

Nest Building

by KATE BRIDGER

Gotta Getta Gazebo

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With rumours of summer fast approaching, it's time to make plans for outdoor living—why not build a gazebo!

'Gazebo' is not just a great sounding word, it also evokes images of warm, sultry mid-summer days sipping mint juleps, or relaxing with a good Somerset Maugham novel.

By definition, a gazebo is an outdoor structure with a roof and sides located in a park or garden. They have been part of pastoral and contrived landscapes for centuries starting in Egypt around 5,000 years ago. They began as small rooftop towers constructed to provide views of the surrounding area—hence the root of the word: 'gaze'. Years later, they found their footings on the grounds of estates and gardens and were often referred to as summer houses, kiosks, screened houses, pavilions, or pagodas.



'Gazing Out From The Gazebo' by Kate Bridger

Gazebos were popular in ancient Rome and dotted the Mediterranean coast. They also showed up in the East. Chinese versions were particularly ornate while the Japanese ones, often referred to as teahouses, were much simpler to provide tranquil backdrops for traditional Tea Ceremonies.

Religious sects have also constructed garden houses, often using them as quiet places for meditation, worship and contemplation.

In Europe, gazebos were made popular by the French in the 14th Century and later showed up in English gardens during the Elizabethan era where they were used primarily for entertaining.

Today elaborate gazebos are no longer the exclusive property of the rich and famous. North Americans, delighted to be free from the grips of winter, are always keen to get out of doors to barbecue, entertain, or relax. A gazebo is a great addition to any garden, providing a sheltered outdoor room to retreat to. A screened-in gazebo will also help keep those pesky mosquitoes out on a northern summer evening.

Gazebo designs range from exotic and whimsical all the way to plain and utilitarian. You can design your own, or purchase prefabricated kits from many home improvement stores. They come in all shapes and sizes—round, square, octagonal, large or small.

They are usually built of wood with a few decorative elements added, but can also be made of ornate wrought iron.

If your property is large enough, a gazebo tucked discreetly at the foot of the garden has the potential to become a very alluring, restorative and special place for you and your friends to enjoy.