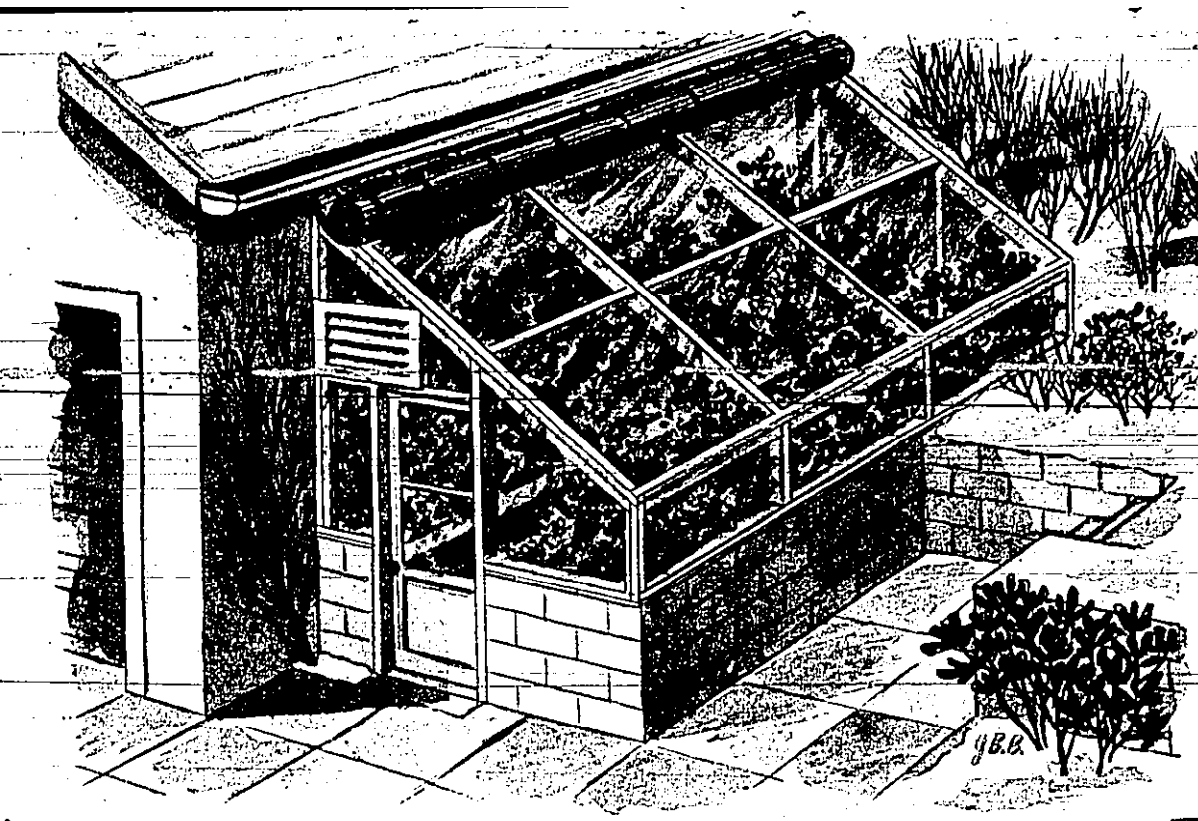
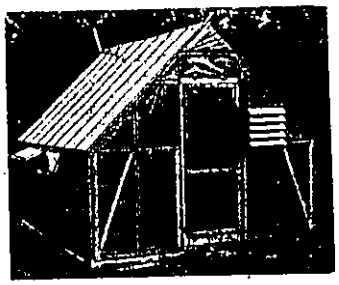


BY JOHN BRIMER

You Can Build Your Own

GREENHOUSE

NOW you can build a greenhouse yourself—for less than half the cost of a prefabricated one—in any shape or form which best harmonizes with the lines of your house (sketches, right). You may attach it to the house, utilizing your present heating eqiupment or sink it partly into the soil, thus taking advantage of the earth's warmth and the sun's heat. At night, an insulating reed blanket is rolled down to retain the daytime heat in this "walk-in cold frame." It can also be built freestanding (photo, below), with its own heating system to enable you to grow orchids and other plants which demand higher temperatures.



Plastic Is The Answer

The advent of a new, practically shatterproof, weatherable plastic has made all of this possible. Professional growers have found that not only does this polyester plastic pare down original building costs—due to its light weight only an inexpensive wood frame is required—but that it stands up to wind and weather remarkably well.

No special tools are required to build the greenhouse, although a heavy stapler will speed the application of the plastic to the framework.

The manufacturer advocates the use of 2" x 4"'s for all corner posts, door posts and end rafters; 2" x 2" rafters and studs spaced every 20" on center between; 2" x 4" every 8' to 10' of length for studs and rafters; and a 2" x 2" crossbar halfway down rafter spans of 8' or more. Two-inch trellis strips secure the plastic and make it weather tight. Any strong wood, such as pine, redwood or cypress may be used for all supports. These durable woods, if treated with preservatives, will last indefinitely, even in the high humidity of the greenhouse.

Cost Is Low

How much would a small greenhouse cost? Price varies, of course, with the size, and with the area in which the house is built. In New York's high-cost area, the 8' x 14' lean-to shown above would cost about $170, including cinder blocks and aluminum louvered ventilator.

What size should the house be? Allowing 30" for aisle, with 30" each for plant benches, the minimum width would be about 8' outside measurement. Figure the length in multiples of the 42" width, if possible, to eliminate waste.

Be Sure To Ventilate

It is important to make provisions for the escape of heat and excessive humidity on days of hot sunlight to avoid injury to plants. An aluminum louver with an inside door which is closed in cold weather (one used for house gables is a perfect answer) or a large kitchen exhaust fan attached to a thermostat are ideal.

In snowy areas, be sure the roof pitch is high enough to allow snow to slide off and not pile up, causing the structure to collapse. You may want to apply chicken wire to the frame under the plastic to give added support.