



POLYTUNNEL

INTERNAL LAYOUT PLANS

Simple DIY layouts for a residential garden

SMALL / MEDIUM / LARGE



**Gardening
Latest.com**

Make room to garden

A useful polytunnel leaves space for your feet, your tools and plants at their full size.

These layouts use straight beds over existing garden soil, low optional timber edges and simple paths. Choose the nearest plan, mark it on the ground and walk through it before buying materials. The dimensions are proposed interior arrangements for an already installed tunnel.

Plan / page	Nominal size class	Worked clear interior	Arrangement
S1 / 4	6 x 10 ft	1.80 x 3.00 m	2 beds + 600 mm path
S2 / 5	8 x 12 ft	2.40 x 3.60 m	2 beds + 800 mm path
M1 / 7-8	10 x 15-20 ft	3.00 x 4.50 or 6.00 m	2 beds + 1200 mm path
L1 / 9	12 x 20 ft	3.60 x 6.00 m	3 beds + two 650 mm paths
L2 / 10	14 x 30 ft	4.30 x 9.00 m	3 beds + two 800 mm paths

Measure inside the actual tunnel

Feet describe the size class only. The metric figures are the working dimensions, not exact conversions. A nominal 14 ft frame is about 4.27 m wide before any internal deductions, so the 4.30 m example may need adjusting. Use page 15 to fit the plan to your measured space.

Find the practical details

What you need	Page
Measuring, reach and headroom	3
Small / medium / large setup steps	6 / 8 / 11
Bed and path construction	12
Timber, compost and path quantities	13
Watering and crop positions	14
Size adjustments and final checks	15
Sources and plan notes	16

Check the space you can use

A tunnel can be wide at ground level and narrow where your shoulders or taller plants need room.

1 Measure the usable interior

Measure between the nearest inner faces of rails or other fixed obstructions at the front, middle and rear. Use the smallest width. Measure clear length between the end structures. Mark anchors, buried polythene and any irrigation pipes.

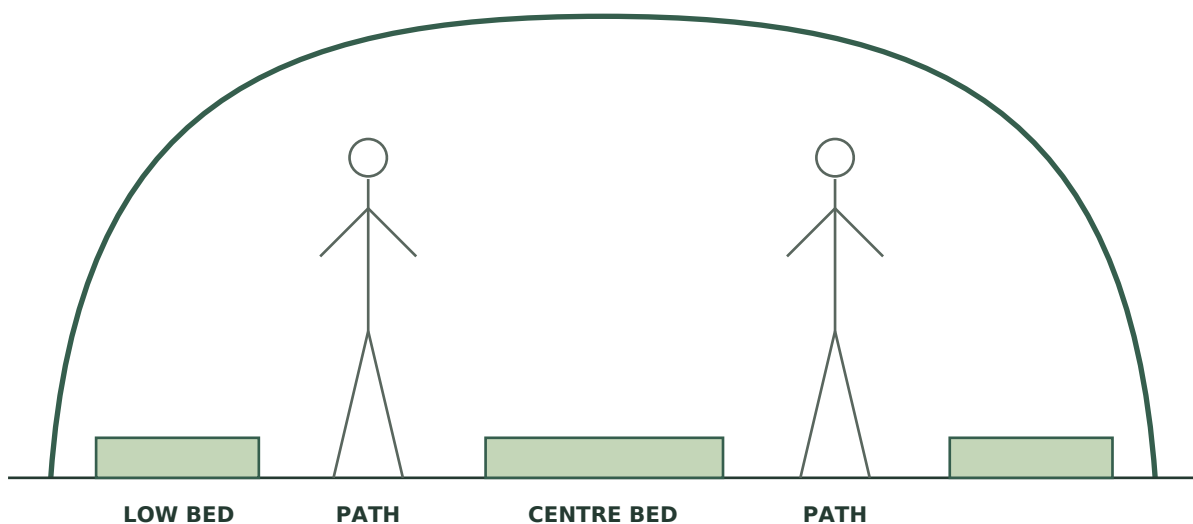
2 Mark doors and reach distances

Lay out the entry bay, bed edges and path with string. Open the existing door through its full travel. Try reaching the back of each side bed without standing on the soil. Keep the 650-750 mm side beds only if that reach is comfortable.

3 Test headroom along every path

Stand, bend and carry your usual watering can where each path will run. With twin paths, test both lanes beside the curved hoops. Move beds or widen paths if you cannot work comfortably. Leave foliage clear of the cover and ventilation openings.

Cross-section: check the curve, not just the floor



Schematic only. Hoop shape and headroom must be checked on site.

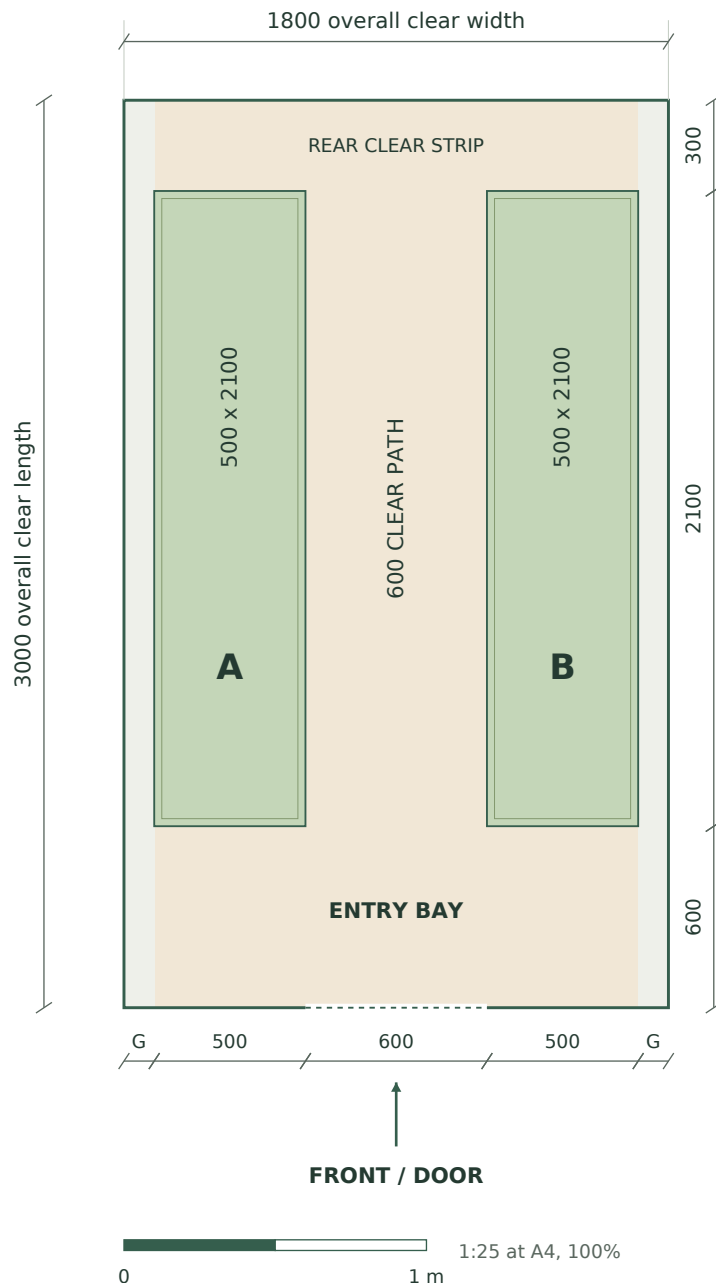
Keep clearances useful

The 100-150 mm side strips protect the cover and allow inspection. They are not access paths. The 300 mm rear strip in the small and medium plans is also not a cross-path. Increase it if there is a rear door. These are walking layouts. Mobility aids need their own door, turning-space and bed-height checks.

Small A: the narrow starter

6 ft x 10 ft class | Working interior: 1.8 m x 3 m

TOP VIEW / ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES



Two narrow beds

Each bed: 500 x 2100 mm.
Reach it from the centre path.

Front bay

600 mm deep. Keep buckets and pots outside this bay.

Path and door

600 mm path for one person.
Test any trolley at the real door.

Rear clearance

300 mm for inspection. No rear walking route is assumed.

Usable soil area

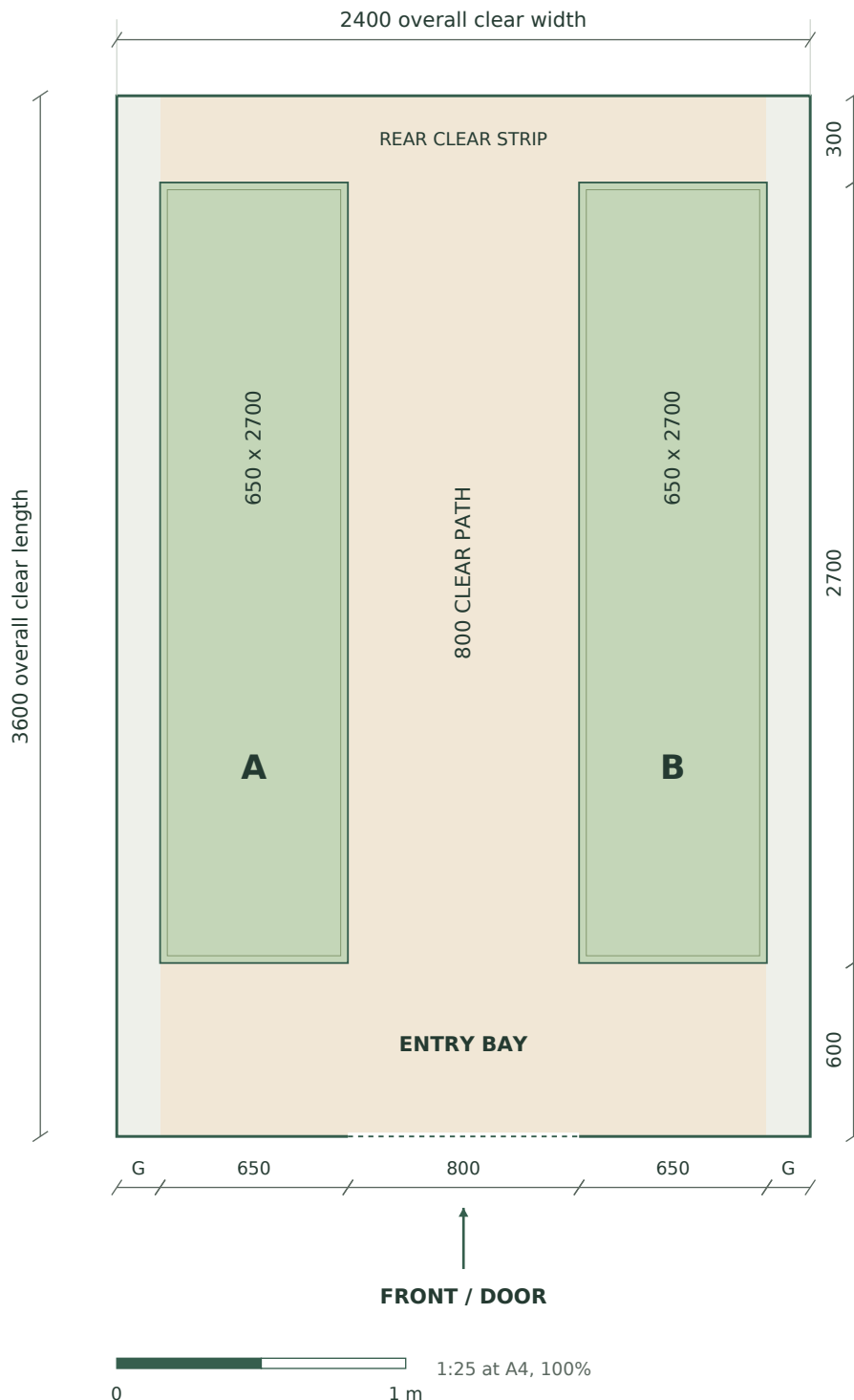
1.85 m² with 25 mm edging.
Dimensions on beds are their outside size.

G = 100 mm side clearance, not a walking path. A/B = side beds. Setup: page 6. Written dimensions govern.

Small B: room to move

8 ft x 12 ft class | Working interior: 2.4 m x 3.6 m

TOP VIEW / ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES



Two longer beds

Each bed: 650 x 2700 mm. Test the reach before fitting boards.

More path space

800 mm between bed edges. Leaves must stay within the beds.

Compact storage

Use a small carry box outside the tunnel. Keep the full path open.

One-door plan

The rear strip is 300 mm. For a rear door, extend it to at least 600 mm and shorten beds.

Usable soil area

3.18 m² with 25 mm edging. Dimensions on beds are their outside size.

G = 150 mm side clearance, not a walking path. A/B = side beds. Setup: page 6. Written dimensions govern.

Build either small layout

Start with two beds and a clear path. A fixed bench uses too much room in these examples.

1 Mark the front bay and rear strip

For both plans, measure 600 mm in from the front end and 300 mm in from the rear. Stretch two strings across the tunnel at those points. The bed length is the clear length left between them.

2 Set the side gaps, then the path

S1: mark 100 mm from each side, then a 500 mm bed. The space between the beds is 600 mm. S2: use 150 mm side gaps and 650 mm beds, leaving an 800 mm path. Check the width at several points.

3 Prepare the beds over the soil

Remove persistent weeds and follow the bed detail on page 12. Fit a single 150 mm board if you want an edge. Add 100 mm of mature garden compost over workable soil. Keep compost off the path and away from the polythene.

4 Finish the route and test watering

Lay the path material, then walk from the door to the rear with a full watering can. You should be able to turn back in the entry bay without standing on a bed. Put the hose inlet near the door and route it along a bed edge.

Small-plan shopping figures

Item	S1: 1.8 x 3 m	S2: 2.4 x 3.6 m
Usable soil area with 25 mm boards	1.85 m ²	3.18 m ²
Compost at 100 mm depth, plus 10%	205 litres	350 litres
Woodchip at 50 mm depth, plus 10%	185 litres	285 litres
Timber cuts and stakes	Page 13	Page 13

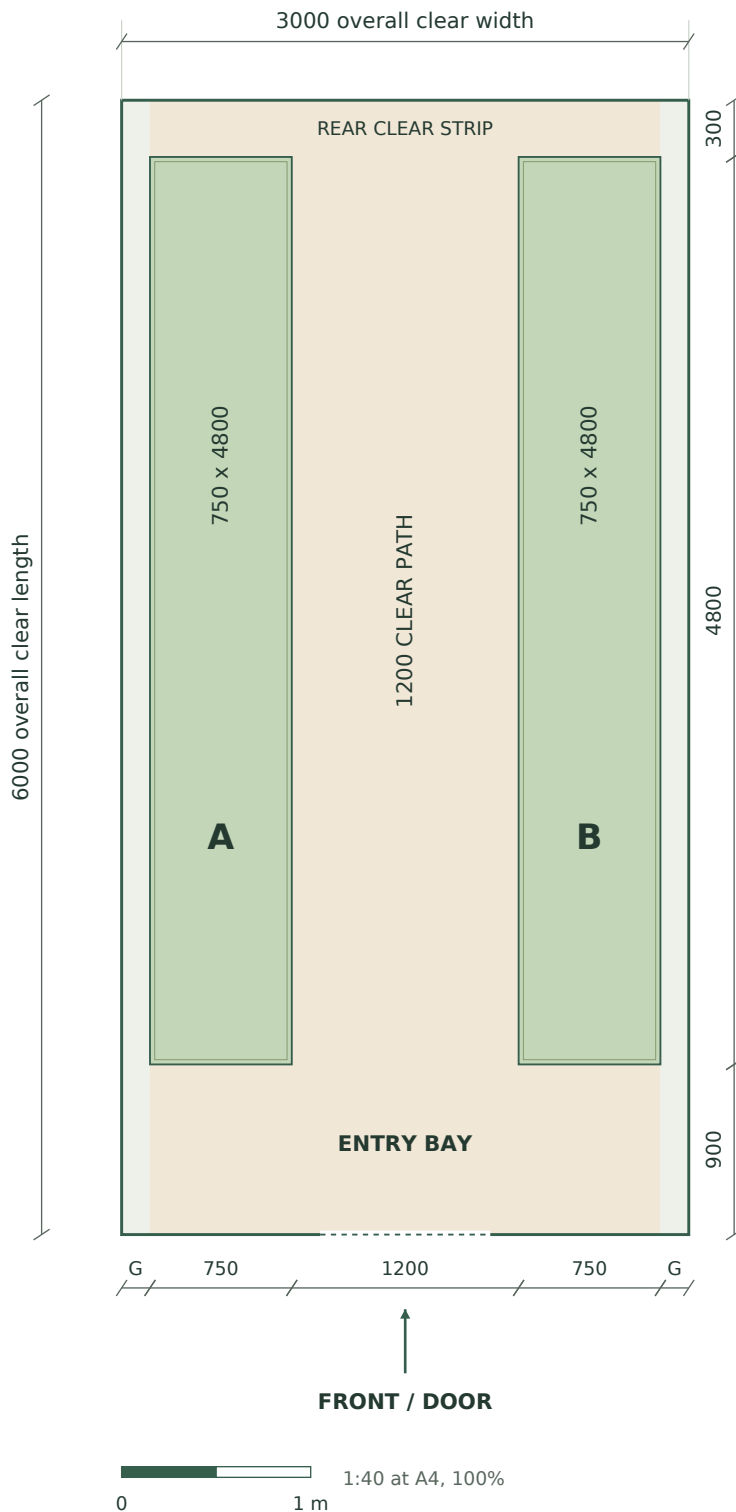
Keep the first planting small

Try leafy crops at the front and a few upright crops farther back where headroom allows. Use the mature spread on the seed packet to choose spacing. A 500 mm bed can suit one row of larger plants or several short rows of small salad crops.

Medium: two parallel beds

10 ft x 20 ft class | Working interior: 3 m x 6 m

TOP VIEW / ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES



Bed dimensions

Two beds, each 750 x 4800 mm. Both are worked from the central path.

Generous centre

The 1200 mm clear path gives room to work. Test equipment against the real door width.

Reach test

If 750 mm is too far, use 600 mm beds and increase the path to 1500 mm.

Shorter version

For a 4500 mm tunnel, keep the widths and shorten both beds to 3300 mm. See page 8.

Usable soil area

6.65 m² with 25 mm edging. Dimensions on beds are their outside size.

G = 150 mm side clearance, not a walking path. A/B = side beds. Setup: page 8. Written dimensions govern.

Give each long bed a clear job

The wide middle path makes this layout easy to water, harvest and replant.

1 Draw two straight path edges

Mark a centreline along the tunnel. Measure 600 mm to either side to set a 1200 mm path. Mark each 750 mm bed outward from the path. This leaves 150 mm beside each cover edge when the clear width is 3000 mm.

2 Allow room at the entrance

Leave the first 900 mm of length clear. Use 300 mm at the rear for inspection, then mark 4800 mm beds in a 6000 mm tunnel or 3300 mm beds in a 4500 mm tunnel. A rear door needs a deeper rear bay and shorter beds.

3 Add low edges and short watering runs

Use page 12 for the one-board edge. Support long boards at no more than 1200 mm centres and at every joint. Keep each hose or drip run within the bed it serves, with fittings reachable from the central path.

4 Keep the middle available

Place seed trays on a temporary stool only while you are working, then remove it. Keep mature leaves, support legs and hoses out of the path. If you prefer permanent bench space, shorten one bed at the front by the full bench footprint and working clearance.

Choose the length that fits

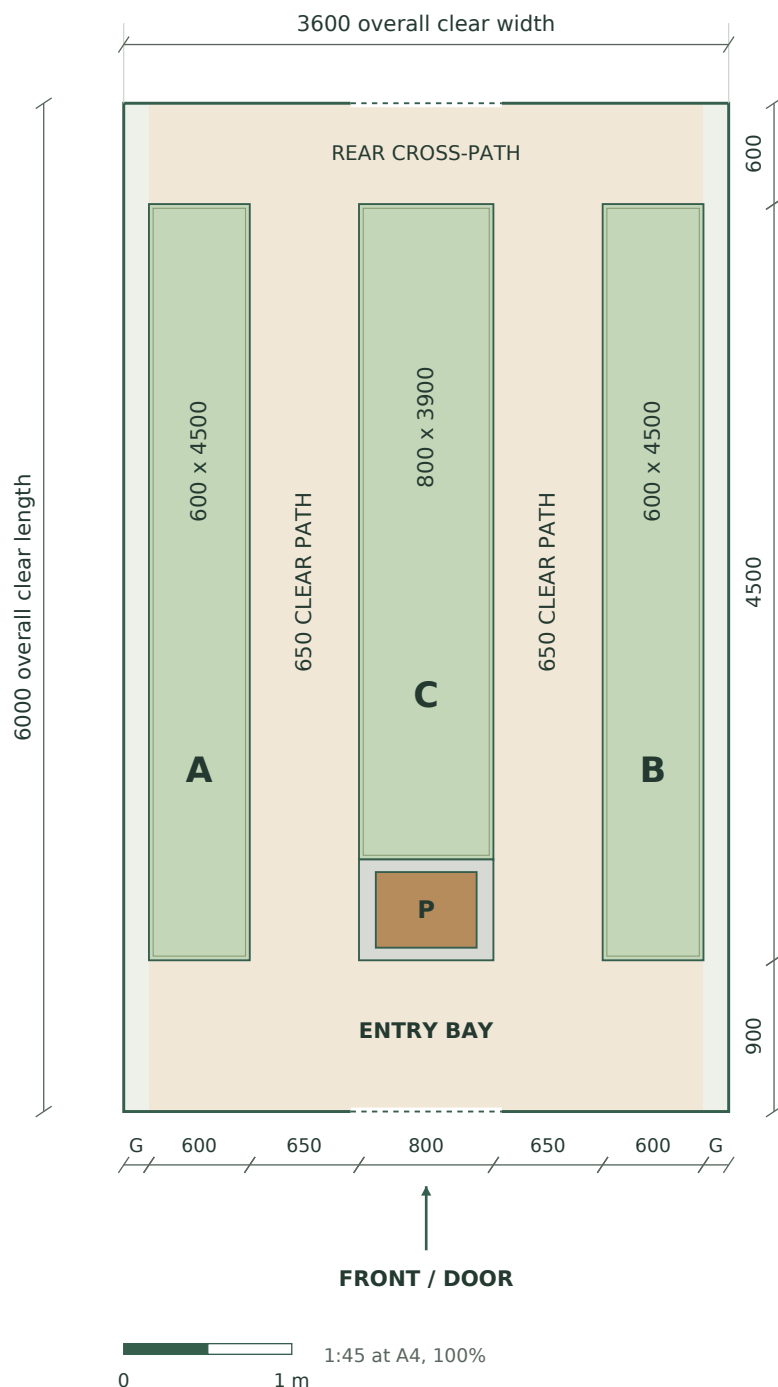
Measurement / quantity	15 ft class	20 ft class
Working clear length	4500 mm	6000 mm
Two bed footprints	750 x 3300 mm each	750 x 4800 mm each
Entry / rear allowance	900 / 300 mm	900 / 300 mm
Soil area inside 25 mm boards	4.55 m ²	6.65 m ²
Compost at 100 mm, plus 10%	505 litres	735 litres
Woodchip at 50 mm, plus 10%	475 litres	595 litres

Use the same 3000 mm width chain for either length: 150 + 750 + 1200 + 750 + 150. Timber cuts for both versions are on page 13.

Large A: three beds, two paths

12 ft x 20 ft class | Working interior: 3.6 m x 6 m

TOP VIEW / ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES



Side beds A / B

Each 600 x 4500 mm. Narrow enough for work from its one adjacent path.

Centre bed C

800 x 3900 mm of bed, reached from both sides. A separate 600 mm long bench pad sits in front.

Potting spot P

600 x 450 mm bench on an 800 x 600 mm pad. Face it from the front bay.

Two routes

Both paths are 650 mm. Rear cross-path: 600 mm. Test your trolley before fixing edges.

Usable soil area

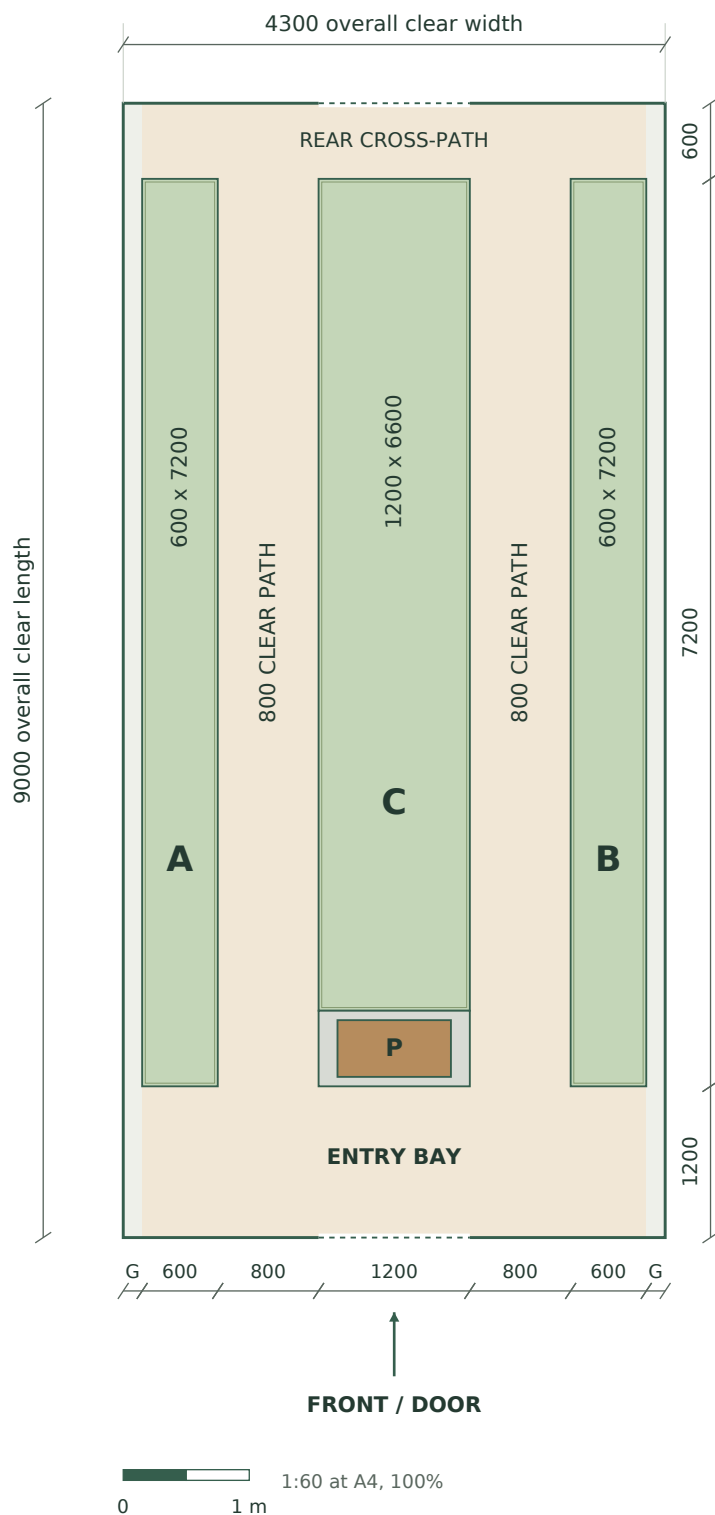
7.78 m² with 25 mm edging. Dimensions on beds are their outside size.

G = 150 mm side clearance, not a walking path. A/B = side beds. C = centre bed. P = potting bench pad. Setup: page 11. Written dimensions govern.

Large B: beds and a work area

14 ft x 30 ft class | Working interior: 4.3 m x 9 m

TOP VIEW / ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES



Side beds A / B

Each 600 x 7200 mm. Keep the full length reachable from its adjacent path.

Centre bed C

1200 x 6600 mm. Reach halfway across from either path.

Potting spot P

900 x 450 mm bench on a 1200 x 600 mm pad. Store hand tools under the bench.

Working room

Twin 800 mm paths, a 1200 mm entry bay and a 600 mm rear cross-path.

Usable soil area

15.40 m² with 25 mm edging. Dimensions on beds are their outside size.

G = 150 mm side clearance, not a walking path. A/B = side beds. C = centre bed. P = potting bench pad. Setup: page 11. Written dimensions govern.

Connect both paths at each end

The front and rear cross-routes let you work around the centre bed without stepping over it.

1 Set out the width chain

For L1, use $150 + 600 + 650 + 800 + 650 + 600 + 150$ mm. For L2, use $150 + 600 + 800 + 1200 + 800 + 600 + 150$ mm. Check that each chain equals your measured clear width.

2 Mark the cross-routes

L1: leave a 900 mm front bay and 600 mm at the rear. L2: leave 1200 mm at the front and 600 mm at the rear. Mark both side beds between these lines. Keep the rear door and both path junctions clear.

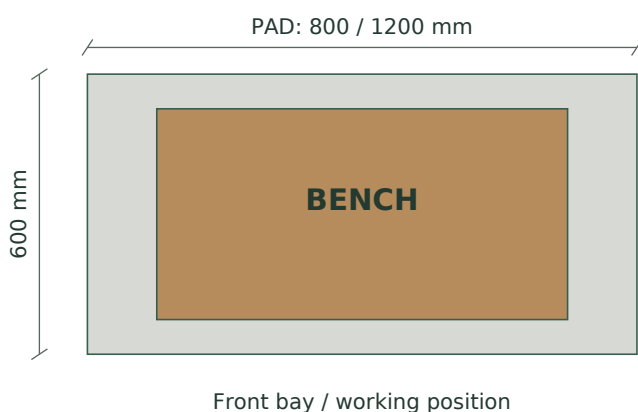
3 Reserve the bench pad before making the centre bed

At the front of the centre strip, mark a 600 mm long firm pad. Start the centre growing bed behind it. This gives a 3900 mm centre bed in L1 and a 6600 mm centre bed in L2. Build all beds using page 12.

4 Place the bench and check both lanes

Use a freestanding bench 450 mm deep and about 800-900 mm high. L1 fits a 600 mm wide bench, L2 a 900 mm bench. Set the feet on a level, load-suitable paving base and check for rocking. Keep stored tools within the footprint.

Bench pad: plan detail



Centre the bench across the pad. Leave 75 mm at its front and rear when using a 450 mm deep bench. The next section of the centre strip is soil. Paths stay clear on both sides.

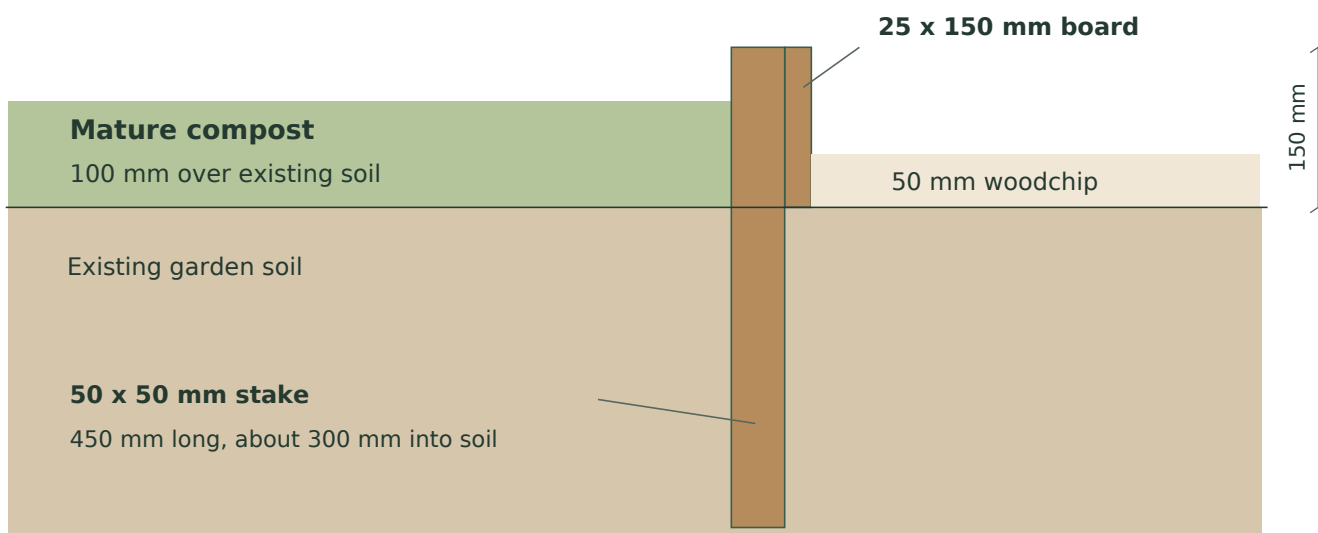
Paving detail follows the paving supplier's base requirements. Keep the pad separate from bed edging and tunnel anchors. No bench loads attach to hoops.

Detail is schematic. Bench width: 600 mm in L1 or 900 mm in L2.

Low beds, simple paths

The worked quantities use 25 mm thick boards, 150 mm high, over existing garden soil.

BED / PATH SECTION



Schematic section. Existing soil remains open beneath the bed.

- 1 Prepare the ground**

Remove persistent weeds. Where grass or annual weeds remain, use overlapping plain cardboard with tape and staples removed, wet it and add mature compost. Leave existing clean beds uncovered beneath the compost. Correct drainage problems before fitting out. [1]
- 2 Fix one row of boards**

Keep the long boards at the stated outside bed length. Fit the end boards between them. Use 50 x 50 x 450 mm stakes inside each corner, at board joints and at no more than 1200 mm centres. Drive carefully after checking for buried services and tunnel fixings.
- 3 Screw, fill and finish**

Pre-drill and fix boards with 4 x 50 mm exterior screws, two per board-to-stake contact. Stagger screws where two boards meet a stake. Keep stake tops flush with the board. Add 100 mm compost, leaving 50 mm below the rim. Lay 50 mm woodchip on cleared path ground.

Use sound timber suitable for garden beds. Avoid oily, creosote-coated or unknown treated salvage. Optional edging can be omitted. Hard paving under the entire tunnel needs deeper, drained containers designed for that surface. [2]

Buy to the measured bed sizes

Cut sizes below assume 25 mm boards. Long boards run past the ends, so end pieces are bed width minus 50 mm.

Plan	Long-side board runs	End-board cuts	Net timber	Stakes*
S1	4 x 2100 mm	4 x 450 mm	10.2 m	12
S2	4 x 2700 mm	4 x 600 mm	13.2 m	16
M-short	4 x 3300 mm	4 x 700 mm	16.0 m	16
M1	4 x 4800 mm	4 x 700 mm	22.0 m	20
L1	4 x 4500 mm 2 x 3900 mm	4 x 550 mm 2 x 750 mm	29.5 m	30
L2	4 x 7200 mm 2 x 6600 mm	4 x 550 mm 2 x 1150 mm	46.5 m	42

*Stake totals cover corners and intermediate support in continuous runs. Add support at extra board joints. Buy timber by available stock lengths with a cutting plan, allowing about 10% spare. A long-side run may be assembled from shorter boards with every butt joint supported. Use 100 exterior screws for S/M or 200 for L, with extras for added joints.

Compost and paths

Plan	Soil area inside boards	100 mm compost**	50 mm woodchip**
S1	1.85 m ²	205 litres	185 litres
S2	3.18 m ²	350 litres	285 litres
M-short	4.55 m ²	505 litres	475 litres
M1	6.65 m ²	735 litres	595 litres
L1	7.78 m ²	860 litres	695 litres
L2	15.40 m ²	1,695 litres	1,180 litres

**Includes 10% extra, rounded up to 5 litres. Compost is a 100 mm layer over existing soil, not the entire rooting depth. Woodchip covers non-bed floor including side strips and end bays, excluding large-plan bench pads. Keep rail clamps and anchors exposed.

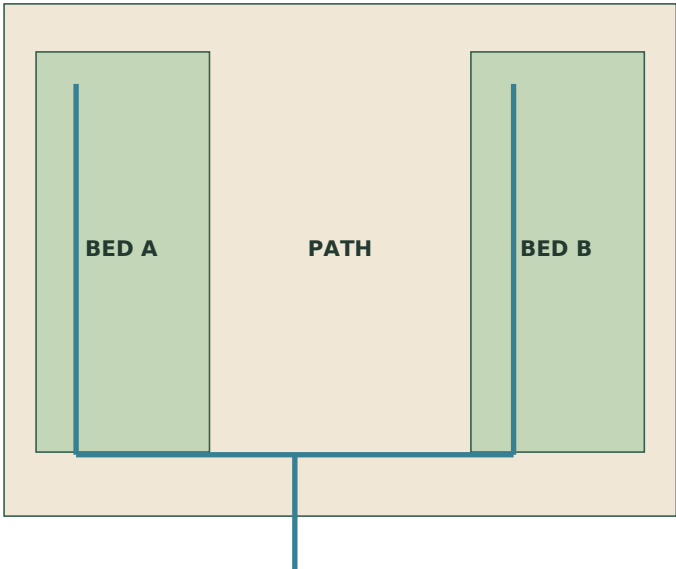
Volume in litres = area in m² x depth in mm. Adjust for your chosen depth and actual inside bed dimensions. For unedged beds, use the full bed footprints. Cardboard, if needed, should cover the bed area with overlap. Buy a bench and its paving separately for L1/L2.

Tools: tape, string, pegs, rake, mallet, saw, drill/driver and eye protection.

Put water and tall crops in reach

Choose varieties for your local climate. Plant spacing and support needs follow the crop, not the drawing.

A simple watering route



Protected crossing at entrance

Bring water in at the entrance. A watering can is enough for a small tunnel. For fixed irrigation, run a supply across the threshold only under a suitable flush cover or protected crossing.

Keep watering lines within beds. Fit the maker's filter and pressure reducer, with backflow protection suitable for your water supply. Follow its spacing and flushing instructions. A valve per bed allows separate watering. [4]

Plant to the available height

Location	A practical use	Keep clear
Narrow side beds	Salads, spinach, herbs and other low crops suited to the season	Cover, side vents and the path edge
Centre bed in large plans	Upright crops on independent supports, with lower crops toward the ends	Both paths and the front bench
Front of small / medium beds	Crops you pick often, with labels you can see from the path	Door swing and entry bay
Rear sections	Longer-staying crops where light and headroom suit them	Rear inspection strip or cross-path

Position taller crops so their shade falls away from shorter ones where possible. Use freestanding supports secured in suitable ground. Do not attach crop loads to the hoops unless the tunnel maker provides approved load-bearing fittings.

Ventilate through the available doors and vents as conditions require. Keep openings reachable and leaves away from the cover. Check soil moisture below the surface before watering. Protected growing can still overheat or become too cold for the chosen crop. [2, 3]

Adjust the beds before the paths

Use the smallest measured clear width. Keep the same approach even if your supplier lists the tunnel in feet.

Two beds and one central path

Width calculation

Path width = clear width - (2 x side gap) - (2 x bed width).

Example: $2400 - (2 \times 150) - (2 \times 650) = 800$ mm.

If the tunnel measures 2300 mm, 600 mm beds keep that same 800 mm path.

Three beds and two equal paths

Width calculation

Each path = [clear width - (2 x side gap) - (2 x side bed) - centre bed] / 2.

Example: $[4300 - 300 - 1200 - 1200] / 2 = 800$ mm.

At 4270 mm clear width, the same beds leave two 785 mm paths. Test them at shoulder height too.

Change the length without changing the pattern

Side bed length = clear length - front bay - rear allowance. In the large plans, centre bed length = side bed length - 600 mm bench pad. If you add a 600 mm middle cross-path, split every bed and deduct that 600 mm from each total growing run. Recalculate edging and compost.

Write in your measurements	mm
Smallest clear width / clear length	_____ / _____
Front bay / rear allowance	_____ / _____
Bed width(s) / path width(s)	_____ / _____
Usable bed length(s)	_____

Walk it once before planting

Open every door and reach every vent. Walk each path carrying your normal equipment. Check a comfortable reach to the back of side beds and the centre of the middle bed. Confirm that the bench stands firm, hoses create no trip points and no timber or screw tip can touch the polythene.

A layout you can keep using

Measure once more after the beds are in place, then check clear paths as the plants grow.

Keep the routine simple

Keep a hand fork and snips in a small box, with larger tools stored outside. Sweep spilled compost back into the beds. Top up the path where traffic creates hollows and check that the door threshold stays level. Move temporary pots as soon as they start narrowing the route.

For cooler seasons, make space for crops suited to your local light and temperatures. In hot weather, keep access to ventilation clear and review shading if needed. A large tunnel can add useful household produce, but year-round harvests depend on climate, crop choice and planting dates. [3]

Sources used for the growing advice

[1] Royal Horticultural Society: No-dig gardening

Cardboard, compost over existing soil and ground-level bed preparation.

[2] Royal Horticultural Society: How to make a raised bed

Bed access, materials, moisture checks and drainage on hard surfaces.

[3] Royal Horticultural Society: Greenhouse ventilation and shading

Ventilation and shading advice that also applies to polytunnels.

[4] Colorado State University Extension: Drip Irrigation for Home Gardens

Irrigation components and maintenance. Follow the selected equipment's instructions.

How to read these plans

All floor-plan dimensions are proposed design values in millimetres. They are not dimensions quoted from the sources. Bed sizes are outside footprints, including optional 25 mm boards. Compost calculations deduct that board thickness and ignore the small volume occupied by stakes. Figures are rounded for ordering.

The layouts assume an existing polytunnel on suitable garden soil. Frame height, anchors, door construction and structural loads follow the tunnel maker's instructions. Dashed openings in the drawings show assumed existing door positions. Door clear widths and swings must be checked on site.

Cover: generated photo illustration of a finished three-bed interior, with the supplied Gardening Latest logo. Use the measured drawings for setting out. Cross-sections and watering details are schematic. Print on A4, at 100% for the stated floor-plan scales.