Greenhouse Plans

Like any construction project, a greenhouse should be planned and built with great care. Building a greenhouse that will last season after season is not a weekend project, so take the time to define your requirements, look over plans, compare materials and come up with a game plan before you begin swinging your hammer.

Greenhouses must be more than glass buildings housing some plants. They should be thought of as freestanding ecosystems, independently built with climate control and watering systems accommodate the needs of the plants. Take the time to design and build your greenhouse properly, so as not to encounter problems with the supply or maintenance of materials and essential elements.

Your greenhouse plans should include an automatic misting and watering system. This is essential to grow and propagate healthier plants. The system should be able to automatically maintain humidity and moisture in the air. If your schedule does not always allow you to water your plants on a regular basis, set automated misters in the greenhouse. Your plants need the right temperature and humidity, right down to their roots; so even if you are on hand to provide daily watering, an automated misting system can take the worry out of keeping an optimal atmosphere. Timers and meters can be set to provide a constant and reliable source of moisture when your plants need it.

Rain systems are another important consideration in your greenhouse plans. Rain systems conserve precious rainwater, which is in turn passed into an automated watering system. The water is pumped into the system as required. In order to properly implement a rain system, be sure that your greenhouse plans include properly placed gutters and downspouts to channel, and a reservoir to collect the rainwater. As a backyard greenhouse gardener you're likely concerned about our environment. A rain system allows you to conserve a natural resource, and save money on watering costs.

The electricity in your greenhouse should be planned to provide enough power to heat and light your plants, especially during cold climates. You might find that you require grow lights to increase spectrum in your greenhouse. Otherwise, your plants might not grow and your investment could be wasted.

Where you live is a determining factor in your greenhouse plans. As you know, climate determines the growing season and directly affects plants. In winter, the days are shorter and the air is colder, so plan on adding enough heat and light sources to help your plants prosper. Lighting plays a key role in the growth of plants, as they may not have adequate exposure to sunlight in winter. If you live in a warmer climate you should still be concerned with lighting. Long, cloudy spells can have a negative effect on your healthy plants.

Aesthetic appeal is a contributing factor to the design of your greenhouse. You want it to be an attractive element of your overall landscape. If you're searching for design ideas, there are many free greenhouse plans available on the Internet. These diagrams, instructions and building tips will help you plan your greenhouse with supply systems to help your plants reach their optimal growing potential. Some sites will take you step-by-step through the construction process, while others offer instructional methods on how to build and maintain a hydroponics operation. Search websites for greenhouse plans to build a freestanding, or lean-to structure.

If you're still in the planning stage of building your greenhouse, consider the basic outline to get an idea of the materials you'll need. These guidelines are based on a small greenhouse:

* Your shopping list should include 15 to 20 squeeze clips, 3 rolls of heavy-duty 3M clear tape, 1 roll duct tape, 6 mm clear plastic to cover the structure, 18 ratcheting tie downs, 4 to 8 T-posts, a 10 x 20 Universal canopy, as well as grow lights and heaters. Those on a budget can build a small greenhouse by using these basic materials.

* Ask a few friends to help you set up the greenhouse frame. Insert the pieces to the frame to make the connection, and be sure the connection points are properly wrapped with duct tape. At this point, pipes will be place in position according to where you'd like them to be in your greenhouse.

* Use the tie-downs to connect the upper part of the frame, and then use four T-posts to support the four corners of your structure. Adding an extra T-post can add extra support. T-posts should be drilled at least 12" into the ground.

* Make two separate plastic coverings to fully cover the structure. It's advised to cut the plastic in 30' lengths. Use a ladder to cover the greenhouse from top to bottom, and anchor the plastic at the base of the foundation with gravel. Be sure that the plastic covers all end caps.

Having a backyard greenhouse is a dream come true, but not necessarily an unattainable one. Use these greenhouse plans as a basis for your budget and design. Your moderate investments of time, effort and cash today will pay off in a big way through gorgeous plants and years of enjoyment.