

Managing and Planting Your Own Greenhouse

with Rob McQueen



Growing plants in a greenhouse make it possible to extend the growing season and to plant certain types of crops all season long. It is important to know how to maintain optimum conditions, so your plants can thrive year-round.

How to keep your greenhouse cool in the summer:

The perfect temperature for most plants to grow in the greenhouse is 27 °C, which is roughly between 80 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. The ideal temperature has to be maintained because if you do not manage your greenhouse properly, then your plants are at the risk of dying.

There are several ways to keep your greenhouse cool in the summer:

- **Damping down:** use a hose to spray down the surfaces in your greenhouse, such as the path. As the water evaporates, it increases the moisture level of the air, which has a cooling effect on the rest of your greenhouse.
- **Fan:** if ventilating your greenhouse is not working well, then you can use a fan, which also lets air flow through to cool down your plants.
- **Shading:** you can shade your greenhouse by placing larger plants on the sides, shade cloth, and shade mesh/nets.
- **Ventilation:** one of the best ways to overcome heat in the greenhouse is to let air flow through by opening the sides, ends, and windows.

How to raise the temperature in your greenhouse in the winter:

- **Compost pile:** compost will naturally put out heat, which can warm the greenhouse.
- **Insulation:** add a layer of horticultural bubble wrap to the interior walls of the greenhouse to reduce heat loss.

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- **Plant coverings:** use either tarps, horticultural fleece, row covers, or sheets.
- **Heater:** install a heater if the other options do not work.

What type of plants to grow based on temperature:

- **Winter:** cold-hardy vegetables, such as spinach, cabbage, lettuce, broccoli.
- **Spring:** melons, cucumbers, and squash, in which they require at least 8 hours of sunlight. Also, since it's the official planting season, start seeds in the tray and as the seedlings emerge, move them into larger pots.
- **Summer:** eggplant, tomatoes, hot peppers, perennials.
- **Fall:** kale, snow peas, turnips.

What materials do you need to maintain your greenhouse:

- **Fertilizer**
 - Acti-sol tomatoes and vegetables organic fertilizer 4-6-8.
 - Acti-sol trees, shrubs, hedges, and evergreens organic fertilizer 4-3-9.
- **Plant food**
 - C-I-L organic-based all-purpose plant food 10-10-10.
- **Soils and mulches**
 - Coffee grounds.
 - Great Value triple blend.
 - Peat moss.
 - Composted manure.
 - Also, Rob gets Rabbit manure from a farm.
 - Humus.
 - Mulch.
 - ASB Greenworld black earth.
 - Wood chip.
 - Grass clippings.
 - Potting soil.
 - Heeman's.
 - All Treat Farms herb and vegetable premium potting soil.
 - Topsoil.
 - Great Value topsoil.
 - Expert Gardener topsoil.
 - Vermiculite.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - Dollarama craft sticks for labelling with a permanent marker.
 - Fruit boxes from produce department stores.
 - Transparent reusable cup for seedlings.
 - Watering can.

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What grows well in the greenhouse:

- **Herbs and vegetable**
 - Mint
 - Chamomile
 - Pumpkin/squash
- **Trees**
 - Elderberry
 - Hickory
 - Northern pecan
 - Pawpaw
 - Sweet chestnut



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