

## SUPER TIPS

## Handling the Unwanted Guest... With Safety and Good Stewardship

Almost everyone who lives in Florida for any period of time has had to deal with a snake at some time. In today's environmentally-conscious world, the three-iron slap shot is not always the best way to eliminate the problem. We handle our unwelcome slithery guests with a homemade snake stick.

All you need to make a world class snake stick is a hollow tube (like an old dew whipping pole), some starter cord, a small bolt with a locking nut, and a golf ball. Every course has old dew whipping poles lying around with the fiberglass insert splintered and no longer usable. The hollow aluminum-tube base is ideal for making your snake stick.

When deciding on how long to make your snake stick, remember this rule of thumb: snakes can only strike about two-thirds the length of their bodies. Therefore, it might not be important to make the pole 10 feet long. We use one that is 4 feet long, and it works great.

Once the pole is cut to size, drill a hole as close to one of the ends as possible to insert a bolt through the tube. The bolt will act as a stopper so the cord does not get pulled up inside the pole when not in use.

Next, double the starter cord and make it longer than the pole by 3-4 feet. You need the extra cord to make the lasso; plus enough to pull the lasso closed. After the cord is cut, melt the ends to prevent fraying and feed the cord down the hollow pole with the loop end sticking out of the end where the hole is drilled. Put the bolt in and secure it, being sure to split the doubled-up cord.

The last thing to do is drill a hole in the golf ball large enough to thread both ends of the cord through, and tie it off.

To capture a snake, make a loop with the cord on the end where the bolt is. When the snake coils up, slip the loop over its body and pull on the golf ball. Be sure not to pull too hard. You only want to secure the snake. Once the snake is secure, simply pick it up and place it into a container with a lid.

The next time someone spots a snake on the course, instead of giving it the three-iron slap shot; you can relocate it. Be cautious, and learn the various species that reside around your property. Be extremely careful when capturing poisonous species.

When we capture a poisonous snake, it is taken to a local facility to be put on display for educational purposes. Check with the local community for opportunities to relocate the snake to botanical gardens, zoos, wonder gardens, or other places where the snake can be used for education.

William Davidson, Jr.



Use common sense and caution when handling poisonous snakes. Keep in mind snakes can strike about two-thirds of their body length. Photo by Bill Davidson, Jr.



A small bolt acts as a stopper for the cord lasso on the end of the snake stick. Photo by Bill Davidson, Jr.



Pigmy Rattlesnake



An effective snake-handling tool can be made from an old dew whipping pole, some starter cord and a golf ball. Photo by Bill Davidson, Jr.

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