

Octagon Pavilion Owner's Manual (Spoke style)

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Thank you for your selection of the DRAGONWING Octagon Pavilion. We are sure that your pavilion will weather many years of service, if you care for it properly. In this manual, you will find details on how to assemble and erect it, and how to care for it.

FINISHING THE POLES

We have left the finishing of the poles to you, since it reduces your costs and it gives you the opportunity to stain or paint the pieces as you desire. Whatever your preference, it's worth it to buy the very best finishing medium you can afford. Scrimping on the cost here is always false economy, not only because it gets unsightly a lot quicker, but also because a frame unprotected from the elements will warp and deteriorate very quickly. The friendly attendant at your neighborhood hardware store will be happy to advise you on what you need for the conditions you'll face in your part of the world. I usually use a good marine "spar varnish" or a polyurethane varnish on the poles I use for my own tents. You may wish to go for a more "period" effect with linseed or tung oils. Whatever you decide to do, do it now, right away, while the wood is still fresh and new. Remember to sand the poles first, to remove any collected grime and give the finish a good surface to stick to. *Please note* that one of the spoke poles is one inch shorter than the rest. You might want to paint that one a different color, or otherwise mark it so that it can be readily distinguished from the others.

SETTING UP YOUR PAVILION

Decide where you want to pitch the tent. You want a fairly level, well-drained area cleared of rocks and debris. If possible, orient the tent so that the prevailing wind will be coming from behind. That is, the doorway should be on the downwind side of the tent. This orientation allows the tent to resist the wind most effectively.

Lay your ground cloth on the ground exactly where you want to have the tent set up. Put the hub down on the ground in the exact center of where you want your tent to be. (If you're using one of our ground cloths, you'll notice that there's a reinforcement in the center of the ground cloth.) Note that there's a screw next to one of the holes in the perimeter of the hub – the shallowest hole. (See Figure 1.) Rotate the hub so that this hole points directly forward, where you want the door to be.

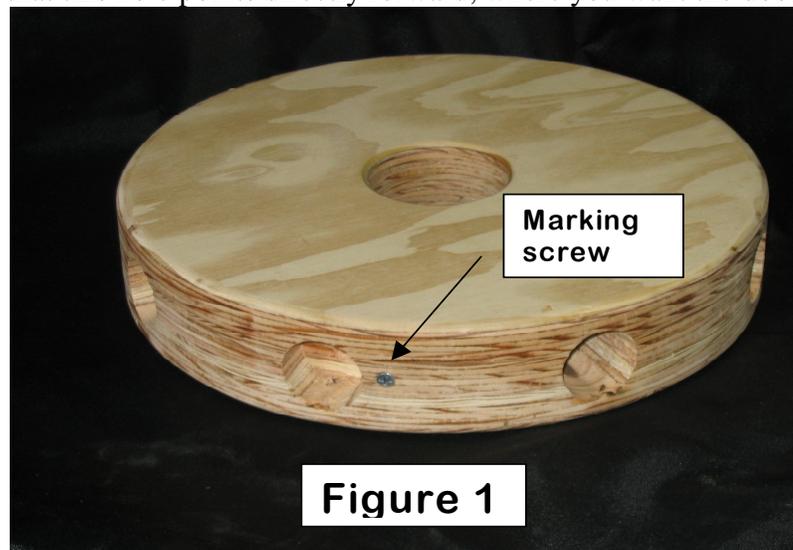


Figure 1

Now look at your spokes. You'll notice that one of them is shorter than the others. Select any six of the seven longer spokes and insert them into the three holes on either side of the forward-facing

hole. (See figure 2.) This should leave you with only two holes without spokes: one facing where the front door will be, and the other where the rear door will be.

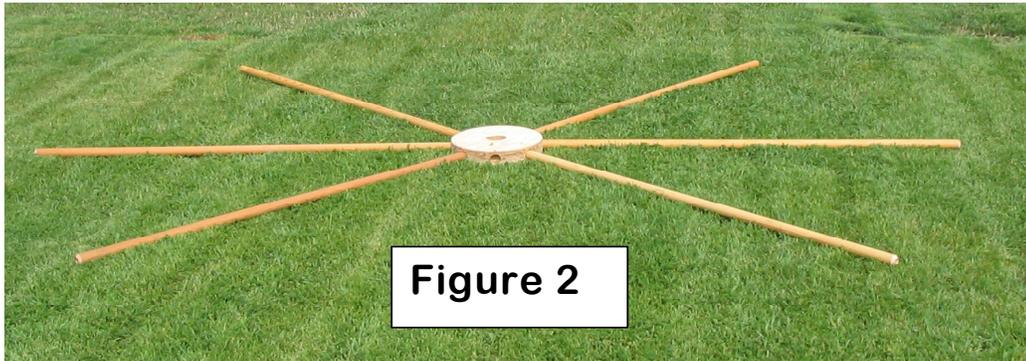


Figure 2

Find six of the seven long (16”) stakes, and your hammer. Select one of the remaining spokes, and lay it end-to-end with one of the spokes radiating out from the hub. The distant end will be where you’ll drive the stake. (See figure 3.) You want to drive this stake into the ground at least a 45° angle to the ground, for maximum leverage and holding power. Move your marking spoke to the next station, and repeat the process. This should give you six stakes spaced evenly (except for where the doors will be) around the center of the tent and roughly nine feet away.

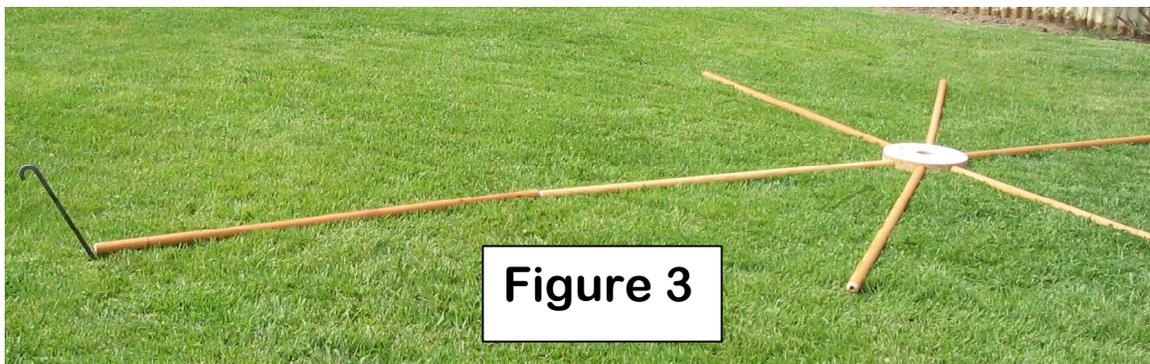


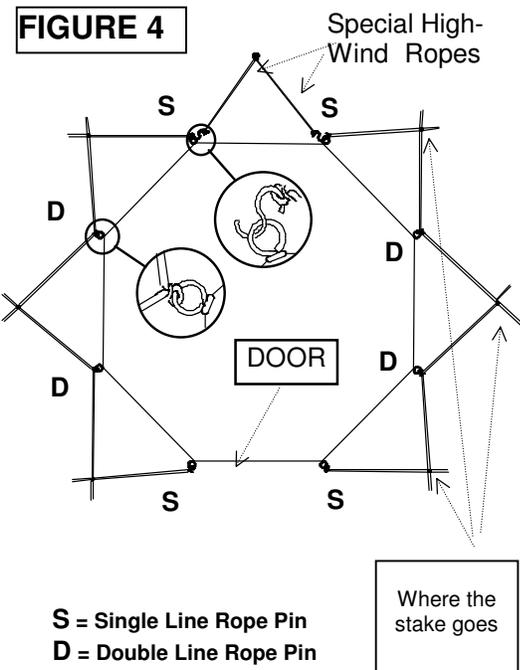
Figure 3

Spread out the canopy, right side up, over the ring (the apex ball should be on the outside, and the canopy plug should be on the inside). You’ll notice that as you go around the canopy, you’ll see a pair of rope pins with two ropes apiece, followed by a pair of rope pins with one rope apiece. The spaces between the single-rope assemblies are where the doors are going to be. Orient the canopy so that the area between the single-rope assemblies is where your door is going to be.

Untangle the ropes and stretch each one out from the canopy ... not directly out, but off at an angle to the right and left. Loosen the slider a little (there’s a “stop” knot tied at the proper place on each guy rope to keep the slider from going too far) and slip the loop at the end of each rope over a stake, but don’t tighten anything yet. What you’re doing should look like figure 4, on the next page.

While you’re looking at figure 4, you’ll notice an extra set of ropes and an extra stake location marked out. These ropes are for the special higher-wind ropes that come with the tent. You probably will never need these lines in normal camping, and it’s nice not to have a stake right at the back door. But if it’s windy, just use the **S**-hook to attach the wind rope to each of the single-rope assemblies at the back door, and put the extra long stake through the rope’s loop at the bottom. (You did set up the tent with its back to the wind, didn’t you? If you didn’t, or the wind changed, make your front door your back door so you’ll have those wind ropes upwind where they need to be.) Since there’s no

adjustment to this rope, don't drive the stake into the ground until the entire pavilion is set up. I'll tell you when.



Find the center pole. It's in two pieces, so put the pieces together. Slide the hub over the top of the pole (where the socket is) and let it slide down onto the pin set into the top part of the pole. With the top of the pole in hand, crawl under the canopy and locate the plastic plug that the apex ball screws into. That plug goes into the hollow at the top of the pole. Raise the center pole to the vertical position. Don't be afraid that the whole tent will fall over, because the guy ropes on the stakes will keep the tent stable.

At this point, it doesn't matter at all where that shallow hole in the hub (the one marked by the screw) is facing. **All that matters is that the shortest spoke goes into that hole and no other, and that all the other spokes go into the deeper holes, and – most important – that the short spoke goes in last.**

To mount the spokes, slip the threaded end of the rope eye-bolts slips the drilled hole at the end of the spoke, and then slip the other end of the spoke into its hole in the hub. You'll find that the first six spokes are easy to install, the seventh more difficult, and the eighth one most difficult of all. (In fact, it would be impossible if it weren't the shortest one.)

Take a break; you're more than halfway there now, and it's time to cool off (or warm up) and hydrate. There's no sense in making an ordeal of this, is there?

HANGING THE SIDEWALLS

You're ready to put up the sidewalls. These are made so that the stake loops should be on the bottom and facing outward. To help you distinguish inside from outside, all the top and bottom hems are folded inward. And the Dragonwing identification label on one of the sidewalls should be on the inside.

Let's hang the left sidewall (left side as you're facing out from the tent). (Which one is the left one? It doesn't matter. Either one will do.) Start where you're going to have the door, and hook the top corner of your sidewalls over the bushing on the rope pin on the left side of the door (that is, to your right if you're in the pavilion, looking out) Proceed counterclockwise inside the tent, hanging the hooks off the spokes. Then connect the sidewalls to the canopy at the intermediate points between the spokes.

For the second sidewall, you'll need to overlap a panel. Remember to note which side the ties or toggles are on, so you'll hang the second sidewall so that you can tie the ties together. If you mess up, it's no big thing; you'll just have to re-do the overlap so that what was inside is now outside, and vice versa.

If your sidewalls have zippers, the first sidewall starts right in the middle of the flat area that marks your door. (The first panel is actually a half-panel). Proceed counterclockwise inside the tent, hanging the hooks off the spokes. Then connect the sidewalls to the canopy at the intermediate points between the spokes. Hang the second sidewall, bearing in mind that there is no overlap.

Now stake down the bottom of the sidewalls with the shorter (12") stakes, remembering that the pavilion is designed to flare slightly outward at the base. For neatness, close the doors of the pavilion before you start staking. Each stake should be one foot further outward from where it would be if the

sidewall were hanging straight down. This feature helps keep the pavilion stable in winds, which is why it was so common on period tents.

The best staking sequence is to first put in the eight stakes that are directly below the spoke ends, where the stake loops are adjacent to the vertical seam between the sidewall panels. Then drive in the intermediate stakes, located along the flat portion of the base of the sidewall where the stake loops are not adjacent to a panel seam. (If it isn't windy and you're tired, you can probably skip these latter stakes. They're there for fouler weather.)

Once the sidewall stakes are in, see if lifting up on the center pole makes the sidewalls look less wrinkled and saggy. If it does, the center pole is probably in a depression, so you'll have to shim it up. I usually carry a few pieces of plywood three or four inches square to do this. (The shim also keeps the center pole from sinking into soft ground).

Re-adjust the tent ropes so as to minimize wrinkles in the canopy and sidewalls, and tighten them. You'll probably have to re-adjust and tighten them periodically, particularly in changes of temperature or humidity, or in winds. To help the sliders from loosening, loop the rope under the hook provided in the slider. If it's really windy and the ropes insist on loosening, you can wrap the rope and sliders together with string or tape.

Here's where I keep my promise to tell you when to stake down the wind ropes with that seventh long stake, if you're going to use them. Now is the time. It's true that the stake is directly in the path of the back door but, if it's windy, that door will always be closed anyway.

Now your pavilion is finished! Have a party in it. Invite your friends.

Taking down the pavilion is the reverse of putting it up, except for these points:

When you take down the pavilion, be very careful not to harm the fabric. Be conscious of where the poke-y bits are.

To loosen the stakes before pulling them out, rotate them a quarter-turn, then back an eighth of a turn.

To keep the guy ropes from tangling together, loop them into a big coil (or fold them into thirds) and tie the coil with a loose overhand knot.

HIGH-WIND CAMPING

The sixteen-inch stakes we provide for your tent ropes should suffice in all but the windiest weather, or in all but the loosest soil. But if you have an abundance of either condition, or a combination of the two, here are some things you can do to keep yourself connected to terra firma:

1. Use longer stakes. Many people have pieces of re-bar, 18" or more. My usual preference is to drive a piece of 1" x 2" furring lumber (at least a foot long or so) into the ground, with the wide side facing the tent, and then drive in the tent stake immediately behind it (that is, against the side of the slat that isn't facing the tent), so that the tent ropes pull the stake tight against the slat. This works because it's not so much the depth of the stake that counts, but the area of stake that presents itself to the dirt. The slat effectively triples the size of the stake.
2. Use more stakes. Tie additional lengths of rope to each of the rope pins and run them out to their own stakes. Don't get them too close to the other stakes.
3. Increase your footprint. Extend the rope beyond the radius determined by the guide knots on the guy ropes. Enough rope has been provided to let you bring the stakes out over eight feet away from the ring if necessary. The only trouble with this method is that it creates more of a tripping hazard, so make sure the ropes are well flagged.
4. Use wind lines. These are special ropes that are attached to the center-pole ball before the center pole is raised. They extend out from the tent and then are staked down as far away from the tent as practicable. The idea is to stabilize the top of the center pole in gale-wind conditions and thereby prevent sway. Obviously, this method isn't something you can easily employ once the

tent is erected, particularly if you have to partially dismantle the tent in a freshening storm. So you need to keep track of the weather forecasts, and have the ropes in place when you set up if it looks like it's going to be a hurricane. On the other hand, Dragonwing pavilions have been through most of the horror-story windstorms you've heard about (the famous "Estrella hurricane" of a few years back, the Twenty Five Year Celebration, the Thirty Year Celebration, and innumerable foul-weather Pennsics and tourneys) without needing wind lines at all. I wouldn't worry much about wind lines, myself.

ODDS AND ENDS

Some SCA kingdom tourney laws require, and we wholeheartedly recommend, that you attach yellow or white flags to the guy ropes to keep your comrades from tripping on them or colliding with them in the dark.

Period pavilion floors can be made of torn-up rugs available at little cost from thrift stores. If you use a slippery plastic ground-cloth underneath them, secure the rugs well against slipping by driving long nails through the rug and ground-cloth into the ground. (If you use cheap, replaceable plastic sheeting, you won't feel so bad about it.)

If you're going to put an ornament or banner over the canopy of your pavilion, don't make it very large or heavy. Higher winds can put a lot of stress on the ornament, and your embellishment may take flight and become an airborne missile.

CARING FOR YOUR PAVILION

The first rule is: make sure that the fabric parts are free from being abraded by anything, particularly when being transported. Keep the stakes in their own canvas bag when you're not using them.

The second rule is: don't store the pavilion wet. Although the fabric parts aren't particularly prone to mildew, the dirt that collect on them is, and will eventually cause discoloration and loss of water- and fire-resistance. Find a dry, large area to air the pavilion if you bring it home wet, and make sure it's dry before you put it into storage. Also, remember that the ropes are made of a natural fiber that may take longer to dry than the fabric, and which will certainly rot if given half a chance. If you must store the pavilion before the ropes are dry, take them off the canopy and dry them separately.

The third rule is: don't clean the pavilion with anything harsher than warm water and a mild soap or detergent. My rule of thumb is that if it's mild enough for your hands to be in (like dish soap or shampoo), it's mild enough for the pavilion. Using anything stronger may damage the water-proofing and fire-retardant properties of the fabric. Also, be sure to rinse the fabric well. And then rinse it again. (This is because sunlight and soap combined will weaken the fabric far worse than either would by itself.)

We wish you many years of happiness in your Dragonwing pavilion. We maintain a photo album of our tents, and would be honored to include yours if you would be so kind as to send us a photograph of your tent as you have it set up for your activities. We are also keen to hear about any customizing of the design which you have performed. Again, happy tourneying!

If you have any questions or comments, or if you would like to know more about our products, feel free to call us at (916) 922-5501 or write us at **Dragonwing, P. O. Box 13322, Sacramento CA 95813-3322**. If we're not in, we'll have a voice-mail/fax machine ready to take your message. Or visit our web site at <http://midtown.net/dragonwing/> for more information on how to use and maintain your tent.