

BELOW, FROM LEFT: Rustic and informal, bursting with symbolism for the family, a grass-roofed dining pavilion has Norwegian roots. A tall but tiny tool shed has elegant French doors. What could be more fitting than an outbuilding that virtually disappears, like this potting shed?



One cornerstone of Arts & Crafts design is, of course, an Eastern aesthetic that celebrates our relationship to nature. For another homeowner in the Pacific Northwest, the Asian connection inspired a Japanese teahouse (previous page), which settled in behind a 1920s brick bungalow. Built of "shoji," or simple wooden slats covered with translucent rice paper, the teahouse looks out towards the central garden and a small lagoon. A window in back overlooks a plum tree brought to this country from Japan by the owner's grandmother, nearly a century ago. Furnished for the classic, etiquette-prescribed tea ceremony with bamboo mats and tea implements, the teahouse is in keeping with Zen Buddhist simplicity. The owner, who longed for a bit of tranquility, reveals that he more often uses the teahouse to unwind after work with his iPod.

Other examples on this page show the creative range for designing suburban outbuildings. The open-air dining shelter is an adaptation of a Norwegian agricultural building, complete with symbolic carvings and a grass roof. (Owner Leslie Lian traces her ancestry to Norway.) For the Fowler family, rural

roots and a growing collection of country antiques inspired a rustic storage shed: a tiny dormer on the shake roof, vintage windows, and salvaged barn siding give it a look of having always been here. Their overgrown potting shed is shown above.

Jennie Hammill's glass garden pavilion was made up from a collection of 43 windows and doors; it's become a bird-watching room tucked into the city garden. Inside, a bench converts to a daybed, and there's plenty of room for tea or even dinner for six. Elsewhere in the Hammill garden, a pair of French doors and more old windows make up a space-saving and functional storage shed that recalls an English telephone booth. A complementary new structure by Minneapolis architect David Heide balances the Prairie-style house and anchors the patio. It functions as a brick-floored outdoor living room that doubles as a guesthouse. ■



## design tips

Our thanks to author Debra Prinzing and photographer Bill Wright; a few of these projects were featured in their book *Stylish Sheds and Elegant Hideaways* [Clarkson Potter Publishers, 2008]. Debra's common-sense advice for planning your shed:

- First check local **building codes** and ordinances for the maximum-size outbuilding permitted in your community.
- Consider the building's **architectural role** in the landscape. Is it for looks, a functional space, or both?
- Plan not just the envelope but also **the interior**, including function and finishes, as you would a room in your house.
- You'll want a **work surface**, and a potting bench, cabinets, and shelves.
- Think comfort, and be sure to save at least one corner for **relaxation**.

*Companies that build quality sheds are listed on page 67.*



LEFT: Made up of salvaged windows and doors, an urban garden house has a sweetly formal air. ABOVE: A garden guesthouse complements the original Prairie-style building.