the ground and easy to pull out.

**Wooden Tap to separate couplers**

The connectors that are used with your PVC pipes provide a snug fit and can become difficult to separate from the pipe when you are ready to disassemble your obstacle. To solve this problem, we recommend that you use a piece of wood as a "tap" between the PVC and a hammer. We have provided a piece of wood as a tap to get you started.

## **Heavy Duty Rubber Mallet**

Weight: 16 oz.

A handy tool that is provided for both hammering in your stakes, insuring a snug fit when inserting pipe into connectors and for use with the wooden tap to separate couplers when you are ready to disassemble your obstacle. It even has a hook on the end to help you pull your stakes out of the ground when you are done.

## **Shower Curtain and Rings**

We have included a shower curtain and set of rings for you to use with your vine simulator. Because there is a connector between the two top pieces, you will probably want to put one third of the rings on the 20" length pipe and two thirds of the rings on the 40" pipe before connecting them together, since the rings are not large enough to slide over the connector.

The shower curtain in your order is one solid piece. In order to use it for your obstacle, you will need to cut it into strips with a pair of scissors. Simply lay the shower curtain out flat and starting from the bottom, cut the shower curtain into vertical strips about 2 inches apart. Stop cutting about two inches from the top of the curtain.

Note: The shower curtain included with your obstacle is fairly lightweight. On a windy day it will blow out of reach. We have included this shower curtain to get you started, but you may want to invest in either a heavier shower curtain or come up with your own items to hang. We chose this particular shower curtain in an effort to keep costs down, and to pass that savings on to you – especially if you want to use other items to hang from your vine simulator.

## **More Suggestions For Your Vine Simulator**

You can use the frame of your vine simulator to hang lots of different types of objects. Some ideas include:

- Canvas tarp
- Pool Noodles
- Balloons
- Pool Toys
- Grass Curtain
- Strips of Cloth
- Empty Milk Jugs

## **Guidelines For Hanging Items From Your Vine Simulator**

Always keep safety in mind when choosing items. Items that are flexible are best.

You should never use any items that are hard or heavy.

When attaching the items to the top of the simulator, make sure that you use materials that do not hang too far down and cause a hazard. Cable ties and binder rings are good candidates for attaching items if they are attached at the very top of the obstacle, out of reach of the rider. Any material that hangs within reach of the rider must be breakable so that the rider or horse can't get hung up in it. For example, fishing line is a very BAD idea, as it does not break and a rider or horse could become tangled in it. Cotton twine that breaks easily would be a good choice.

# How to Assemble the Vine Simulator

**HINT:** Although not required, a light coating of vegetable oil on the ends of the pipes where they go into the connectors may make the disassembly process easier.

1. **STEP ONE:** To assemble each base, insert a 20" base pipe into each horizontal opening of the 4 way connector, but NOT in the TOP opening. The top opening is how the frame is connected to the base. Make sure that the end with the pre-drilled hole is NOT inserted into the connector.



2. **STEP TWO:** Anchor one base using three of the stakes provided.



3. **STEP THREE:** Position second base so that it is between 5 ½ and 6 feet apart from the first base. You will fine tune this position in Step 7.



4. STEP FOUR: Layout the pipe for each section on the ground in the desired color configuration. You can mix the colors for the frame if you want, as long as you are using poles of the correct length. For example, each side consists of two 40" pipes and one 20" pipe. We recommend using one color for each side as an easy way to assemble your obstacle, but you can mix the pipe colors as long as you are using the correct lengths when you do so. Important Note: the pipes used for the base cannot be mixed with any pipes in the frame because they have holes pre-drilled in them so that they can be staked down.



5. STEP FIVE: The frame consists of the sides and the top. Connect the frame using the couplers and elbows as shown. Use the rubber mallet to tap down the poles into the connectors to assure that the poles are well seated.



6. STEP SIX: Insert one side of the frame into the top opening of the base. Holding the other side of the frame, insert into the top opening of other base.



7. STEP 7: Now you will position the frame so that it is at its most stable position between the bases. This requires the bottom portion of the frame to be between 6 inches and one foot wider than the top of the frame. This is easily accomplished by spreading the sides of frame until the bases are 6 inches to one foot wider apart.



8. STEP 8: Use the rubber mallet to tap the top of the frame at the elbows to make sure the poles are seated into the base.



9. STEP 9: Examine frame for any minor adjustments. Anchor second base using the other three stakes provided.



10. Way to go! You are now ready to add whatever you would like to dangle from the top of your frame.



11. For our example, Phil added some pool noodles. Make sure you have a stable surface to use to stand on!



12. Ready to go - Now if we could only bring our horse into our backyard!

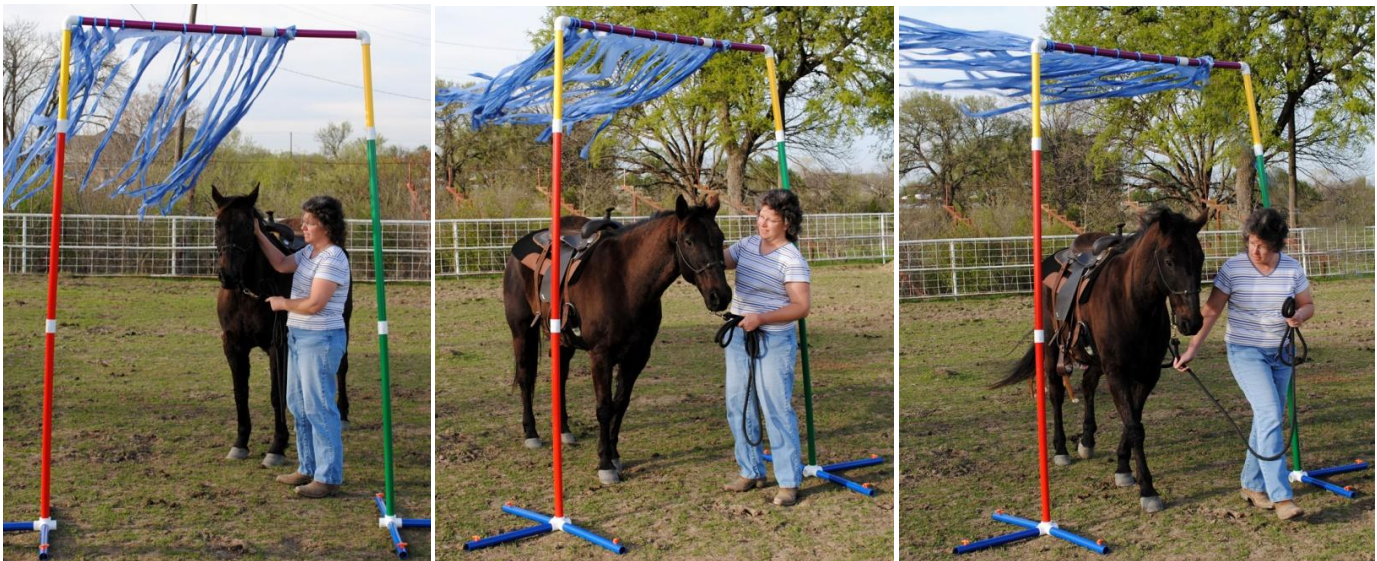


# Using Your Vine Simulator

Fully Assembled Dimensions (approximate) : 8.33'H x 5'W

We recommend that you introduce your horse to the vine simulator on the ground first, especially if he has not been through a similar obstacle in the recent past. Remember that some horses are convinced that new obstacles may try to eat them at any moment, and it is your job to convince them otherwise. This is best done from the ground before attempting the obstacle from your horse's back! It is recommended that you proceed by using the following steps:

1. Introduce your horse to the vine simulator on the ground, and give him a chance to become comfortable around it. You can start off with just a halter so that he can be relaxed and you don't accidentally jerk on his mouth if he shies away from it. Let him sniff it and examine it if he wants to do so. When he seems comfortable around it, you can encourage him to walk through it. Once he does so comfortably, repeat several times. This was a very windy day, so the light-weight shower curtain really blew in the wind – making it quite scary.



2. When your horse is comfortable around the vine simulator, you can try leading him through by his bridle. If he takes this well, you can move on to attempting the obstacle from his back. Remember to be calm and confident and that will help your horse to remain calm and confident too. If you ever feel that your horse may become out of control while trying to ride him through the obstacle, dismount and start again from the ground. Confident and consistent approaches will help your horse become relaxed and desensitized to the obstacle. Once you are both comfortable going through in one direction, repeat the process going through the other direction, until your horse easily moves through the obstacle in both directions.





Although nervous at first, Dylan did a great job going through the vine simulator. By the end of our session he was going through it like he had been doing it all his life. It is so much fun doing obstacles with Dylan because he gets really focused and I can see that he enjoys doing a job.

Here Tammy is taking Handsome and Memphis through the vine simulator using a camo tarp, pool noodles, and real hanging vines that grew on our backyard fence. As with our other products, the vine simulator helps us have fun that is only limited by following safe practices and by using our imagination!



## Disassembling Your Vine Simulator

Taking apart your obstacle is fairly straightforward. The part that can become a bit difficult is separating the pipe from the connector if it won't come off by simply twisting them apart. In order to assist with the disassembly process if this does occur, we have included a wooden tap to help you separate the pieces. Simply hold the pipe in question stable (it helps if you have a second person to hold the pipe) and place the wooden tap against the connector as shown. Use the rubber mallet, hitting it against the wooden tap, to loosen the connector from the pipe. If the connector is particularly stubborn to loosen, you may have to rotate the pipe and use the tap repeatedly until it will separate. If you lose your wood tap or it becomes unusable, simple grab any similar piece of wood to do the job.



## Safety Information



*These poles should not be used under excessively cold weather conditions since it is known that PVC becomes more brittle in cold weather. While our products are U.V. coated which helps prevent the breakdown of material due to exposure to the sun, as with the use of any equipment, it is important to constantly inspect the condition of the equipment to ensure that it is undamaged and use it only for the purpose intended. While no specs are published concerning the impact resistance of PVC, we have pictured here one of the PVC poles that was used to stake down an obstacle during the Grace Lakes Ministry Competitive Trail Challenge. It seems this particular pipe received a great deal of abuse from 1200 lb. horses wearing shoes coming down on it. We were thrilled to see that the PVC pipe "smooshed" instead of shattered. No one noticed until taking the obstacle down that the pole had even been damaged because it remained usable and did its job of holding the obstacle in place!*

**Important Storage Note: When storing your obstacle, make sure and store PVC pipes flat, otherwise longer lengths will remain usable but may tend to warp.**

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