POLYTHENE | FOUNDATIONS | ALUMINIUM V TIMBER | CONSTRUCTION TIPS

THE ULTIMATE POLYTUNNEL GUIDE

BUILDING ON A SLOPE

THE NUMBER ONE GUIDE TO
TAKING YOUR GROWING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

BUILDING A POLYTUNNEL ON A SLOPE

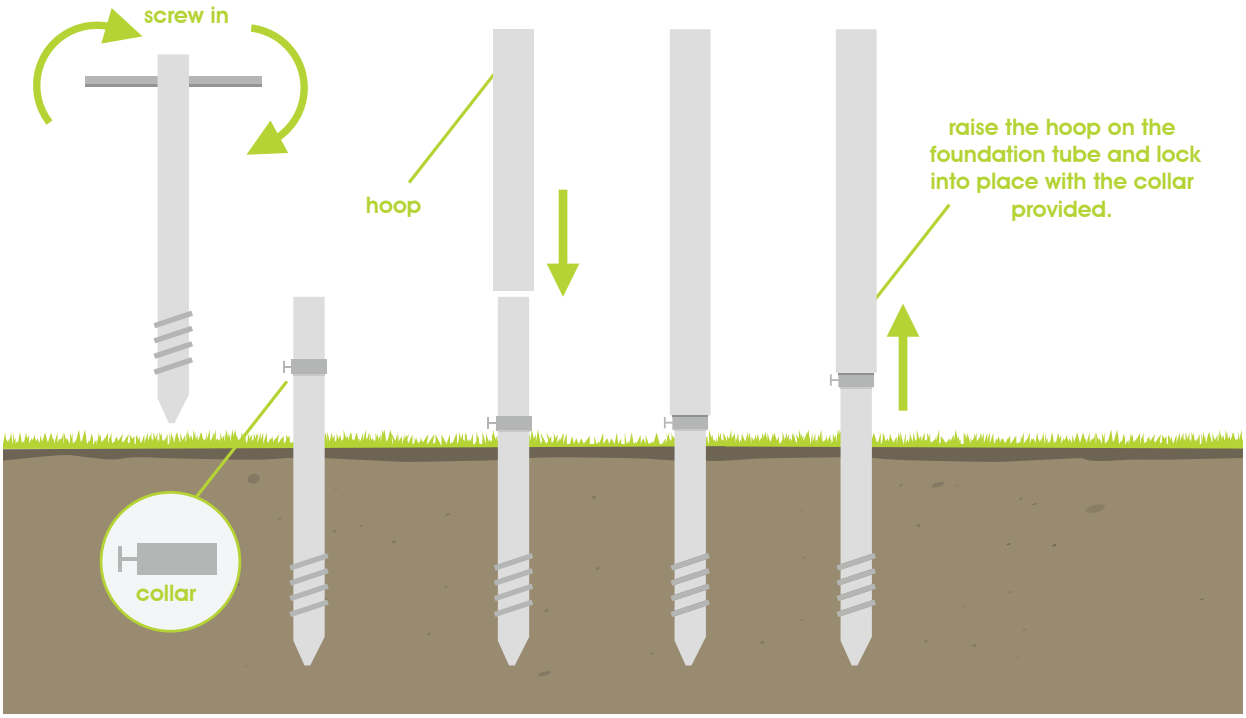
Slopes can be a challenge for any build, and polytunnels are no different. Luckily there are some tried and tested ways to successfully erect your polytunnel securely and safely.

SLIGHT INCLINES

Slight inclines are fairly straight forward to overcome without any specialist tools or equipment. First decide whether you want your polytunnel to be **FRONT TO BACK** (with the back or front facing down the incline) on the slope or **SIDE TO SIDE** across the slope.

Depending on the severity of the slope you may need to raise some of your hoops or sink some of the foundation poles deeper into the ground to create an even build. Some polytunnels have a tensioning system that allows the hoops to be raised up on the foundation tubes and secured in place. This system has the capacity of raising the hoops up to 20cm from ground level without the need for additional extension poles. This is especially useful with a side to side slope, as one side of the hoops can be raised higher than the opposite side to overcome the slope.

The diagram below shows screw anchors, but the tensioning system is standard for all Northern Polytunnels foundation options. Other polytunnel designs often require the site to be levelled, although you may decide you're able overcome the slope by setting your foundation tubes a little shallower in the ground leaving more of the tube exposed. Some suppliers provide extension tubes on request.



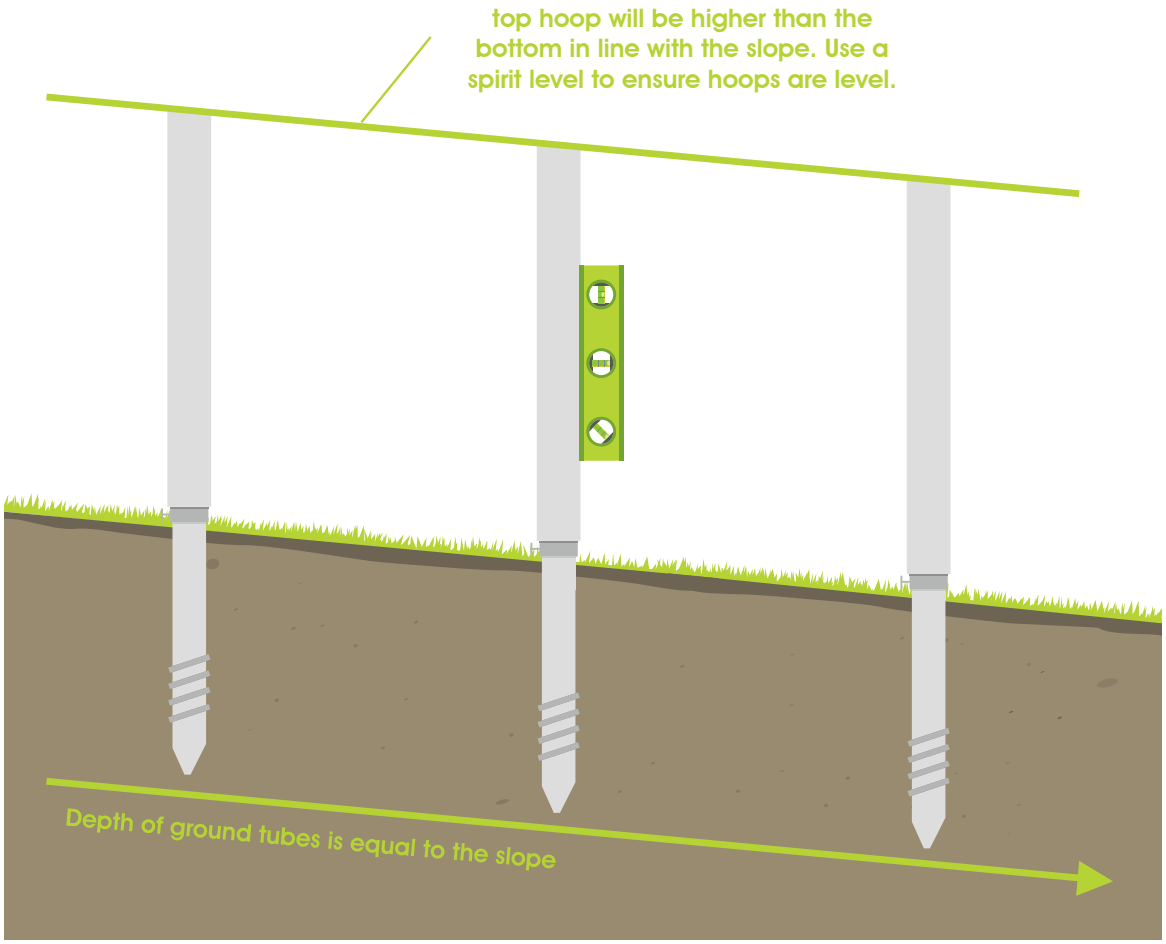
FRONT TO BACK

Some key points to remember:

While the polytunnel hoop at the top of the incline can be higher than the hoop at the bottom, it is important that the foundation tubes are set vertically rather than perpendicular to the ground. This will greatly improve the appearance of your polytunnel and make the doors easier to hang.

The rate of descent should be even along the entire length of the tunnel, so when you set your foundation poles you should be able to sight along them and see that none are set lower than the rest. This can be achieved by attaching a tensioned string line from the top foundation tube to the bottom foundation tube and making sure none of the inner tubes sit higher above the string line than any of the others. If the ground undulates then some foundation tubes will have more tube exposed than others. If some foundation tubes don't appear to be far enough in to the ground they can all be set a little lower to compensate.

Your base rails should run in a straight line and be flush to the ground. If the ground undulates then you can either allow your base rail to follow the contours or you can keep it straight and fill in any gaps underneath afterwards. However, some side ventilation systems require the base rail to be straight. A straight base rail also give a more professional finish.

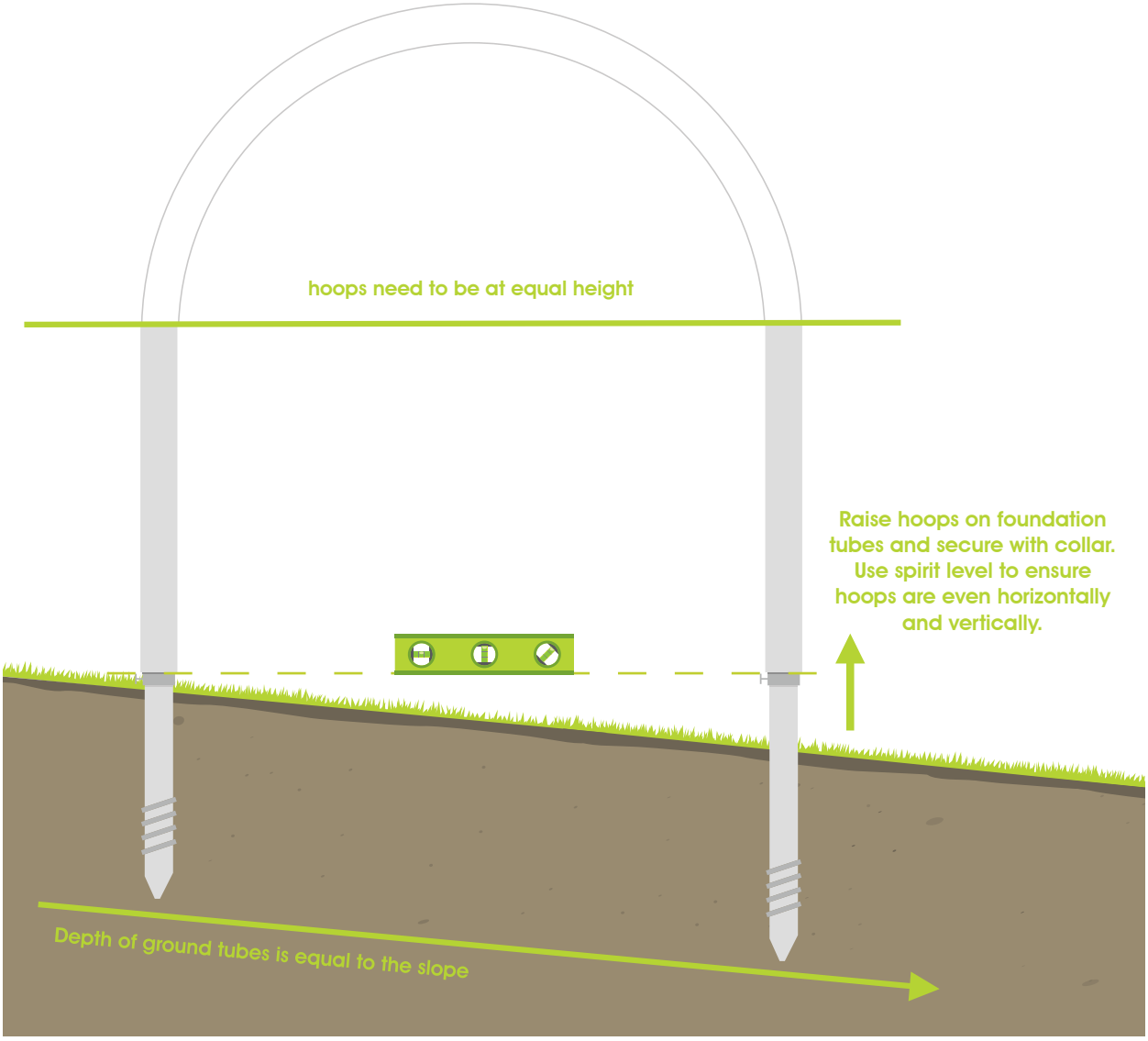


SIDE TO SIDE

Again, the polytunnel hoops should be positioned vertically rather than perpendicular to the slope, so the foundation tubes have to be set level from side to side and front to back. Depending on your type of foundation tubes you may be able to set them deeper on the upper side and higher on the lower side (or a compromise between the two) in order to make the hoops level.

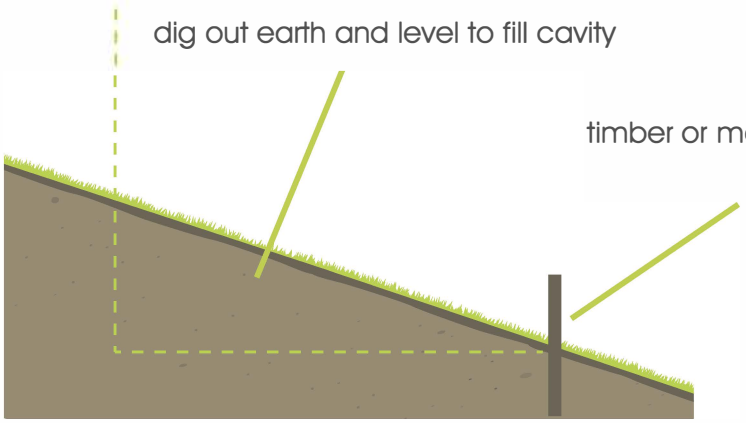
Do not be tempted to set the foundations too shallow on the lower side if you're not setting them in concrete as this could make the whole structure less secure in strong winds. Polytunnels that have a polythene tensioning facility on the foundation tubes can easily overcome a slight slope by simply raising the hoops on the lower side (up to 20cm) whilst not raising the hoops on the upper side.

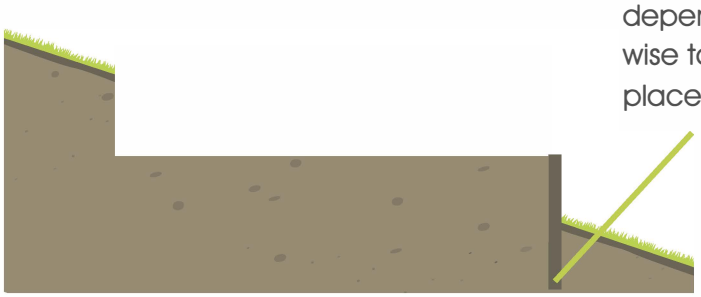
SIDES FACING DOWN THE SLOPE



SEVERE INCLINES

For severe inclines we would recommend that you create a terrace to make your ground level before erecting your polytunnel. This can be achieved by building a retaining wall at the base of the slope (using timber or masonry products), then removing the earth from the top of the slope to fill the cavity at the base of the slope. **Please note we would only suggest this option if you are experienced at DIY or hire a contractor.**





DOORS

Doors are the main consideration with sloping ground, especially with hinged doors, as careful thought needs to be given to the direction they will open. For instance, a door at the uphill end of a polytunnel may only open inwards and subsequently you could lose valuable inside space. Likewise a door at the lower end may only open outwards. Sliding doors generally aren't a problem, although a sideways slope may determine which way it will slide.

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