

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Is This the Oldest Venlo Greenhouse in Venlo?

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Located on the corner of Genooyerweg and Genooyerkapelweg in the Dutch border town of Venlo, this vintage greenhouse is right next to the famous kapel of Genuuje, which dates from 1631 ... a bit earlier than this interesting edifice.

This photo started as a lark as I was driving from Essen, Germany, back to Amsterdam for my flight home from IPM. Venlo is just a short detour and there's a fabulous garden center nearby (Tuincentrum Leurs). I thought I'd just drive the back roads, letting my GPS keep me from getting completely lost, and see if I could find a really old, really vintage, Venlo greenhouse. Who knows—maybe the oldest in town!

Why? Because Venlo has given its name to a style of greenhouse used worldwide today, featuring multiple ridge-and-furrow roof sections over wide bays. Roof vents provide air flow. The design allows for single panes of glass with fewer purlins and no leaky lap joints. As I understand it, the idea was maximum light, wide bays with fewer columns and energy efficiency.

Alas, I know nothing of who designed the first Venlo greenhouse or why the design became so universally accepted—and so timeless! The main difference between this house and a new one is the very low gutter height and very small glass pane size (which made it easy to identify as old). But it's still functional—some new glass, a weeding, and some electrical and plumbing work and it could be growing plants again.

I'd love to know more about Venlo houses and this one in particular. Any Dutch readers able to fill us in? Do so at beytes@growertalks.com. **GT**

