
Greenhouse Reviews - Top 5 Greenhouses for Gardeners

by [MasterGardener](#)

Choosing a Greenhouse Kit - Reviews and Ratings of Hobby Greenhouses



If you are new to hobby greenhouse gardening, selecting from the many greenhouse kits available can be daunting. There are many greenhouse kit makers, such as Grandio, Rion, Brighton, Juliana, Riga, etc. There are several types of frames (plastic/resin, aluminum, wood) many types of panels (polycarbonate, clear polycarbonate, glass, acrylic). Then there are the shapes of greenhouses (barn style, A-frame, lean-to, octagonal) and a slew of sizes to choose from, starting at nothing more than a seedling starter up to near commercial sizes. Here we will review several of the most popular models available, which will hopefully help you select just the right model for your needs.

Top Greenhouse Kits

Our picks for the best hobby greenhouses.

1. Grandio Greenhouse
2. Riga Greenhouse
3. Juliana Premium
4. Brighton Hybrid Greenhouse
5. Rion Prestige Greenhouse

Pick #1: Grandio Greenhouse Ascent and Elite Review



Grandio Elite



Grandio Ascent

Dollar for dollar we have found the Grandio Greenhouse Ascent and Elite to absolutely be the best deal for a hobby greenhouse on the market today. They offer both a barn-roof style and a traditional sloped roof style. Both models feature heavy duty frames, thick insulated panels, high snow loads and wind loads, wide entry doors, and many other great features, all at very reasonable prices.

Grandios are all aluminum framed greenhouses, and this is definitely our favorite greenhouse frame material when done right. We were very impressed with the strength, ruggedness, and durability of the Grandio frames. We held the frame pieces next to the frame from an old Hobby Grower Snap and Grow, and there appeared to be nearly double the amount of material used in the Grandio. This

makes for a much stronger and durable greenhouse that won't shift or blow over at the first hint of a breeze. The frame has also been powder-coated in a nice deep, dark forest green hue. This is an expensive process that protects the metal from wear and the weather. Most of the silver-colored greenhouses being sold don't do this and instead are selling raw aluminum frames which will oxidize over time and may corrode or discolor. These also are very tall for a starter-priced greenhouse at 7 1/2 feet tall for the Ascent model and over 8 feet tall for the Elite model. Many of the competitor greenhouses are closer to 6 1/2 feet tall, and trust us, you don't have to be particularly tall to appreciate every bit of roof height, which helps when you are spending a lot of time working in your greenhouse.

The panels of the Grandio Greenhouses are either 10mm or 6mm thick, twin-wall polycarbonate that has been UV treated. Again, in the price range that the Grandio's fall in to, these are surprisingly good panels. In fact, none of the other hobby greenhouses we've tested have had more than 8mm thick panels, so the Grandio Elite at 10mm is probably the best you will find. Most in this range will have single-layer polycarbonate on the order of 1mm thick, or maybe if they have twin-wall it will be only 4mm. So to have these come standard with 6-10mm is a great benefit, especially for anyone who is trying to really extend their growing season into cold temperatures where every bit of insulation is critical.

Another great feature that goes along with the frame strength was the extra snow-load / wind bracing that comes with the Grandios. These are similar to a truss system you would find in a house, and the purpose of them is to provide added rigidity and to spread any load (from accumulated snow for instance) to keep that greenhouse intact in times of severe weather. This can be critical for those gardeners who have a greenhouse in places that get lots of wind and snow. The last thing you want is to look out into your yard after a storm and see your greenhouse strewn out in pieces, or to see the roof collapsed after a snow. While there are no 100% guarantees we feel highly confident that the Grandios are some of the strongest greenhouses we have tested and would have no problem using them in windy or high-elevation or snow prone locations.

Something that we can't forget to write about with the Grandio's was their fantastic attention to detail in the packaging and installation of the kits. This is an area that is often overlooked by greenhouse manufacturers, but it is no small thing when you realize that most of the greenhouse kits have to be shipped the full length of North America before reaching the customer. The Grandio's are the only greenhouse we have yet tested that were packaged with EVERY SINGLE PIECE either shrink-wrapped (frame pieces) or double-sided protective film covered (panels). This means that when you open your kit you should find it in pristine condition and the pieces will not have been bouncing around and rubbing during transit getting completely scratched up before you've even cracked the boxes.

The installation itself was quite simple and straight-forward. The instructions were by far the best we've ever seen in a greenhouse kit. They were very thorough and well thought out with loads of pictures and descriptive text. We've spent seemingly countless hours installing other kits and you often find yourself spending more time deciphering the instructions to figure out what you are supposed to do next than actually building the greenhouse. Or you get a piece or two wrong and end up disassembly part of it to go back and correct the mistakes. But this was not the case with the Grandio we built and while it still took the better part of an afternoon to construct, we never had to call support to have them walk us through a tricky section like we've done on other kits.

Conclusion: The new Grandio Greenhouse kits are a welcome addition to the greenhouse market and seem to be a fantastic value. Our kit came standard with a base kit, two roof vents, 10mm twin-wall polycarbonate, a double sliding door, anchoring system, snow load kit, and a very sturdy powder-coated green frame. They also feature a limited lifetime frame warranty and 10 year panel warranty.

Shop around and you will see that for the price these are probably the most feature-loaded greenhouse can find.

WHERE TO FIND IT: [Grandio Greenhouses](#)

Pick #2: Riga Greenhouse Review

According to the manufacturer the Riga Greenhouse Kit is the absolute sturdiest hobby greenhouse available. We didn't have the advantage of being able to test in the extreme high winds that Riga has tested, but we certainly could find no reason to dispute their claims. If the Riga is anything it is a sturdy and durable greenhouse.



Riga Greenhouse

One of the biggest reasons for the Riga's extremely high wind and snow resistance is the most obvious - it's "onion" shape. As the picture shows, the Riga's are rounded on the sides coming to a point on top, which helps shed snow and lessens the effect of high winds. While this is a good feature to have from a strength standpoint, we were not as thrilled about the shape from an aesthetic standpoint. While the manufacturer states the onion shape is "beautiful", our unscientific poll of our review team was much more partial to the more traditional shapes of the Grandios and Julianas. That's not to say the Riga's are ugly, we just as a whole preferred the looks of the other models we tested.

The size options for the Riga's are varied and give a great range of lengths from fairly small to very large. They range from length of approximately 7' up to 17', and also have two width options of 7' or 9'. This means that just about any gardener can find a just right for them size. The heights of the Riga vary depending on the model from 7' to 7'6". Similar to the Juliana Premium, this is nice while you are standing in the middle of the greenhouse, but again we noted that we had to do more stooping inside the greenhouse than in the Grandio Elite or Rion Prestige because of the way the roof slopes more severely from top to sides. If you are a taller than average gardener and work inside the greenhouse much, this can be a noticeable drawback to the Riga's and the Juliana Premium.

Installation of the greenhouse was in a range that we would call moderate - more difficult than the Grandio, but less difficult than the Rion Prestige. The instructions were fairly easy to understand and follow, but the greenhouse did require a few tools to install.

Similar to the Rions, the Riga has an optional base kit that can be used to secure the greenhouse to the ground. As with the Rions we would definitely recommend purchasing the base, although in this case you will be shelling out around \$100 more for any of the Riga base kits than you would for comparable sized Rion base kits.

As for standard features, the Riga's come with roof windows, automatic roof window openers, and a hinged rear window. You can also purchase some shelving units that attach either at a standard shelf height (about hip level), or upper unit shelves that are more at eye level. We did like these shelving units and thought they were functional and attractive, although a bit on the pricey side.

Conclusion: The Riga Onion series is an extremely durable and well-constructed greenhouse. It comes in a nice range of sizes, both width and length, and was not overly difficult to assemble. We weren't thrilled with the looks of the onion shape, but if that is a style that suits your eye, then you can't go wrong with whichever size Riga you select. Also, be aware that the Riga's are approximately double to triple

the cost of the Grandio Elite and Ascent (our #1 pick) per square foot.

WHERE TO FIND IT: [Riga Greenhouses](#) at EpicGreenhouses.com or [Riga Greenhouses](#) at GreenhouseOutlet.com.

Pick #3: Juliana Premium Greenhouse Review

The Juliana Premium greenhouse is billed as a top-of-the-line, high-strength, high-quality hobby greenhouse. In this respect it did not disappoint. The Premium truly is a strong and well-built greenhouse with its heavy duty aluminum frame and extremely thick 10mm polycarbonate panels. If you live in a location that gets extreme winter weather with very strong winds and multiple feet of snow, this would be a good consideration.

The panels are very insulating and if you continue to garden throughout the winter, every millimeter of polycarbonate thickness helps!



Juliana Premium Greenhouse

The Premium comes in a few size options (9'x9', 9'x12', 9'x14') which is nice, but we would have liked to see a few more sizes available, or possibly a greater spread between the sizes so some longer length greenhouses were an option. Something like a 9'x18' or 9'x20'. The height at the peak of the Juliana Premiums is significant (nearly 8 feet) which gives plenty of headroom while standing in the center of the greenhouse, but the roof is sloped much more than the barn-style of the Grandio Elite, so you may be ducking down a bit if working on staging tables set up along the side walls.

Installation of the greenhouse was also somewhat more difficult than the Grandios. The primary reason for the difficulty was the, in our opinion, poorly written instructions. We spent almost as much time deciphering the confusing instructions as actually putting the greenhouse together. We didn't think the actual construction of the greenhouse was particularly hard once we figured out what to do, so we hope that in the near future Juliana will see fit to rewrite the instructions to be more clear and understandable.

Similar to the Rion Prestige, the Premium has an optional base kit that can be used to secure the greenhouse to the ground. As with the Rions we would definitely recommend purchasing the base. It doesn't add much expense (around \$200), and is extremely sturdy and a much better solution than simply erecting the greenhouse directly on the soil or on a custom built wood base.

A couple of the nicer features the Premium offers that many competitors do not is the enclosed rain gutter and downspout system, and the hinged, lockable Dutch door. The rain gutter system is great at keeping the rain from pouring off the sides or front, which may not be a huge deal, but is a nice added bonus. And the Dutch doors gives the Premium a high-end, European style feel, along with the frame shape, that adds to the attractiveness and functionality of the greenhouse.

Conclusion: The Juliana Premium series is a very nice greenhouse, especially for those gardeners who live in areas with very harsh winters, or who like the look of a European-style greenhouse versus the barn style of the Grandio Elite. It is attractive, has nice standard features, is extremely well insulated and durable. Also, be aware that the Juliana Premiums are approximately double the cost of the Grandio Elite or Ascent (our #1 pick) per square foot.

Pick #4: Brighton Hybrid Greenhouse Review

If you are new to greenhouse gardening and want to test the waters without spending too much, then the Brighton Hybrid Greenhouse would be a good way to go. It fills the starter greenhouse niche nicely and can be a great little greenhouse for lengthening the growing season.



Brighton Hybrid Greenhouse

There are several size options to choose from - 6x4, 6x6, 6x8, 6x10, and 6x14. Not sure why 6x12 is skipped as an offering, but one of the other 5 or so sizes should fit the bill for most gardeners. If more space is needed beyond a 6x14, then we would definitely recommend the Grandio Ascent 8x8 or 8x12 as a better choice for something larger. The height of the Brighton Hybrid is 6' 10", which is plenty tall for average gardeners. It comes in the A-Frame style roof which sheds snow, ice, and falling leaves nicely. We still favor the barn-style roof for maximum headroom if you are tall, but otherwise with the high roof peak headroom shouldn't be an issue.

Because this is a fairly small greenhouse it is shipped typically in two boxes (one with panels and one with the frame and other parts/pieces) of approximately 30-60 pounds each. These come via common carrier (UPS), and thus you will find the two relatively small and easy-to-handle boxes on your doorstep when it arrives instead of a giant box on the back of a flatbed truck.

Installation was probably the easiest of any of the greenhouses except the Grandio and took us only about 5 or so hours to construct a 6x8 Brighton. This is far better than the Juliana Premium and the Rion Prestige.

You may now be wondering why this greenhouse is called the "Hybrid". Basically that is due to the fact that the Brighton greenhouse has two different types of panels used instead of the typical one type of panel. Most greenhouses use either clear acrylic/poly for the entire kit, or a dual-wall polycarbonate for the entire kit. The Brighton Hybrid uses some of both - clear polycarbonate for the sides and dual-wall polycarbonate for the roof. The thought here is that you can combine the features of clear panels for visibility and aesthetics, with the slightly superior insulating factor of dual-wall panels where viewing isn't necessary. We weren't sure at first about the side panels, but once set up we really liked the clear sides. They are nearly as clear as glass panels, but infinitely more safe and durable. We tried throwing a few rocks at the panels, as well as bumping them quite sharply with the back end of a shovel, and they do not shatter or scratch easily, which is a drawback to using actual glass panels. The downside of the single layer clear panels is that they have a bit less insulating factor than the double-wall polycarbonate panels on the other greenhouses tested. So this is where some thinking through your greenhouse usage will be important. If you do mostly spring through fall gardening and are on a budget, or if you enjoy the look of a clear greenhouse, the Brighton Hybrid is a good choice. If you are trying to keep your prized flowers going all winter or live in an area that gets quite a lot of snow or severe cold, then this would not be the greenhouse to purchase.

The overall quality of the Brighton was not quite up to the level of the Grandio, Juliana, or Riga greenhouses. The frame was quite sturdy for a starter greenhouse, but not as rigid as the higher-end models we ranked. But then you are saving hundreds to thousands of dollars, so you need to evaluate just how serious you take greenhouse gardening before making a purchase. You do get a base kit

included, as well as roof vents and a rain gutter kit.

Conclusion: The Brighton Hybrid Greenhouse is a great little starter greenhouse that for the money (starts around \$400-\$500) is a very good value. It takes up only a little room and with its clear panels is attractive and shows off plants nicely. If you are just getting into greenhouse gardening and are looking around at the various entry level greenhouses, this is definitely one of the best ones we've tested with its relatively sturdy frame, easy setup, included base kit/accessories. Plus its 5 year warranty should give you peace of mind for quite a long time.

WHERE TO FIND IT: [Brighton Greenhouses](http://BrightonGreenhouses.com) at BrightonGreenhouses.com or [Brighton Greenhouses](http://EpicGreenhouses.com) at EpicGreenhouses.com.

Pick #5: Rion Prestige Greenhouse Review

The Rion Prestige Greenhouse came in 5th due to a few factors that we will outline below. The first issue is price - The Rion Prestige has the same height and width and barn style roof as the Grandio Elite, yet the Rion Prestige is priced hundreds of dollars higher. The price differential is even worse when you consider the fact that the base kit is included with the Grandio, but has to be added for an extra fee with the



Rion Prestige Greenhouse

Rion. Plus the Prestige has single layer 1mm clear polycarbonate instead of 10mm dual layer like on the Elite, and doesn't have the snow load and wind load supports like on the Grandio.

We did like the variety of size options for the Rion Prestige. You can get anything from 8'x8' up to 8'x24' or more. That means there is a size available that fits just about any requirement, from a starter greenhouse to a near-nursery sized greenhouse. But just be aware that if you are going for a longer size Rion greenhouse, you will not get a warranty. That was surprising to us, but in fact if you read the Rion warranty they state that they will only warranty the sizes up to 16' in length. Anything longer than that (20', 24', etc), the warranty is void. Apparently it has something to do with the roof design, and on the longer models the roof strength can be an issue and so the manufacturer has decided to not warranty the longer ones.

The frame of the Rion Prestige is constructed of high quality UV Protected PVC Resin (aka Plastic). The panels again are single layer clear polycarbonate. We were at first thinking the panels would be like thick glass, but instead are rather thin and flexible. It actually reminded us of the clear plastic found on most all product packaging that you have to cut open to get to the products inside. This can be fairly strong and resistant to cracking and breaking, but it isn't quite like having a full glass greenhouse if that is what you are after. But if you like the looks of clear walls then it can be a decent option.

Installation of the greenhouse was not as easy as we would have hoped. Having plastic parts that snap together with plastic pins sounds okay in theory, but getting the roof on was very difficult and it took a few extra bodies hanging on and pushing to get it to slide into place finally. There were definitely times throughout the process when we thought it would have been quite a bit easier to just screw in a bolt than wedging in the plastic, but once we discovered the trick of soaping up all the parts really good, it at least made it somewhat easier. Words and text descriptions would have been nice in the instructions also. Everything was done in pictures only and it made for some deciphering work to figure out what was intended.

There is a nice variety of accessories that are available as add-ons. These include the base kit, as mentioned, plus roof windows, louver windows, automatic window openers, solar lights, rain gutters, and staging/potting tables. These can deck out your Rion really well and add to the functionality.

While the Rion Prestige is an okay greenhouse, we think that there are better options available that will be stronger, easier to install, and will cost the same or less.

WHERE TO FIND IT: [Rion Greenhouses](#)

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