

THE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS

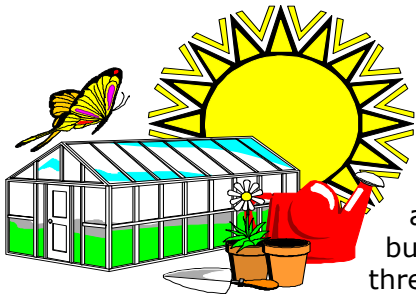
Your design and installation team



Winter Greenhouse Growing

How does the greenhouse work?

Well, on a sunny day the air trapped inside the greenhouse heats up when the ground absorbs radiation from the sun. The increased temperature of the soil is conducted to the air next to the soil; that air then warms, expands and then rises. At night in the greenhouse the cooling starts from the roof. The stored heat from the full height of the greenhouse is available overnight, and the plants never get much colder than the air.



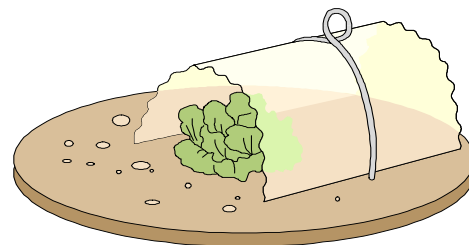
If your greenhouse is getting a little too cold then you may want to try placing buckets, jugs or drums of water inside the greenhouse. The water will absorb heat in the day and give it off at night. Other options are to install electric propagators, heaters or clean burning heaters that will keep the frost away. There are three different houses, cold greenhouse, cool greenhouse and warm greenhouse. Cold greenhouse usually has a minimum temperature of 28 degrees that is maintained. No growth occurs in this type of house but you can over-winter plants that are frost tolerant.

Cool greenhouses are usually heated during the cooler months to a minimum temperature of 45 degrees. This is just warm enough for a little plant growth and frost sensitive plants will survive the winter in this house.

Warm greenhouses have a minimum temperature of 55 degrees and then a wide variety of plants and vegetable will grow during the winter months.

Greenhouse growing

October can be busy, bring in the tender perennials and plants, sow and tend wintergreens and perhaps harvest the last of the summer crops.



November you can sow onions for transplanting, box up rhubarb crowns, bring in pots of herbs and bulbs pots as shoots appear.

December is the month to do spring cleaning, so get out the elbow grease!

January you can start to plan the year's crop. Buy seed supplies and get fresh soil for planters and beds. Sow onions in flats, sow radishes in the greenhouse soil. Don't forget to vent the house on sunny days.

Wintergreens for the greenhouse

Leafy greens are fast and easy to grow from seed so you can have fresh greens for most of the winter. Here are a few vegetables that you may want to try growing in your greenhouse this winter.

BOK CHOY – tasting similar to Swiss chard but having thicker leaves that are less wrinkled. Grows to 15" tall with beautiful white stems and tender leaves. This is a good winter sub for lettuce as it keeps in the fridge longer.

COLLARDS - these mild, cabbage-flavored leaves are high in vitamins A and C and calcium. Grows from 24 to 36" tall.

KALE – red or green succulent leaves form beautiful heads.

Mustard – most varieties are fast growing, maturing in 20-45 days.

SPINACH – try varieties such as 'Olympia, Tye or Vienna Hybrid' which are downy mildew resistant.

SWISS CHARD – varieties vary from dark red leaves with crimson stems to light green leaves or rainbow stems including crimson, orange, pink, white and yellow.

Seed starting dates

When purchasing seeds look for the varieties that have been bred specifically for greenhouse production. Try everything from beans, eggplant, melons, carrots, and lettuce to peppers, tomatoes and radishes.

In warm greenhouses start tomatoes in early January, pepper and cucumber in late February. Remember that in different areas the growing seasons will vary, as well as the temperature at which you maintain the greenhouse. Both of these will play factors in the growth of your plants and vegetables, but by manipulating the environment within the greenhouse you will be able to harvest all year long.



Putting the Geraniums and Fuchsias to Bed for the winter

Geraniums and Fuchsia require similar conditions for wintering. Here are a few ways to winter over your plants.

1. You can treat them like houseplants for the winter and have them inside the house.
2. Take geranium slips; cutting just below a node, each cutting should be about 4 inches long and you should allow the cutting to sit for a few hours before planting. This process will produce a callus on the end of the stem. Remove all leaves except for the top few and then cut those back about halfway. Then dip the stem in a rooting hormone, shake off the excess powder and place the cutting in a tray of starter mix about two inches apart.

Keep in a cool, light room, water weekly or as needed. Do not fertilize the tender cuttings. Fuchsia cutting should be two to three inches long and cut just below the node also. Then follow the same as geraniums.

3. You can also hang your geraniums upside-down, bare root in the basement or garage.
4. Place them in an airtight plastic bag with a small amount of moist (not wet) peat moss.
5. Some gardeners like to bury their fuchsia in a trench about 3 feet deep. About 4-6 inches of rock in the bottom of the trench for drainage, then add 4-6 inches of sawdust or straw, lay pruned-back plants on their side, dust with an insecticide and cover with sawdust or straw to the top of the trench.

Whatever method you choose make sure the plants do not dry out over the winter, but also too wet will rot their roots so make sure you stay to a regular watering and feeding schedule.