

DIY Pressure Washer

I came into a couple of (legitimately acquired) 15.5 gal. sankey kegs, and planned to turn them into fermenters. After a thorough cleaning and exterior polishing, I started to muse on how to clean hard-to get krausen rings and general gunk that would develop in these unwieldy behemoths after I put them to use. Lifting them up over the jet bottle washer was a thorough pain, and using a carboy brush can cause rust spots when the metal portion scrapes against the interior was (learned the hard way on the initial cleaning). Regular garden hose nozzles couldn't angle through the neck (got a good soak in the process of trying), and while some of the 'sweeper nozzles' would fit, the angle would not hit the highest areas where I expect krausen gunk to develop, plus we have pretty low water pressure in the house.

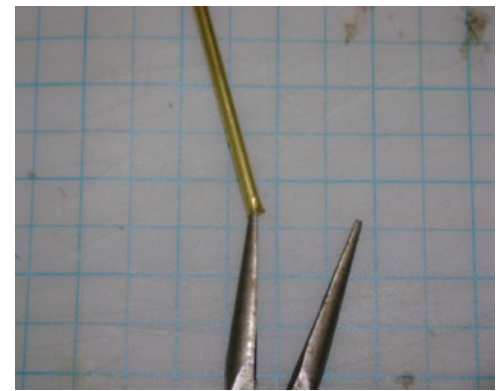
After lamenting to some friends, seemed like the only great solution was going to be a pressure washer, which seemed plausible, but excessive. Hence this idea was hatched- it's cheap, simple to build and *very* effective. Take a sweeper nozzle, attach a reducer/extension that can be angled, fit it to a garden hose and voilà, here you go...



Here's the parts (bought from the local Ace):
 1/8" x 12" brass tubing (89¢)
 Brass sweeper nozzle (\$3.25)



The tools you'll need are;
 A propane soldering set
 Water-based paste flux and brush
 Lead-free plumbing solder
 Needle-nose pliers



First, use the needle-nose pliers to 'flare' one of the ends of the tubing. This will help create a better seal on the inside of the sweeper nozzle. I did it by putting jaw of the pliers in the tubing and rotating until I got a pretty smooth circular flare.



Here you can see how the tubing rests inside the nozzle one fed through. This is just a test fit, the rubber washer will need to be removed before the next steps.



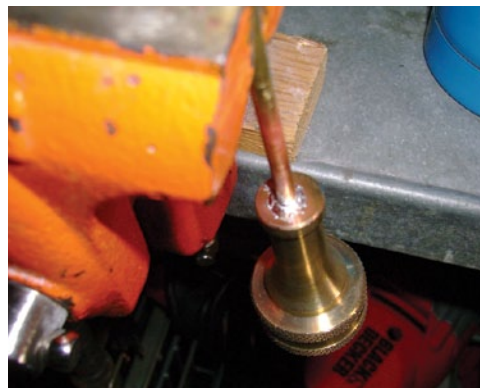
Next, you'll need to clean both the nozzle and flared end of the tubing. Fine sandpaper will do a great job, plus you can roll it to get the inside of the nozzle.



Apply the paste flux to both parts and fit together. Hang by gently clamping the tubing in a vice, or have a helper hold it with a pair of pliers (it will get hot).



Heat the nozzle with the propane torch, this will facilitate a better flow of solder.



Now apply the solder to the joint. You won't need too much.



If you get a small amount of solder drip in the nozzle you can file it, or just leave it- the whole point is flow restriction anyway. Now re-insert the rubber washer.



Once it's cooled, use your hands to gently and slowly bend the tubing. A 45° angle works quite well, but you can go further if you like.



Take the needle-nose pliers and gently flatten and pinch the end of the nozzle- this will give you a good sweep area and increases the pressure. Heck it did a great job on my basement floors!

The final step is to check your work- hook it up to a garden hose or sink with garden hose threads, plug the tip with your finger, turn on the water and see if the soldered joint leaks.

Hook this up to a garden hose and you are good to go. I use mine with a 10' hose and hooked up to the utility sink (to get the hot water bonus).

This can also be used to clean any other hard-to-reach objects such as carboys and corney kegs.