



Styles and sizes of the outbuildings offered at suppliers like GardenSheds, *opposite page and above*, allow the shed to fit in with the main house. Things like shrubbery, window boxes, and shutters can make a shed like this one, *right*, either extroverted or just a subtle addition to the land.

Scarfone is fond of the sheds created by Walpole Woodworkers. The company produces sheds in a variety of sizes that take their inspiration from New England's traditional architecture, encompassing elements such as salt box roofs. Their sheds can be outfitted with carriage-house-style double doors for accommodating riding lawn mowers, and decorated with cupolas, window boxes, and shutters. (The company has a store in Virginia or sheds can be mail-ordered. Visit walpolewoodworkers.com.)

The shed can now be a statement or a subtle addition to the landscape. "If the property is big enough that the shed is away from the house and incorporated into the garden, that shed can take on any vernacular," says Scarfone. "A shed can be used to develop the character of a yard or garden."

The garden shed and the house act as a complete composition.

Like the garden follies popularized by British gardeners, sheds can add whimsy, structure, or artistry to a landscape. Unless, that is, the lot is small: A shed in a small lawn must respect its home's architecture or risk becoming a glaring overstatement.



On a tiny lot in the historic Oella neighborhood, architect Gleason had no choice but to create a garden shed that fit with the home's design when he was contracted to remodel and add to the 19th century house. The resulting shed is attached to the home by a short roof and is covered in the same siding and trim as the house proper. From the outside, its incorporation makes it look as if it was always there. "The garden shed and the house act as a complete composition," he says.

Nellie Ahl, the founder and owner of Lancaster, Pa.-based GardenSheds, started out in the playhouse business but soon realized the need for high-end, well-built garden sheds. "I was so sick of seeing those ugly sheds," she says. "I thought there had to be a demand for something that was a beautiful addition to your property, not an eyesore." (Visit gardensheds.com for ordering information.)

While the classical architecture of the Williamsburg and Bell designs is popular, many of Ahl's sheds are custom creations she designs with homeowners, landscape designers, or architects. Clients often send her photographs of their homes so the shed can be built to match the look of the house. Her sheds, which typically cost from \$2,000-10,000, can be customized with window boxes, trellises, and cupolas. For a Victorian home, the owner sent pictures of the house's ornamental brackets,

which Ahl's builders meticulously replicated on the garden shed.

Ahl's garden sheds can be customized to the owner's needs inside as well. All the sheds are

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made with hand-hewn 2x4s—no plywood—and are as functional as they are pretty. For a family of kayakers, the company provided special roof storage space and a pulley system for lowering and raising the boats. For a demanding gardener, the shed was outfitted with extra long dowels for hanging tools, flexible shelves, and multiple, flexible storage areas. Sheds have been delivered to function as everything from a place to stick potting soil to a chicken coop and a pool house.

"When you are dealing with the landscape, a shed isn't a utilitarian structure," says Scarfone. "It's just as important to include it into the overall design of the landscape." ❁