

## The Greenhouse Rises Again

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**Image:** *The repaired greenhouse in its new location.*

From a state of near wreckage, the greenhouse rises again, a peaceful zombie composed of broken aluminum struts and strangely resilient sheets of polycarbonate ...

It was one of those OMG moments. I just stood by the kitchen window, where I'd been working on supper, saying quietly to myself, "F...ck, f...ck, f...ck ...".

I suppose we should've known better, but, to be truthful, it was something that was difficult to estimate.

Winter 2017. We had just gotten a heavy dump of wet coastal snow. There was at least six inches sticking to our metal roof, and nearly a foot on the ground. Everything was quiet and snuggled up under a blanket of winter whiteness.

The sun came out. The snow sparkled, and everything glistened with tiny diamonds. The snow began to melt, lubricating the surface of our roof. Anyone who has lived under a metal roof knows what happens next. It started with little plops and thuds, as the snow began to creep off the roof, falling in a pile just under the eaves. This is normal, and we are accustomed to it. However, the dull base roar that followed was not. With a groan that shook the house, most of the snow on one side of the roof started sliding, gaining momentum, and then leaping free of the roof. The huge sheet of snow traveled a surprising distance, and rather than landing in the usual heap under the eaves, crashed with a tremendous force onto the roof of the greenhouse. It seemed to take place in slow motion, although I suspect it was all over in seconds. I kept thinking to myself, "Damn, we should have moved the greenhouse farther away." Too late now.

Even though the greenhouse was largely buried in snow, I could see that some or all of the rear section had been collapsed by the force of the impact ... surely windows were broken and the frame snapped. Likely a write-off ...

It was a week or so before we were able to survey the damage ... we had to wait for the snow drift containing the greenhouse to melt before we could enter it and figure out what to do. Surprisingly, the damage was not as extreme as I might have expected ... four panels knocked out, two of them with damage to the polycarbonate itself, and about six frame breaks along the back half nearest the house. Fortunately, the greenhouse is light, and we dragged it well away from the house, braced it with wood as best we could, and covered it with a tarp so the wind couldn't tear at the damaged section. Repairs would have to wait until spring ...

And spring is here. As you can see, the greenhouse looks more or less normal. Ken was able to drill and wire the broken components of the frame together. Clear tuck tape repaired the ripped panels. And a wonderful Gorilla glue product that comes in tubes and can be dispensed in large quantities using a caulking gun was used to re-attach the polycarbonate panels to their frames. The greenhouse was moved to a new, and much safer location. Already it is a temporary home to my tomato and squash starts, and hopefully will allow us to grow a crop of basil and stevia.

I have to give the designers credit ... that's one tough little greenhouse!