



How to clad your Polytunnel

What you need to know...

Polythene is degraded by Ultra Violet sunlight. Tunnel covers have a special additive in them to prevent this, if no additives were used it would last about 3 months before becoming brittle and breaking apart.

The warranty is for UV degradation only and does not cover you if it is not fixed on tightly. If it is so loose that it flaps in and out in a wind IT WILL BREAK, usually along a fold. This is not a fault in the polythene but is a fault of the way you have put it on the structure.

Even though the warranty of an XLPoly tunnel cover is only for 5 years it actually has a design life of 7 years, and it is not uncommon for it to last for 10 years or even more as long as it is stretched onto the frame tightly. Don't be afraid to pull on the polythene, it will stretch about 500% before it will break.

Like all things it's easy when you know how and these tips from a professional tunnel cladder will help you get it right. So spend a minute looking at these pictures, follow the sequence exactly and you should get your polythene on tightly. The pictures are only of a very small tunnel - it doesn't matter how big it is, the same principles apply just follow the same sequence.

If you have a base rail on your tunnel and not a trench the same sequence will apply, just fix to the base rail instead of filling in the trench.

Happy Growing!

Please note that XL Horticulture are wholesale suppliers of polythene. Please go back to the company that supplied you the polythene to start with if you have any queries.



WHATEVER YOU GROW, WE'VE GOT IT COVERED!

Step 1

Erect tunnel level and square.

Cover all the hoops with Anti Hot Spot Tape.

It should look something like this.



Step 2

If you are fixing your polythene in a trench then make sure you dig the trench at least 1 spade deep and a little over a spade width wide.



Step 3

Cover all sharp edges with tape



Step 4

Get your polythene ready to pull over the roof. We put a bar through the middle and support that on a trestle at each end.

If you had allowed some polythene for covering the doors, cut this length off now.

Step 5

If you don't have any room alongside your tunnel to unroll the polythene and pull it over from the side this is the way we do it.

Tie a rope on the end of the sheet and tape the rope over.



Step 6

Take the rope to the far end of the tunnel away from the polythene. We do this for tunnels up to 50 metres long.



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Step 7

Pull on the rope which will unroll the polythene onto the ridge.



Step 8

The polythene is rolled so that an equal amount will fold out down each side.



Step 9

Make sure that the cover is square on the framework and an equal amount of polythene is down each side of the ridge tube.



Step 10

Now you are going to fix the cover to the frame so start by cutting yourself pieces of batten around 30 to 50 cms long.



Step 11

Cut up from the end edge of the sheet, 1 width of a batten strip. Wind the polythene round the batten and nail it onto the inside of the door frame, pulling the polythene tight as you go.



Step 12

Repeat the process at the far end making sure it is VERY tight. This is the most critical fixing on the tunnel. If it's tight enough you will usually get these little "up" rolls in the polythene along the ridge.



Step 13

See how the gathers are put in the sheet so that they all run to the centre.



Step 14

Now start to fix all along the top of the door frame. With a little tunnel like this one probably only one more batten will be needed, but on bigger tunnels just cut and batten fix as you did the first one.



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Step 15

You can see from the picture that you cut in at an angle on the end corner of the door frame.



Step 16

Wrap and fix the batten making sure that you are pulling the polythene tight. Don't forget to pull the polythene tight sideways as well as length ways. The most difficult part to get tight is the piece on the roof immediately above the door corner so take care on this bit.



Step 17

Here you can see how we roll and wrap the batten in the polythene.



Step 18

And then you fix the batten in place with nails. As you can see here...



Step 19

When you have finished one end go to the other end and repeat the process.



Step 20

Now start on the upright door posts and cut into the polythene a piece big enough for 1 batten down.



Step 21

Wrap the batten in the polythene and nail in place.

Step 22

See how all the gathers in the polythene are sloping down hill. That way the polythene is being pulled down tight, and the rain runs down as well.



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Step 23

Now leave the ends and go to the middle bay. Pull the polythene down tight, using your foot if you have to, and start to fill in the sides.

Do the middle bay only on one side first then go to the other side and repeat the process.



Step 24

You can see here how they are pulling the polythene up from the ground with a weight of soil in it and then firming the soil back onto the polythene with their boot.



Step 25

The polythene should now be tight over the roof where the trench has been filled and firmed in.



Step 26

Continue to backfill the trench pulling the polythene both downwards and along the tunnel towards the corner.



Step 27

There should be no gathers or creases in the film along the sides of the tunnel where you have finished.



Step 28

Back fill only the sides for now, not the ends.



Step 29

When it is finished it should look like this.

Step 30

Once you have finished the sides go back to the upright door posts and continue to batten down in small pieces as before.



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Step 31

Batten down nearly to the ground.



Step 32

Leave the last bit on the bottom of the door posts and fill in the ends. Here you can see the worker is using a soft soled boot to stretch the polythene tight.



Step 33

Make sure you tread the soil in tight.



Step 34

Finally fix the last batten around the door post at floor level and trim off any surplus polythene.



And when it's finished it should look like this. No loose polythene, stretched tight onto the frame.



No loose bits around the door frame or roof and the hoops should stick out a little on the top of the roof.

An XLpoly polythene tunnel cover fixed in this way will far exceed it's warranted life against UV degradation.



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