

Greenhousery

Growing under glass is gaining popularity

What is aluminum and glass and green all under? The answer, of course, is a greenhouse.

Interest in the home greenhouse is growing at phenomenal speed, but knowledge of greenhouses has not kept up with the interest, and prospective greenhouse owners have many questions. Just learning the vocabulary of greenhouses is a step toward better understanding of the fastest growing hobby in America.

To the question of what is a greenhouse, it's a specialized structure designed to provide totally controlled environment for the well-being and promotion of plant life.

There are basically two styles of greenhouses: the even span and the lean-to. The old estate conservatory has given way to these modern greenhouse which actually are a gracious extension of the home.

The even span greenhouse has glass on both sides of the high point (or ridge) and can be attached to an existing building at one end of the gable, or it can be erected as a separate free standing structure. A lean-to is one-half of a greenhouse as it always

attached to an existing structure on the long axis.

The attached greenhouse is often cheaper to build than the free standing one because an existing wall provides one end or one side and also because of the ease of bringing the necessary utility services into the greenhouse.

The overriding advantage of the attached greenhouse is the easy accessibility from the house itself. This has led to the increasing popularity of the attached greenhouse and its use as a garden room and an integral part of the home.

Available space is the key factor in determining the most suitable type for you. Architectural details, both inside and outside, and accessibility to utilities all must be considered.

In positioning the greenhouse, the goal is to select a spot where the plants will receive as much light as possible throughout the day. Any exposure that gets three hours of sunlight daily is considered adequate.

We recommend southeast, south or southwest exposure -- in that order. While a western exposure affords growing light, it definitely

requires shading in the summer.

Building your own greenhouse isn't as hard as it sounds. Many people who are handy have followed the assembly instructions and have successfully built their own greenhouse. Some folks have

See related story and picture on pages 20 and 21.

done all or part of the masonry, heating, plumbing and electrical work themselves and then called in experts to erect the glass and aluminum superstructure. But even that part can be done successfully by the handyman-gardener.

Heating, cooling, shading, light, air movement, air exchange and humidity are the major environmental factors to be considered in a greenhouse.

Controlling excessive heat is important to maintain the proper temperatures in greenhouse gardening. There are two systems for lowering the temperatures which supplement the year-round overhead vents for cooling and air exchange.

The cooling system for a greenhouse is called a "wet pad" evap-



Marge Alpern stands in what is probably one of the most photographed greenhouses in the area. And, it's hers. (Photo by Dick Kelly)

orative cooler and is placed just outside the greenhouse. The fan draws outside air through the wet pads into the greenhouse. Water is piped into the cooler and a pump circulates the water through the wet pads.

The equipment is automatically controlled to operate as necessary. This special air conditioner will check rising temperature, thereby minimizing the danger of "cooking the plants," and it helps to

(Continued on page 25)

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