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True Utility 3 Color Flame Lighter by Mango International Inc

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Review by Dave Wilkes

<http://www.mangoenergy.com/Products/WindproofLighters.htm>

I received a 3 Color Lighter from Mango International Inc to review over the next 3 months.

The lighter is advertized as a windproof lighter for any weather conditions, and it features a rotating barrel with 3 flame color options; red, green, or blue. This is a refillable Butane lighter with an adjustable flame.

Its dimensions are listed as; L3.0" x W1.4" x D.9" and it weighs 2 oz.

The lighter has a metal case with a glass fuel reservoir and metal case, the design fits nicely in my hand. To operate simply depress the thumb switch, which opens the cover exposing the fuel port and the fuel valve, while at the same time as creating a spark that ignites the flame. Just below the top of the lighter, is a black barrel that can be rotated to select any one of the 3 flame options.



Image courtesy of Mango International Inc



Fill port and flame adjuster

Filing the lighter is the same as any refillable butane lighter: Invert the lighter and butane canister, insert the nozzle into the refill port on the bottom of the lighter and press to fill. Adjusting the flame is another matter. There is a ring around the fuel fill port that is split in two places. A flat tool like a screw driver can be inserted and turned to adjust the flame. The material in this ring is very thin as is the space between the ring and the sides of

the opening, so I found it difficult to locate a suitable tool. I finally managed to wedge the screwdriver tip of my Swiss army knife into one of the slots and was able to adjust the flame. After trying a few settings, I found the original setting to be about the best. Much lower and there was very little flame, much higher and the lighter was quite difficult to light.

Lighting the flame is as simple a depressing the thumb switch until it clicks. However, I found that the blue flame port was the most difficult to light. The red and green lights most times on the first try, but the blue can take 5 or more clicks before it will light.

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I am not entirely sure what the purpose of the three colors is. The blue looks to be the natural color for the butane, while the red and green is obtained by some sort of material suspended within the flame, causing it to burn that color. I found the green to be the most visible and impressive while the red is almost ineffective (only under ideal lighting can I see any red color) and the blue is a narrow blue flame. In all cases, the colors are only visible in subdued lighting and totally invisible in direct sun.

The lighter is advertized as being wind proof. In preliminary testing I tried gently blowing on the flame, and in almost all cases I blew the flame out. My first impression is that "windproof" is not the description I would use, but I will be using the lighter outdoors and see how well it operates in actual wind before making any judgments.

I intend to try out this lighter for various outdoor activities including camping, backpacking, hiking as well as around the house and yard over the next 3 months. I invite you to return to see how it performs and to submit any questions, comments and/or suggestions you may have.

Oct 24 2010

I have been using this lighter quite a bit. I have used it to light camp fires while backpacking and camping, light our charcoal grill at home and while camping, light alcohol backpacking stoves, and a few miscellaneous uses around home and work.

I have found filling the lighter to be about on par with filling other refillable butane lighters. That is that it is a bit tricky but not too complicated. One good feature with this lighter is the clear, easy to see fuel reservoir. While using and filling the lighter it is very easy to see exactly how full it is.

One of the things I have been unimpressed with is how well it ignites. I find it often takes a number of tries to get the lighter lit. The different color settings affect how easily it lights with the blue setting being the most difficult to light. When using the blue setting it often takes 6 or more tries before the lighter will light. Since the flame is difficult to see in direct sunlight sometimes I do not even know it is lit, so when repeatedly trying to light it, I will sometimes already be trying again to light it before realizing it was lit.

When it does light it creates a VERY hot flame. I have had no trouble igniting whatever material I am trying to light, be it kindling or paper. I have used the lighter to heat a metal rod in order to melt and shape some plastic and the very hot flame did the job quite quickly. One drawback to the design and the very hot flame is that the metal lid, when open, is directly adjacent and slightly over the flame. This piece connects directly to the thumb button used to light the lighter and I find that if I keep the flame lit for extended periods (such as when heating something or trying to ignite thick or damp materials) the thumb button can quickly get uncomfortably hot. I don't normally use camp fires when backpacking but on one recent backpacking trip I decided to practice my fire making skills. The conditions were not conducive to fire starting. It had been raining off and on for the previous few days so finding dry tinder and kindling was quite difficult, and finding dry fire wood, out of the question. I knew getting a fire started in these conditions would be quite a challenge and figured it would be good practice. So using nothing but found materials I started to build my fire. I was able to shave some dry wood from the underside of bark I pulled from some dead wood, and using my Benchmade Model 147 – NimCub-II (see my review of this fine knife) was able to create a few small Feather Sticks after shaving the wet outer layers off a small dead branch I found. This, combined with a bit of dry moss I was able to scrounge, was my tinder. Most of the kindling I was able to find ranged from damp to soaking wet. So I arranged what little dry kindling I had in a tepee fashion over the tinder and put the damp kindling and then the wet material over that. My hard work was rewarded by being able to get the fire started on my first try. I would like to say the intense heat of the lighter was an asset, but I am sure I could have started the fire as easily with a match so while satisfying, it was not really a good test of this lighter.

Using the lighter to light my grill has been, I believe, a better test (and use) of the lighter. I use a charcoal starter and no lighter fluid. The starter is basically a metal tube that holds the charcoal, then I place two sheets of crumpled newspaper in the bottom and light the paper. Getting the paper lit and burning hot makes a big difference in how long it takes to light the coals. This lighter does a good job at this. I light the paper at multiple points around the starter, holding the lighter in place for a few seconds at each to get a good flame going.

I still have found no good way to adjust the flame. I just can't find anything that fits the opening properly, so I have just left the flame at its original setting.

The lighter seems to go through fuel quite quickly. It seems like it holds the same amount of

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fuel as one of the smaller Bic style lighters but I can almost completely drain it in a few days of use. My guess is that this is the trade off for such a hot flame.

I have still found no point to the colored flames. The green being the brightest is the only one even remotely visible in bright light, and the red almost invisible except in very dark conditions.

So far I have yet to have the opportunity to use this lighter in windy conditions so I have nothing to add from my previous comments on it being "windproof".

For my purposes I am finding the weight and difficult lighting to make it impractical for use while backpacking. For the same weight I can carry 2-3 small disposable lighters that will last longer and light more reliably (and if one fails I have at least 1 backup). However, for camping and use around the house its hot flame and ability to be refilled make it rather useful.

Nov 15 2010

I don't have a lot to add to my previous comments about this lighter. I have been using it for various tasks such as lighting the grill, candles, melting rope ends, etc.

Finishing the ends of synthetic rope has been my favorite task for this lighter lately. The very hot and precise flame makes it easy to quickly melt the ends of the rope as well as heat it just enough to shape [e.g. point, blunt, etc].

I have been experimenting with different designs of homemade alcohol stoves, some of the designs require preheating the fuel (priming). One expedient method I have used while testing a new design is to directly heat the base of the stove using the lighter (vs. splashing a bit of fuel around the base of the stove). The very hot and precise flame worked well for this. This is not something I would intentionally plan for, but effective for my experiments and could possibly help light the stove in cold weather.

The lighter has become a standard fixture around the house, and I fully expect to continue to use it around the house and when the weather warms up for family camping.

I would like to thank the folks at Mango International Inc and 4AllOutdoors.org for the opportunity to use and review this product.

Dave (the turtle) Wilkes

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