

Do-It-Yourself Gutter Cleaning Tool

by Leo J. Laughlin

For years I have been cleaning gutters the same way as everyone else, that is getting out the extension ladder and climbing up and scooping out the gutter with a hand trowel and sort of dropping the junk into a garbage can sitting on the ground. The problem is that as I get older, I am less likely to get it done, and right now there sits a kennel in the way. I thought there has to be a better way, and after doing some measuring, I had found a way that not only works, but eliminates a lot of the mess!

It is a simple observation that a 2" PVC pipe has about the same diameter as a shop-vac 2-1/2" hose. The big trick was figuring out how to connect the two together. The answer is a Fernco 2" rubber coupling, (available at the local hardware or plumbing shop). A Fernco rubber coupling is designed to connect two pieces of different pipe, i.e. PVC and Cast-iron for example. In this case you will use it to connect it to the shop-vac hose, or if you want to spend the extra money, you can buy a shop-vac hose coupler, designed to connect 2 hoses together. It takes a little bit to wedge it inside, but it does fit. (As shown to the right)



Then all you need is enough 2" PVC pipe to reach your gutter and 2 - 2" street elbows. You can glue these to the top of your pipe, or do as I did in the picture below, and glue them to a threaded fitting, so that I could change the head if desired.

However, this is not needed. In fact the materials needed are:

- 2 - 2" PVC street elbows
- 1 - 2" PVC pipe (or more as needed)
- 1 - 2"x2" Fernco coupler
- Optional Shop-Vac Hose Coupler

Optional male-female threaded fittings for adding/removing sections

While you can add more items to make it more versatile, that is all that is needed. For your situation, you may need 2 lengths, and a threaded fittings between so you could reach higher, and be able to take them apart for storage.



This is tried and tested. I did the back gutter when the leaves and the like were wet. It worked well. A couple of times I needed to rub the material off the end on the edge of the gutter, so that it could suck them up, but it was much easier. The gutter was almost full, and I filled up a 16 gallon shop-vac with the wet junk. When it was really full, I moved the cleaner up and down, so that it could work its way down through all the junk.

Later on, I did the front gutter, which happened to be dry. The material was so hard and crusted, that I did have to lift it out with the tool, and swing it down to crunch up in my hand and let it be sucked up. But, it tended to get to the bottom and suck all the dirt out of the gutter.

I believe that it would be better to do it after a good rain, when the material is still wet. However, if you want to clean down to the bottom, go again after it dries. I suggest you not use more than one hose, as the ribs tend to collect wet debris, and will need rinsed out. One note is that the street elbows work well, so that it fits down into the gutter well, without getting stuck on the bottom, as it is a little short of reach all the way to the bottom. Mine is 1 - 10 foot section and it work well. I store it laying on top of my extension ladder, which is on ladder hooks.

