



Home Garden Tips

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Design Your Dream Garden Shelter

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Ready for some more back breaking work?

Well how about a garden shelter, pergola, arbor, gazebo or a tepee! You can build one in just a few days of concentrated labor and a few weeks/years of mother nature's help.

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A kit is a great way to built someone else's architectural design, but try doing it for you. Design your dream.

The roof is what will be the most difficult to build. It has to be strong enough to take on winter snow and still be graceful for the garden. Also, a roof has to be able to take on a good gust of wind. If you want a roof on your design, don't cut corners; go all out in its construction.

If you feel inadequate doing roof construction, get help or stay with the idea of doing a frame or arbor. Use a live vine as the cover. Climbing roses, clematis or grape wines can do a great job in two to three years. If you want quicker results you can have an annual vine growing the first year. Thomas Jefferson used hyacinth beans in his Monticello home garden. But you can use just about anything that climbs like morning glories or garden pole beans.

Design your shelter without walls (but if you must have them, use a lattice design). The poles used for the roof should be the

only thing obscuring your vision.

A great garden shelter for kids can be made with an Indian tepee design. Just take five or six bamboo poles (6-8" long), tie them about a foot or so from the thin end and open them like an umbrella on the ground. Get a vine to grow on it and "Voila"!

Floors can be grass, dirt, mulch or more complex. Concrete, stones, bricks or wood are just a few ideas. A friend has a spring as part of a garden shelter, now that is a real treat!

Some safety when working with treated wood and power tools:

Always wear wearing a dust mask and safety goggles. It is best when work is done outdoors.

Dispose of all debris (including sawdust) with your trash pick up. Wash hands before eating, and launder your work clothes separately from other clothing.

Work with a partner.

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