

# Greenhouses extend season

America's green thumb seems to be getting greener, as more new homes are adding greenhouses to lengthen the growing season for the home gardener.

If you're considering a greenhouse, be aware they've come a long way from the leaky backyard potting sheds of the past. Recent advances in technology have led to an explosion in residential greenhouses. For customer-designed units, the National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (NGMA) recommends hiring an architect.

"The elements needed for designing a space for both people and

plants are sometimes at odds," says Donald Watson, an architect who has designed greenhouses. Watson suggests that these factors be considered that will affect design and cost:

- Purpose and location. Will the greenhouse be used solely for growing plants? Will it be a recreation area or both? What about location? If the greenhouse is to be used to collect solar energy, the best exposure is to the south or, to a lesser extent, to the southeast or southwest.

Unless properly designed, greenhouses can be more expensive to heat than ordinary rooms because of the lack of insulation. Energy-saving

features can be built into the addition, such as automatic shades that can provide shading in the summer and insulation in the winter; heat reflecting and insulating glass and plastics; and dark masonry floors that absorb heat during the day and release it at night.

The heating system of the main house — as well as the electrical system can often be extended to the addition. Energy bills can be substantially reduced by installing a separate thermostat to turn off power when not in use.

An important element of greenhouse design is air circulation and

moisture control to prevent condensation damage. The natural movement of air, or convection, can be achieved by placing vents in the roof or wall to expel warm air while taking in cooler air through lower windows. Sometimes a combination of fans and windows will work. Drains can often be installed for control of water runoff caused by condensation.

For a copy of the booklet, "Residential Greenhouses/Solar Room Planning," send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to NGMA, Dept. A1, P.O. Box 567, Pana, Ill. 62457.

Thursday, November 16, 1989 O&E

(\*57)\*5H



This greenhouse serves as an entrance and sitting area with sliding doors that open for cross-ventilation during warm weather. During cold months, it is an airtight greenhouse and Florida room.

## Plan to cut energy in housing proposed

Colorado Sen. Tim Wirth announced a series of suggestions to improve energy efficiency in housing in the United States, including a plan to raise the insulation standards used for federal-assisted housing.

Wirth, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, announced the plans at a forum in Washington, D.C., by the Alliance to Save Energy, a non-profit coalition of business, government and consumer leaders.

"With the proper policy mix, good energy policy can be good economic policy, good housing policy and good environmental policy," Wirth said.

He said that if energy consumption would be cut by 25 percent in the housing sector, the equivalent of 400 million barrels of oil would be saved each year.

The five plans will be part of two bills before the Senate, Wirth said. The first would allow consumers

to include the cost of energy improvements within their mortgages while the second would raise efficiency standards for homes built with federal assistance, Wirth said.

"With recent advances in building technology, higher energy costs and the growing affordability crisis, such a move is overdue," he said.

A third plan would create a national voluntary ratings system to measure energy efficiency, he said.

Other efforts would be to include energy efficiency measures in the allowable costs covered by federal assistance payments and to invest more in energy efficiency in improvement assistance projects by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"The federal government pays more than \$1 billion each year for the energy bills of public housing. Much of this could be avoided with cost-effective investments," he said.

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