



Unit 6 Farm Security

✦ Glossary

Wealthy: rich people

Coat of arms: a pattern that is the sign of a family

Slightly: a little

📖 History of glasshouses

Glasshouses first appeared in Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries, when a vast quantity of new and exotic plants were brought back from Asia and the Americas by travelers and explorers. The buildings were designed to allow the plants to flourish in an artificially warm climate – though the high price of glass meant that only the very **wealthy** could afford them.

Some of the first glasshouses were orangeries, created to shelter the vibrant citrus fruits that were brought to England from Spain in the mid 16th century. Originally heated by burning charcoal braziers, the buildings were later warmed by hypocausts – underfloor heating systems that used hot air. Orangeries became particularly fashionable after William II was crowned king of England in 1689, as the orange was the symbol on his **coat of arms**. Early orangeries were built as extensions to the house, but later it became popular to have glasshouses separated from the main property. Many were built in the Classical style, and looked like Roman temples in stately home gardens. As time went on, the buildings were used to house more than just oranges.

In the 19th century, the term “orangery” was replaced by the words “conservatory” and “greenhouse”, though they were used to mean **slightly** different things – a greenhouse was largely for conserving and overwintering evergreens, while conservatories provided suitable growing conditions for any type of plant.

As the fashion for glasshouses flourished, increasingly innovative structures were

designed to maximize light and create the perfect temperature for the plants inside. Ventilation was created by adding sliding frames at the top of the roof, while roofs were made of glass positioned to catch the sun. During the Industrial Revolution, new materials and technologies were employed – especially iron, whose strength made it ideal for creating glass structures. Many huge iron-framed glasshouses were built, especially in public gardens, and many still survive today.

(Adapted from: *A History of Glasshouses*, www.telegraph.co.uk)





Understanding the text

1. Read the text and find at least eight verbs related to glasshouses. One has been done as an example.

- 1. Shelter
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

2. Read the text again and answer the following questions.

- 1. What determined the appearance of glasshouses in Britain?
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- 2. What were the main features of the orangeries?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
- 3. What is the difference between a conservatory and a glasshouse?
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- 4. What innovations were introduced in the 19th century?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

Writing

3. Think of a greenhouse that you have seen recently and write down a list of factors that differentiate it from the early glasshouses (e.g. the materials used).

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