

# Project Sunroom:

## Your Birds Will Love You For It!

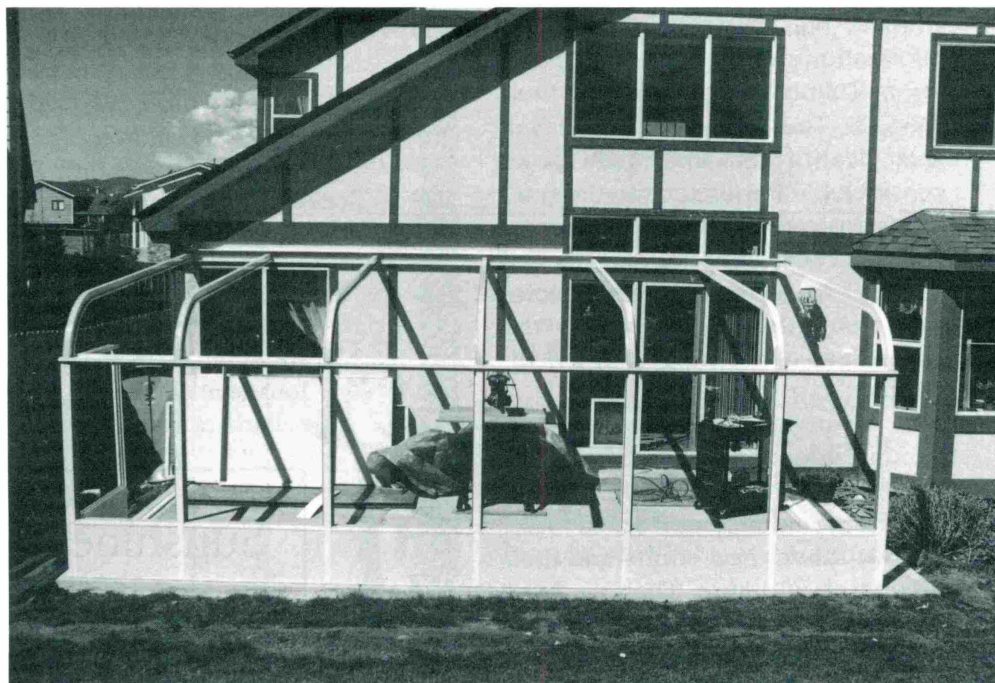
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**T**his project started harmlessly enough; we were simply looking out of the sliding glass doors onto the patio while enjoying the warm spring sun and day-dreaming. "Wouldn't it be nice to build a sunroom over the patio concrete slab?" my husband and I mused. Just think how much fun Taco and Tiki, our Solomon Island Eclectus and our Cockatiel would have in the sunroom. And just think how much we would enjoy just relaxing out there, sipping our tea while watching the antics of Taco and Tiki, along with the day to day activities of the wild birds at our feeders, as well as the squirrels swiping nuts from the top of the fence while chattering angrily at the wild birds that

are encroaching on their territory.

Before we knew it, we had dug 30-inch deep footers (our house is built on expansive soil so deep footers were necessary) all the way around the patio's concrete slab, added two feet to the width of the slab, formed it all up and ordered concrete. Now why did we do all this you ask, well....because parked in one side of our two car garage is now a 22 x 12 foot Sun Room Kit waiting to be brought around back of the house and erected on that concrete slab.

Here is how we found ourselves with a garage full of sunroom parts. First we cruised the information highway, AKA the Internet, checking out the sunroom sites. We got a lot of ideas



*The curved beams are in place across the front.*

from that, but did not see exactly what we wanted. What we wanted was a sunroom with windows that opened, with curved glass at the top, but a solid insulated roof, so the room could be used all year around. We did not want an oven with a view, nor a room that would create "birdsicles" in the winter.

So we continued our search and contacted several local contractors who built sunrooms to see what was available locally. Several home shows and contractor appointments later, we got lucky when we met with John, from New Life Construction. His company specialized in sunroom construction. We explained what we were looking for and he whipped out a brochure from Texas Aluminum, which was *exactly* what we were looking for, with curved glass and windows that opened. John also was willing to help us put a kit together for us to build ourselves. He kindly threw in two hours of his time to assist us with questions and "how to" tips during our construction.

The cost ranges from approximately \$8,000.00 upwards depending on the size of sunroom you desire. The cost of our 22 x 12 foot sunroom was approximately \$14,500.00. We made a few changes during construction, such as having glass panels made, which we installed next to the house instead of using the insulated panels. That added to the cost a bit.

Our sunroom is built on the east side of our house. It gets the morning sun to warm it up and cools off by evening, making it pleasant on summer evenings. We have a small radiant baseboard heater that keeps the room warm during the cold winter nights of Colorado. During the day, regardless of the outside temperature, it warms right up to 65 or 70 degrees. I should add that my husband and myself are not new to do-it-yourself projects. We remodeled our former home and built a huge garage, among other projects.

Contrary to popular myth, we did read the directions first. Then we looked at all the supplies and seriously wondered what we had gotten ourselves into. With the help of friends, construction began Memorial Day Weekend and we were enjoying the



*Taco and Tiki discuss the next step in the construction process. They are on a pavement breaker, which we used to break away some of the original patio slab to dig the 30 inch footer on the north side of the sunroom.*



*The sunroom is completed!*



Interior view of the completed sunroom taken from the north side.

fruits of our labors, very appropriately, on Labor Day Weekend.

We worked on the sunroom mostly on weekends and a few week nights, under the strict supervision of Taco and Tiki, who had to inspect every phase of the construction and each piece of construction equipment. We had the help of a few friends, but did a lot of it ourselves, much to the amusement of our neighbors. It became their weekend activity to sit in their back yards watching our efforts, laughing when the awkward 12 by 3 and 4 foot panels got the best of us. In our defense, this did not happen often, but those suckers were heavy to hoist to an eight-foot height to slide into the tracks of the metal roof supports. However, we have the last laugh by enjoying the comforts of our

sunroom come rain, snow, wind (which we have a lot of), or shine!


A metal track was secured to the cement slab, in which the 3 and 4 foot sections were placed. The curved overhead support beams were placed in the framework. The insulated panels were cut to the proper height and length to form kick panels about 18" inches high for each three or four foot section (I had no desire to attempt to keep glass panels clean that went all the way to the ground).

The windows and window frames were then put on the insulated panels. Then the curved glass was placed on top of the window frames. Those pieces of curved glass are *heavy*. The glass is all double paned and insulated. The sections and windows are either

three or four feet wide, depending upon the size and shape of the room. Our sunroom consisted of four four-foot sections across the front, two three-foot sections on the corners, a six-foot sliding glass door on the northern end, plus a four-foot section at the corner. The southern end consisted of one four-foot section and two three-foot sections. Next to the house, we have double insulated glass panels that run from the bottom kick panel to the top dormer (approximately six feet high).

The windows measure either three or four feet wide, and are 4 feet 5 inches high, and slide either to the right or left, whichever we prefer. Both sides of the windows have security locks on them, as does the sliding glass door, so the room is secure. The neat thing about this sunroom is that you can remove all the window panels in a matter of minutes and have a screen room with lots of fresh air and sunshine -- without bugs!

Our decision to build the sunroom was one of our best ever. Taco and Tiki spend their mornings out there, as I work most afternoons. Taco watches the wild birds outside eat at their feeders and asks "Is it good?" As they finish and fly off, Taco matter-of-factly comments "All gone." Taco also sternly asks the *big* shiny black crows "What *are* you *doing*?" as they land in our back yard.

Tiki also adds a few well placed chirps and returns to watch her world go by from atop her spiral rope perch. Given the fast pace of the world today, our sunroom is a place where we can get away from it all and enjoy our birds. It just doesn't get any better than that. 



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