

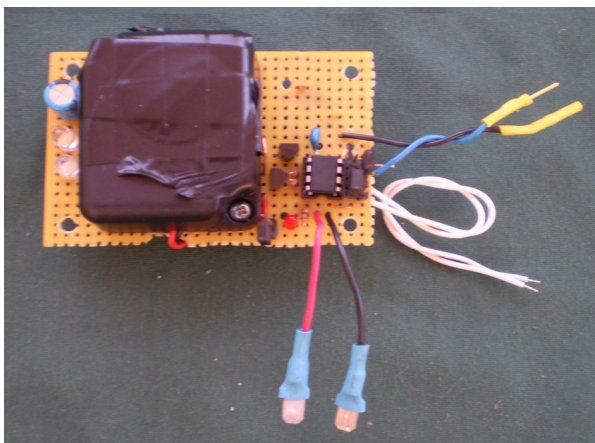
## Prowler Pooper Alarm

People prowling between our house and a vacant house next door motivated the development of this alarm system.

My first version was simply a wire hung between a couple 3' pieces of pipe leaned against the walls. These were balanced so they would make a loud clatter when the wire was violated, to indicate when a person was trespassing. In discussing the problem with the owner of the vacant house, we decided something a little more sophisticated would be in order.

The result is a gadget that provides four levels of adrenaline, for persons uneasy about where they are sneaking (level one). When first tripped, there is a distinct clicking for a period of about five seconds. The suspect knows he has tripped something and is immediately straining his eyes in the dark towards the sound to assess the level of danger. Level two is a brilliant flash into a pair of wide open dark-adjusted eyes from two or three feet away. The suspect is likely to imagine he has just had his picture taken (level 3), which may or may not be true, but in either case, he is temporarily vision impaired. Level four immediately follows as a siren, to motivate the blinded suspect at a full gallop to anywhere but there. Hopefully he will not cause too much damage to property or vehicles on his way out there. The urgency might be slightly enhanced by repetitions, of the flash at one-second intervals (level 5). Meanwhile, he might be temporarily tracked by the sound of collisions with trash cans and bushes that needed pruning anyway.

Since I may or may not want to get involved at this point, the siren is set to run for a limited period of time, so I would have the option of smiling and going back to sleep, if I chose to. The gadget may be programmed to run for either 3 or 30 seconds. Normally, the 30-second option would be used to clear the area, but if a person wanted to become involved, the 3-second mode would allow one to aurally track the desperate movements of a disturbed suspect.



The total material cost is less than \$15, and the project could be assembled by anyone capable of handling a soldering iron. The tricky part is that it does involve a programmed microprocessor (included in the \$15 estimate). At the moment you'll have to get in touch with the author for that.



The red and black leads at the bottom connect to a 5 volt supply. I have used a cell phone charger when household power is available, but three common batteries will also work for portable use when you happen to be the person with the backpack or shopping cart (while sleeping between a couple of houses somewhere).



The alarm is triggered by opening the circuit connected to either of the two pairs of leads protruding to the right. One activates for 30 seconds and the other for 3 seconds.

Although any broken circuit would trigger the alarm, a common method of triggering is to use a "reed switch" which is held closed by a nearby magnet. When the magnet is removed, the switch opens, and trips the alarm.