



Our Root Cellar— Custom-made!



The best root cellars are, of course, those that can be found in an old farmhouse. Since ours is not an old farm house, the best we could do was to imitate these conditions—which we did some 14 years ago.

Following the tested example of a friend of ours, we had a company that constructs concrete holding and septic tanks make one according to our specifications. The dimen-

sions are 12' x 8' x 7'. We asked them to simply construct the tank with a rectangular opening at the top for the trap door entrance and four round, 4-inch holes, one at each corner of the tank, for air circulation. Before it was delivered, we had a hole excavated that was large enough to fit the holding tank, the top being flush with the ground.

Once the tank was in the ground, we simply built a shed with the same dimensions—12' x 8'—over top, putting in a wood floor over the concrete roof of the tank and leaving openings at the four corners to line up with the aeration holes in the tank ceiling. We installed a trap door with a ladder leading down over the rectangular opening made for this purpose. We also insulated the space between the tank roof and the floor of the shed. We fitted two 6-foot-long vinyl pipes, 4-foot in diameter, into two of the four aeration holes on the short end of the tank that faces northwest, where most of the wind comes from. This is where cold air drops down and enters the tank at floor level; it warms up, then escapes through the two aeration holes in the tank ceiling on the opposite side.

We now have a root cellar that doesn't freeze, even when winter is at its coldest. We use our root cellar mostly in the winter to store all kinds of root vegetables, in addition to fruits, such as apples and pears, and condiments, such as maple syrup and olive or sesame seed oil.

Some things to consider when using this kind of root cellar: Do something to keep items, such as carrots and potatoes, moist. Either leave them in the bag or spray them with water periodically. The best method would be to cover them in moist earth, like they come from the ground when harvested. Also, put some kind of steel mesh over the air holes to keep mice and other little guests from dropping down into your root cellar.
—GT