

a plurality of fine, buoyant color-pigmented particles mixed with said silica particles as part of said cloud-like dispersion to thereby enhance visual determination of said scent trail.

15. The hunter's scent dispenser as defined in claim 14 wherein said silica particles comprise amorphous hydrophobic fumed silica.

16. The hunter's scent dispenser as defined in claim 14 wherein said scent media is absorbed by said silica particles.

17. The hunter's scent dispenser as defined in claim 14 wherein said pigmented particles have a fluorescent color to further enhance said visual determination.

18. The hunter's scent dispenser as defined in claim 14 wherein said pigmented particles comprises a thermoplastic material.

19. The hunter's scent dispenser as defined in claim 15 wherein said scent media comprises a deposit of viscous fluid disposed in said housing within said quantity of silica particles.

20. A method of gauging wind direction and velocity, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of silica particles of sufficiently small size to be buoyantly carried by ambient wind;

dispensing said silica particles as a buoyant cloud-like dispersion to be carried by said wind;

introducing color to said particles before dispensing them by using a plurality of color-pigmented particles, to provide a colored cloud-like dispersion of enhanced visibility; and

observing the direction and rate of travel of said cloud to gauge wind direction and velocity.

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to wind speed and direction gauging, and more particularly to use of lightweight particulate media for forming a floating cloud for this purpose.

Bow and rifle hunters, as well as other sports enthusiasts, have heretofore mainly had only makeshift methods and devices available to them for gauging wind speed and direction. This is particularly desirable for hunting purposes, while stalking or waiting in a blind for game, since game downwind from a hunter will avoid the hunter's position if the animals detect the hunter's scent. To avoid detection by the prey, hunters stalking animals attempt to monitor the wind and remain downwind therefrom. For bow hunters, in addition to gauging the general ambient conditions of wind speed and direction, it is also important to accurately gauge the particular windage that an arrow will experience when it is

shot, since the wind has a significant affect on the trajectory of arrows.

In an attempt to accurately determine the wind speed and direction, meteorologists have used such things as balloons and chemical smoke dispensers which emit smoke which is visually monitored. Variations of such chemical dispensers may be mounted on the barrel of a hunter's rifle or otherwise set up by the hunter. However, chemical odors emitted by these dispensers, along with the odor of smoke, are easily detected by animals. Such odors are easily strong enough to be detected by the animal. Consequently, the animals are alerted to the hunter's presence, and move away from the hunter.

In an attempt to generate a wind gauge which animals will not detect, powder-like hydrophobic material, such as unscented raw talc or magnesium trisilicate has been used in an effort to create a wind-borne cloud which the hunter may visually observe. A small amount of the talc material is sprayed into the air by means of a manually operated squeeze bottle. The speed and direction of travel of a cloud created by the dispersed talc is then observed to determine prevailing wind conditions. In actual practice, however, the raw talc settles out of the air relatively quickly and thus drifts only a short distance from the hunter's position. Additionally, the talc cloud is difficult to see. Thus, it is difficult at best for the hunter to actually gauge wind direction and velocity by observing a talc cloud.

It is important for bow hunters to accurately determine the windage which an arrow will experience during the flight to the target. Accuracy is particularly critical, as animals are often alerted to the hunter's presence by the first arrow a hunter shoots, regardless of whether the hunter hits an animal. Because heretofore known powders tend to settle to the ground relatively quickly and are difficult to see, they do not really form an airborne cloud, do not drift far, and once they move away from the point of dispersion hunters can no longer see them. Thus, known windage-gauging powders do not in fact provide hunters with an accurate gauge by which to judge the windage that will act on their arrows.

In addition, many hunters use blinds which they have built either on the ground or elevated from the ground, such as platforms or other such structures secured in trees. Elevated blinds are particularly advantageous as most game, and in particular large animals such as deer and the like, are not thought to be upwardly observant, largely concentrating their surveillance to a horizontal line of sight. Thus, although extremely wary by nature, game such as deer are known to frequently walk directly beneath a hunter occupying an elevated blind in a tree.

Regardless of whether the hunter is stalking or waiting in a blind, and regardless of whether the blind is elevated or on the ground, hunters must remain downwind from the game they hunt or the animals will detect the hunter's scent. The animals are wary of unfamiliar scents, and consequently, avoid moving upwind when they sense an unfamiliar scent. Accordingly, hunters who stalk their prey attempt to monitor the wind direction and maintain a downwind position relative to the prey. For hunters using blinds, the position of the blind is fixed and scents are emitted from the blind and carried downwind. Thus, only those animals upwind from a blind will approach it. To avoid detection by animals downwind from blinds, hunters use masking scents to conceal their own scent. Such masking scents are familiar to game and consequently do not alert the wary animals. In one attempt to cover their scent, hunters have used a masking scent which permeates the talc powder used in an effort to create a wind gauge. The talc powder absorbs the masking scent, such as acorn, pine, apple, cedar or the like. However, as indicated above, talc powder does not travel far, and accordingly the scented powder does not adequately cover the hunter's scent.

In an attempt to attract animals such as deer to a particular location, such as a blind from which they are hunting, hunters also dispense certain scents along a trail leading to that location. However, leaving a scent trail requires that the hunter physically travel over the trail. The hunter's movement along the trail while physically dispensing the scent may well disturb and frighten animals, and the hunter's own scent is often left on the trail. Consequently, animals are likely to move away from the trail instead of being attracted by the scent dispensed by the hunter.

