

CAMPING and GEAR

BLUESCREW - TENT and AWNING PEGS

We've been testing Aussie designed Bluescrew tent and awning pegs with great success. They don't look like they'll work, but they do.

The first time we tried a set of Bluescrews we thought: "No way, they'll break or they'll pull out." See, they're made of what looks like ordinary blue plastic – it isn't ordinary we found out – and the way to use them flies in the face of all we've learnt about tent pegs since granddad showed us how to bang in rusty bits of bent reo and tear our hands to shreds on hemp ropes. Bluescrews go into the ground at the same angle as the rope: not at 90 degrees to the line of pull as with conventional pegs.

So, there we were on a windswept beach, trying to tame a flogging awning and relying solely on these powder-blue plasto pegs. We had a mixed bag of short ones and long ones and the instructions said the short ones were meant for soil, not sand. Oh well.



We screwed the pegs in to the soft sand and looped the awning ropes over their ends and tightened, expecting to get whacked by a flying peg at any moment, but they stayed put – even the short ones. The wind got up to 20 knots by day's end and the blue pegs were still hanging on to the sand like a drowning man to a trailing rope. When it came time to fold everything away the pegs needed to be unscrewed from the sand – no way would they just pull out.

Bluescrews aren't designed for use in very hard ground, where a normal peg will get a firm hold. Our testing has found that if the ground is soft enough to accept a hand-screwed Bluescrew it's too soft for a normal peg to get a good grip, so the demarcation point is obvious.

How can this fragile-looking device work so well, we wondered, so we chased up the designer, Jeff Scimonello and asked him. Jeff's an industrial engineer, by the way.

"I thought of the screw-peg concept a few years ago and I've been working on perfecting the design and evaluating different materials," Jeff told OTA.



"I made up a succession of prototypes in various materials before settling on this high-tensile stuff: it'll break, but you need an awful lot of force.

"Although the intention was for an improved tent peg, I've since come across many other uses, including tethers for pets and sand anchors for small boats that work even underwater."

We loved our test units so much we've since bought more packs of large and small Bluescrews. Info from www.bluescrew.com