

## Build a Greenhouse

The ultimate dream of many gardeners is to have their own greenhouse. In your own personal greenhouse, you can provide a perfectly nourishing environment, and watch your plants thrive. In rain or shine, you may take your time attending your plants, or simply use the space as a place to disappear from your hectic daily grind.

Smaller greenhouses offer all the benefits at a reduced price. Supplies and materials are available to accommodate virtually any budget. On the other hand, larger greenhouses provide room to grow bigger crops of vegetables, and a wider variety of flowers and orchids.

If you're considering building a greenhouse to develop and propagate more plants or extend your growing season, consider these factors to maximize the productivity while minimizing your expenses:

- \* If you're thinking about building a larger greenhouse, consider using salvage materials. Re-using building materials will help you keep the construction budget on track. The money you save will allow you to invest in more plants or greenhouse supplies.
- \* Be sure to keep the natural climate of your area in mind before you build. If you live in a cold climate, plan on insulating your greenhouse, and budget for a good heating system. Those living in warmer places need to have shade control in place to shelter plants from too much sun and heat.
- \* You have the option to choose the kind of foundation you'd like to build. Concrete foundations offer the most security, but it is possible to improvise to stay within your budget. Railroad ties can be secured to the ground and used as a base for your greenhouse. Choosing the materials really depends on the size of your budget.
- \* Sunlight is essential for every greenhouse, and all plants within. Be sure that the location of your greenhouse receives an ample amount of direct sunlight. Shady areas will not receive enough light and heat for the plants to thrive. A solar greenhouse for vegetables and exotic fruit bearing plants should be situated where there is east-west exposure to sunlight.
- \* Your greenhouse will need proper ventilation, air circulation, pest control soil, humidity control devices and heaters for winter season. Don't plan on growing just one variety of plant, as your tastes and interests can change. Make your greenhouse a suitable environment for all types of plants.
- \* It is also important to consider the roofing and wall covering materials to be used. Glass and fiberglass are the most expensive options, but also most advisable. These materials provide the highest degree of durability, and do not deteriorate as quickly as plastic coverings. Glass and fiberglass also create more warmth and humidity within the greenhouse.
- \* Allow ample storage room in your greenhouse plans. You'll need a space to tuck away potting soil, tools, fertilizer and other greenhouse essentials. Have storage cabinets or shelving available, and place a tool rack near your potting bench. This will make it easier (and less messy) to transfer soil from storage to pots. Buckets can also be used to hold tools when they are not being used.
- \* The greenhouse you build should meet or maximize its full potential. While you're building as a place to grow plants, you should also create your personal oasis. Add benches to provide places to sit back and marvel at the beauty you've created. Include features that will take care of some of the work for you, like automatic watering, temperature control, ventilation and heating systems. These bonuses that will tend to the basic needs of your plants, so you can spend more time pruning, propagating and harvesting them.
- \* Natural predators are a wonderful alternative to chemical pest controls. Good bugs can be incorporated into the greenhouse environment to prevent and control an infestation of harmful insects. If you do find insects in your plants, you'll have to try to isolate those plants (ideally outside of the greenhouse) to keep the pests from harming all of your crops.

There is no denying the fact that gardening is one of the most relaxing hobbies and essential food for the soul. In your private greenhouse you can happily tend your plants, and in turn you'll find the plants will take care of you.