

Part 1: Planning



The wooden garden workshop is the most popular choice for most of us. In our new series we're going to show our own Woodworker Project Workshop taking shape. By Mark Ramuz

There's been an explosion in the number of companies offering timber garden buildings over the last ten years. Gardens have become another 'room' of the home as we seek extra space for entertaining, working or playing. The growth in outdoor lighting and patio heaters has been dramatic and this has been equaled by the demand for extra space that a garden building can provide. Of course, you can buy a shiplap timber frame shed from a garden centre and convert this for use as a workshop but there are other options that will provide a warmer more welcoming room all year round.

Over the next few months we will be erecting a Lugarde 4x5m workshop based on the traditional interlocking sections of timber found in European cabins. Just like woodworking itself, preparation is the key and the first stage is to plan your location.



One of the hardest jobs is clearing and levelling the site but don't skimp this stage

1st class cabin

Where to site your workshop

- Always check with your local planning authority before even buying a garden workshop. It's unlikely to be a problem but conservation areas or particularly large structures may need planning permission. This may depend on the ratio of garden area the building will take up.
- Consider your neighbours now, not after the building is halfway up and overshadowing their patio. Ask them if they would mind if the building is adjacent to a boundary fence. Think about how the fence or any shrubs will be maintained if the building is too close. It's better to leave a walkway along the back of the shed so that you can apply preservative to any fencing and your workshop. Again, blocking light to your neighbour's house or garden may have planning implications.
- Draw out a rough scale plan of the garden on graph paper and mark on pathways, septic tanks, drainage pipe

Richard Squires of Garden Affairs helped us decide on the exact specification for the Woodworker Project Workshop. Smaller cabins are available with 28mm thick walls and there is a wide choice of door and window pattern to suit the location. The company can also carry out the ground preparation and building stages if required.

lines, trees and any other items that should be avoided. Cut out a cardboard rectangle or square representing the workshop's ground area. This can then be moved around on the plan to find an optimum location.

- Bear in mind that you will need some hard paving to get to the workshop without walking on mud or the lawn. Allow for a path width of at least 450mm along the side of the site.

Useful information

Our Lugarde log cabin and all buildings shown here supplied by Garden Affairs Ltd, 01225 470372, fax: 01225 442855 www.gardenaffairs.co.uk

WORKSHOP

TIP

If the workshop is near your house, you may consider blending the exteriors, i.e. using artificial slate instead of felt. You could also choose a matching paint colour or a dark green to make the building blend into the garden.



of large glazed areas against the benefits of natural lighting. You will also need to install lighting and probably insulation, or at least internal plywood boarding. Are the supporting struts deep enough to accommodate light sockets and fibre insulation batts?

3. Materials

Although it's possible to buy oak outbuildings, the cost is prohibitive for most woodworkers. Modern preservative stains and paints mean softwood will have a long life in our climate. Tongue and groove boarding will give a strong watertight wall but we've decided to opt for 44mm profiled pine to provide a much stronger, warmer building that will also support shelving and racking.

- Do you want to order double doors - good for board materials - or single? Will the door be at one end or on the front of the building? A door at one end will allow you to move longer timbers in and out without having to turn them. You may also want to include a lean-to or divide the workshop so that you can store garden tools or bikes separately.

cramped. Apex roofs give a useful storage space in the rafter area for storing lengths of timber, but pent roofs will often give greater working height along the bench side of the workshop. Visit as many show areas as possible and send off for catalogues from companies advertising in the back of home magazines.

2. Windows and lighting

Do you want windows on two sides or a more solid wall for tool storage? Along with the choice of pent or apex roofline, this will be an important factor in your decision. Consider the security aspects

- As well as ground slopes and drainage problems, look at the proposed site from a point of view of natural light. A well-lit bench in front of a south-facing window is better than relying on artificial light all the time.

Designs

1. Size and shape

Buy the biggest workshop you can afford. Like conservatories, they are difficult to enlarge afterwards when you find it is too



NEXT MONTH

We level the ground and install the base...