



### Barn Cloches for Growing Early Fruit and Vegetables. Traditional Kitchen & Market Garden Technology

The growing area under a single cloche is approx 0.38 sq.m (4.1 sq.ft). Typically, a number of cloches are set up in a row and if needed, closed off with a pane of glass at each end held in place with a cane. For extra security, this cane top can be wired to the nearest cloche lifting handle.

The cloches are traditionally glazed using four pieces of 3mm thick horticultural glass, each being 24" x 12" (now 610mm x 305mm). The panes are made from cutting in two a standard sized sheet of horticultural glass measuring 24" x 24". This is the cheapest option.

Once the cloche is assembled, the entire cloche can be picked up by the circular wire handle and easily moved around. The assembled cloches weight 6 kg each. This makes them heavy enough not to be blown over but light enough to move to harvest crops or do weeding. The shape of the cloches also adds greatly to their stability in windy areas.

There is now need to irrigate inside the cloches as rain water or irrigation water soaks the ground around the cloches and the plants roots reach out for this moisture. This has the advantage of maintaining a dry soil surface inside the cloche which mitigates fungal diseases triggered by wet soil and wet plants. This also ensures the soil retains its original tilth without caking and therefore allowing air to penetrate freely to the crops' roots.

The metal A frame is untreated mild steel which will naturally and attractively rust but last for decades. The handle and clips are made of galvanised high tensile steel for a long life. A support post is provided with each order of cloches and this greatly eases singled-handed assembly. It is recommended the cloches are assembled on a lawn and then moved to the vegetable plot.

Horticultural glass is readily available, cut to size, from larger glass merchants. We use Brownhills Glass Company, Walsall.

