

SNIFFING AROUND

I would like to thank you for providing a great magazine geared toward the hobbyist. I particularly enjoyed building the "RF Sniffer" in the August issue. However, there are some errors in it. LED 1 should be labeled as LED 2, and vice versa; L2 is correctly stated in the parts list to be a 2-mH choke, but the schematic shows it as a 2- μ H choke.

Speaking of RF chokes, I would like to see some information on how to read the molded kind. Are they color coded and read the same as resistors? They seem to have more color bands than resistors do. Are they read as microhenry or millihenry?

Incidentally, to make the "RF Sniffer" more sensitive, replace the telescoping antenna; cut an 8-inch length of 75-ohm coax; and remove the vinyl sleeve, the outer braid, and the center conductor wire so that all that is

left is the dielectric material. Wind the entire length with No.26 wire, close wound, and solder it to a male pin connector attached on one end. Cover the length with heat-shrink tubing. You now have a flexible antenna that is much more sensitive than the telescoping kind. Attach the female pin connector to the case, and it becomes removable.

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Molded chokes do share their color-code scheme with resistors, although there are some differences in the way the two are read. For exact information on how to read molded chokes, see the ARRL Handbook's chapter on Construction Practices and Data Tables; if you don't own a copy of the Handbook, one is available at most local libraries. Also, a FactCard on inductors, including RF chokes, is planned for later in the year.