

Glowing Pickle



Purpose: To show that a pickle can conduct electricity, converting electrical energy into thermal energy and light.

Location: Room 146; shelf M2

NOTE: USE CAUTION WITH HOUSEHOLD CURRENT WHICH IS USED TO ILLUMINATE THE PICKLE.

Take a pickle and place it in a Pryex^R glass pan or on some other insulating surface. Do NOT plug the cord into the wall first! Place the electrodes (nails) into the ends of the pickle and make sure they do not make contact with each other. There is no need to make contact with or be near the pickle anymore. (Warn students not to get close!) Plug the cord into a 120VAC outlet and turn off the lights. You should wait no longer than 3 minutes for the pickle to first hiss and then begin to glow on one end. You are observing the sodium in the pickle getting enough energy to light up. Unplug the cord immediately upon completion of the demo.