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(54) **LAWN DEBRIS BAG**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

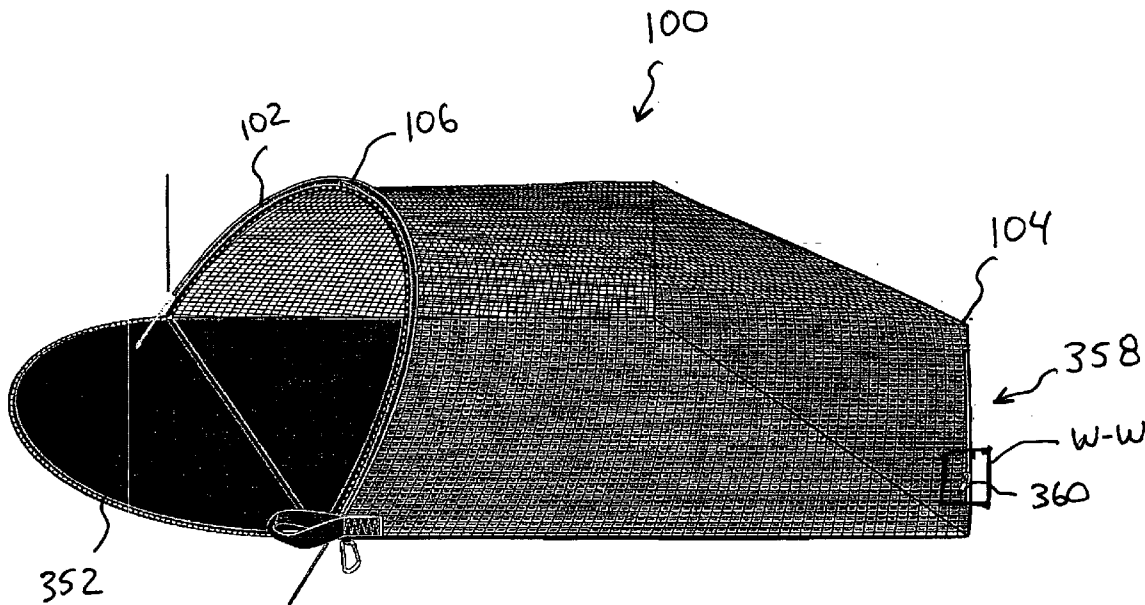
A lawn debris bag device is provided and includes a bag member used to hold lawn debris, a support pole for use in holding the first end of the bag member in an open and upright position, and a method for engaging and thus securing the ends of the support pole into the ground. The support pole includes a plurality of sheath members and a method for connecting the sheath members together. The support pole can be positioned into a first condition where the sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve and a second condition where the sheath members are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other for easy storage.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/891,898**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 15, 2004**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/487,318, filed on Jul. 15, 2003. Provisional application No. 60/497,986, filed on Aug. 26, 2003.



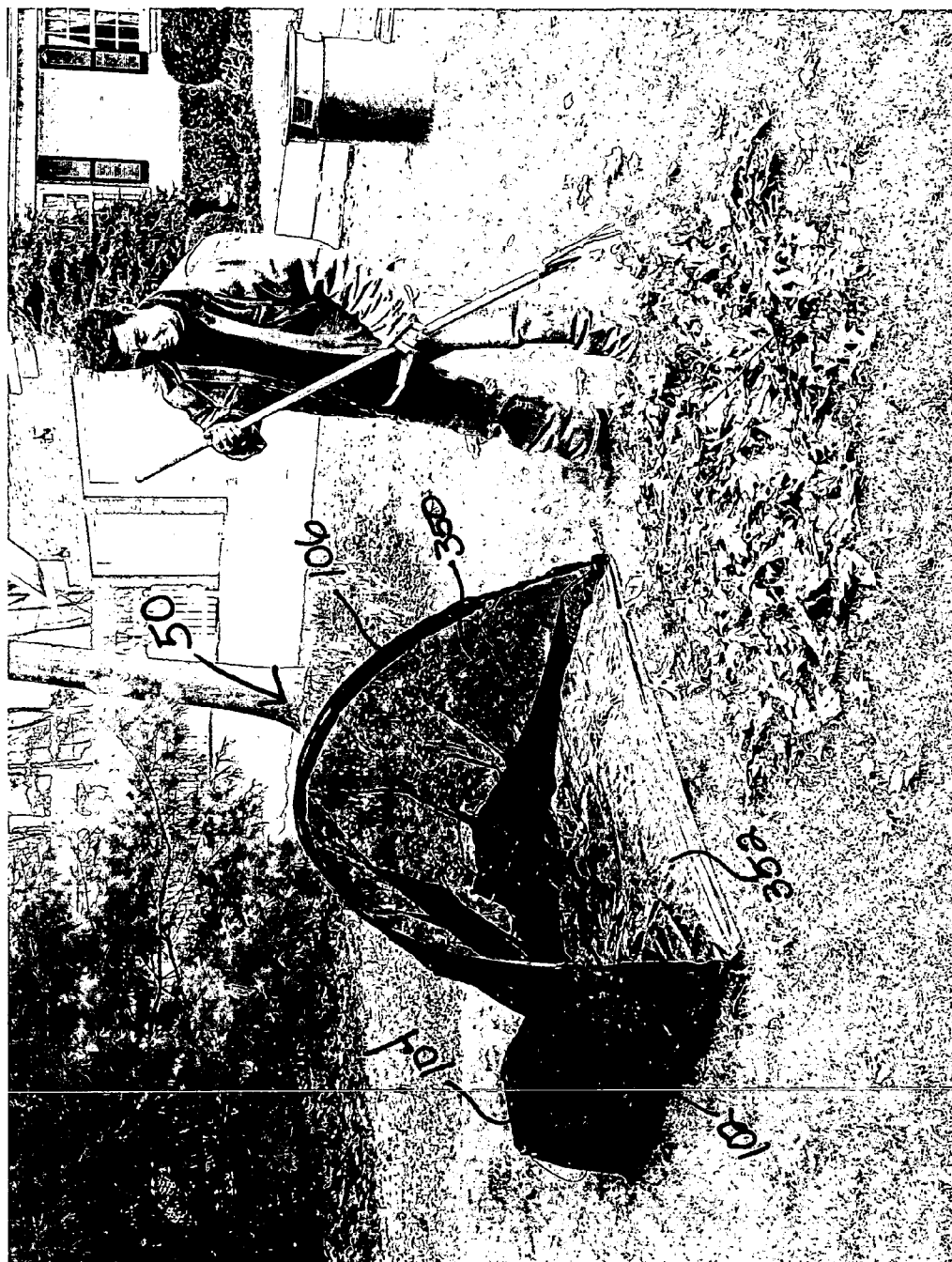


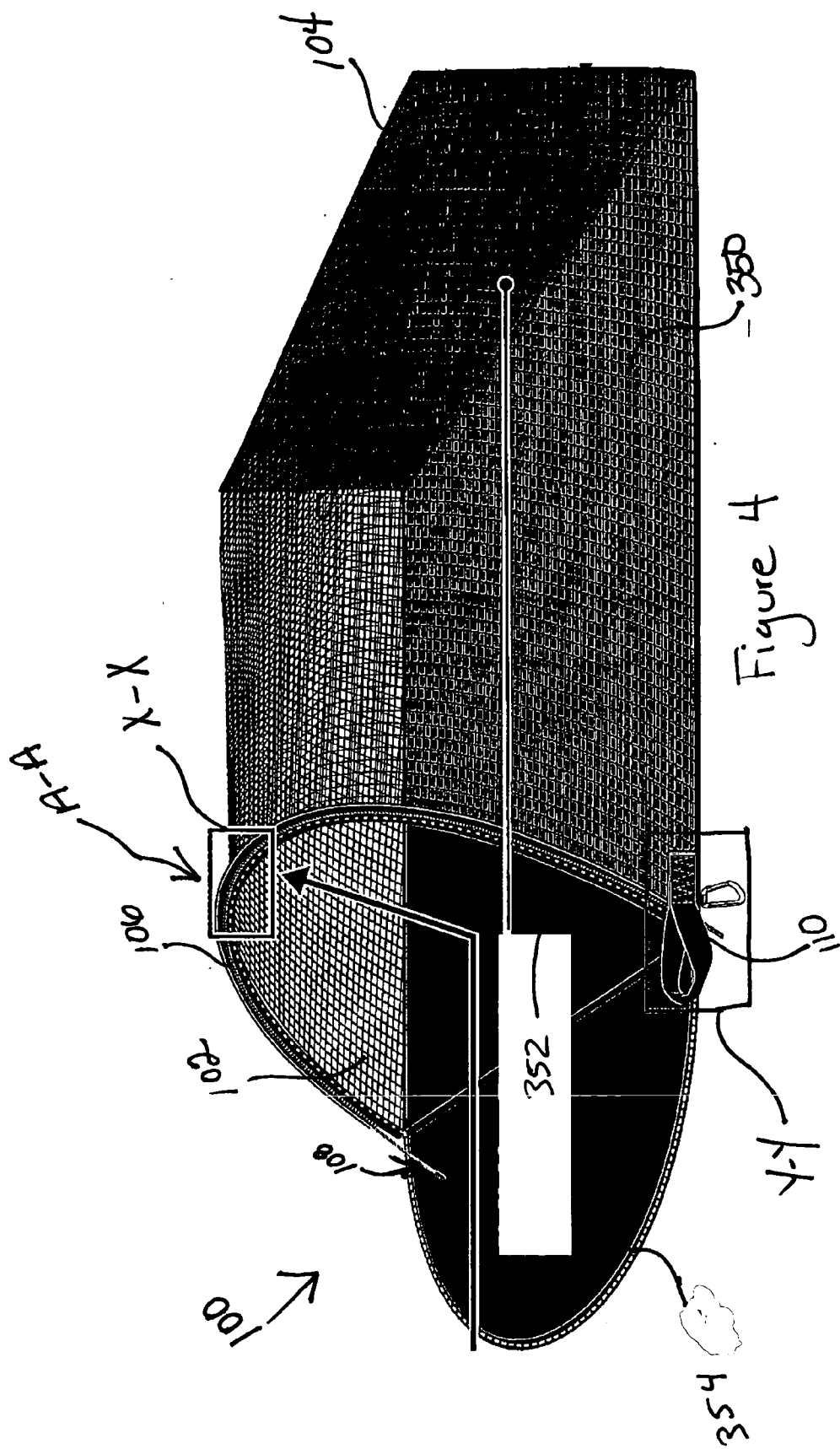
Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



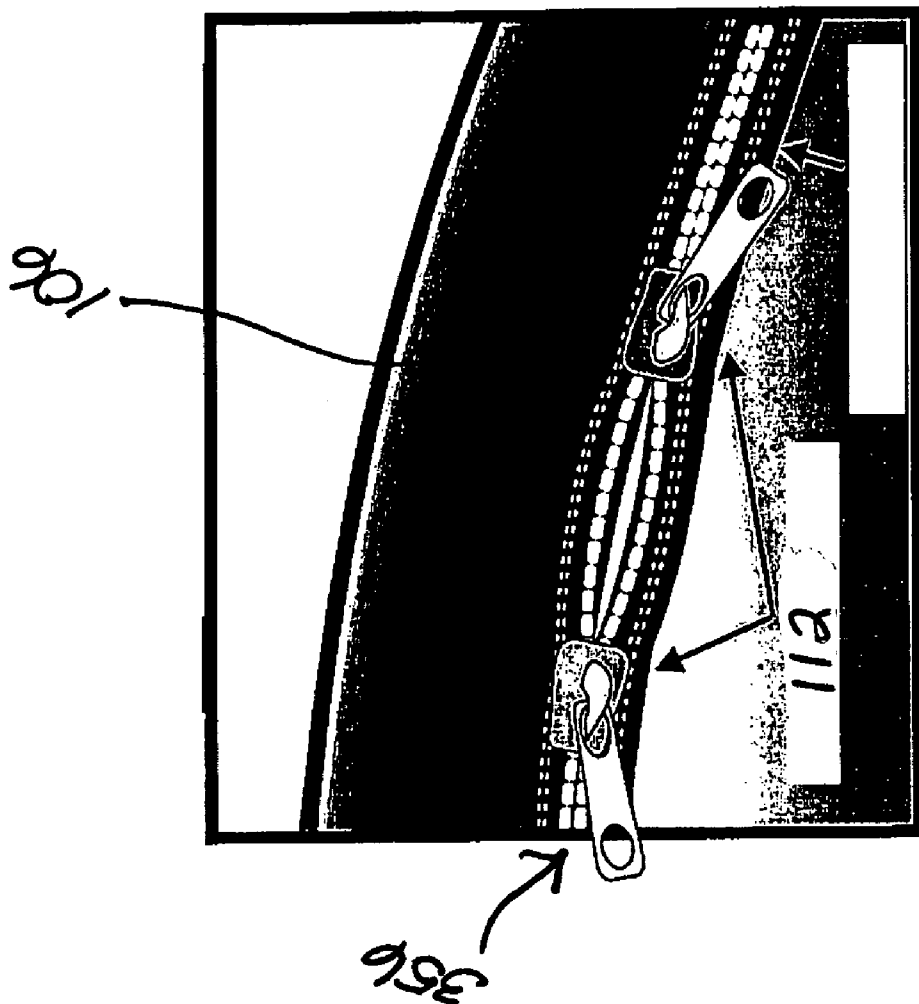


Figure 5

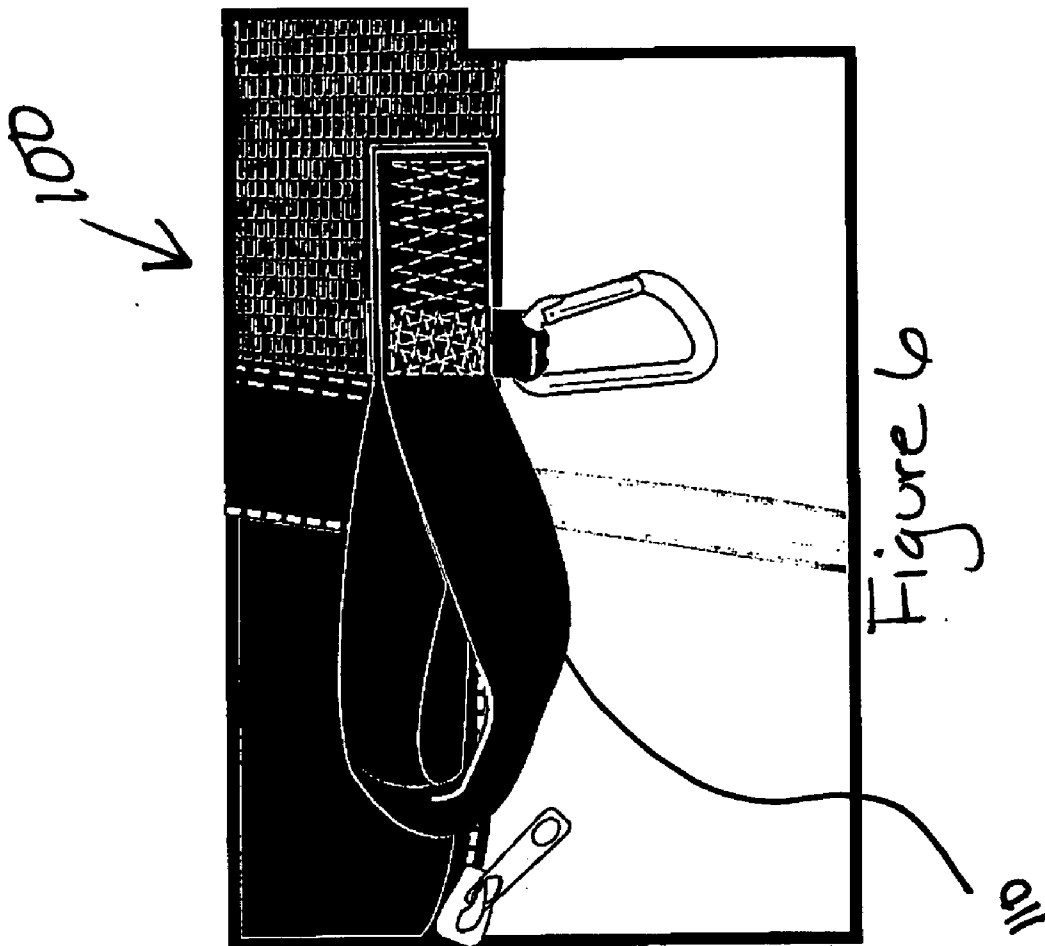




Figure 7



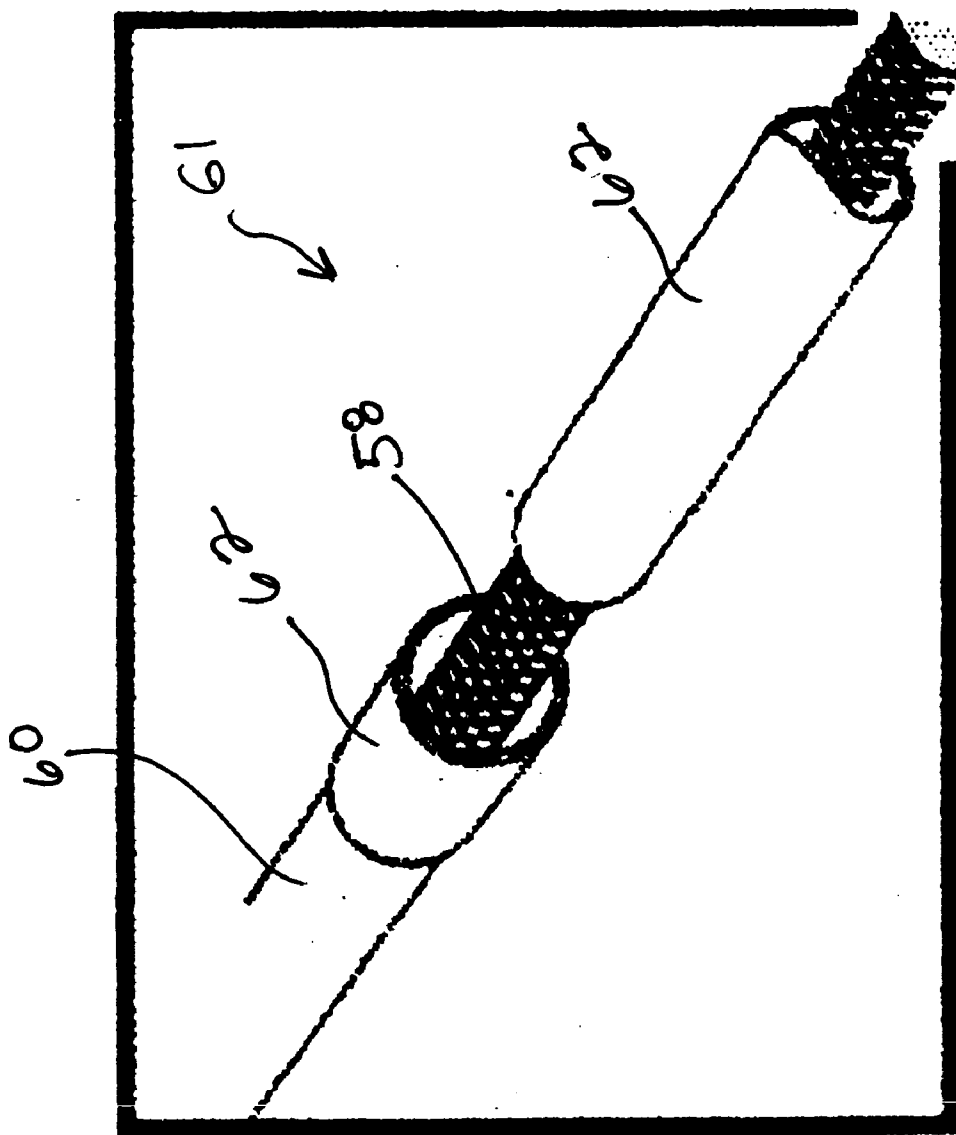


Figure 8

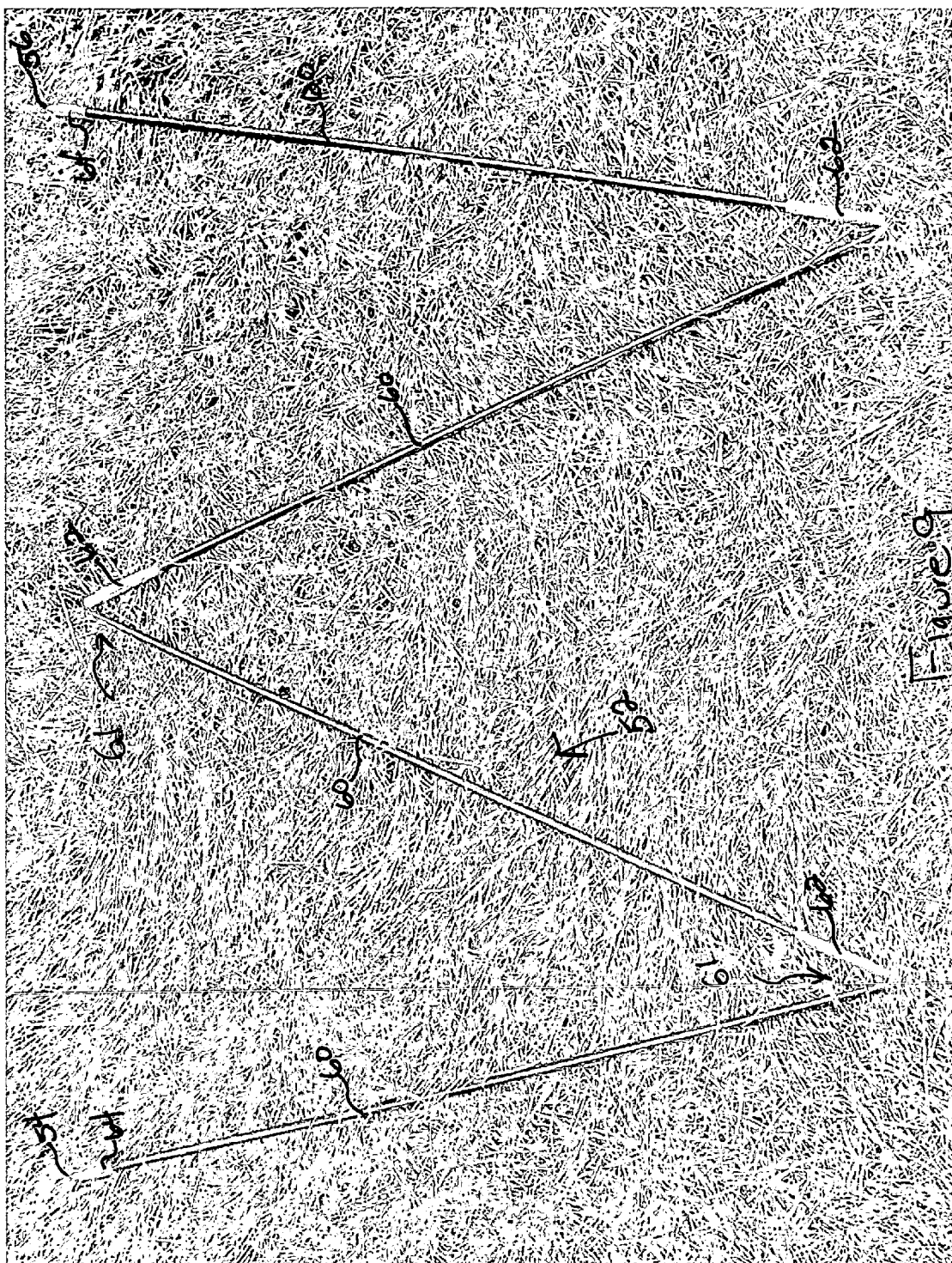


Figure 9



Figure 10

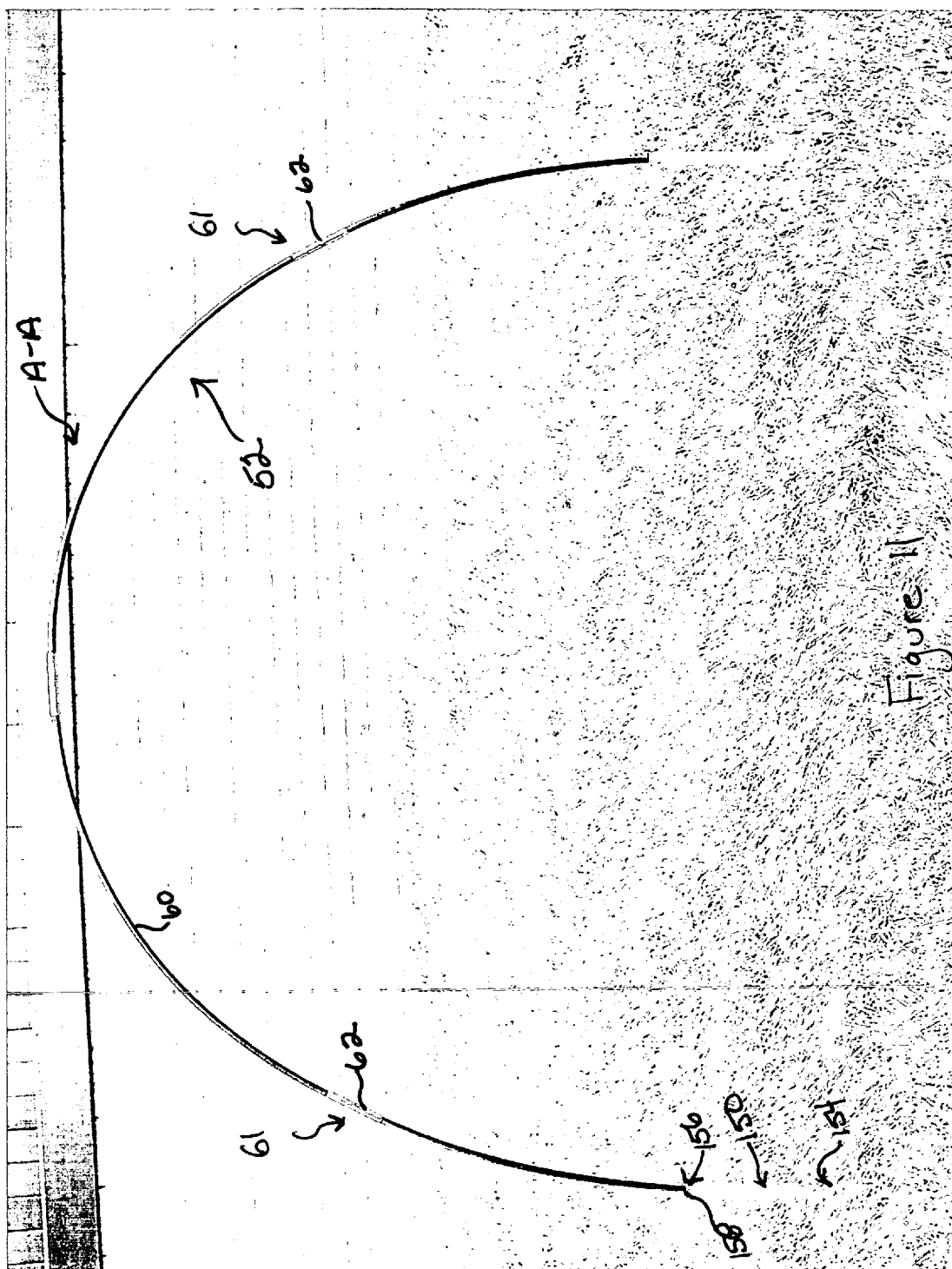


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

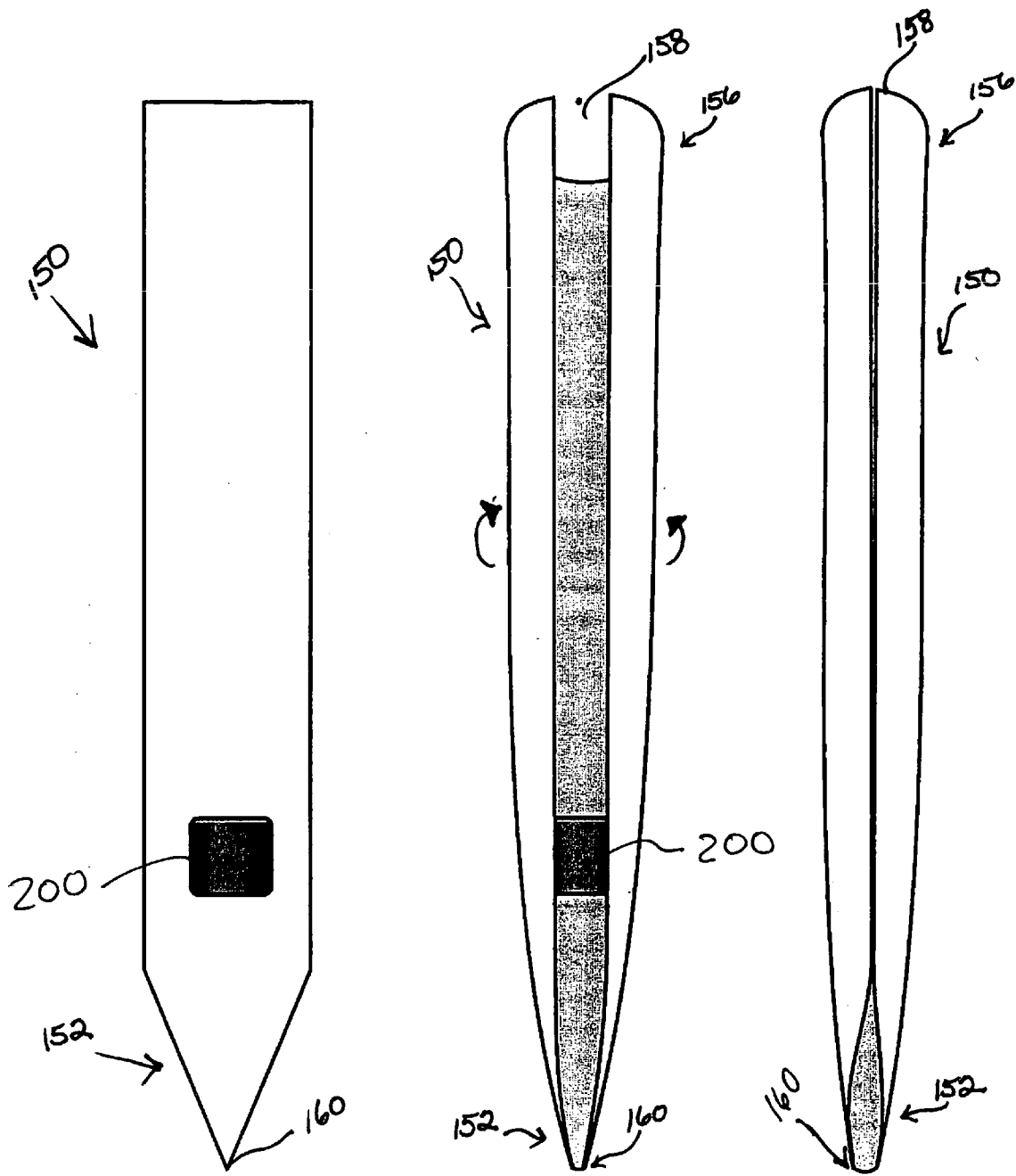


Figure 15





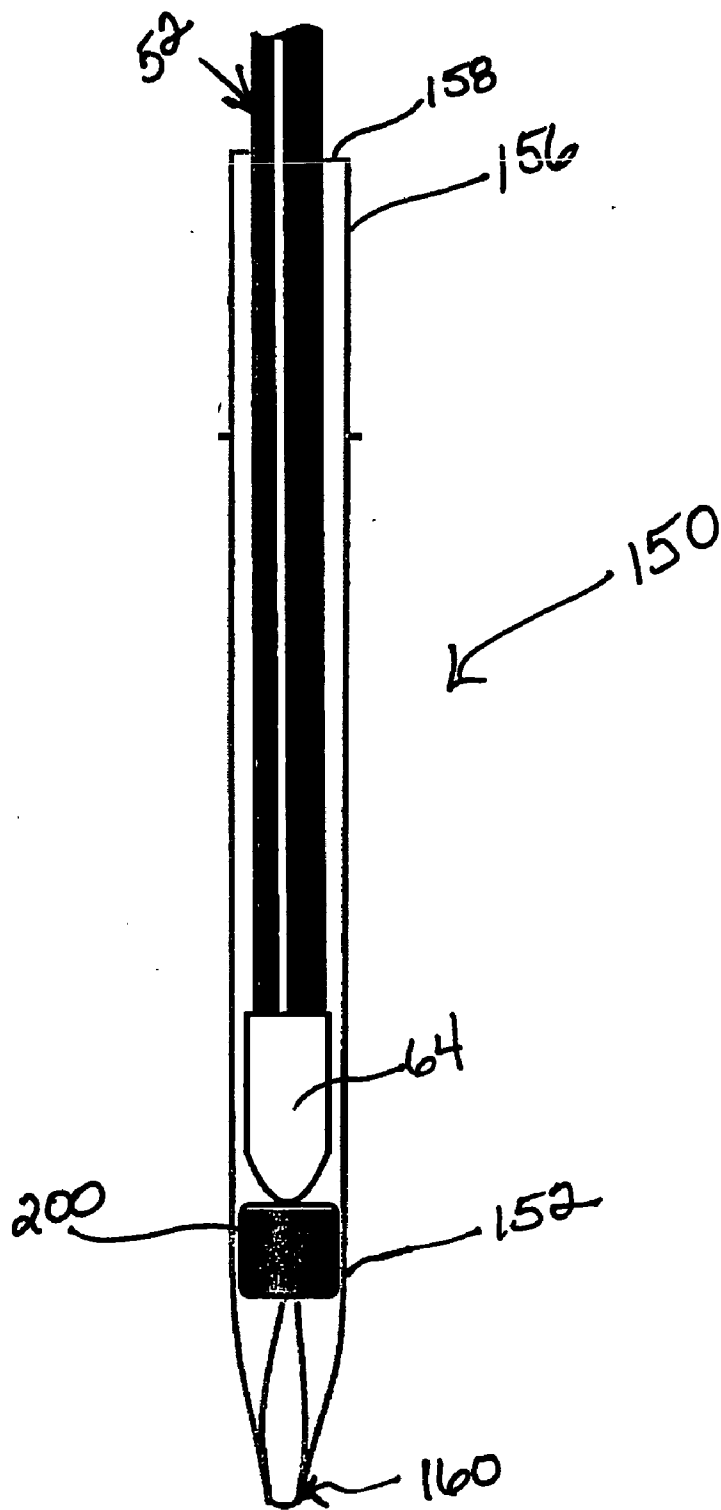


Figure 17

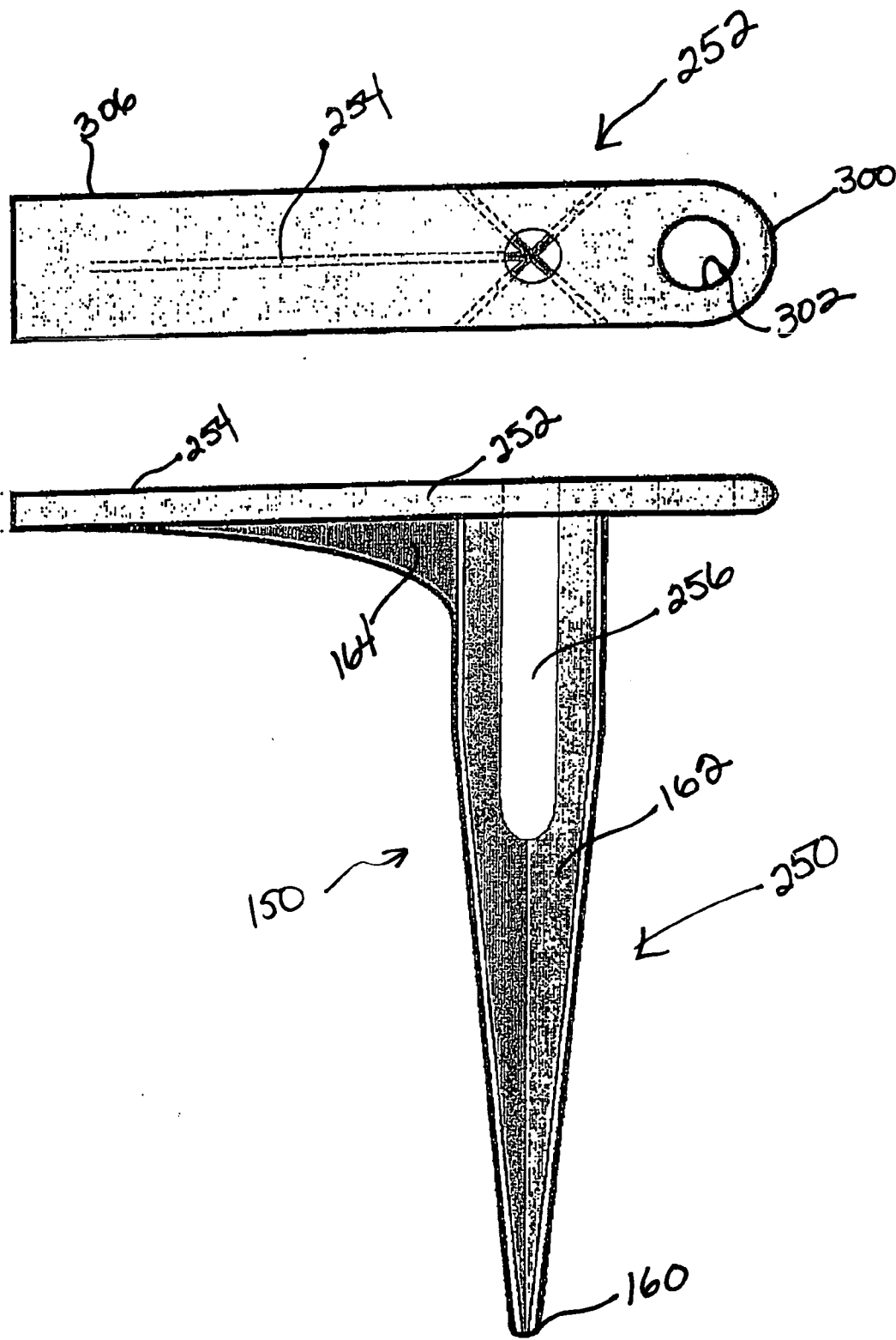


Figure 18

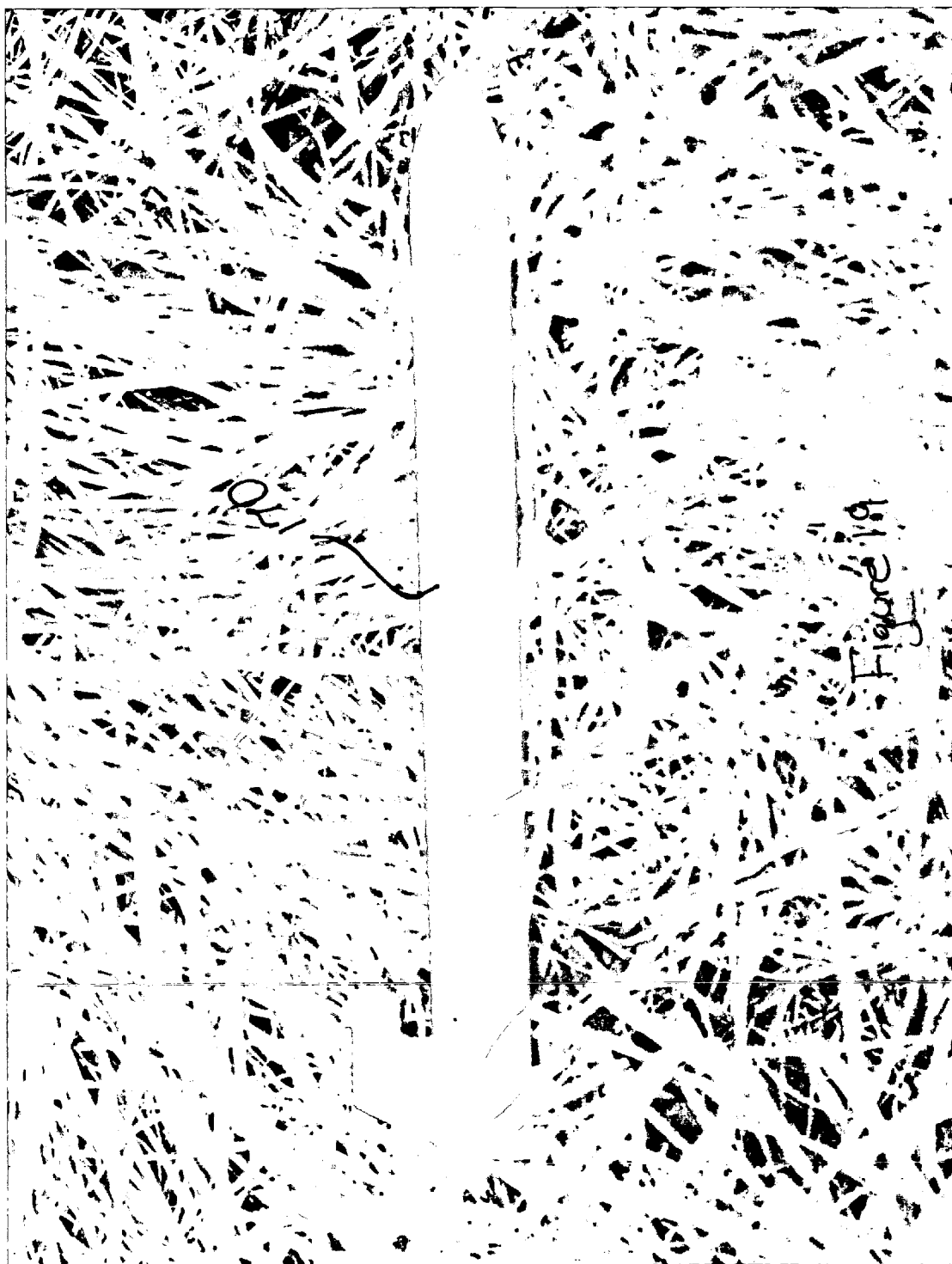


Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

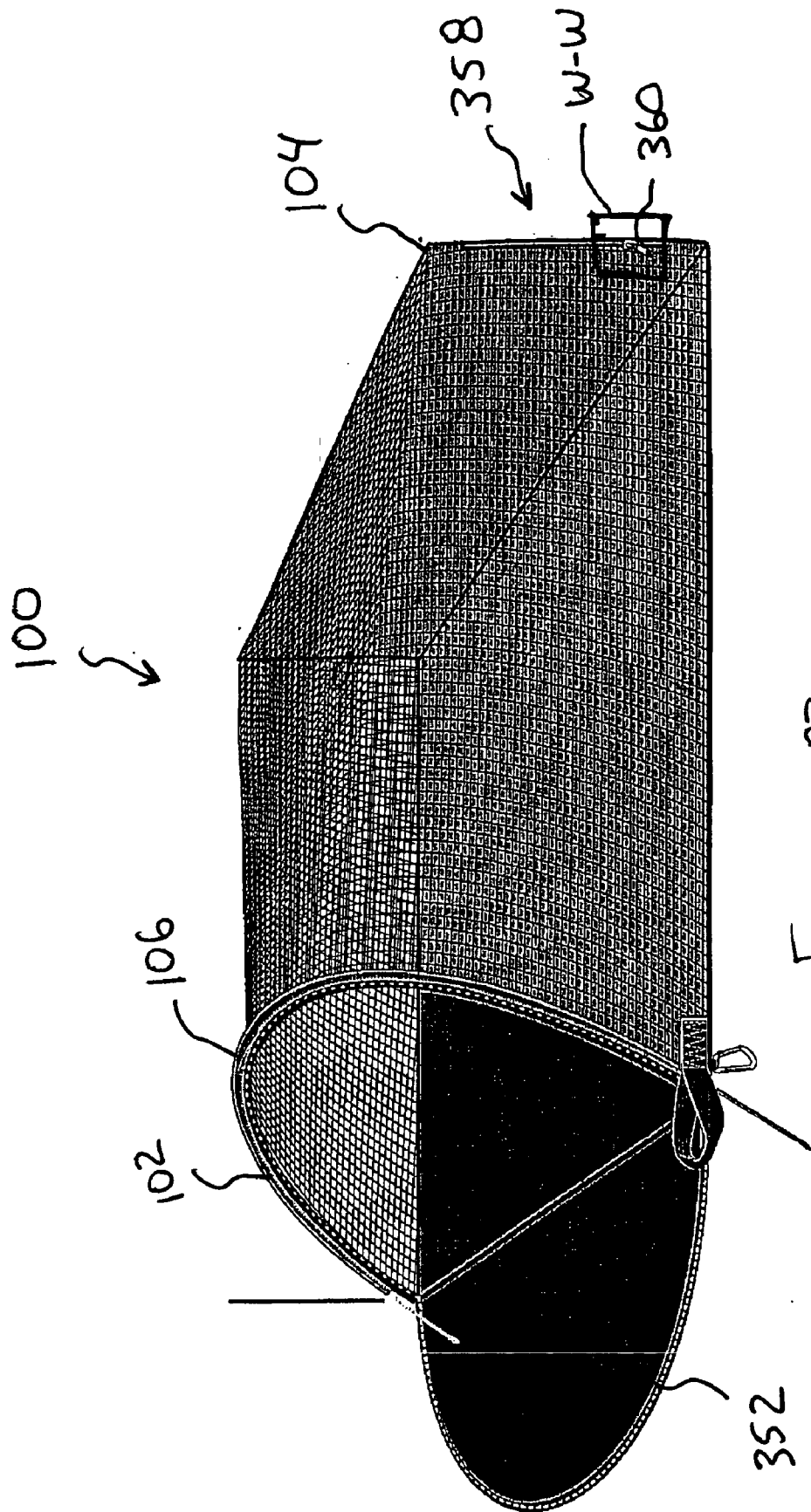


Figure 23



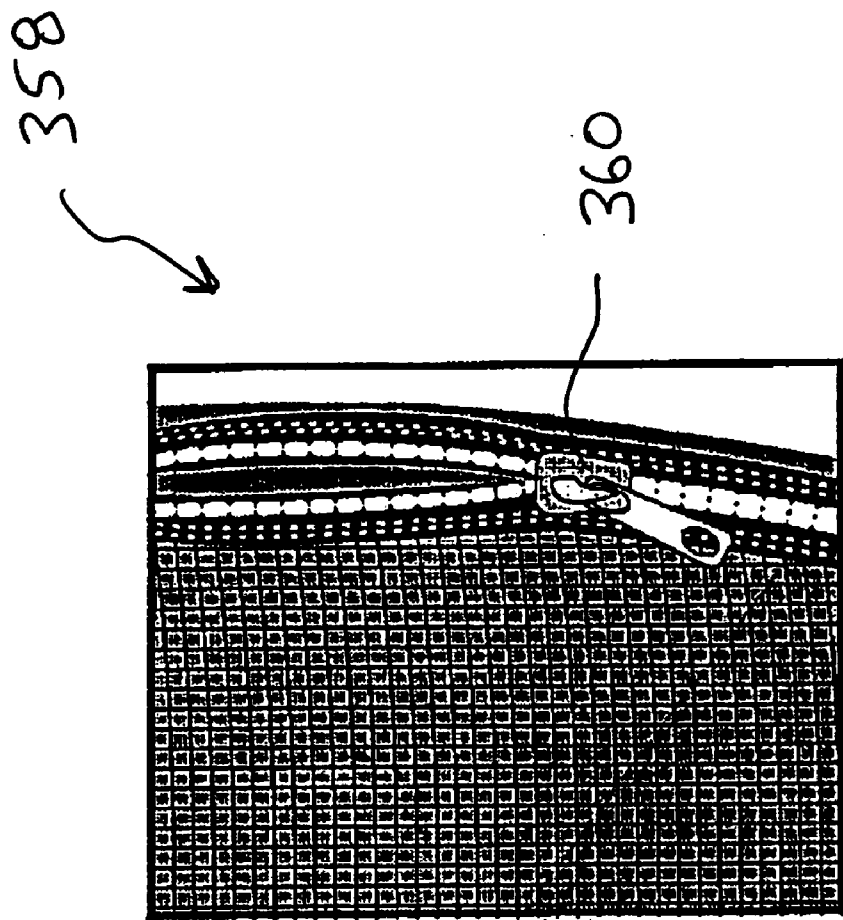


Figure 24

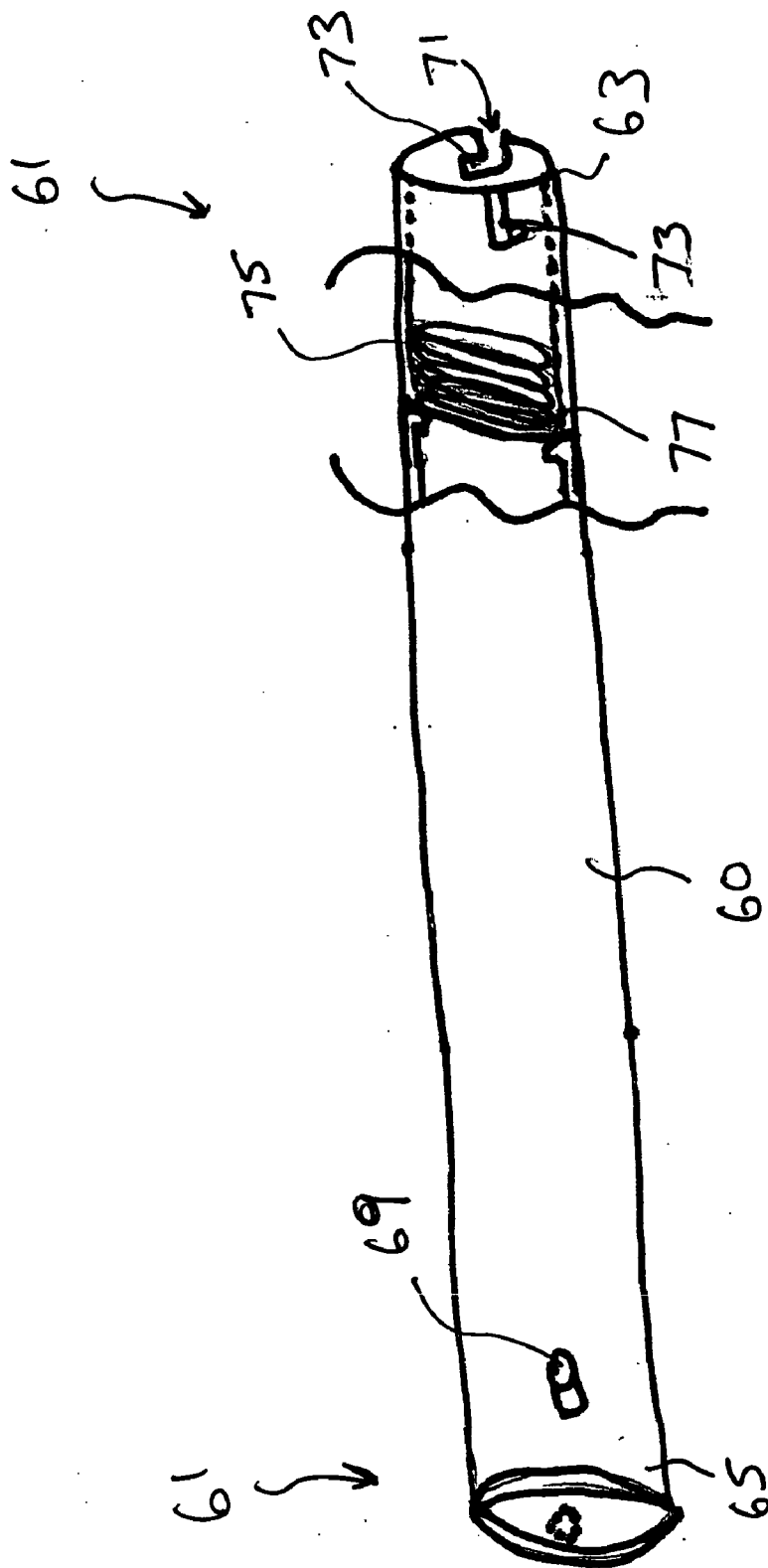


Figure 25

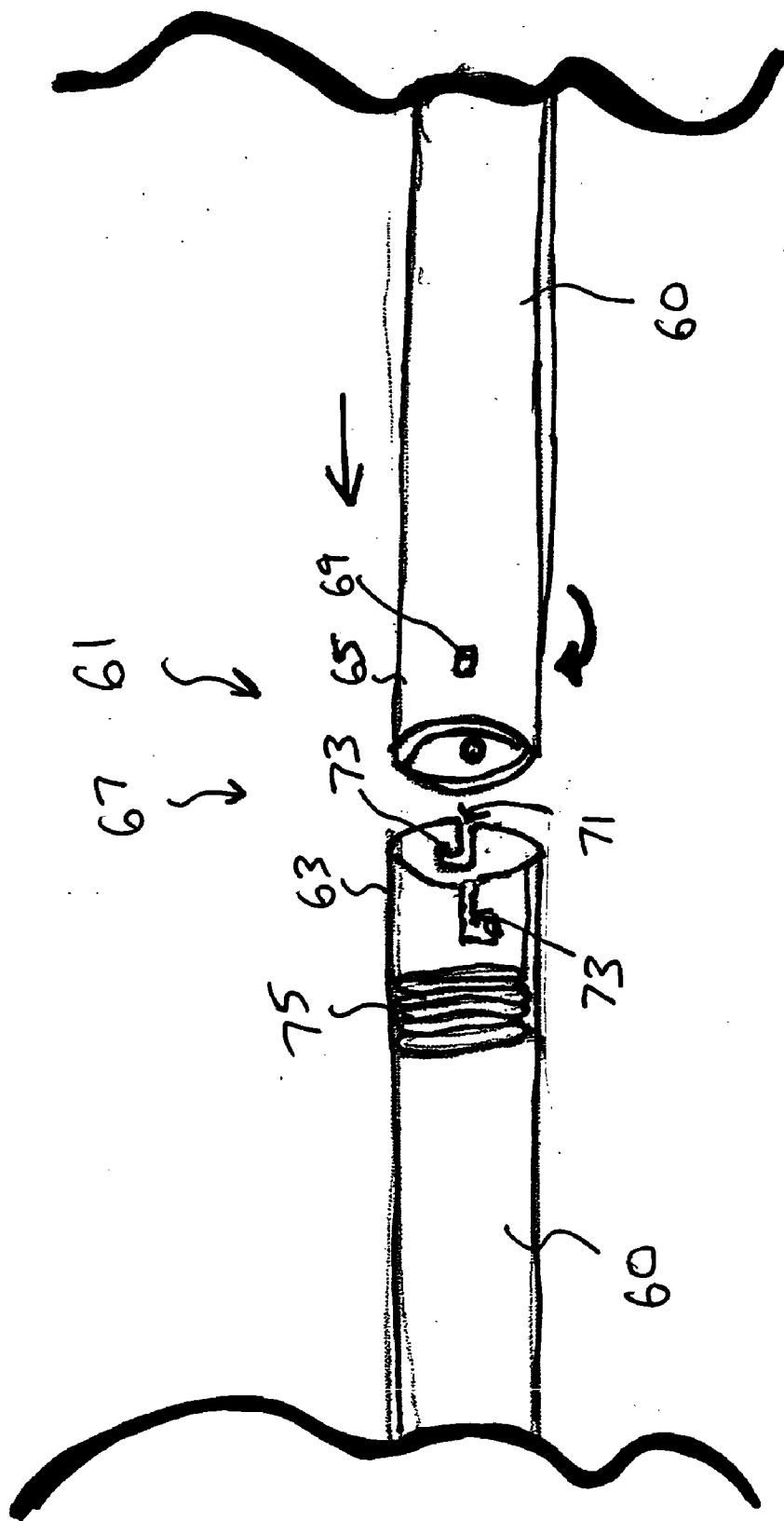


Figure 26

## LAWN DEBRIS BAG

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application 60/487,318 filed Jul. 15, 2003 and from U.S. Provisional Patent Application 60/497,986 filed Aug. 26, 2003 both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

### I. BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### [0002] A. Field of Invention

[0003] This invention pertains to the art of methods and apparatuses for debris collection systems and more specifically to methods and apparatuses for collecting, storing and disposing of lawn debris.

#### [0004] B. Description of the Related Art

[0005] The desire to maintain lawns is shared by many including home owners, businesses, national and state parks, etc. Such maintenance requires the collection and disposal of lawn debris including fallen leaves, fallen twigs, cut grass and other debris from lawn care activities. It is frequently difficult to efficiently collect and transport such debris to the place of disposal.

[0006] In an effort to minimize these difficulties, various lawn bags have been proposed for collecting lawn debris. U.S. Pat. No. 5,011,103 to Hayes et al. (Hayes), for example, discloses a collapsible frame that supports a leaf bag in an open condition to receive leaves and the like. The frame includes a flexible rod that is received within a pair of stabilizing feet. Similarly, U.S. Pat. No. 5,149,028 to Blackaby et al. (Blackaby) discloses a support frame for supporting a lawn bag on the ground with its mouth open to receive leaves raked into the bag. The support frame includes a flexible rod that fits within a clip member.

[0007] The support frames for lawn bags provided by Hayes, Blackaby and others may work according to their intended purpose. However, these known devices share the problem of being difficult to disassemble and difficult to store when not in use. The flexible rods used by such known devices are particularly cumbersome to maneuver after use and for storage. Thus, what is needed is a lawn debris bag that can easily be set-up on the ground to receive lawn debris but that can also be easily disassembled into readily manageable components.

[0008] Another problem with known lawn bag systems is the difficulty in securing the bag to the ground. This difficulty is magnified when the lawn bag is used with especially hard ground. Hayes does not address this problem as the stabilizing feet that receive the flexible rod are free to move relative to the ground. The ends of the flexible rod of Blackaby can be inserted into the ground. However, no provision is made for especially hard ground where the insertion of the flexible rod into the ground would be very difficult. What is needed is a lawn debris bag that can easily be secured to the ground surface, whether the ground surface is soft or hard.

[0009] The invention of this patent application overcomes these problems and provides a lawn debris bag that can easily be set-up on and secured to the ground, whether soft or hard, and can also be easily disassembled into readily manageable components using a sectional flexible support pole.

### II. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] According to one aspect of this invention, a lawn debris bag includes a support pole having first and second ends, a bag member having a first open end and a second closed end, and a method for engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground. The preferred support pole is used to hold the first end of the bag member in an open and upright position. The preferred support pole also can be positioned into a first condition where the pole defines a continuous line or curve and a second condition where the pole components are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other.

[0011] According to another aspect of this invention, the support pole may include a plurality of sheath members with each sheath member having a female end and a male end. The female end of one sheath member receives a male end of another sheath member with a notch-in-groove connection.

[0012] According to another aspect of this invention, the support pole may include: (a) an elastic cord; (b) multiple sheath members that receive the elastic cord; and, (c) multiple collar members that receive the elastic cord. A first collar member can be located between a first and a second sheath member to connect the first and second sheath members together. A second collar member can be located between the second and a third sheath member to connect the second and third sheath members together.

[0013] According to still another aspect of this invention, the preferred method for engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground includes: (a) providing a first peg member having a first end that can be inserted into the ground and a second end with an opening that receives the first end of the support pole; and, (b) a second peg member having a first end that can be inserted into the ground and a second end with an opening that receives the second end of the support pole.

[0014] According to another aspect of this invention, a preferred method of using a lawn debris bag is provided. This preferred method includes the following steps: 1) providing a support pole that has first and second ends and that includes first, second and third sheath members; 2) providing a bag member that has a first open end and a second closed end where the first end has a sleeve; 3) positioning the support pole into a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve; 4) inserting the support pole into the sleeve in the bag member to hold the first end of the bag member in an open and upright position; 5) engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground; 6) removing the support pole from the ground and from the sleeve in the bag member; and, 7) positioning the support pole into a second condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other.

[0015] According to still another aspect of this invention, a preferred method of engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground includes the following steps: 1) providing first and second peg members each having first and second ends; 2) inserting the first end of the first peg member into the ground; 3) inserting the first end of the support pole into an opening in the second end of the

first peg member; 4) inserting the first end of the second peg member into the ground; and, 5) inserting the second end of the support pole into an opening in the second end of the second peg member.

[0016] One advantage of this invention is that the lawn debris bag can easily be set-up but can also be easily disassembled into readily manageable components. This easy set-up/disassembly advantage helps the end operator as well as retail stores that may display the lawn debris bag of this invention.

[0017] Another advantage of this invention is that the lawn debris bag can easily be secured to the ground surface, whether the ground surface is soft or hard.

[0018] Still another advantage of this invention is that the lawn debris bag can be emptied at either end.

[0019] Still other benefits and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which it pertains upon a reading and understanding of the following detailed specification.

### III. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The invention may take physical form in certain parts and arrangement of parts, a preferred embodiment of which will be described in detail in this specification and illustrated in the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof and wherein:

[0021] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the inventive lawn debris bag of FIG. 13 with an operator positioned to place lawn debris into the lawn debris bag.

[0022] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the inventive lawn debris bag of FIG. 1 shown in its storage packaging when not in use.

[0023] FIG. 3 is a view of the inventive lawn debris bag of FIG. 2 removed from its packaging.

[0024] FIG. 4 is a perspective schematic representation of the inventive lawn debris bag of FIG. 1 showing the closeable section in an open position.

[0025] FIG. 5 is an exploded view of portion X-X shown in FIG. 4 showing the preferred double slide zipper used as the securing means.

[0026] FIG. 6 is an exploded view of portion Y-Y shown in FIG. 4 showing one of the handles.

[0027] FIG. 7 shows the operator of FIG. 1 assembling the inventive lawn debris bag according to one method by connecting sheath members together using a collar member.

[0028] FIG. 8 is an exploded schematic view of portion Z-Z shown in FIG. 7 showing how one embodiment of the support pole is designed.

[0029] FIG. 9 is a top view showing the sheath members and collar members of one embodiment of the support pole prior to connecting the sheath members together.

[0030] FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing the support pole assembled and defining a continuous line.

[0031] FIG. 11 is a perspective view showing the support pole assembled and defining a curve.

[0032] FIG. 12 is a perspective view showing the end of the support pole, with a cap, positioned to be inserted into the sleeve of the bag member.

[0033] FIG. 13 is a perspective view showing the support pole being inserted into the sleeve of the bag member.

[0034] FIG. 14 is a perspective view of an operator beginning to place one end of the support pole into the ground.

[0035] FIG. 15 shows three stages in the process of forming a first embodiment peg member having a stop member.

[0036] FIG. 16 is a perspective view of an end of the support pole positioned to be inserted into a second embodiment peg member.

[0037] FIG. 17 is a schematic representation of an end of the support pole positioned within the second embodiment peg member.

[0038] FIG. 18 shows top and side views of a third embodiment peg member.

[0039] FIG. 19 is a side view of a conventional stake that can optionally be used to pilot holes into the ground that receive the ends of the support pole.

[0040] FIG. 20 is a perspective view of an operator beginning to remove the support pole from the ground.

[0041] FIG. 21 shows an operator pulling the inventive lawn debris bag by the handles toward a vehicle.

[0042] FIG. 22 shows an operator preparing to attach the inventive lawn debris bag to the transport vehicle with a hook member.

[0043] FIG. 23 is a perspective schematic representation similar to that shown in FIG. 4 but showing an alternate embodiment where the lawn debris bag has opening means at the second end of the bag member.

[0044] FIG. 24 is an exploded view of portion W-W shown in FIG. 23 showing the preferred zipper used to secure the opening means.

[0045] FIG. 25 is a side view of another embodiment for the support pole with a portion shown cut-a-way to show how the spring is received within the sheath member.

[0046] FIG. 26 is a perspective schematic representation showing how the sheath members of FIG. 25 are connected together.

### IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0047] Referring now to the drawings wherein the showings are for purposes of illustrating a preferred embodiment of the invention only and not for purposes of limiting the same, FIGS. 1 and 4 show a device 50 for holding lawn debris such as leaves, twigs, grass cuttings, mulch and other debris from lawn care activities. The inventive device 50 may also be used to hold other types of debris chosen with sound judgment. The device 50 includes a support pole 52 having first and second ends 54, 56, a bag member 100 having a first open end 102 and a second closed end 104, and

ground engaging means **108** for use in engaging the first and second ends **54, 56** of the support pole **52** into the ground **154**.

[0048] With reference now to **FIGS. 4 and 8-9**, in a first embodiment the support pole **52** includes a plurality of sheath members **60** and connecting means **61** for selectively connecting the sheath members **60** together. In this first embodiment, the connecting means **61** includes an elastic cord **58** that is received by the plurality of sheath members **60** that receive and a plurality of collar members **62** that also receive the elastic cord **58**. By “receiving” the elastic cord **58**, it is meant that the elastic cord **58** is positioned within the sheath members **60** and the collar members **62**, as shown. In the preferred embodiment, each end **54, 56** of the support pole has a cap **64**. A cap **64** fits over the end of each distal sheath member **60** and serves to maintain the sheath members **60** and the collar members **62** on the elastic cord **58**. The cap **64** also is used to assist with the ground engaging means **108** as will be discussed further below.

[0049] With reference now to **FIGS. 7-9**, to connect one sheath member **60** to a neighboring sheath member **60**, the collar member **62** positioned between the two sheath members is used. More specifically, the collar member **62** has an opening on one end that receives a first sheath member **60** and another opening on the other end that receives the neighboring sheath member **60**. This connection between an end of a sheath member **60** and an opening in the collar member **62** is a press-fit connection that forms a rigid connection that permits the support pole **52** to be used to hold the first end **102** of the bag member **100** in an open and upright position as shown in **FIGS. 1 and 4**. However, the press-fit connection can be easily disconnected, when desired, by pulling the sheath member **60** away from the collar member **62**. When disconnected, as shown in **FIG. 9**, the sheath members **60** and collar members **62** can be positioned side by side by simply bending the portion of the elastic cord **58** that is not, at that time, received within the sheath members **60** and collar members **62**. This design feature, as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 3**, makes storage of the support pole very easy to accomplish and assures that only minimal space is required for storage.

[0050] With reference now to **FIGS. 2-4, 8 and 10-11**, as a result of this inventive support pole design, the support pole **52** is selectively positionable into a first condition, where the sheath members **60** and collar members **62** are arranged to define a continuous line, such as shown in **FIG. 10**, or a curve such as shown in **FIGS. 4 and 11**. To support this curved arrangement, it is preferred that the sheath members **60** be formed of a flexible material such as fiberglass, plastic or other material chosen with sound engineering judgment. However, it is also preferred that the sheath members **60** return to their natural generally linear form when they are not under loads that force them into the curved arrangement. When in this first condition A-A, the support pole **52** is ideal for insertion into the bag member **100** and for maintaining the bag member **100** in an open and upright position. The support pole **52** is also selectively positionable into a second condition where the sheath members **60** are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other, such as shown in **FIG. 3**. When in this second condition B-B, the support pole **52** is ideal for insertion into a storage container, as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 3**.

[0051] With reference now to **FIGS. 25-26**, in a second embodiment the support pole **52** is again formed of a plurality of sheath members **60** and connecting means **61** for selectively connecting the sheath members **60** together. For this embodiment, however, there is no need for an elastic cord or a plurality of collar members. Instead, each of the sheath members **60** has a first female **63** end and a second male end **65**. The first female end **63** of one sheath member **60** is adapted to receive the second male end **65** of another sheath member **60**. Preferably the connecting means **61** for this embodiment uses a notch-in-groove connection **67**. By notch-in-groove connection it is meant that one sheath member **60** has a notch **69** (or pin, or extension) that is received within a groove **71** in a neighboring sheath member **60**. The notch-in-groove connection **67** forms a rigid connection that permits the support pole **52** to be used to hold the first end **102** of the bag member **100** in an open and upright position as shown in **FIGS. 1 and 4**. However, the notch-in-groove connection **67** can be easily disconnected, when desired, with a turn and pull motion as will be described further below.

[0052] With continuing reference to **FIGS. 25-26**, each notch **69** may extend from the outer surface of the male end **65**. Preferably, as shown, two notches **69** extending oppositely from the sheath member **60** are used. However, one such notch or any number of notches chosen with sound engineering judgment will work with this invention. The preferred groove **71** is L-shaped, as shown, in order to create a groove leg **73** that is not parallel with the axis of the sheath member **60**. Most preferably, the groove leg **73** is angled with respect to the axis of the sheath member at 90 degrees, as shown, or greater. In this way, when the notch **69** is received within the groove leg **73**, it will not easily “fall out” of the groove **71** unless so intended by the operator. To further secure the notch **69** within the groove **71**, an optional spring member **75** may be positioned within the female end **63** of each sheath member **60**. The spring member **75** receives the male end of the neighboring sheath member **60** and biases the neighboring sheath member **60** away from the female end **63**. This biasing force helps maintain the notch **69** within the groove leg **73**. The spring member is supported within the female end **63** with a shelf **77** positioned within the sheath member, as shown. Except as just described, the overall design and operation of the second embodiment support pole is similar to that described elsewhere regarding the first embodiment support pole.

[0053] With reference now to **FIGS. 4 and 14-18**, the ground engaging means **108** of this invention can be used with two different ground conditions—a relatively soft ground surface and a relatively hard ground surface. When the ground surface is relatively soft, then the previously described caps **64** can be inserted directly into the ground **154** to secure the bag member **100** to the ground **154**. As shown, the caps **64** have a narrowing end that is ideally designed for insertion into the ground **154**.

[0054] With continuing reference to **FIGS. 4 and 14-19**, when the ground surface is relatively hard, such as clay or densely packed soil, four embodiments are provided. The first three embodiments use a peg member **150** to engage and support the first and second ends **54, 56** of the support pole **52** into the ground. The first embodiment peg member **150** is shown in **FIG. 15**, the second embodiment peg member **150** is shown in **FIGS. 16-17**, and the third embodiment peg

member is shown in FIG. 18. For the first three embodiments, each peg member 150 has a first end 152 adapted to be inserted into the ground 154 and a second end 156 with an opening 158 that receives either end of the support pole 52.

[0055] With reference now to FIG. 15, the first embodiment peg member 150 is formed of a generally planar material, as shown in the far left portion of FIG. 15, that is rolled or curved, as illustrated in the middle portion of FIG. 15, to form a peg having a generally circular cross section, as shown in the far right portion of FIG. 15. While any material chosen with sound engineering judgment may be used, this first embodiment peg member 150 is preferably formed of a sheet steel. Preferably, the first end narrows to a point 160, as shown, to make it easier for the first end to bore a hole as the peg member 150 is forced downward and inserted into the ground, point first. It is also preferred that a stop member 200 be positioned within the peg member 150, as shown. This stop member 200 is used to limit or stop the motion of the support pole 52 as the support pole 52 is inserted into the opening 158 in the peg member 150. In other words, the tip of the cap 64 contacts and rests against the stop member 200. The stop member 200 can be formed of any material chosen with sound engineering judgment including metal, plastic, and rubber.

[0056] With reference now to FIGS. 16-17, the second embodiment peg member 150 operates and is used just like the first embodiment peg member. However, the second embodiment peg member 150 is formed in an extrusion process. Preferably, this peg member also includes a stop member 200. The tip of the cap 64 contacts and rests against the stop member 200, as shown in FIG. 17.

[0057] With reference now to FIG. 18, the third embodiment peg member 150 has a leg portion 250 adapted to be forced into the ground, a bracket portion 252 that extends from the leg portion 250 and defines a force receiving section 254, and a leg opening 256 that extends through the leg portion 250 and the bracket portion 252. Preferably, the leg portion 250 has at least one fin 162 (four shown) narrowing to a point 160 at one end of the leg portion 250. These fins 162 make it easier for the leg portion 250 to bore a hole as the peg member 150 is forced downward into the ground, point first. It is contemplated that the fin 162 (or fins) could have various designs and dimensions. However, a fin is not required for this invention. The leg opening 256 extends from the top section of the leg portion 250 down into the leg portion interior and is adapted to receive either end of the support pole 52. Preferably, the bracket portion 252 of each peg member 150 includes a first end 300 having a hole 302 that is adapted to receive an associated cord, rope, handle or the like, and a second end 306 defining the force receiving section 254. The force receiving section 254 is intended for use as the portion of the peg member 150 that the operator applies the force to, such as with the operator's foot or with a separate tool, in order to insert the peg member 150 into the ground. Most preferably, the leg opening 256 is positioned between the first and second ends of the bracket portion 252. An additional support portion 164 is preferred and shown as a form of webbing that strengthens the rigidity of the connection between the leg portion 250 and the bracket portion 252. It is contemplated that the support portion 164 could have various designs and dimensions. However, the support portion is not required for this inven-

tion. Preferably the second embodiment peg member 150 is formed as one continuous piece that is formed of plastic in a molded plastic process. However, it should be understood that the peg member 150 can be formed of any material and with any method chosen with sound engineering judgment.

[0058] With reference now to FIGS. 4 and 19, the fourth embodiment for use with a relatively hard ground surface, uses a stake 170, such as a conventional tent-peg type stake 170 shown in FIG. 19. More specifically, the stake 170 is driven into the ground on one side of the open end 102 of the bag member 100 and then removed from the ground. This may be repeated on the other side of the open end 102 of the bag member 100. In this way the stake 170 is used to pilot holes into the hard ground. Once these holes in the ground have been formed, the first and second ends of the support pole are inserted into them. With reference now to FIGS. 1, 4-5, 13 and 23-24, the first end 102 of the bag member 100 preferably includes a sleeve 106 for receiving the support pole 52. The sleeve 106 may be a continuous loop, as shown, or alternatively the sleeve 106 may be composed of multiple smaller loops arranged about the first end 102 of the bag member 100. Preferably, the sleeve 106 is formed of a flexible material. The first open end 102 may be selectively closeable as will be discussed further below. The second closed end 104 may be fixedly and permanently closed so as to hold lawn debris. However, in an alternate embodiment, shown in FIGS. 23-24, opening means 358 is provided for selectively opening the second end of the bag member 100. This opening means 358 is preferably formed using a zipper 360, as shown. Other known devices, such as snaps, may be used for this opening means 358.

[0059] With reference now to FIG. 4, the bag member 100 may also have a top portion 350 and a bottom portion 352. The bottom portion 352 may be constructed from a durable material and may be formed of a solid material in that it may not allow small particles to flow through it. In other words, the preferred bottom portion material will hold in small debris as well as large debris. The bottom material may be a tarp-like material, and in the preferred embodiment, the bottom portion 352 is made out of Polytuf®, a woven reinforced plastic. In this way the bottom portion 352 can withstand a lot of abuse and abrasion.

[0060] With continuing reference to FIG. 4, the top portion 350 may be constructed from a mesh-like material. The mesh-like material may be lighter in material weight than the bottom portion. It is noted that any material may be chosen with sound engineering judgment for use on the top and bottom portions 350, 352 of the bag member 100 as is consistent with the subject invention. It is also to be noted that the material for the top and bottom portions 350, 352 may be flexible. In this manner, the bag member 100 may be collapsible and foldable. Therefore the device 50 may be folded and stored in a container for storage, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. Any type of container may be chosen with sound engineering judgment including but not limited to a bag or box.

[0061] With reference now to FIGS. 4-5, the first open end 102 may include a selectively closeable section 354, which may extend along the full length of the first open end 102. However, any length or section of the first open end 102 may be selectively open-able or closeable. The closeable section 354 may include a zipper member 112 that zips closed. Most

preferably two zipper members are used, as shown in FIG. 5. Alternately, snaps may be used to close the first open end 102. However, it should be noted that any means for securely selectively opening/closing the first open end 102 chosen with sound engineering judgment would work well with this invention.

[0062] With reference now to FIGS. 1 and 4, as noted above, the support pole 52 is used to hold the first end 102 of the bag member 100 in an open and upright position. The use of the support pole 52 means that the first open end 102 may be retained in an open configuration without the help of the operator. This allows the operator to gather debris, with a rake or other hand tool for example, and channel or sweep the debris easily into the device 50 without having to hold open the bag member 100. This is shown in FIG. 1 and works with either support pole embodiment.

[0063] With reference now to FIGS. 4, 6 and 21, the bag member 100 may also include one or more handles 110. The handles 110 may be secured to any portion of the bag member 100. However, in one embodiment, the handles 110 are fashioned as an extension from the corners of the bag member 100. The handles 110 may be fixedly sewn onto the material that constructs either the top or bottom portions 350, 352 of the bag member 100. The handles 110 may be used to pull or transport the device 50 such as when transporting debris to a vehicle 400 as shown in FIG. 21. In another embodiment, the handles 110 may be used to secure the device 50 to a transportation vehicle 400, which may be a trailer or truck or other vehicle. The handles 110 may be secured to the vehicle 400 to keep the debris from blowing away during transportation.

[0064] With reference to FIG. 4, the lawn debris bag device 50 of this invention has at least two key applications. One use is residential, around homes, and the second use is with commercial establishments. In many states the laws require that all loads, including lawn debris, must be covered or contained when being transported by a vehicle—especially “on road” applications. Sometimes these laws also prevent persons from placing grass bags into a landfill. The lawn debris bag 50 of this invention is ideal to properly conform to both of these types of laws—it attaches to the vehicle 400 and/or a trailer so that the debris is easily covered. Since the debris is simply emptied out of the lawn debris bag 50 (the lawn debris bag is reusable), no bags are placed in a landfill (or otherwise disposed of).

[0065] With reference now to FIGS. 4 and 21-22, the inventor contemplates providing lawn debris bags 50 made at a various specific sizes. Preferably, at least some of these sizes are appropriate to attach to a lawn care trailer and/or the back of a vehicle 400 such as a pick-up truck. In one embodiment, the lawn debris bag 50 can be selectively attached to the tailgate of the pick-up truck (or other vehicle). In a preferred embodiment, a plurality of hook members 402 is used to attach the device 50 to the vehicle 400. Alternatively or in addition as noted above, the handles 110 may be used to attach the device 50 to the vehicle 400 or trailer. The truck or trailer may have a tail gate (or drop-down gate). In use, the operator may put the gate down so that lawn mowers and other equipment can be rolled (taken) off. Then, the lawn debris bag 50 may be attached to the gate.

[0066] With reference now to all the FIGURES, the use of the lawn debris bag 50 of this invention will now be

described. The lawn debris bag 50 is first transported to the location where it will be used. The various sheath members 60 are then connected together using either of the two connecting means 61 described above. In this way, the support pole 52 is positioned into a first condition where it defines a continuous line or curve. The support pole 52 is then inserted into the sleeve 106 in the bag member 100 to hold the first end 102 of the bag member 100 in an open and upright position. Next, if the ground is relatively soft, the ends of the support pole 52 are engaged or inserted directly into the ground 154. Alternatively, if the ground is relatively hard, a pair of peg members 150 may be inserted into the ground on opposite sides of the open end 102 of the bag member 100. The ends of the support pole 52 are then engaged or inserted into the openings 158 in the peg members 150. Once the support pole 52 and bag member 100 are properly positioned and secured, the bag member 100 may be filled with lawn debris. Once filled, the closeable section 354 may be positioned over the first opening 102 and secured in place by, for example, zipping the zipper into a closed condition.

[0067] With continuing reference to all the FIGURES, to dispose of the debris within the lawn debris bag 50, the support pole 52 should be removed from the ground or from the peg members 150. If peg members 150 are used, they also should be removed from the ground. The support pole 52 can then be placed into the second condition, noted above, where the sheath members 60 are arranged such that their axes C-C are parallel with each other. This makes storage of the support pole 52 very convenient. The bag member 100 may then be transported to a disposal site where debris may be easily removed either by using the first open end 102 of the bag member 100 and/or by using the opening means 358 at the second end 104 of the bag member 100. Once the debris is removed, if the second embodiment peg members 150 are use, then a cord, rope or the like may inserted into the hole 302 to thereby tie or connect the peg members 150 to the device 50. The bag member 100 may then be folded up for storage as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3.

[0068] The preferred embodiments have been described, hereinabove. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the above methods may incorporate changes and modifications without departing from the general scope of this invention. It is intended to include all such modifications and alterations in so far as they come within the scope of the appended claims or the equivalents thereof.

I/we claim:

1. A device comprising:

a support pole having first and second ends and comprising: (a) at least first, second, and third sheath members; and, (b) connecting means for selectively connecting the first, second, and third sheath members together;

wherein the support pole is selectively positionable into (1) a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve; and, (2) a second condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other;

a bag member having a first open end and a second closed end, the first end having a sleeve for receiving the



support pole, the support pole for use in holding the first end of the bag member in an open and upright position; and,

ground engaging means for engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground.

**2.** The device of claim 1 wherein the ground engaging means comprises:

- a first peg member having a first end adapted to be inserted into the ground and a second end with an opening that receives the first end of the support pole; and,
- a second peg member having a first end adapted to be inserted into the ground and a second end with an opening that receives the second end of the support pole.

**3.** The device of claim 2 further comprising:

- a first stop member adapted to contact the first end of the support pole and positioned within the first peg member; and,
- a second stop member adapted to contact the second end of the support pole and positioned within the second peg member.

**4.** The device of claim 2 wherein the first and second peg members each comprise:

- a leg portion adapted to be forced into the ground;
- a bracket portion that extends from the leg portion and defines a force receiving section; and,
- a leg opening that extends through the leg portion and the bracket portion, the leg opening adapted to receive either end of the support pole.

**5.** The device of claim 1 wherein the ground engaging means comprises:

- a peg member used to pilot holes in the ground into which the first and second ends of the support pole are received.

**6.** The device of claim 1 wherein the first, second and third sheath members are flexible and return to a generally linear orientation after having been flexed.

**7.** The device of claim 1 wherein:

- each of the first, second and third sheath members comprises a first female end and a second male end, wherein the first female end of one sheath member is adapted to receive the second male end of another sheath member; and,
- wherein the connecting means comprises a notch-in-groove connection.

**8.** The device of claim 7 wherein the connecting means further comprises:

- a spring member positioned within the first female end of each of the first, second and third sheath members, wherein the spring member of one sheath member is adapted to receive and bias the second male end of another sheath member; and,
- at least a first notch extending from the second male end and at least a first groove formed on the first female end, wherein the first groove in one sheath member is adapted to receive the first notch from another sheath member.

**9.** The device of claim 1 wherein the connecting means comprises:

- an elastic cord that is received within the at least first, second, and third sheath members;
- at least first and second collar members that receive the elastic cord; and,

wherein the first collar member is selectively locateable between the first and second sheath members to connect the first and second sheath members together, and wherein the second collar member is selectively locateable between the second and third sheath members to connect the second and third sheath members together.

**10.** The device of claim 1 wherein the bag member has a top portion formed of a first material and a bottom portion formed of a second material that is substantially different from the first material.

**11.** The device of claim 1 wherein the bag member further comprises:

- a closeable section that is selectively positionable over the first open end of the bag member; and,
- securing means for securing the closeable section over the first open end of the bag member.

**12.** The device of claim 11 wherein the bag member further comprises:

- opening means for selectively opening the second-closed end of the bag member.

**13.** A method of using a lawn debris bag comprising the steps of:

- providing a support pole having first and second ends and comprising at least first, second, and third sheath members;
- providing a bag member having a first open end and a second closed end, the first end having a sleeve;
- positioning the support pole into a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve;
- inserting the support pole into the sleeve in the bag member to hold the first end of the bag member in an open and upright position;
- engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground;
- removing the support pole from the ground and from the sleeve in the bag member; and,
- positioning the support pole into a second condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged such that their axes are parallel with each other.

**14.** The method of claim 13 wherein the step of engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground, comprise the steps of:

- providing first and second peg members each having first and second ends;
- inserting the first end of the first peg member into the ground;
- inserting the first end of the support pole into an opening in the second end of the first peg member;

inserting the first end of the second peg member into the ground; and,

inserting the second end of the support pole into an opening in the second end of the second peg member.

**15.** The method of claim 13 wherein the step of engaging the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground, comprise the steps of:

providing a stake;

piloting holes in the ground with the stake on opposite sides of the open end of the bag member; and,

inserting the first and second ends of the support pole into the ground.

**16.** The method of claim 13 wherein before the step of removing the support pole from the ground and from the sleeve in the bag member, the method comprises the steps of:

filing the bag member with debris;

positioning a closeable section over the first opening in the bag member; and,

securing the closeable section over the first opening in the bag member.

**17.** The method of claim 16 wherein after the step of removing the support pole from the ground and from the sleeve in the bag member, the method comprises the step of:

opening the second closed end of the bag member; and,

emptying the debris from the bag member using the opening at the second closed end of the bag member.

**18.** The method of claim 13 wherein the step of positioning the support pole into a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve, comprises the steps of:

providing each of the first, second and third sheath members with a first female end and a second male end; and,

inserting the male end of one sheath member within the female end of another sheath member.

**19.** The method of claim 18 wherein the step of positioning the support pole into a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve, further comprises the steps of:

providing a spring member and at least one groove within the first female end of each of the first, second and third sheath members;

providing at least a first notch extending from the second male end of each of the first, second and third sheath members; and,

wherein the step of inserting the male end of one sheath member within the female end of another sheath member, comprises the steps of:

(a) inserting the first notch of the one sheath member within the first groove of the another sheath member;

(b) compressing the spring within the another sheath member; and

(c) rotating the one sheath member with respect to the second sheath member.

**20.** The method of claim 13 wherein the step of positioning the support pole into a first condition where the first, second and third sheath members are arranged to define a continuous line or curve, comprises the steps of:

providing an elastic cord that is received by the first, second and third sheath members;

providing at least first and second collar members that receive the elastic cord;

connecting the first and second sheath members together using the first collar member; and,

connecting the second and third sheath members together using the second collar member.

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