

# Garden Products / Cloches



## DID YOU KNOW?

Cloches were originally invented by the French to protect plants

# Cosset your plants

Cloches will help protect your precious plants when the weather gets rough. Geoff Hodge tests some of the best on the market

**F**ROM autumn to spring, the British climate can play havoc with plants, but a good cloche will provide valuable protection.

Cloches can be used to overwinter tender plants, warm up the soil in spring for earlier sowing and keep crops growing in autumn - helping to extend the growing season at both ends.

The temperature under the cloche depends on the ambient outdoor temperature. Although the cloche will trap heat and the temperature inside it will be a few degrees warmer, it won't stop the plants freezing if the temperature drops too low.

Cloches can keep damaging cold winds at bay and they can also be used to protect against airborne pests and diseases.

A light cloche is easy to move around the plot, but in a windy position it is likely to end up in the

next county, so ground pegs are often supplied for keeping cloches in place. The larger the pegs, the more likely they are to keep the cloche secured.

During warm, sunny weather, the temperature under the cloche can rise significantly - often to damaging levels for young plants and seedlings - so it is important that the cloche has a way of providing good ventilation, such as air vents.

### The test

I tested the temperature under the cloche against the outside temperature. All the cloches produced an increase of between 2 to 3C (3-5F) above the outside temperature.

From late autumn to late winter, light levels can be fairly low, and if you're protecting plants and the cloche doesn't let enough light through, then plants can become drawn and leggy.

So I tested light levels under the cloches, using a Nortene Plant Light and Moisture Meter. The fewer the stars, the lower the light level against the ambient/normal level; five stars mean there is no drop in light level.

### Suppliers

📍 **Botanico/Nortene**  
01905 791984,

[www.botanicogarden.co.uk](http://www.botanicogarden.co.uk)  
Supplies direct to garden centres and stores

📍 **Gardman** 01406 372237,  
[www.gardman.co.uk](http://www.gardman.co.uk)

Supplies direct to garden centres and stores

📍 **Haxnicks** 01747 861539,  
[www.haxnicks.co.uk](http://www.haxnicks.co.uk)

📍 **Parasene** 0121 508 6570,  
[www.parasene.com](http://www.parasene.com)

📍 **The Stewart Company** 020 8603 5700,  
[www.stewartcompany.co.uk](http://www.stewartcompany.co.uk)

📍 **Two Wests & Elliott**  
01246 451077,

[www.twowests.co.uk](http://www.twowests.co.uk)



TWO ADJUSTABLE AIR VENTS PROVIDE VENTILATION

## 📍 Haxnicks Kitchen Garden Cloche

Galvanised, powder-coated steel frame and UV-resistant clear plastic cover. A bit fiddly to put together; tools - screwdriver and spanner - are provided. Two adjustable air vents. Ornate wrought iron carrying handle. Four 20cm (8in) long steel ground pegs supplied.

📍 **Growing area** 100.5cm long x 45cm wide x 35cm high (39½ x 17¾ x 13¾in)

📍 **Light level**

📍 **Price guide** £36.99

## 📍 Stewart Medium Cloche

Rigid, durable plastic. Ready for use - no assembly needed. End pieces available separately, so you can buy as many as you need, depending on how many cloches you put together; the retaining wires do not provide a tight fit. Carrying handle. Two 19cm (7½in) long, rigid plastic ground pegs supplied.



END PIECES ARE AVAILABLE SEPARATELY

📍 **Growing area** 61cm long x 42cm wide x 27cm high (24 x 16½ x 10½in)

📍 **Light level**

📍 **Price guide** £13.99; end pieces £6.99 per pair including fixing wires

## 📍 Parasene Longrow Super Cloche

Made of UV-stabilised, rigid, corrugated PVC on a galvanised steel frame. A bit fiddly to put together. Two adjustable air vents. Fixes into the ground with 13cm (5in) long anchor legs.



📍 **Growing area** 115cm long x 48cm wide x 26cm high (45¼ x 19 x 10¼in)

📍 **Light level**

📍 **Price guide** £39.99



**GN TOP TIP**

Keep cloches clean to make sure the plants get maximum light

**Houseplants**

How to look after those festive favourites **Page 11**

**Gladioli**

Essential glad care questions answered **Page 13**



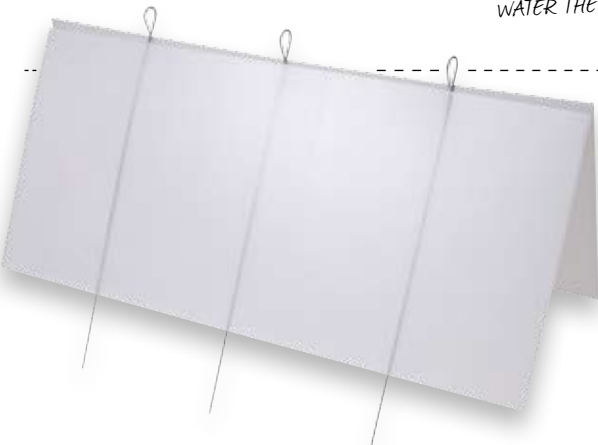
www.liveforgardening.com

## Two Wests & Elliott Gardeners Cloche

Made from twin-walled polypropylene, 'double-glazed' panels. Reservoir along the top of the cloche directs water through the holes to water the plants. Adjustable end panels for ventilation, which can also be removed for access. Two carrying handles. Four 12.5cm (5in) steel ground pegs supplied. Quick and easy to assemble.

- **Growing area** 100cm long x 50cm wide at the base x 35cm high (39½ x 19¾ x 13¾in)
- **Light level**
- **Price guide** £19.95

THE RESERVOIR DIRECTS WATER THROUGH HOLES TO WATER THE PLANTS



## Two Wests & Elliott Traditional Cloche

Six UV-stable, twin-walled polypropylene, 'double-glazed' panels make three tent-shaped cloches with a total length of 2.46m (97in). Three wire supports per cloche slide up and down the cloches and extend 12cm (4¾in) into the ground. By pulling the supports slightly out of the ground, the top of the cloches can be opened for ventilation and watering. Two end panels with steel supports that extend 18cm (7in) into the ground. Not a tight fit between the two sides of the cloche. Lightly oil the supports first, so they insert through the walls easily.

- **Growing area for each panel** 82cm long x 28cm wide at base x 33cm high (32¼ x 11 x 13in)
- **Light level**
- **Price guide** £17.35

## Botanico/Nortene Sun Tunnel

High impact, UV-resistant clear plastic. Ready for use - no assembly needed. Two adjustable air vents. Four 18cm (7in) long steel ground pegs supplied.

- **Growing area** 105.5cm long x 42cm wide x 30cm high (41½ x 16½ x 12in)
- **Light level:**
- **Price guide:** £19.99

The Sun Tunnel Double is similar, but provides a larger growing area:

- **Growing area** 105.5cm long x 60cm wide x 34cm high (41½ x 24 x 13½in) with four air vents.
- **Price guide** £24.99



## Stewart Large Cloche Tunnel

Rigid, durable plastic. Ready for use - no assembly needed. Push-over, tight fitting end pieces available separately, so you can buy as many as you need, depending on how many cloches you put together. The cloches simply snap together to form a longer tunnel. Roof design traps rainwater, which then drips inside to water the plants. The end pieces can also be used together to make a mini cloche.

- **Growing area** 130cm long (including end pieces) x 35cm wide x 26cm high (51¼ x 13¾ x 10¼in)
- **Light level**
- **Price guide** £24.99; end pieces £14.99 per pair including fixing pegs; four 24.5cm (9½in) long, rigid plastic ground pegs £6.99

THE ROOF DESIGN TRAPS RAINWATER TO WATER THE PLANTS



## Bell cloches

Bell cloches are useful for protecting individual plants. Because of their domed shape they make most use of the light to warm the air underneath as well as giving protection.

### Gardman Bell Cloche

Clear, rigid clear plastic bells. Adjustable air vent. Holes for ground pegs if needed. Three sizes available.

- **Growing area:** Large 30cm diameter x 29.5cm high (12 x 11½in); medium 22.5 x 17cm (8¾ x 6¾in); small 17 x 16.5cm (6¾ x 6½in)
- **Light level:**
- **Price guide:** Large £5.99; medium £6.99 for three; small £4.99 for three



### Botanico/Nortene Clear Dome Cloche

Rigid plastic bells. Adjustable air vent. Two 15cm (6in) long steel ground pegs supplied per cloche. Three sizes available.

- **Growing area:** Medium 34.5cm diameter x 22cm high (13½ x 8½in); Small 21cm x 20cm (8¼ x 8in)
- **Light level:**
- **Price guide:** Large £19.99 for three; medium £14.99 for three; small £9.99 for four



### Haxnicks Victorian Bell

Made from high-impact polystyrene. Adjustable air vent. 15cm (6in) long steel ground pegs supplied. Four sizes are available; I tested two.

- **Growing area:** King size 35cm diameter x 30cm high (13¾ x 12in); original 29 x 25cm (11½ x 10in)
- **Light level:**
- **Price guide:** Large £15.99 each; King size £13.99 for two; Original £11.99 for three; Baby £9.99 for three

