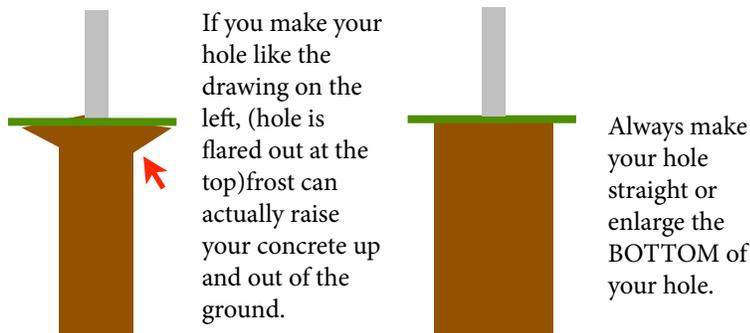


High Winds and Gourd Racks

Concerned landlords are worried about their martins as well as their gourd racks. Here are a few things to know about high winds.

How can I prevent my pole or gourd rack from falling down? It begins with how you well you cement your ground stake. As stated in the directions poor soil conditions warrant larger holes. This is important not for the strength of the ground stake but for the stability of it. Poor soil, like we have here at our research site tends not to support the cement, so by making a larger hole and using more cement will to help alleviate the problem. What you may notice after a storm is that your pole looks crooked, but actually the concrete holding your ground stake has shifted in the ground. Remember, you cannot have too much concrete.



What should you do if high winds are forecasted for your area? First and the most important, lower your hub. Lowering the hub section reduces the amount of stress that travels down the pole. Lowering the hub section a minimum of two feet can make all the difference. And the best part is that the martins don't mind.

How much winds can the pole and gourd racks take? Not such a simple cut and dry question. We have personally experienced wind gust of 63 mph. My racks were lowered 2 feet and all withstood the burst. But other factors can be in play, how many gourds and or houses are on the pole is a prime example. Landlords want to get the best bang for the buck, but any pole that is overloaded will fail before its counterpart. It is important that you understand that. Whether you have a steel or aluminum pole, they ALL have their failing point.

Would using a ground sleeve be beneficial? Ground sockets can be a useful tool for the landlord who knows they are moving in the near future or a landlord who would like to have the ability to remove the entire pole, including the ground stake during the off season. But as to whether or not using a ground sleeve would help your over all pole or gourd rack withstand severe winds, no, it will not. A ground sleeve that is flush with ground level gives you no better support.

