

OUR BIGGEST AND BEST ISSUE EVER!

AUSTRALIAN

Handyman

DEC 2013/JAN 2014

SUMMER GARDEN

- Grow your juiciest vegies
- Patch a spotty lawn
- Save time watering

OUTDOOR LIVING

Ways to keep cool in the heat

➕ Zap flies and mosquitoes

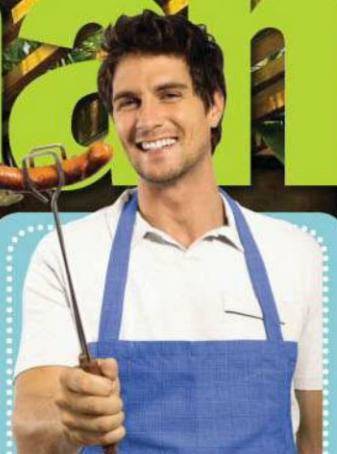
STAY SAFE

BUSHFIRE ACTION PLAN

23 Dream DECKS

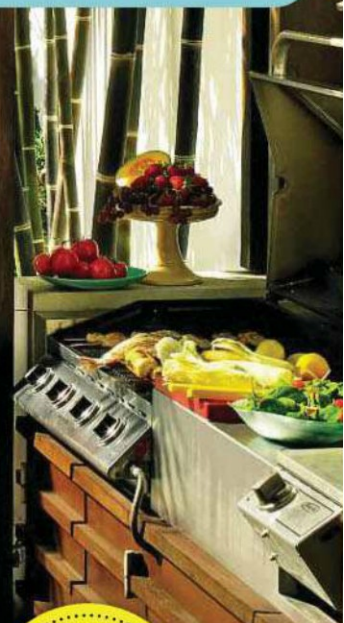
BUILD YOUR OWN STEP BY STEP
PLUS FAST TIMBER FIXES

Holiday decorating
LIGHT UP THE YARD FOR ENTERTAINING

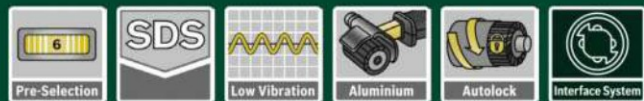


CHRISTMAS BARBECUE

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even fruit cake!



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Beautifully decorated walls without a single nail hole.



STEP ONE

Clean the wall surface with isopropyl rubbing alcohol to remove any dust or residue, wipe gently and allow to dry.

STEP TWO

Separate Command™ Picture Hanging Strips at the perforation, then connect fasteners by pressing firmly together until they snap. Remove one green and white liner and position in a corner of your frame. Repeat for each of the remaining three corners. Ensure you press firmly each time. Then position your frame on the wall and hold for 30 seconds.



STEP THREE

To achieve maximum holding power, temporarily remove your print again. Do this by holding your frame along the bottom edge and lifting outwards from wall to remove the frame. A set of strips will remain behind on the wall. Wait at least one hour, position your frame and press against original strips till you hear them lock in place. Press firmly.

HOW TO REMOVE STRIPS FROM THE WALL

Remove your frame by holding the bottom edge and lifting outwards from wall. To remove strips left on the wall, lightly press the top of the strip and grab the tab. Slowly pull the tab straight downwards along the wall. You will see the strip slowly lift up from the surface, removing cleanly.



TIPS

- Choose the correct size depending on what you are hanging. For example the MEDIUM STRIPS hold up to 5.4kg and the LARGE STRIPS hold up to 7.2kg.
- If you have black or dark coloured frames, use the BLACK coloured strips. This will ensure they are completely invisible from the side. Choose WHITE strips for lighter coloured frames.
- If you already have prints hanging, but they never seem to sit quite straight, use Command™ Frame Stabilizer strips in each bottom corner. They keep frames straight in almost any position.
- The strips are not recommended for use on wallpaper.

For more hints and tips about Command™ Picture Hanging Strips visit
www.commandbrand.com.au



CONTENTS DEC/JAN



32 Turn a problem space into a deck



56 Create festive decorations



COVER PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS L JONES
STYLING GEMA BENEITEZ

Build

- 20 DESIGNER DECKS**
Be inspired by the experts to create your dream deck
- 32 POOLSIDE DECKING**
Transform wasted space into a resort-style retreat
- 40 TWO-DAY DECK**
Add an outdoor room in just a weekend
- 48 QUICK FIX DECK REPAIRS**
Take care of timber for a deck that lasts a lifetime

Decorate

- 56 CHRISTMAS BY DESIGN**
Get out the toolkit to make festive decorations
- 60 DOWN TO THE WIRE**
Make designer homewares on a DIY budget
- 64 RECLAIMED TIMBER TREE**
Build a unique seasonal ornament
- 66 HOLIDAY HINTS**
Easy ways to store string lights
- 68 FESTIVE LIGHTING**
Give the yard a welcoming glow
- 70 DIY PARTY LIGHTS**
Set the mood for entertaining

This issue

- 11 HANDY STUFF**
Easy ways to keep cool
- 18 BUYER'S GUIDE**
Ties and straps for every job



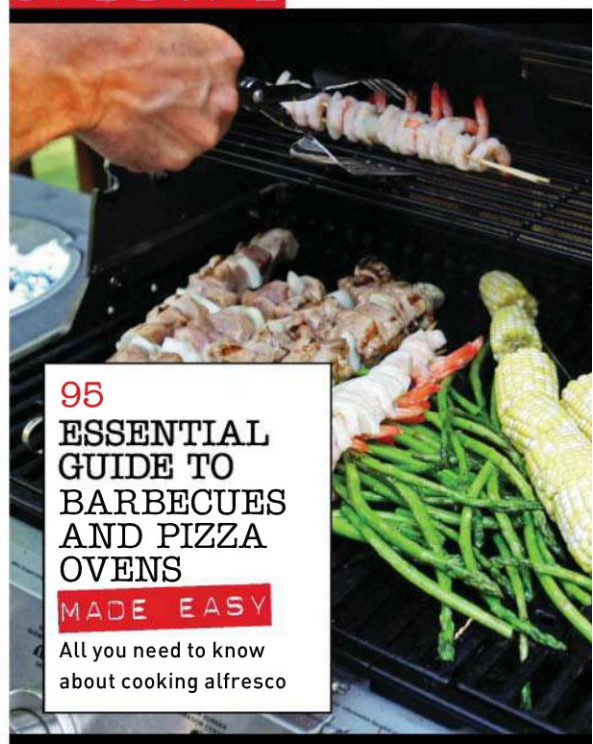
68 Holiday lights for every home

124 Build a dog house



174 Grow your own veges

SPECIAL



95 ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BARBECUES AND PIZZA OVENS

MADE EASY

All you need to know about cooking alfresco

Holiday

- 77 CHRISTMAS ON THE BARBIE**
Cook a classic festive feast in the backyard
- 88 BARBECUE BONANZA**
Easy recipes for summer entertaining

Renovate

- 104 HEAVENLY HOME**
An old church is transformed into a roomy family dwelling
- 110 FROM MESS TO MODERN**
Give an old brick house much-needed kerb appeal
- 114 STORAGE CUBES**
Reclaim living space by keeping your clutter under control
- 117 SMART SECURITY**
Products and techniques to guard your place while you're away

Pets

- 124 DOGGY BEACH HUT**
Build your pet a new home
- 128 DRY FOOD DISPENSER**
Add a wall-mounted food station
- 132 DOG POO COMPOSTER**
Turn pet waste into plant food

Outdoor

- 140 LUSH SUMMER LAWN**
Keep the grass green during hot and dry weather
- 148 INSTALL DRIP IRRIGATION**
Take the guesswork out of watering your garden beds
- 152 PEST PATROL**
How to keep bugs and biters under control
- 158 BUSHFIRE SAFETY**
Prepare your home and your family by planning ahead

Garden

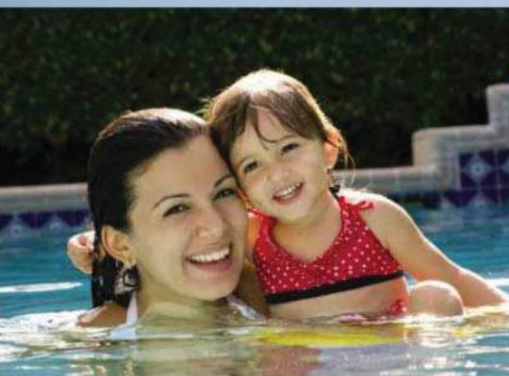
- 170 THIS MONTH**
Beat the heat and keep the garden alive when you're on holiday
- 174 HOMEGROWN HARVEST**
Grow, pick and preserve a bumper crop of vegetables
- 190 CHRISTMAS COLOUR**
Enjoy a festive seasonal display of poinsettias, natives and lilies
- 198 POTS OF COLOUR**
Restore a metal plant stand and fill it with vibrant annuals



Pool owners, parents, grandparents, carers, DIYers...

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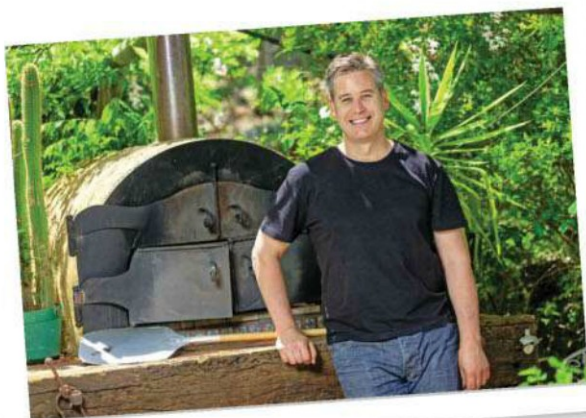
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Christmas cake, you'll wonder why you didn't try this sooner.

So you can cook up a storm we also provide you with the ultimate guide to charcoal and gas barbies plus pizza ovens, on page 95.

And do you remember when

a string of Christmas lights had to be thrown away because if one light didn't work, none of them worked?

Well they've come a long way since then but still can get quite tangled. Check out great solutions to straighten them out and clever tricks for hanging them, on page 66.

SUMMER VEGIES

This season is when the vegie patch is overflowing with produce. And the taste of home grown is always best so why not preserve your harvest?

We show you techniques for bottling, drying and freezing vegies so you can continue to enjoy them throughout the year.

Enjoy the holidays!

MANAGING EDITOR
LEE DASHIELL

Welcome to our annual celebration of the summer season that we all love.

Nothing says outdoor living quite like a deck, so each year we tell you how to build a new one or revive an old one.

To inspire you to design your own and give you solutions to tricky spaces we've compiled a gallery of amazing decks from all over the country.

We show you how to build a deck from scratch using a classic bearer and joist system, plus another method to install decking using new materials for quick and easy DIY.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

On a hot Christmas Day, there is nothing worse than being inside with the oven on high for hours on end, heating up the house even more.

Turn to page 77 to see how to keep the house cool by cooking a fantastic feast in the barbecue.

With recipes for a traditional turkey, ham, prawns and even



Design a deck to complement your landscape and lifestyle.

More inspiration

Looking for inspiration for your deck? Pinterest lets you create and organise boards of your favourite pictures.

It's a great way to find and share ideas for your next DIY project. Check out *Handyman* at pinterest.com/diyhandyman or scan this code with your phone.



Pinterest

We like to hear from you
WIN \$100!



Handy hints

Visit handyman.net.au/mag and share your DIY advice. *Handyman* Reader Dave Emmerson from Evatt, ACT, wins \$100 for this tip.

'When using oil-based paint there is no need to clean your brush before the second coat. Wipe the excess paint from the bristles and put the brush in a jar of clean cold water filled

to 5mm below the brush's metal collar. The water stops air getting in and the oil-based paint can't set.

'When it's time for the next coat, a day or even a week later, take the brush from the water and scrape it five times on scrap cardboard then you're ready to paint. No clean-up or turps needed,' says Dave.

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Reader's Digest
AUSTRALIA

Published by Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd
[ABN 81000565471] 80 Bay St, Ultimo, NSW 2007
©2013 Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd
Prepress by Sinnott Bros
Unit 7, 108-120 Silverwater Road, Silverwater NSW 2128
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd,
16 Tuas Ave 5, Singapore 639340
Distributed by NDD Distribution Pty Ltd



Handyman magazine is printed on PEFC-certified paper, providing an assurance that the paper is produced from sustainably managed forest, recycled and controlled source

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HANDYSTUFF

Keep your cool in the blistering temperatures of summer with these clever heat busters

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



Play and spray

Remember when you used to play under the sprinkler as a kid? Relive those days by cooling off in the spray of a Nylex Premium Oscillating Sprinkler, \$36.

Its 20 nozzles cover a 15 x 12.5m area so there won't be any fights over whose turn it is to get wet. Plus it helps the whole garden stay cool and hydrated.

cyclone.com.au

Did you know?

The hottest day ever recorded in Australia was on 2 January 1960 in Oodnadatta, South Australia, where the temperature reached 50.7°.

Life's a breeze

Don't sweat and suffer this summer, have a fresh flow of air running through the room with the Moretti MSW16 Misting Fan, \$179.

Its 1.5L water tank provides up to six hours of cooling mists, which can be controlled using a remote.

It has three fan speeds to choose from and three breeze modes of constant, natural or sleep.

bunnings.com.au



Vapour veil

Your guests won't be cooked at your next barbecue if you cool them down with a Holman Misting System, \$35.

Bringing the temperature down on the deck is easy. It releases a fine mist into the air, which then evaporates to act like an air conditioner.

Use nail clamps to secure the supply lines to the perimeter of your deck, and chill out.

holmanindustries.com.au





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Hard facts

Cell damage from the sun can occur in minutes, says Louise Baldwin, Chair of the National Skin Cancer Committee of Cancer Council Australia. 'If the UV Index is above 3, you need to be well protected. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before you go outside,' she says.

A shade sail creates a cool backyard oasis on a hot day.

Plain sailing

Cruise through the sunny season under the comfort of your own Coolaroo Extreme Shade Sail, \$89.

This easy-to-clean sail is triangular in shape, measuring 3.6m on each side and crafted from breathable commercial grade fabric. It offers substantial protection from the sun, blocking up to 90 per cent of UV rays.

coolaroo.com.au



Mix and match

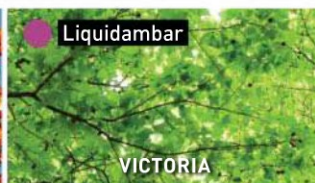
Stay sheltered under the shade of a mix and match Kaleido Umbrella, from \$139.

Choose from a range of three aluminium frames and eight canopy colours. Set-up takes just two minutes.

mayohardware.com.au

Natural shade

Mother Nature has been creating her own beautiful shade for millions of years. To protect your backyard from the sun's glare, plant a tree that will thrive in the climate where you live, providing dappled, leafy shade for generations to come.





\$638m

The amount Aussies spent on ice cream in the past year.

The flavour possibilities are endless when you make your own frozen treats.

Top pop

Have icy sweet treats on tap with the Zoku Quick Pop Maker, \$90.

It only takes seven minutes to make a freshly frozen ice cream. Just store the compact base in the freezer until you want to use it.

The kit comes with six re-usable pop sticks, an easy release tool and six drip guards.

haleimports.com.au



Chill out

Avoid the devastation of warm beer on a hot afternoon with the Chillsner Beer Chiller, \$40.

You'll never have to clean up a frozen beer explosion again. Just put the rod, not the beer, in the freezer for 45 minutes then place it in your beer bottle and lock the airtight seal for a perfectly chilled drink.

latestbuy.com.au



Nice ice

Don't hide an ugly Esky under the table, trade it in for the Mimosa Outdoor Timber Ice Box, \$129.

Its natural oil finish and 34L capacity means this outdoor cooler is both stylish and practical.

The lid is hinged so you won't break a sweat getting it open to reach the chilled goodies inside.

bunnings.com.au

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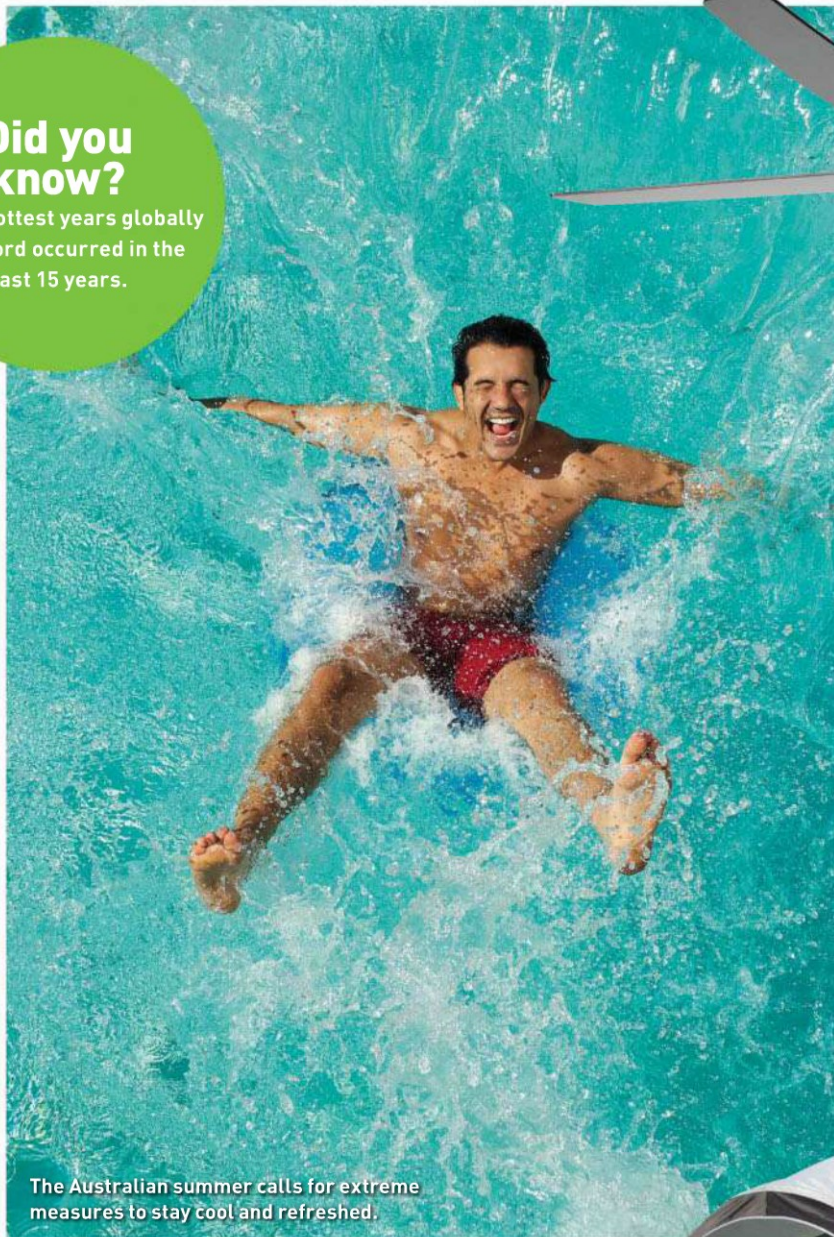
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WWW.KINCROME.COM.AU

Did you know?

The 10 hottest years globally on record occurred in the past 15 years.



The Australian summer calls for extreme measures to stay cool and refreshed.



Fresh flow

Whip some cool air into a stuffy room with the Brilliant Arctic 130cm Ceiling Fan, \$199.

This energy-efficient fan only uses 85 watts so your power bill won't rise with the mercury. It's crafted from steel and has black plywood blades for quiet operation on those hot sweaty nights.

brilliantlighting.com.au

Take cover

Give up the search for patchy shade in the park and picnic in the comfort of your own shelter with the Coleman Event 12 Gazebo, \$159.

It's easy to set up, and the cable jointed poles and shock cords mean you can take 12.9 square metres of secure shelter just about anywhere. There's an air vent in the canopy to let extra breezes through.

colemanaustralia.com.au



Quick quench

You won't feel refreshed during summer if your water is warm. Drink chilled water anywhere with the Esky 5L Ice King Jug with cup, \$26.

Foam insulation will keep your water icy fresh while the soft-grip handle and tap make filling your cup quick and hassle free.

colemanaustralia.com.au



PICTURE (TOP) THINKSTOCK

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BUYER'S GUIDE

TIES AND STRAPS

Super stretchy

Don't drive like a nanna because you're worried your surfboard isn't secure on the roof rack. Keep it tied tight with Cordzilla Stretch Rope, about \$17. It uses bungee cord for maximum strength, stretches to 2.1m and holds up to 181kg. It comes with steel easy-clip hooks so you can ease off the brakes a bit.

Bend and bind

Save loosening your teeth when undoing tough knots by swapping string for Twist N' Stay Tie Downz, \$13 for eight. They have a 125kg holding capacity and there are two lengths in each pack, 43cm and 86cm. Use them anywhere in the house or yard to tie up the garden hose, tools or sports gear.

Tie it tidy

Are the cords for your electronics more tangled than a toddler's shoelaces? Get organised with Coloured Velcro Re-usable Ties, about \$7 for five. Just wrap around your cords and press to secure. Each pack contains ties in yellow, red, orange, green and blue for an easy colour-coding system.

Secure luggage on the roof rack or bring order to the garage with these handy ropes and cords



Hook and hold

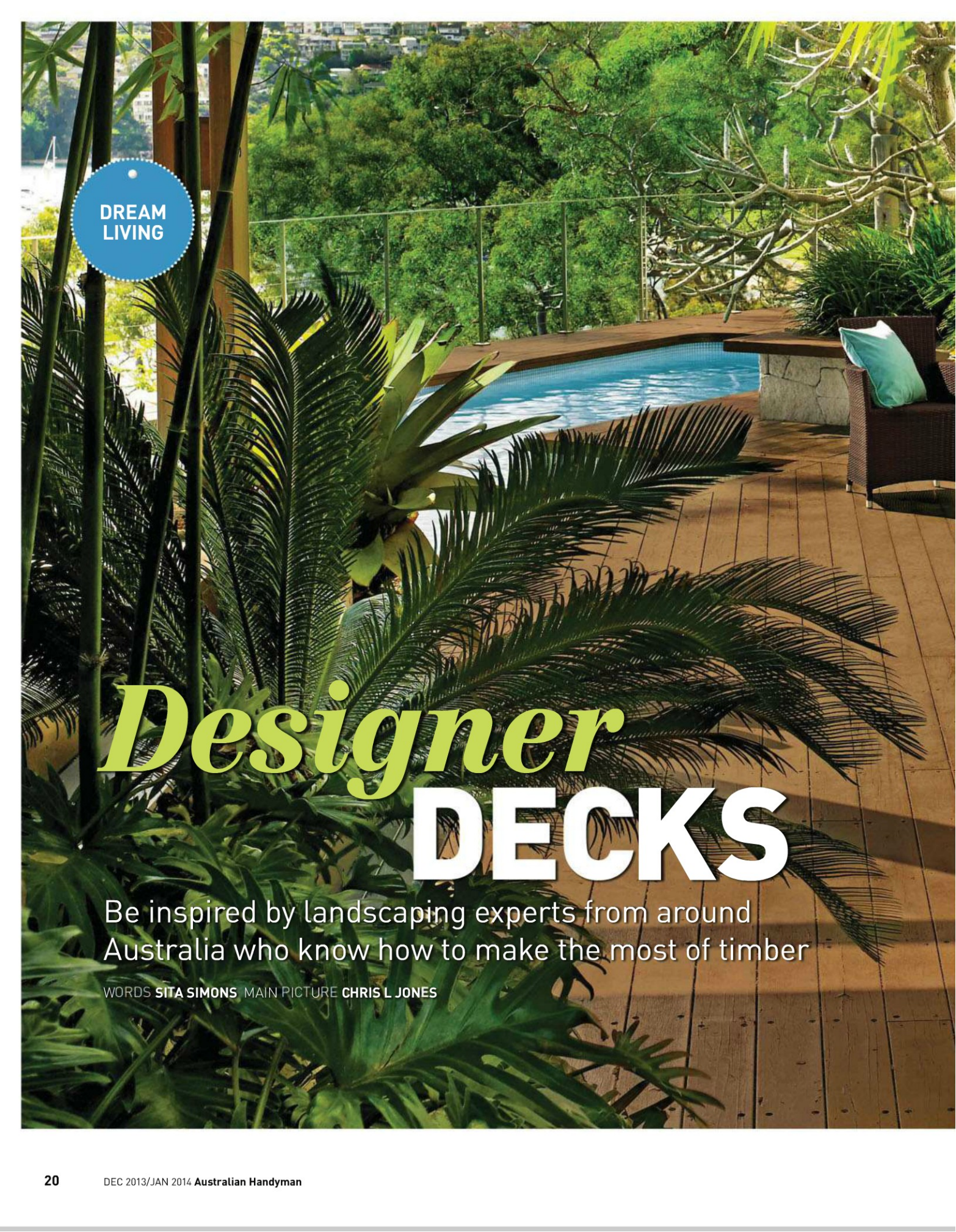
Load the trailer safely by tying its contents down with a Lion 76cm Rebound Safe Octopus Strap, about \$7. The stretchy rope is encased in protective tubing to prevent fraying and damage from sharp edges. And the capped hooks are made of steel so they won't snap under pressure.

Clip the grip

Rock climbers don't take chances with their safety, so follow their lead with the Grunt Flat Strap, \$7 for 1m. Designed to last, it has carabiner hooks to ensure the rope won't slip off. All the metal parts of the flat strap are zinc plated to prevent rust while the strap is made from cloth-covered latex.

Lock and load

Wondering how you'll fit the whole family's luggage into the car? Avoid a meltdown and strap it all to the roof with Syneco Ratchet Tie Downs, \$10 for two. With a high visibility strap, 200kg load capacity and 400kg break strength, it's the ideal heavy-duty accessory for a family road trip.



DREAM
LIVING

Designer **DECKS**

Be inspired by landscaping experts from around Australia who know how to make the most of timber

WORDS SITA SIMONS MAIN PICTURE CHRIS L JONES



Stop dreaming and hire a landscaper to turn your decking ideas into reality.

Decks have always been a staple of the Aussie backyard, but design and integration have come a long way.

A modern deck is an outdoor extension of the home and can take many shapes and forms.

Innovations in materials and fasteners have made DIY a lot easier, but if you want a landscape, rather than just a deck, call in the experts.

Working with a landscape designer will bring your dreams and ideas to life. Keeping in tune with the environment, your lifestyle and budget, you can create a space that will add value to the home. ➤

THE BALCONY GARDEN

Sydney landscaper Josh Harrison (harrisonslandscaping.com.au) says a deck is the perfect way to bring a natural feel into a tired backyard.

'A lot of the older style architecture in Australia features large expanses of paving and, particularly in our sunny climate, the glare can make it look bleached out,' says Josh.

'A timber deck is ideal for softening the space as well as adding great function. Like anything, you get what you pay for. If space is limited, use large-format, wide boards, so there are fewer gaps to distract the eye.

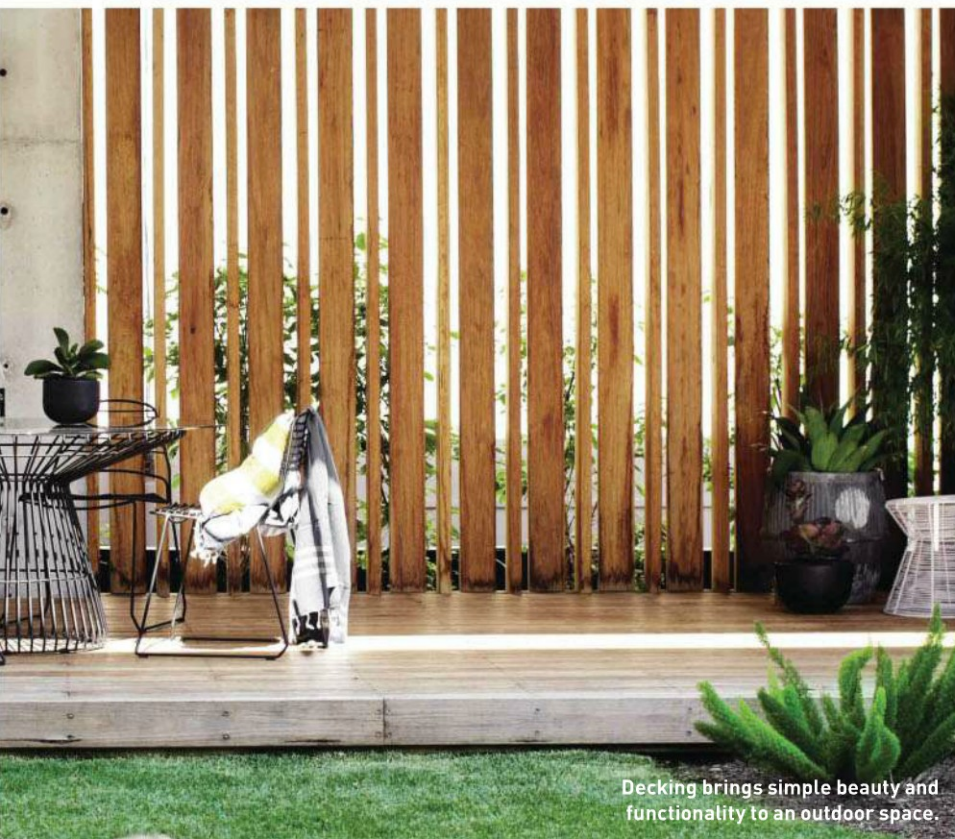
Josh advises paying close attention to construction techniques and fastening mechanisms.

'We generally use treated pine frames on all our decks so the timber is always raised from the ground for good ventilation.

'If you don't do this, the boards act like a sponge, absorbing too much moisture and will be prone to swelling and cupping.' ➤



Use plants and trees as points of interest in extensive timber decks.



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SINCE 1922

For information on how to change from your existing finish to Wet Look Deck see www.feastwatson.com.au



Curved shapes add interest and help the deck mimic nature more closely.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Award-winning Melbourne landscaper Paal Grant likes to treat a deck like a sculpture (paalgrant.com.au).

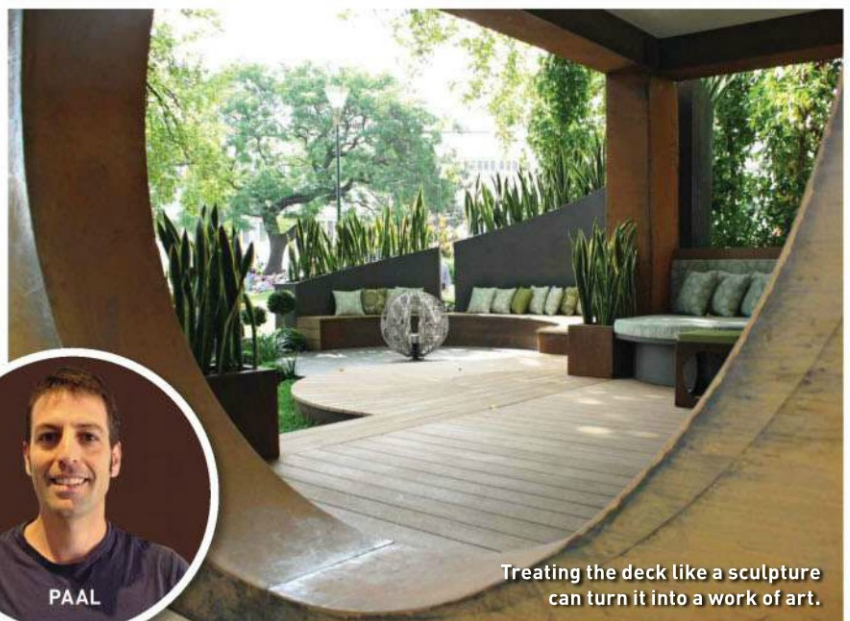
'Instead of a regular square finish, I like rounded shapes that mimic nature more closely,' says Paal.

'Construction is harder, of course. It takes about three times as long to build a curved deck as it does a regular one.

'We sometimes rip out decks only a couple of years old. The most common error is not leaving enough space between boards.'

Paal's advice is to meet Australian construction standards then exceed them.

'Over-engineering takes a deck from ordinary to amazing.'



Treating the deck like a sculpture can turn it into a work of art.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

Three elements define the success of a deck, says Daniel Angotti of Modern Outdoor Living, based in Melbourne (modernoutdoorliving.com.au).

'There's practical, aesthetic and resale value. A great deck satisfies all three criteria to differing degrees,' says Daniel.

'The traditional approach used to be very practical. A deck had to be a square or a rectangle, and use lots of timber in the balustrading. These days, we focus on consistency.'

'A deck has to have a relationship with the house and the landscape. It's a more fluid approach that keeps evolving and also means a customised result for each person.'

Daniel says that a deck will always pay for itself in resale value, but a well-planned yard with integrated deck can add so much more. ➤



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Add furniture and accessories that let the timber make a statement.

A SENSE OF SCALE

Landscape designer Justin Bajada, from Origin Landscapes in Perth, says size is everything in a deck (originlandscapes.com.au).

'Scale works when it comes to decking design. If you are going to incorporate the look and feel of timber into your garden, let it have the impact it deserves,' says John.

'As house architecture changes, as it has changed pretty dramatically over the past 10 years or so, great decking areas have become something that most people want.'

Justin has also noticed an increased interest in themed areas, taking influence from all over the world.

'You might want to create an African-looking garden, which is well suited in terms of planting, but the textures and colours might not work with the timber you've chosen.'

'When you are planning a deck, make it part of the whole picture.'



Every picture needs a frame, so use a deck to enhance a garden feature.

SPACE IN THE SUBURBS

Landscape designer Evan Robins, from Scenic Scapes in Brisbane, says that no backyard in Queensland would be without a deck, whether built into the home or attached to the back of a house (scenicscapes.com.au).

'Not for us the dinky little courtyards like you see in Sydney or Melbourne. Here in the Queensland suburbs it's all about space,' says Evan.

'Most of the places I work on would be at least 1000sqm blocks and

an average deck build would be 60 to 80 metres. There are pros and cons to working on this scale.

'With no size limitations, deck design tends to be fairly standard whereas in smaller, more tricky spaces the envelope has to be pushed.'

Evan says if you do have plenty of space, focus on quality.

'Invest in the best timbers and neatest fastening systems, and choose balustrading that doesn't get in the way of a view.' ➤



When you have lots of space, you are limited only by your imagination.



Warm timber can bring to life an existing element, such as a pool.

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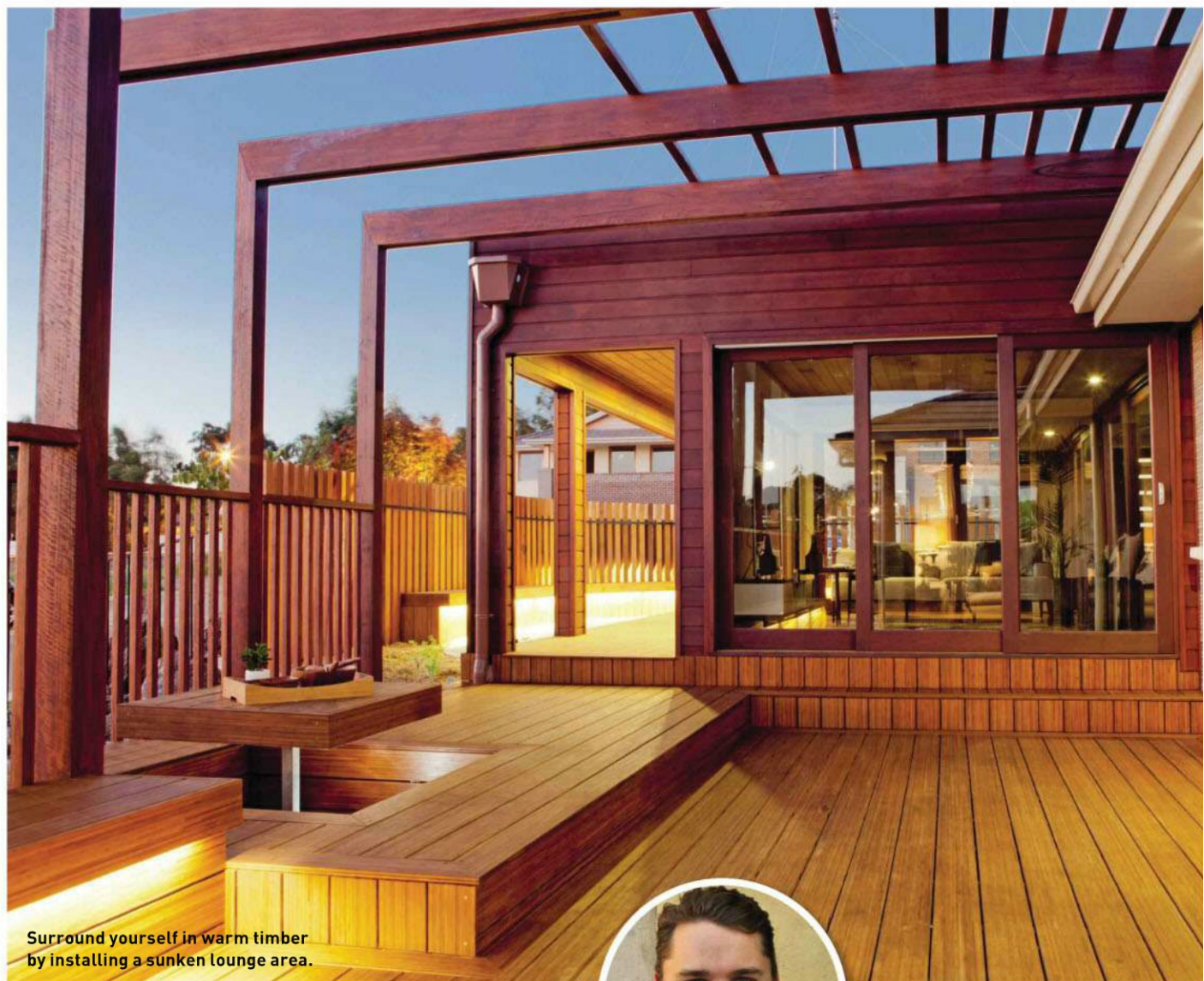


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Surround yourself in warm timber by installing a sunken lounge area.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Outdoor designer Matt Coates of Life Outside in Sydney has seen big shifts in what people want from a deck in recent years (lifeoutside.com.au).

'The whole concept of living outdoors has really pushed design, and so how people interact with their space has evolved too,' says Matt.

'It's not just about how it looks, but how it feels. Sunken areas are a feature we often include, so you are sitting in the landscape, not on top of it.'

'This can be one of the most successful inclusions that will be used

all year round, particularly if there is a fire of some kind.'

'Even in summer, an outdoor fire in the evening is something most people love to sit around. Fire pits are the new water feature.'

'Once the design is decided, the details are everything. We tend to picture-frame finish, which makes a real difference to the end result.'

'The quality of the construction and materials are what ultimately sets a great deck apart from an average one.'



'Australian hardwoods are attractive and popular but they are not well suited to sunny areas.'

Composite boards, meanwhile, have improved in quality and can work in almost any area as they're non-permeable.

'People generally want to spend much less time on maintenance and want boards that look aged or recycled, and composite boards offer all that.'

'I'd say it's 50/50 these days between hardwood and composite and I see it only increasing in the future.'



If your deck has a sunny aspect, choose UV-resistant materials for longevity.



Make a pool seem even more luxurious by framing it with beautiful decking.



Composite boards are durable and low-maintenance, so suit any area.

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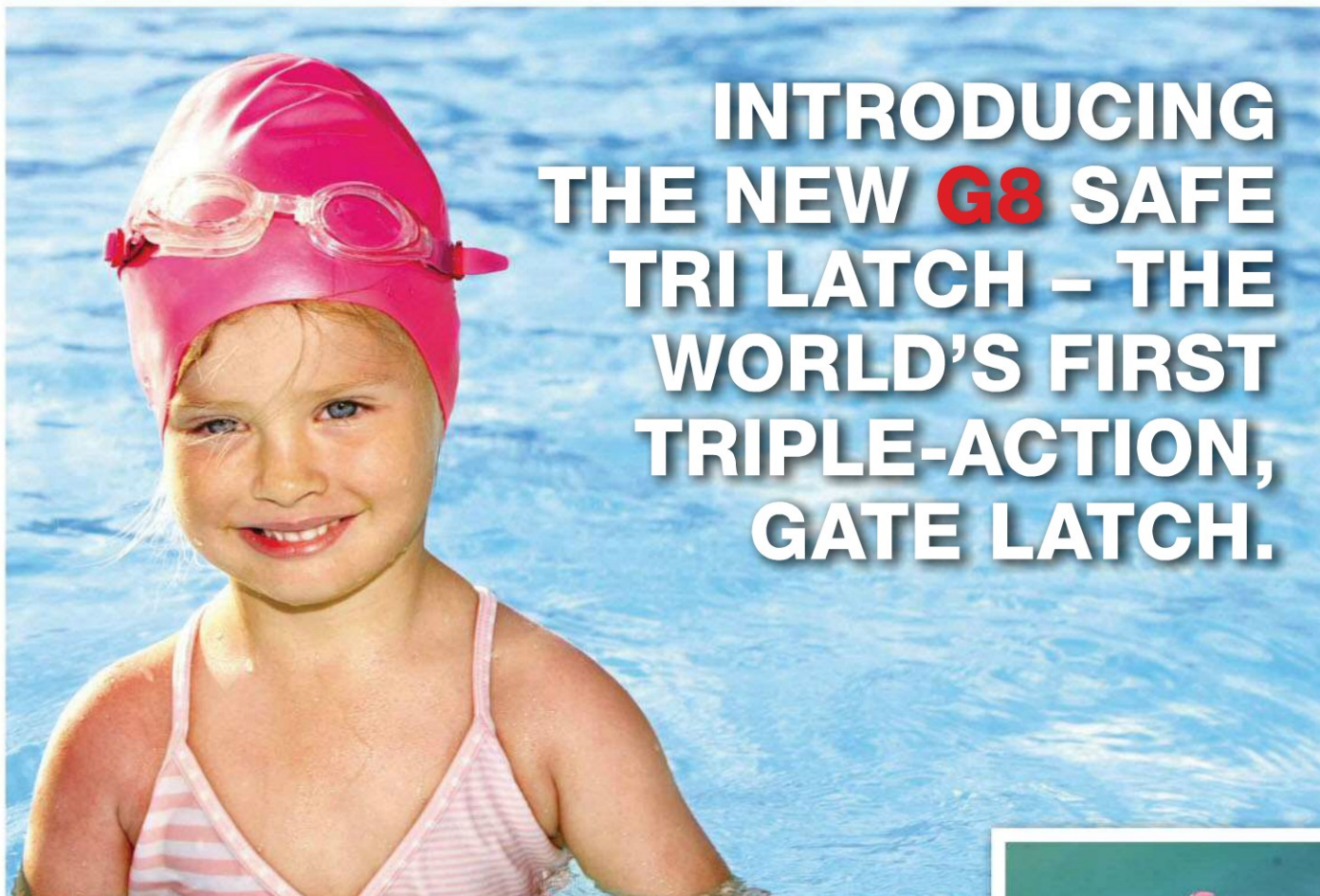
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It's a **G8** time of year to be a pool owner. Summer is well and truly underway, with pools all over Australia emerging from their winter hibernation.

Owning a pool is lots of fun for the whole family, but it brings responsibility too. If you've got a pool, you need to make sure that it's a safe environment – particularly for the kids.

Is your pool's latch showing signs of wear and tear? Does it close by itself, or have you got it permanently propped open? A faulty latch and inquisitive children can be a recipe for disaster – so make sure that your gate shuts securely this summer!

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G8Safe also offers a range of other hinges and latches for the pool – all of them high quality and good value for money. For more information on **G8**Safe products or a Pool Safety Checklist visit www.g8safe.com or visit your local Bunnings Store. For more information on pool fencing legislation in your local area and state, please contact your local council.

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CREATING WAVES FOR POOL SAFETY

OUTDOOR
LIVING

BEFORE

The overgrown corner beyond the pool was in desperate need of an overhaul.

AFTER
Laying a deck turns an unusable sloping site into a popular poolside feature.

POOLSIDE DECKING

Lay treated pine boards to transform an awkward corner into a resort-style relaxation zone

PROJECT **FRANK GARDNER** MAIN PICTURE **STUART SCOTT**

DIY> \$920

HAVE IT DONE FOR \$2520

SKILL> 1 2 3 4 5

TIME> 4 DAYS

For a backyard that sees a lot of activity during the warmer months, a small change can make a big difference to the enjoyment of an already popular area.

This is particularly true when replacing a troublesome eyesore with a luxurious poolside feature.

Handyman Technical editor Frank Gardner had always struggled with

one corner of his poolside garden. The triangular section was sloped and, over the years, had been landscaped with rocks and a variety of plants.

But the site's constant exposure to harsh sunlight meant that weeds and an enthusiastic creeper were the only successful inhabitants.

Frank's solution was to build a timber lido deck, raised above the uneven ground on brick piers.

The deck was built a step down from the existing paved area to create separation and two timber bollards were added to enhance the resort-style build.

This new deck soon became known as The Landing and has become a popular spot to dry out after a dip.

Not all problem areas are identical, but whatever you wish to disguise with a deck, the basic steps for building the structure will be the same. If your deck is to be a similar size, the cost will also be comparable.

Always check with your local council about relevant approval regulations and to ensure all the deck components, sizes and timber spans meet Australian standards. ➤



Building a step

If the optimal height for new decking is lower than the surrounding hard surfaces, incorporate a step into the design.

Build the step frame using 200 x 50mm treated pine sleepers with joists at 450mm centres. For this site, one end was extended to retain the adjacent garden bed.

Backfill the step with dry mortar mix and set the existing pavers that butt against it on a wet mix of mortar at the level of the step.

Use 65mm x 8g stainless steel decking screws to assemble the box then clad both the tread and riser with decking boards.

Fasteners

Use 75 x 3.75mm galvanised bullethead nails to secure the joists to the bearers.

Attach the sleepers of the step to the deck joists with 100 x 3.75mm nails.

Secure the decking with 50mm x 8g T17 countersunk rib head square drive stainless steel decking screws.

CHOOSE THE TIMBER

Timber for outdoor use needs to be resistant to rot and termites.

Hardwoods such as tallowwood and merbau are durable with a rich natural colour, but they're expensive. Even if you're only building a small deck the cost will quickly add up.

A far more economical option is treated pine. We used it for all parts of this deck including the bearers, joists, decking, bollards and retaining sleepers.

Treated pine is lightweight, easy to work with and will last decades if you look after it. Seal all cut ends and surfaces with a preservative, oil-based paint or a treated pine sealing agent.

To finish, we applied three coats of grey decking stain to the decking and bollards for a naturally weathered look and to fit with the neutral palette of the pool surrounds. ➤



Feast Watson Grey Look Deck, \$83 for 4L. feastwatson.com.au



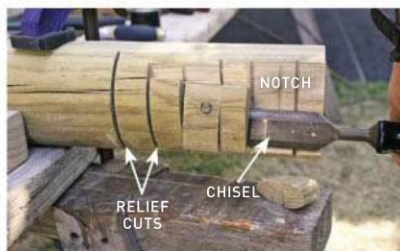
Decorative bollards on either side of the step give the deck a resort feel.

Making the bollards

Timber bollards made from 1200 x 100mm treated pine posts were installed to flank the step. Use a router with a 20mm roundover bit to soften the tops of the posts then make the bollards.



1 CUT GALVANISED STRAPPING to length and secure it 30mm from the top of the posts with 40 x 2mm galvanised clouts. Wind rope below the strapping and secure with clouts.



2 NOTCH THE BASE of the posts to fit over the step, making 30mm deep relief cuts to match the step height using a mitresaw. Chisel out the waste then smooth the surface using a hand plane.



3 POSITION THE BOLLARD on the step, using a spirit level to check for plumb then drill two 8mm pilot holes, attaching the bollard to the riser with 130 x M8 TechShield coachscrews.

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METAL CARE - IS NOW EASY AND EFFECTIVE

Here's How to Shine and Preserve Metal in and Around Your Home - Forever!

The clean and shiny appearance of metal surfaces does not last long. Why? because of moisture, oxygen, dirt, airborne salt, acid and other contaminants - the process called oxidation. Without proper care, the metal will degrade, look ugly, and gradually fall apart. In years gone by removing tarnish and corrosion from your daughter's brass saxophone or tea stains from balcony rails required harsh abrasives, caustic chemicals, and a lot of elbow grease. Alternatively, expensive tradesmen. These days metal care is much easier. German-made Autosol has easy-to-use products that provide solutions for virtually every metal care problem, from DEADLY DULL (due to oxidation) to - READY TO REPLACE (due to corrosion and stains.) Mild oxidation polishes off fairly easily. Corrosion, tarnish and stain removal is much more difficult - until now. Autosol's new Metal Life Saver - Corrosion and Stain Remover - meets that need; it provides a rub-in, wipe-off solution for the tough stuff.



With both the **EASY OFF** and **TOUGH STUFF**, there are two simple steps to follow -

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- 1 Wash with water and detergent every week or so. This will remove surface contaminants, thereby greatly reducing oxidation.
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BUILD THE DECK



1 Excavate the area

Clear any vegetation and mark out the area for the deck, setting pegs in each corner. Use a water level or spirit level and straightedge to mark the finished height of the deck on the pegs then excavate the site to the required depth.



2 Pour the footings

Set out the pier positions then dig 300 x 300 holes to 400mm deep and fill with concrete, checking for level between them. The top of the footings should finish 285mm below deck level.
TIP To make concrete, mix aggregate, sand and cement in a 4:2:1 ratio.



3 Build the piers

Add water and a mortar plasticiser such as Bycol to premixed mortar to construct 230 x 230mm brick piers, checking for level across the tops and between the piers. Cover the piers with dampcourse and ant capping then cut weedmat to fit.



4 Assemble the framework

Position the bearers on the piers and check for level along and across the bearers, packing as needed. Use a builder's square to position the first joist perpendicular to the bearers. Space the remaining joists at 450mm centres and skew-nail to the bearers.



5 Add the retaining sleepers

Cut 200mm wide sleepers to fit between the ends of the deck joists and the raised garden bed. Position the sleepers flush with the top of the joists and secure with galvanised bullethead nails to the ends of the joists then build and install the step.



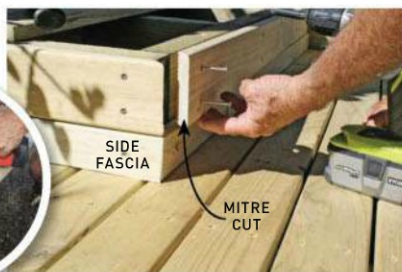
6 Install the decking boards

Lay three or four rows of boards at a time to fit neatly between the contained edges or with 50mm of overhang at the exposed ends. Use a combination square to mark the centre position of each joist then use 3.75mm nails as spacers for the boards.



7 Align and trim the boards

Set a stringline along every fifth row to check the boards are straight and adjust by opening or closing the gaps. Mark a cut line on the decking edge, leaving a 20mm overhang. Cut using a circular saw and straightedge guide then round over the edges.



8 Secure the cladding

Cut the riser fascia boards to width so the top boards finish flush with the sleepers, cutting mitres on the corners and securing with screws. Cut the tread boards with 15mm overhang at the front and sides, securing at 450mm centres to the step joists.



9 Stain the deck

Scrub down the decking surface with deck cleaner, rinse off with a hose and allow to dry thoroughly. Sand the deck surface with 120 grit sandpaper and remove all dust then apply two or three coats of deck stain using a lamb's wool applicator.

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TWO-DAY DECK

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PROJECT **DARREN BRADFORD** MAIN PICTURES **GEOFF BECK**

DIY> \$3975

HAVE IT DONE FOR \$4775

SKILL> 1 2 3 4 5

TIME> 2 DAYS

Most decks in Australia are constructed using traditional methods and materials.

Digging holes for piers or posts and concreting them in to support bearers and joists is the accepted way to install a deck, and can take up to a week.

But there are now products available that provide faster and easier ways to build and maintain decking.

This 4500 x 4130mm platform deck, positioned off the family room at the rear of the house, was built in just a couple of days using 36 Handi Blocks made from fibre reinforced concrete.

If the ground is level, space the 8kg blocks evenly on the site to match joist spacing, usually 450mm. Slot the joists onto the blocks and attach the end trim boards to create a strong solid framework to carry the decking boards.

On sloping sites, fit posts cut to length to create a level deck, keeping it less than one metre in height.

CHOOSE THE BOARDS

Merbau, treated pine, and other hardwoods need regular maintenance to sustain the timber. Cleaning and oiling needs to be done annually.

For a low-upkeep choice, consider installing composite decking, which is also eco-friendly.

ModWood decking is made from recycled items like plastic milk bottles and pine waste from certified plantation-grown, sustainably managed forests. It comes in a range of different colours and two widths.

Usually, decking boards are secured to the joists with screws, leaving the screw heads visible from above. Here, the fasteners are hidden thanks to the KlevaKlip system made specifically for use with ModWood boards.

The clips lock into grooves along the edges of the decking, creating even gaps between the boards, and a box of 40 secures 9sqm of decking. The perimeter of the deck should be kept open to allow ventilation underneath.

TIP Contact your local building authority to make sure your deck design and materials are approved before starting construction. ➤



Fasteners

Attach the end trim boards to the joist ends using 75mm x 14g galvanised bugle screws.

Secure the KlevaKlip strips to the timber joists using 30mm x 8g galvanised button-head screws.

The decking boards are held within the clip strip system using a daub of construction adhesive for added strength.



AFTER
This covered platform deck is a place to sit and enjoy the superb views.

Time-saving materials



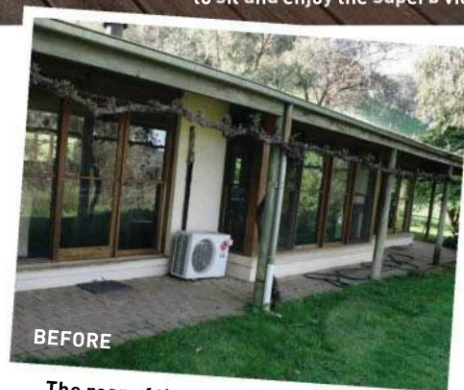
ModWood Composite Decking, 5400 x 88 x 23mm, \$54. modwood.com.au



Handi Blocks Instant Foundation, \$19 each. evolvegrp.com



KlevaKlips Concealed Deck Fasteners, \$150 for 40. klevaklip.com.au



BEFORE

The rear of the home was uninspiring, with no connection to the outdoors.

ADD A ROOF

The split-bamboo roof allows dappled light to filter through onto the deck, providing a shady spot to sit and relax while soaking up the views.

A panel of bamboo fencing was supported by two traditionally turned verandah posts at the outside deck corners.

The posts were connected with a front beam, and four rafters run back to the house fascia with two rows of trimmers secured between.

Sheets of Suntuf 2.4m Clear Polycarbonate roofing were laid across the top.

This will prolong the life of the bamboo by shielding it from the elements, and makes the roof watertight.

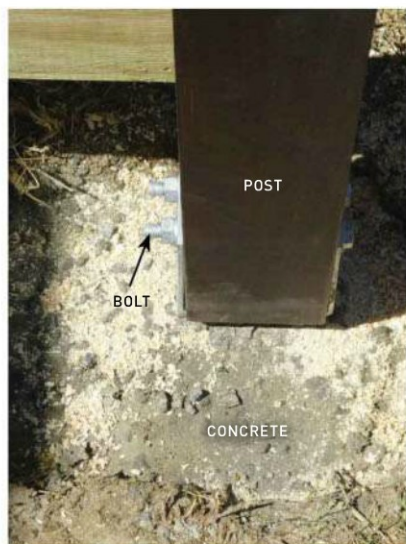
The roof added just \$800 to the total cost of the build.



Cornall 88 x 88 x 2700mm Treated Pine Verandah Post, \$93. cornalls.com.au



The bamboo roof provides shelter for the deck, creating an outdoor room.



1 Set the posts

After the blocks and joists are set out, excavate two 300 x 300 x 400mm deep holes and fill with concrete. Set the galvanised post stirrups in position, allow the concrete to set, then stand and brace the posts in the stirrups, securing with galvanised bolts.



2 Install the framework

Secure a 140 x 45mm beam to the inside of the posts using galvanised cuphead bolts. Attach 90 x 45mm rafters from the beam to the house fascia using metal hangers, with two rows of trimmers between the rafters as attachment points for the roof.



3 Attach the roofing

Position the bamboo panels face down and secure with 50mm x 8g stainless decking screws to the rafters, trimmers and beam. Overlay the bamboo with clear polycarbonate and secure using Clearfix self-drilling screws at every third ridge. ➤



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BUILD THE DECK



1 Set out the blocks

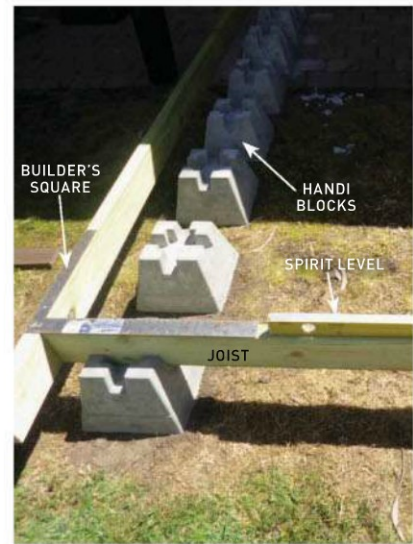
Position and space the Handi Blocks accurately to match your setout plan and joist spacings, placing the first row as close as possible to the house.

TIP Make sure the blocks are sitting completely flat on the ground otherwise the joists may move.



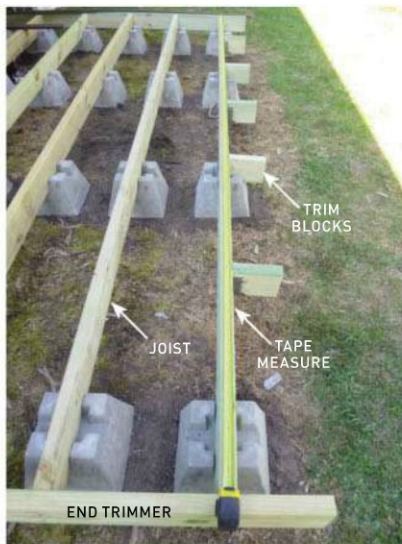
2 Level the blocks

Check the Handi Blocks for level in both directions using a long spirit level or straight timber joist and spirit level, adjusting any blocks that don't fit the level setout by moving them up or down as needed.



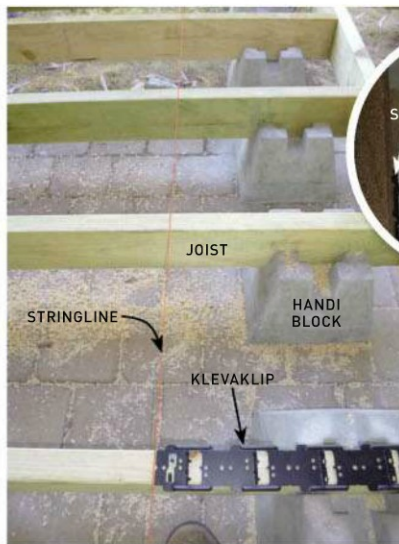
3 Square the frame

Position the first and last joists on the blocks and attach the end trim boards using bugle screws to complete the deck shape. Use a builder's square to check the corner layout for square, measuring the diagonals to check. Adjust if needed.



4 Position the deck joists

Cut the remaining deck joists to length and position across the blocks, inside the end trimmers. Check for straightness then secure to the end trimmers with screws. Secure the trim blocks on joist hangers at either end using galvanised clouts.



5 Install the securing system

Set a stringline across the joists to match the clip width. Secure the strips of KlevaKlips on all the joists, making sure they all line up perfectly straight.

TIP The KlevaKlip system will ensure consistent spacing of about 4mm between the boards.

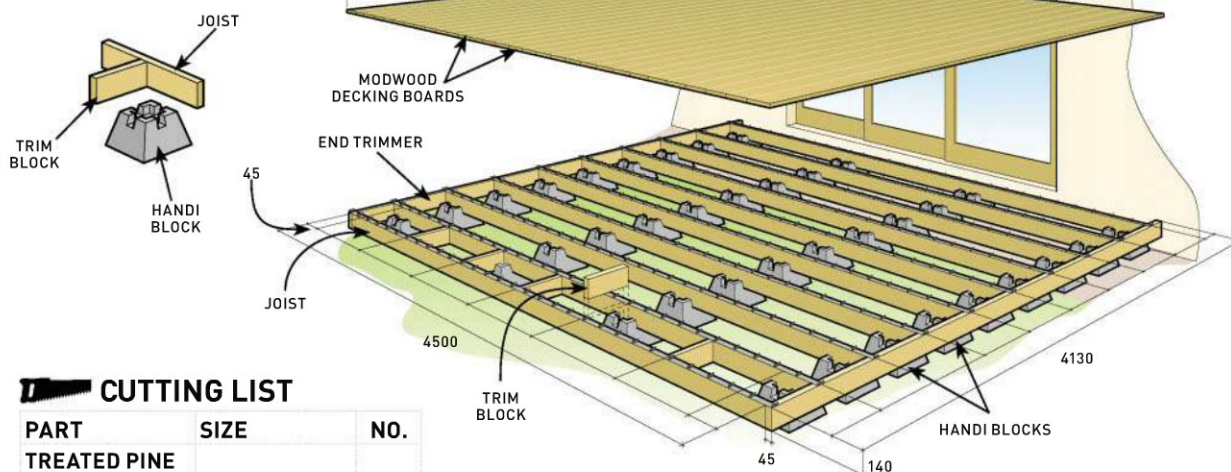


6 Add the decking

Apply a 10mm bead of construction adhesive across the centre of the clip. Position the board edge groove on one side of the clip and snap the board into place by walking along it. Use the supplied fixing tool to tap the spurs into the edge of each board as you go.

TWO-DAY DECK

measurements in mm



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO.
TREATED PINE		
Joists	4500 x 140 x 45	10
End trimmers	4130 x 140 x 45	2
Trim blocks	300 x 140 x 45	5
MODWOOD		
Decking boards	4130 x 88 x 23	45

+ Handyman.net.au

Download the tools, materials and costs for building this Two-Day Deck.

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Trust British Paints
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AFTER
The warm decking and soft lighting create an appealing outdoor room.

Built to entertain

Ever since *Handyman* reader Tanya Butcher and her husband Michael moved into their home, they had been unhappy with the backyard.

All the right elements were there including a pool and patio, but the space wasn't as appealing as it could be.

'It felt unloved and sparse. It also seemed to lack warmth,' says Tanya.

The couple set about revamping the area, creating an expansive deck with an outdoor kitchen as the focal point.

Rather than removing the patio, they cut into the paving to allow stirrups to be concreted in, then laid merbau decking on top.

The outdoor kitchen was fitted with a granite benchtop, barbecue, bar fridge and downlights for atmosphere.

The undercover area was completed with ceiling fans and lounge seating.

A final touch was removing the old metal pool fence and installing glass fencing to help open up the area.

'We achieved what we set out to do, create a backyard with personality, warmth and useable space,' says Tanya.

Cash for DIY

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handyman.net.au



BEFORE

The old patio had all the right elements, but felt cramped and a bit gloomy.



An outdoor kitchen has helped transform the backyard into an entertaining area.

TROJAN

THE WORKHORSE

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A photograph of a modern backyard pool area. In the foreground, three lounge chairs with light-colored, striped cushions are arranged on a dark-stained wooden deck. The deck is made of horizontal wooden planks. In the background, a large, rustic stone wall made of irregular grey and brown stones runs across the frame. To the right of the wall, a small wooden platform or bridge extends over the pool. The pool water is clear and blue. Lush green trees and foliage are visible behind the stone wall and to the right. A blue circular graphic with white text is in the upper left corner.

**HANDYMAN
GUIDE**

Decking stain can dramatically
alter the look of your boards.

DECKING QUICK FIXES

Revamp your timber deck in time for summer with these maintenance tips and tricks

A backyard deck is often overlooked during winter but really comes into its own during the summer months.

Keep your deck looking like new and avoid expensive repairs by staying on top of regular maintenance. Fix common problems DIY and refinish the timber once a year.

TIP Get the kids involved in jobs such as refinishing the deck, and turn a chore into a fun family activity.

1 Check the framing

Take a peek below the surface to ensure the structural elements of your deck are in good shape. Replacing a joist or bearer can be difficult, but a solid framework is essential for the safe enjoyment of your deck.

EXAMINE THE JOISTS to make sure they are solidly seated in the hangers, check that the ledger is attached firmly to the wall and that there is no movement in the bearers or posts.

CHECK THE POSTS are plumb. Secure extra bracing if needed to keep them upright.

REPAIR THE HANDRAILS if there is any sign of rot, and tighten wires on balustrades that have slackened.

REPLACE THE FASTENERS holding the framing members if they have corroded or worked loose. ➤



Zenith Quickshot Screw, 50mm x 12g, \$10 for 50. itwproline.com.au

2 Replace a broken board

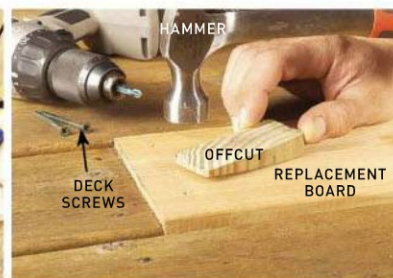
A broken or splitting board presents a hazard to children or anyone walking barefoot on the deck. Instead of using a whole new board, replace the damaged section with a length of timber that spans at least three joists.



1 DRAW SQUARE LINES to one side of the joists beneath. Use a jigsaw to cut away the damaged section of the board then remove the board using a pinch bar.



2 DRILL CLEARANCE HOLES in two 400mm long timber cleats. Apply construction adhesive, hold the cleats up to the boards and secure one to the joist at each end of the repair.



3 CUT THE NEW BOARD to fit and tap it in position using an offcut to protect the timber. Drill pilot holes and secure with two 65mm x 10g deck screws into the cleat and joists.

3 Clean the surface

An oiled or stained deck only needs thorough cleaning a few times a year to keep it looking great.

Remove stains and grime with a specialised cleaner. Choose a product that suits the timber and the finish that was last applied.

Water activates the cleaner, so hose the deck then work on one square metre at a time. Hose the area again then apply the cleaner using a stiff yard broom to work it into the surface.

Leave the deck to soak for about 15 minutes without letting it dry out

completely, then hose it until the water runs clean and leave to dry for a day or two before applying the finish.

TIP Treat any areas of algae, mildew or mould with a specialised product applied using a stiff bristle brush.



Cabot's Deck Clean, about \$13 a litre. cabots.com.au



Use a brush to apply the cleaner, working it into the surface.

4 Sand to refresh

Years of neglect can result in badly weathered boards that need refinishing. Before applying paint, stain or oil, carry out any surface repairs then sand the timber.

If the boards were secured with nails, and the filler has popped out but the fasteners are still sound, apply new putty over the nail heads.

For a deck that was stained or oiled, sand it all over then give it a good clean with a pressure cleaner before applying the new finish.

If the deck was painted, use a random orbital sander fitted with an 80 grit disc, working across the deck and sanding two boards at a time.



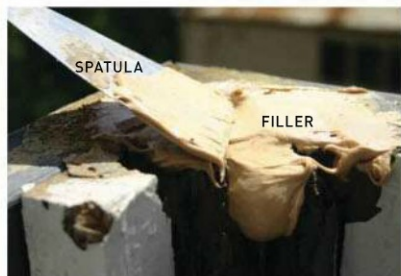
Ryobi 300W Random Orbital Sander, \$69. ryobi.com.au



WEATHERED TIMBER

5 Patch a rotting post

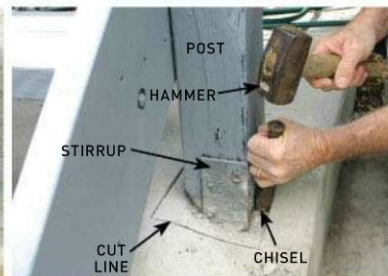
Decay can be caused by the end grain of a post being in contact with termites and moisture. In some conditions, even a galvanised post support can corrode. Make repairs and improve the runoff instead of replacing the post.



1 SEAL THE TOP POST with timber preservative, then use a spatula to apply two-part exterior filler into the damaged area to protect it from future water penetration.



2 EXPOSE THE BASE of the post by making a cut line using an angle grinder with a diamond cutting disc to cut a square in the concrete covering the base.



3 CHISEL OUT WASTE with a lump hammer and cold chisel to expose the post and the stirrup, cutting a drainage line to prevent water from pooling, then seal the timber.

6 Repair a rail

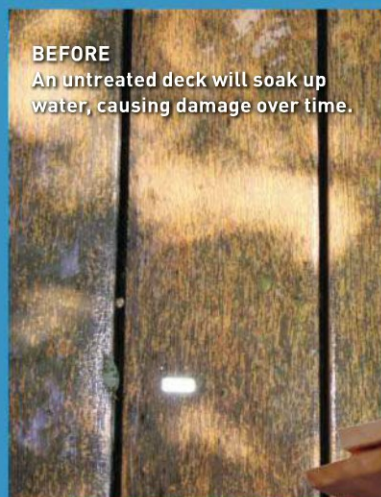
Handrails are an important safety feature, and there are strict guidelines about when and how they must be incorporated into the structure of a deck.

Apply epoxy adhesive into mitred corners if they are opening up and secure a screw through the points of the mitres to pull them tightly closed.

If any parts of the rail have rotted, treat them with timber preservative, apply two-part filler and leave to cure. Sand it flush with the surrounding timber then refinish the handrail.

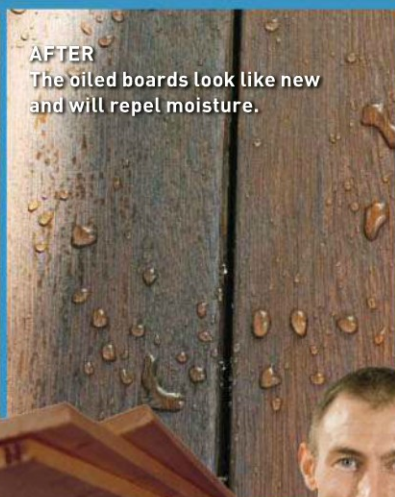


Don't ignore your safety by neglecting handrails.



BEFORE

An untreated deck will soak up water, causing damage over time.



AFTER

The oiled boards look like new and will repel moisture.

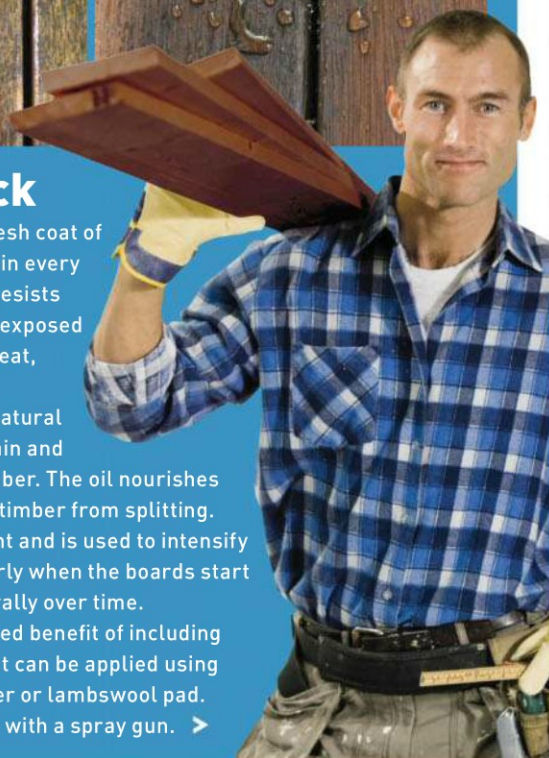
7 Oil the deck

Most decks need a fresh coat of oil twice a year or stain every year or two. A quality finish resists abrasion, doesn't fade when exposed to UV light, and withstands heat, cold, wind and moisture.

DECKING OIL enhances the natural colour and brings out the grain and characteristics of quality timber. The oil nourishes the boards and prevents the timber from splitting. **DECK STAIN** contains pigment and is used to intensify or alter the colour, particularly when the boards start to grey, which happens naturally over time.

Stains often have the added benefit of including oil in a combined product that can be applied using a long-handled brush, a roller or lambswool pad.

TIP Stain can also be applied with a spray gun. ➤



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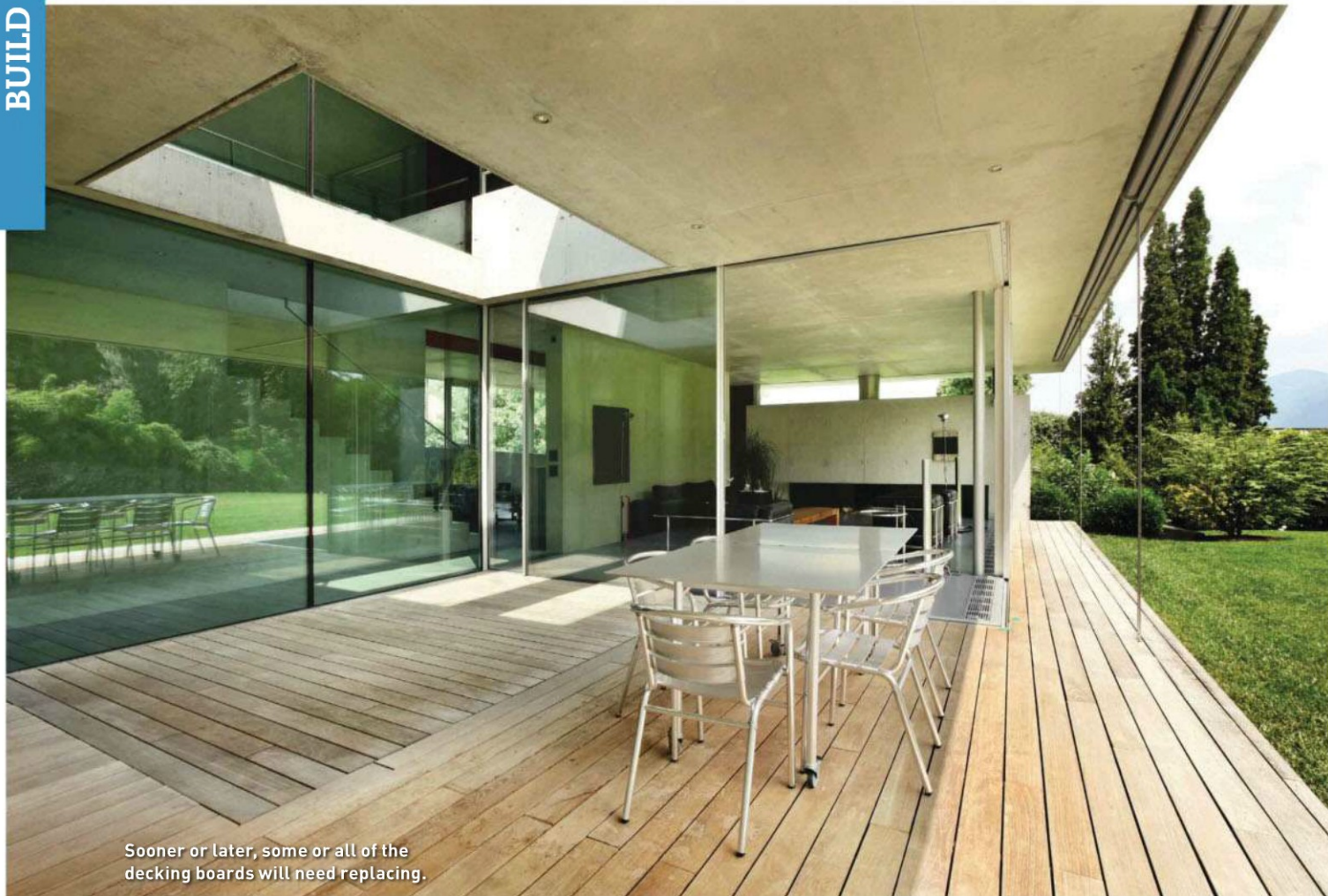
For information on the range of structural and decorative profiles available, contact your closest building products centre or go to: www.woodhouse-weatherproof.com.au



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Sooner or later, some or all of the decking boards will need replacing.

8 Lay new boards

There is only so much sanding, cleaning and refinishing that a deck can take and if the boards get in bad enough shape, eventually you'll need to replace them with new ones.

A typical 20 square metre deck requires more than 1000 fasteners just to secure the boards.

Choosing the wrong type of screw or failing to drill pilot holes can result in the heads wrenching off or camming out, or boards splitting and requiring repairs.

The type and size of decking board you are working with will determine which fasteners to use. Boards are typically 19 to 25mm thick, and 64 to 140mm wide, with 90 x 22mm being a popular section size.

Timber boards vary widely in density. Treated pine is relatively soft and easy to secure, while hardwoods and manufactured composite boards can be much tougher to work with.

Stainless steel screws are a good choice for decking as they offer good resistance to the chemicals in treated pine, as well as being highly resistant to corrosion caused by moisture.

If you are securing 90 x 22mm boards, 50mm long screws will usually be enough. If securing 140mm wide boards opt for 65mm screws, because the force of the timber cupping as the boards dry may tear out shorter screws.

Driving screws

Sometimes the driver bit can cam out of the screw head, which means it wrenches free and turns without transferring torque to the screw.

Phillips drive is particularly prone to camming out, making it a bad choice for decking screws.

Other factors that make screws cam out are high torque, as required for hardwood decking, and the

In addition to drilling pilot holes, it's worth using 10 or 12g screws instead of 8g in very hard timber.

Some screws, such as the Zenith Quickshot range (itwproline.com.au), not only bore their own pilot hole, but are also self-countersinking, saving you hours of effort.



CAMMED-OUT SCREW

fastener material, as stainless steel is softer than high-carbon steel.

To minimise the risk of screws camming out, use square-drive screws, and opt for an impact driver instead of an ordinary cordless drill.

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for fastening timber decking to **Steel Joists***



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Available at
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warehouse

Refinish decking boards

A deck is one build that keeps on giving, adding lifestyle benefits and value to the home. Regular maintenance can help quality outdoor timber last for up to 15 years, so it pays to look after your investment.

Giving the deck a thorough going over at the start of summer prepares it for use and uncovers any potential problems that need fixing.

CHECK THE FINISH

Depending on the age and outlook, a good wash down with a stiff bristle broom and mineral turpentine may be enough to revive the timber.

But if it's in a shady position or receives strong, direct sun it may need to be deep-cleaned and refinished.

OILED DECK should be treated with a timber cleaner then re-oiled every six months for best results.

STAINED DECK needs light sanding and restaining every two years.

PAINTED DECK requires light sanding, cleaning and refinishing every few years using a primer and specialised paint.

OIL THE TIMBER

Check an oiled deck twice a year and a stained deck every two years to see if it needs refinishing.

A quick method to use is to splash water on the boards. If it soaks in instead of beading off then it's time to reseal the timber.



»Get the look



Cabot's Deck Clean,
\$36 for 4L.

Cabot's Decking Applicator,
\$15.49.



Cabot's Natural Decking Oil,
\$49 for 4L.



1 CLEAN THE DECK by hosing it down with water, then applying deck cleaner to one square metre at a time.

TIP The cleaner is activated by water.



2 SCRUB THE SURFACE with a stiff brush then leave the cleaner to soak for 15 minutes without letting it dry out completely. Hose it down to rinse off.



3 FINISH THE DECK with two coats of decking oil using a lamb's wool pad with a long handle to apply it evenly, leaving the oil to dry between coats.

»Prepare the deck for summer with a wash and scrub then apply a new finish D.I.Y. to protect the timber



PICTURE BETTY IMAGES

A deck provides a space for entertaining and relaxing, plus increases the value of the home.

»Eco-friendly decking

For a sustainable alternative to timber boards, use Ekodeck.

A composite product containing both bamboo and recycled plastic, Ekodeck boards can be installed D.I.Y. the same way as hardwood but don't need oiling or painting, saving you time and money.

Designed and tested in the Australian climate, Ekodeck is pre-treated to resist rot, decay, mildew, mould and termites. With anti-UV technology the colour won't fade to grey, and minor scuffs and scratches can be sanded out.

It comes in four colours and costs from \$5.98 a metre.



**HOLIDAY
PROJECTS**

A simply decorated branch doubles as a Christmas tree and table centrepiece.

CHRISTMAS *by design*

Get out the hot glue gun this festive season to give your home designer style on a DIY budget

WORDS **ARTEMIS GOUROS** PROJECTS **GEMA BENEITEZ** PICTURES **SUE FERRIS**

This year say goodbye to trees and tradition and create your own Christmas. All you need to give your home a festive feel are basic items from the hardware store.

It's a way to get creative without breaking the budget and in homes where floorspace is at a premium these decorations can't be beaten.

With little more than a hot glue gun and balls of twine you can turn

a tree branch into a rustic chandelier, make a colourful wreath and create a wall-mounted Christmas tree.

You'll need a forked branch about 30mm thick with several smaller limbs. Use one left over from spring pruning or source one from a local arborist. Any smooth-barked tree like crabapple or eucalyptus will work.

Trim the branch with a handsaw, sanding any rough edges. Wrap

a plastic ivy garland around it then add handmade twine baubles and jar lights. You can use live greenery but it will only last a day or two.

The branch is only temporary so use heavy-duty twine to hang it from a hook on a wall or ceiling. Just make sure the fastener is rated to take the weight of the decorated branch.

TIP You can spray-paint the branch to match any colour scheme. ➤



1 PREPARE THE DISPLAY by wrapping greenery around the branch, securing it with hot glue. Roll white twine into balls, securing the ends with glue and attaching a looped hanger, then tie them to the branch.



2 MAKE THE LIGHTS by filling jars with silver beads and adding a tea light to each one. Light them with a stove lighter, then hang them on the branch.
TIP For a safer option, use flameless, battery-powered LED candles.



Decorate for the season using a few common DIY tools and materials.



Give guests a festive welcome with a colourful wreath.

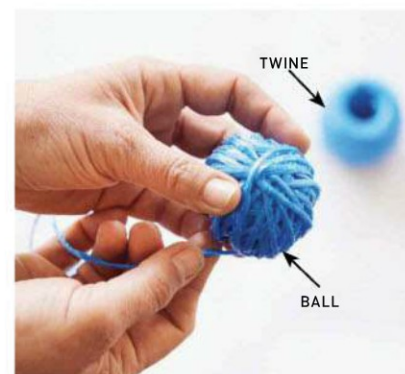
Ball wreath

Make a colourful wreath to hang on an internal door by decorating a foam ring with balls of twine.

You'll need a 340mm polystyrene wreath base, about \$6, from a supplier like Craft 4 Less (craft4less.com.au).

To make the balls, use Grunt twine in different colours and thicknesses, about \$4 a roll (usegrunt.com).

Secure the balls to the wreath base with generous amounts of hot glue, handling the gun carefully to avoid burns, then attach a hanger.



1 ROLL THE TWINE into balls, making four different sizes and securing the ends with hot glue. For a 340mm wreath you will need about seven 100mm, 20 x 80mm, 10 x 50mm and 15 x 30mm balls.



2 ATTACH THE BALLS to the foam wreath using a hot glue gun, starting with the 100mm balls. Add the 80 and the 50mm balls, filling any gaps with the 30mm. Let it dry then glue a jute hanger to the back of the wreath.



Make a cheerful wall-mounted tree from balls of twine.

Twine tree

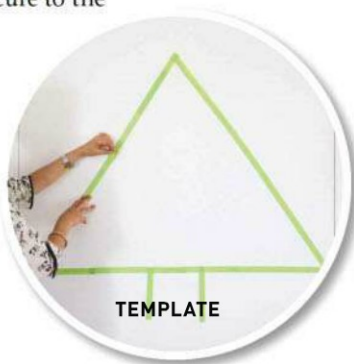
Deck the wall and free up the floor with a tree made from balls of twine attached to removable hangers.

You'll need Command Mini Hooks with clear strips that hold 225g each, about \$14 (commandbrand.com.au).

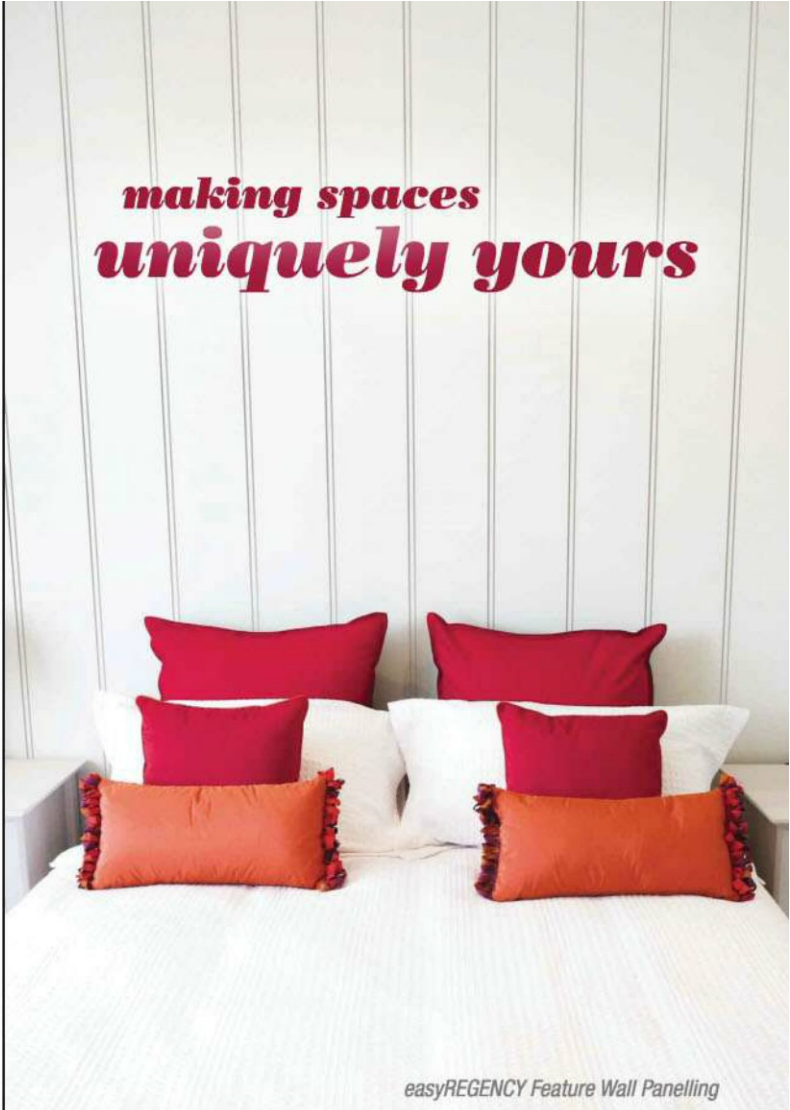
Make a template by marking the outline of a tree shape on the wall using painter's tape. Roll jute and coloured twine into 50mm balls, thread the twine ends through small plastic rings then secure to the ball with hot glue.

Measure the distance between the balls on the wall, allowing about 100mm in between.

Follow the packet instructions to attach the hooks on the marked positions. Hang the balls on the hooks by the rings and remove the tape.



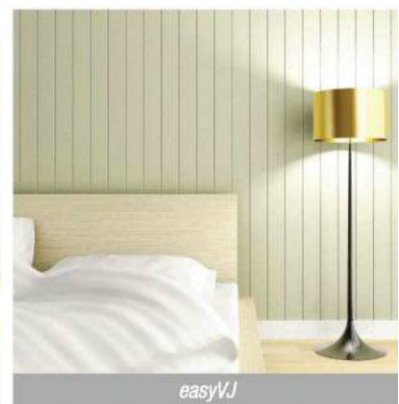
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DIY GIFT
IDEA

DOWN TO THE WIRE

Make a designer bowl with just a few twists and snips then decorate it with paint and beads in bright colours

WORDS **DONYALE HARRISON**

Wirework bowls are kitchen classics but often come with high price tags at antique and decorator shops.

This one can be made in just a weekend for the price of the wire, seed beads and metal paint.

Seed beads can be found at craft shops, but for a budget option just recycle some old jewellery and buy tie wire from a hardware store.

If you have trouble finding the exact size you can go up and down a little in thickness, using

2.9 or 3.2mm wire instead of 3mm or 1.57mm in place of 1.6mm. It is sometimes sold by gauge rather than in millimetres, and the higher the gauge, the finer the wire.

For 3mm wire use 8 or 9 gauge, 14 gauge for 1.6mm, 19 gauge for 0.9mm and 21 gauge for 0.7mm.

The only tools you need to make the bowl are wire cutters to snip the wire to length and pliers to help bend it into shape, plus a round bowl to use as a size guide for the bowl rim and separate base with feet. ➤



Whites Galvanised Tie Wire Handypak, about \$6 each. whiteswires.com.au

Painting galvanised wire

The zinc coating on galvanised wire stops paint from adhering. To finish the bowl, first treat the wire to provide adhesion for the topcoat.

When weaving the bowl, leave two gaps for the beadwork, adding it after the wire has been painted.

WASH THE BOWL with an alkaline water-based cleanser with a pH of at least 11. Rinse with clean water and leave overnight to dry thoroughly, or longer in humid conditions.

APPLY A PRIMER using an etch or zinc-rich primer then spray with two coats of enamel formulated for metal, letting it dry between coats.

TIP Test paint a small area, let it dry then apply masking tape. If the paint comes away with the tape, clean and prime the bowl again.

Dy-Mark Etch Primer, \$11 for 325g. dymark.com.au



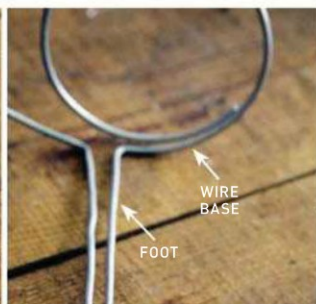


Make a decorative bowl with tie wire, adding beads for a bit of bling.

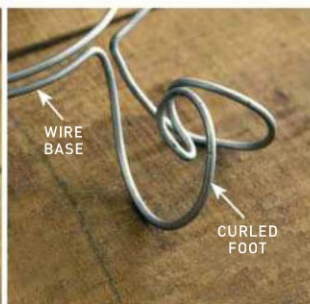
MAKE THE WIRE BOWL



1 FORM THE BASE from a 1200mm length of 3mm wire, shaping one end into a circle sized to fit the bowl. Extend the wire around the inside of the circle by about a quarter and bend at 90°.



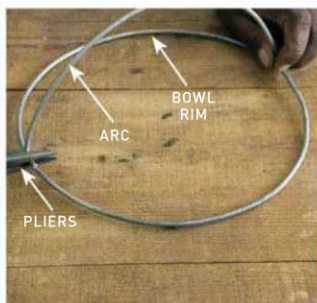
2 BEND THE WIRE into a 120mm-long foot, take it around the circle by one-third, make another foot then repeat. Use wire cutters to trim the wire to the start of the circle.



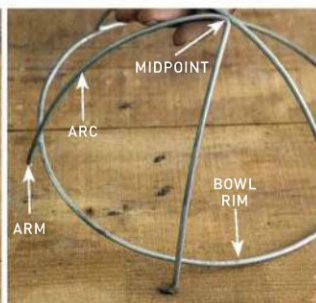
3 FINISH THE FEET by forming a curl from each 120mm long wire foot by gently separating and bending the two strands. Adjust all three feet so the bowl base sits flat.



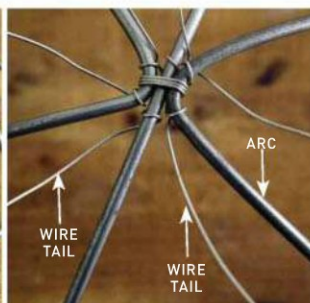
4 CREATE THE RIM of the bowl by wrapping a length of 3mm wire around an object of the required diameter. Cut the wire with wire cutters and tie the ends of the rim with 0.7mm wire.



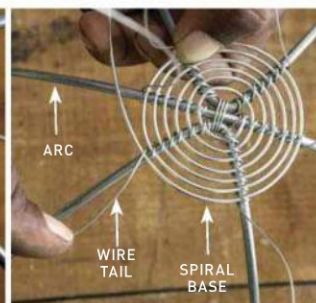
5 MAKE AN ARC from 3mm wire, cut it to length plus 50mm and bend 25mm arms at 90° on each end using pliers. Position the arc on the rim and secure with 0.7mm wire.



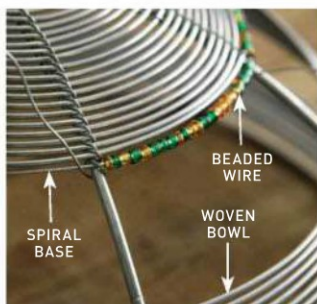
6 SHAPE THE BOWL by adding two arcs bent at the midpoint into a 60° angle. Attach the arms to the rim of the bowl and join the arcs at the midpoints using 0.7mm wire.



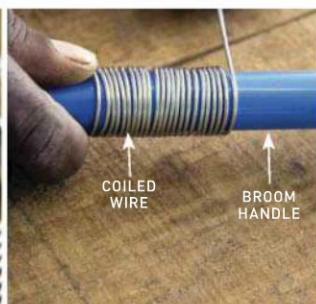
7 ATTACH THE WIRE for weaving the bowl by cutting three lengths of 0.7mm wire to five times as long as the arcs. Twist each wire around two arcs, leaving equal tails.



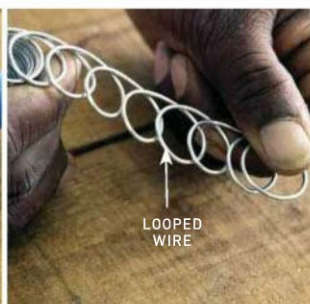
8 START A SPIRAL of 1.6mm wire in the centre, weaving the 0.7mm wire tails around the arcs. Finish the bowl base then twist and cut off the wire to leave a gap for the beadwork.



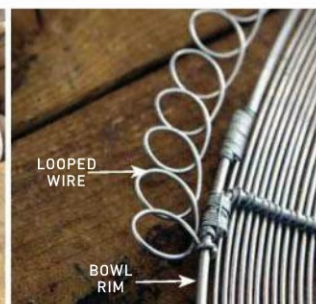
9 THREAD THE BEADS onto lengths of 0.9mm wire. Finish weaving the bowl, leaving another gap for beadwork. Tie off and trim all wires, attaching the beadwork with 0.7mm wire.



10 MAKE THE LOOPS for the rim of the bowl by tightly coiling a length of 1.6mm wire around a broom handle or 18mm dowel, keeping tension on the wire as you go.



11 SLIDE THE WIRE off the broom handle and gently stretch the loops out between two hands. **TIP** To flatten the looped wire, sit it under heavy books overnight.



12 FINISH THE BOWL by attaching the loops to the rim at regular intervals with 0.7mm wire and trim any excess. Neaten all wire joints and secure the base to the bowl with 0.7mm wire.

Making a wire heart



Create a mini garden sculpture from scrap metal like this rustic heart made from mild steel wire, which is iron containing a small percentage of carbon. You can find rusted mild steel wire at a scrap yard, buy it new at the hardware store and let it weather or use galvanised wire finished with a special rust-effect paint.

To make the heart, form the shape using 2.5mm wire. Wind 1.6mm wire around an 18mm dowel, slide it off and twist the loops around the heart using pliers, letting the loops open as you work. Secure the ends to the heart with 1.6mm wire, cutting off any excess.

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BUDGET
BUILD

RECLAIMED TIMBER TREE

Get festive with DIY and turn offcuts into a seasonal decoration that will last for many holidays to come

PROJECT AND PICTURES **JESS COX**

This year, instead of buying a live Christmas tree that will end up on the back of a council truck by January, make your own.

Use odds and ends from other DIY projects to create an individual, eye-catching festive decoration.

For the branches we used scraps of hardwood decking boards, a pine frame from a large canvas and a few scraps of framing timber. The branches were threaded onto a 600 x 10mm dowel, with pine offcuts used as spacers and the tree base.

Measure and mark the reclaimed timber into different lengths for the branches and spacers, ensuring that each branch has a matching pair.

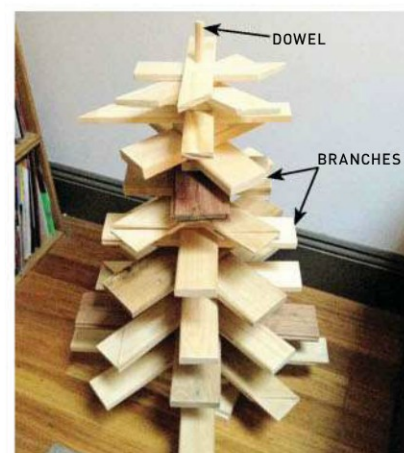
You can leave the timber in a raw, unfinished state, or apply two coats of oil or beeswax before assembling.



1 Make the branches
Cut the branches and spacers to length with a mitresaw. Sand all the pieces with 100 grit then 150 grit abrasive paper, smoothing over rough ends and corners. Find and mark the centre of each branch.



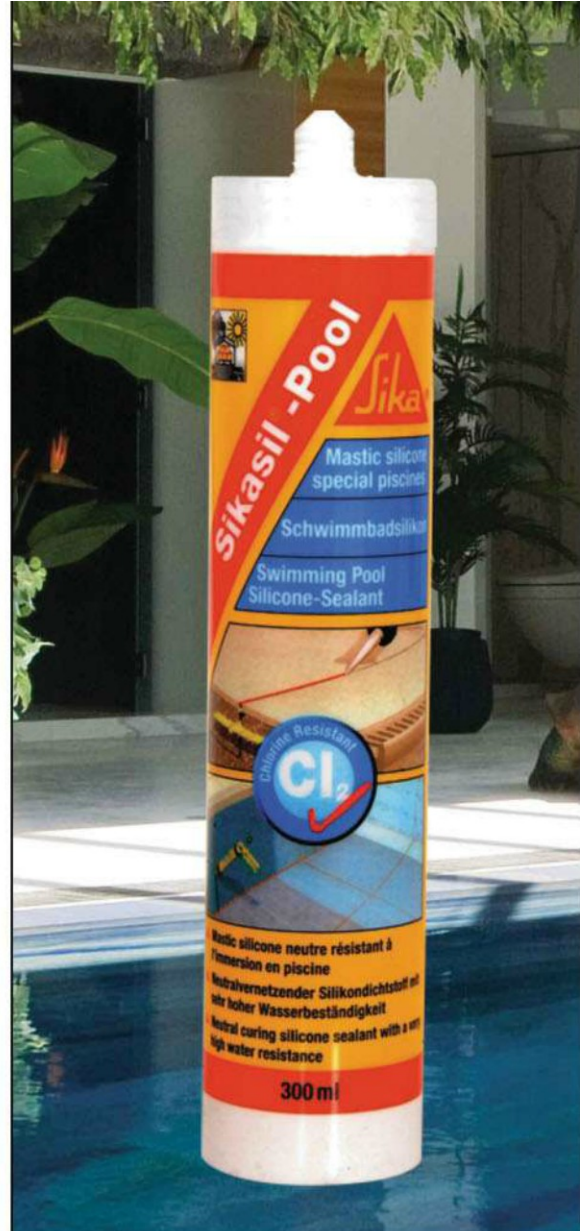
2 Drill the holes
Make pilot holes in the centre of each branch using a 3mm bit, then drill with a 10mm bit, taking care to keep the drill vertical. Test-fit the branches to the dowel. Drill a hole in the base and secure the dowel with adhesive.



3 Make the tree
Thread the branches onto the dowel, adding spacers. Not all the branches need a spacer between them, judge what looks best as you go. Leave 50mm of dowel extending from the top for a star or angel. Add decorations.



Flameless LED tea lights and shiny baubles add sparkle to this festive one-off.



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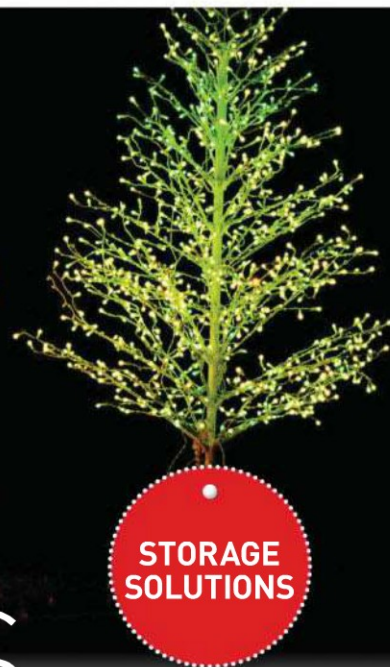
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HOLIDAY HINTS

Great ideas for putting up, taking down and packing away your festive decorations

Anyone who enjoys decorating the house and tree will love these great solutions for storing and managing decorations.

Use these techniques to put up string lights and pack them away to keep them damage-free, so you can hang them up next season without spending hours untangling the cords or replacing broken bulbs.



In the bag

An easy way to store holiday lights according to usage is to put each string in a separate plastic bag with the location marked on it.

Make sure the lights are untangled and the bulbs intact before putting them in the bags, storing them in a safe spot.

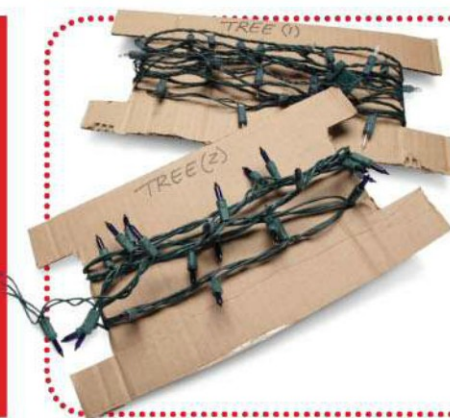
Take a stand

If you use dozens of light strings each year, storage can be tricky.

To make stands for the lights, cut timber to fit the bases of plastic storage tubs and attach dowels 50mm from the ends using screws.

Wrap the string lights around the dowels in a figure-eight pattern and put the stands in the tubs.

You'll be amazed how many light strings you can store on the stands without tangles or damage.

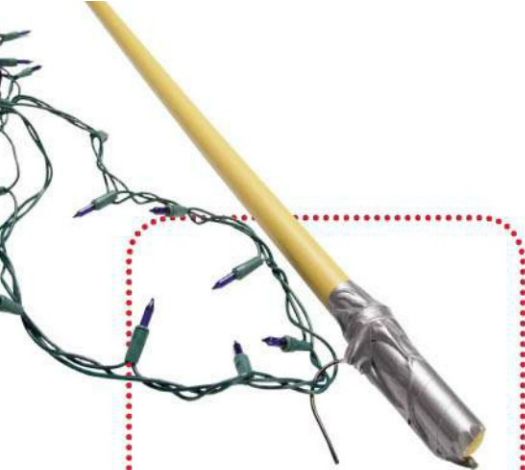


On the cards

Here's a simple way to recycle old boxes and keep string lights from getting tangled when in storage.

Cut pieces of cardboard into the shape of flat spools with slots on the ends, like the type used for twine, ribbon and thread.

Wrap one light string around each storage card, label them and put in a plastic tub until next year.



Off the hook

Putting up and taking down lights on a tall outdoor or indoor tree can be dangerous. Make it safer by using a paint roller extension pole or broom handle with a hook.

Cut the hook from a wire coathanger or make one from heavy-gauge wire, securing it to one end of the pole with duct tape to stop it sliding around.

TIP The pole hook is also useful for hanging ornaments up high.



Wrap it up

When dismantling an artificial Christmas tree, use the ribbons it was originally packed with to tie up the boughs of each section.

When the ribbons wear out and you need substitute ties, use rolls of self-adhesive bandage to wrap the branches for storage.

Strong and re-usable they'll do the job without damaging the tree or breaking the budget.



Peg it out

Instead of poking nails into Colorbond fascia and fibro eaves when you're stringing outdoor lights, clip the wires to the base lip with clothes pegs for damage-free hanging and easy removal.


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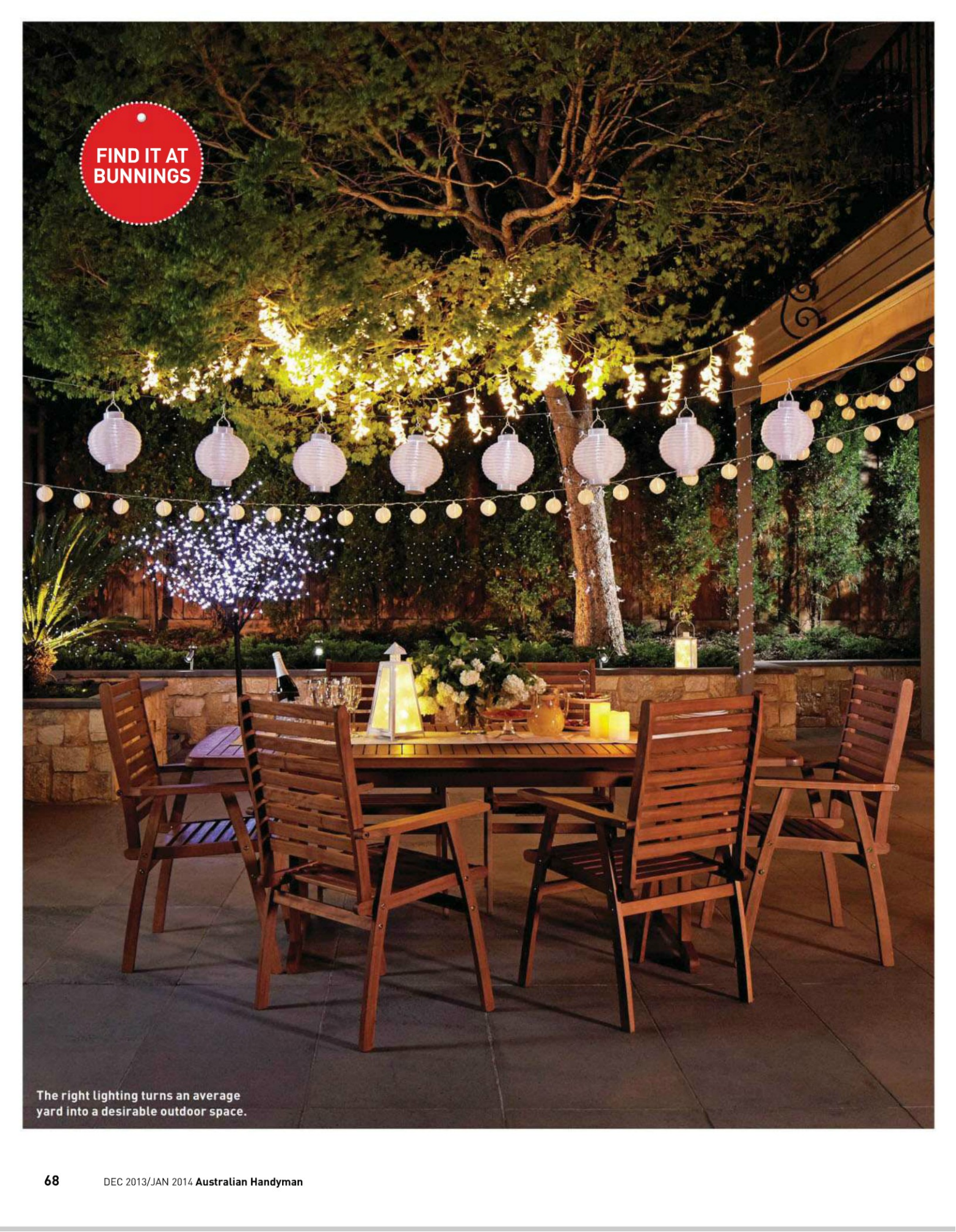


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The right lighting turns an average
yard into a desirable outdoor space.

FESTIVE LIGHTING

Make any outdoor area more appealing this summer with affordable and efficient backyard illuminations

Decorative lighting is an easy and effective way to turn an ordinary outdoor area into a more intimate and inviting space to enjoy during the festive season.

Decks, courtyards and gardens illuminated with decorative lighting are far more welcoming on warm summer nights than yards that are dark and gloomy, or lit with harsh fluorescent bulbs.

Advances in technology have reduced both the purchase price and ongoing costs of outdoor lights. Efficient LED lights use a fraction of the power of standard bulbs and can save hundreds of dollars over time.

Small areas like courtyards benefit from subtle lights such as torches and lanterns tucked into planters, or hung from lattice. Citronella candles can be placed in decorative holders for an attractive light that deters mosquitoes.

Hanging and wall-mounted lights work best in larger areas such as backyards. Large standing lights can also be used effectively in these areas to make a dramatic statement.

SAVE MONEY WITH SOLAR

Solar powered lights are a smart outdoor lighting solution. They feature

small built-in solar panels and are not connected to mains power, meaning they have no running costs and are easy to install DIY.

Solar lights require at least six hours of sunlight per day to charge the internal batteries that power LEDs.

Most models have sensors that activate the lights at dusk.

Solar-powered path lights are completely self-contained with no wires. They are ideal for lining paths, paved areas and garden beds and can easily be repositioned as required.

Get the look



Trax 200 x 95mm White Hanging Garden Lantern, \$10.



Miner 230 x 110mm Rustic Red Hanging Garden Lantern, \$9.



Lytworx 1.8m 200 LED Warm White Blossom Tree, \$49.



Rouge Living LED Solar Powered Hanging Lantern, \$20 for four.



Rouge Living 3.8m 10 Piece Solar Powered Mini Lanterns, \$13.



Rouge Living 2.5m 480 LED White Curtain Cluster Budlights, \$60.



OUTDOOR
AMBIENCE

DIY PARTY LIGHTS

Give the garden a designer glow this summer with customised hanging, path and table lamps

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS

Summer is the season for entertaining outdoors, with backyard barbecues and alfresco parties top of the list.

To lend your gatherings a relaxed feel to go with the warmer weather and longer days, give the garden an ambient glow and turn off outdoor spotlights.

Create an alfresco lighting feature using vintage-style lampshades by having an electrician connect the light sockets to an outdoor cord.

Just plug the cord into a power point and hang the other end on a hook, taking it down at the end of the night.

For table settings and other lights with a festive feel, make your own lamps and lanterns by recycling household items and using decorative paper, adding candles for a soft glow.



1 Milk carton candles

To make hurricane-style lamps for outdoor table settings, use a utility knife to make rectangular cutouts in the front of one-litre milk cartons. Cover the cartons with wrapping paper secured at the joins and folds with PVA adhesive, piercing ventilation holes in the back. Position glass holders with tealight candles in the cartons.



2 Wrapping-paper lanterns

Decorate for festive parties with seasonal lanterns. Cut wrapping paper to fit around glass candle holders with 10mm extra in length, folding each piece of paper in half lengthways. Score 30mm lines along the fold line with a utility knife then secure the papers around glass candle holders using double-sided tape.



3 Paper bag path lights

Light the way to the party with path lighting. Make cutouts on one face of white paper bags using a utility knife. Score 60mm lines on lengths of 80mm wide paper and secure to the inside of the bag tops with PVA adhesive. Position the bags along a pathway, adding a candle in a 150mm tall glass holder to each one.



4 Hanging tealight tins

For ambient garden lighting, hang candle holders from a tree. Use an eyelet punch to make decorative holes in tin cans then add two hanging holes 10mm from the rim. Thread the hanging holes with galvanised tie wire and secure crepe paper tails to the bases with Super Glue. Add tealight candles in glass holders to the tins and hang up.

Gift guide



DIG IN with the Kids Gardening Set, \$39, including a handle wheelbarrow, shovel and rake.



CUT BACK BRANCHES with the Bosch Keo Cordless Pruning Saw, \$149.



TRIM AND TIDY the garden with the Fiskars Smart Fit Pruner, \$24.98.



COOK OUTDOORS in the Outdoor Chef Charcoal Kettle BBQ, \$198.



GRILL ON THE GO with the Everdure eChurrasco BBQ, \$298.



PREPARE PIZZA on the BBQ Buddy Pizza Stackers, \$59.98.



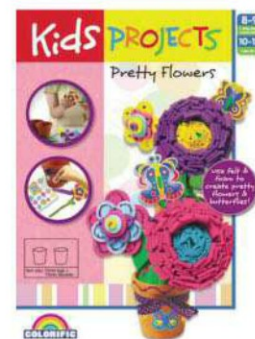
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MAKE BLOOMS using the Kids Projects Pretty Flowers, \$14.99.



BUILD YOUR OWN toy at home using the Wood Worx Dragon Kit, \$14.99.



BRUSH UP on your artistic side with Boyle Craftwood Wobbly Animals, \$10 for three.

SET UP A SAFARI in your garden with the Pretty Flamingos, \$32.90 for two.



Gift guide



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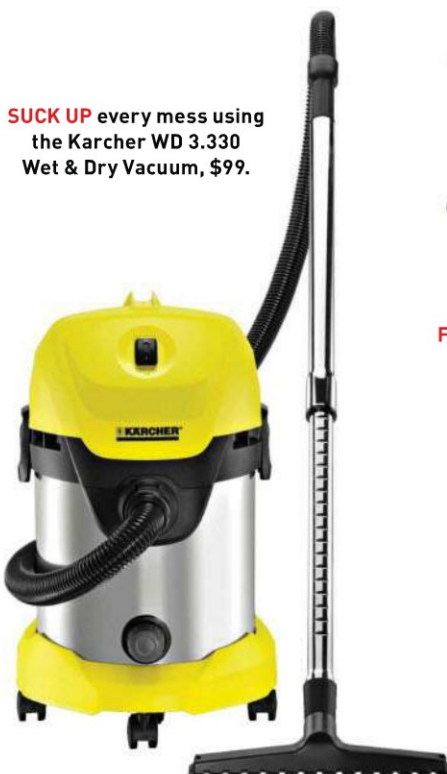
STOCK YOUR SHED with the Ryobi 18V ONE+ 8 Piece Kit, \$699.



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FOR FAST FIXES use the Bosch Multi Function Tool Kit, \$159.





DO ODD JOBS around the house with the Bosch PSR Select, \$89.



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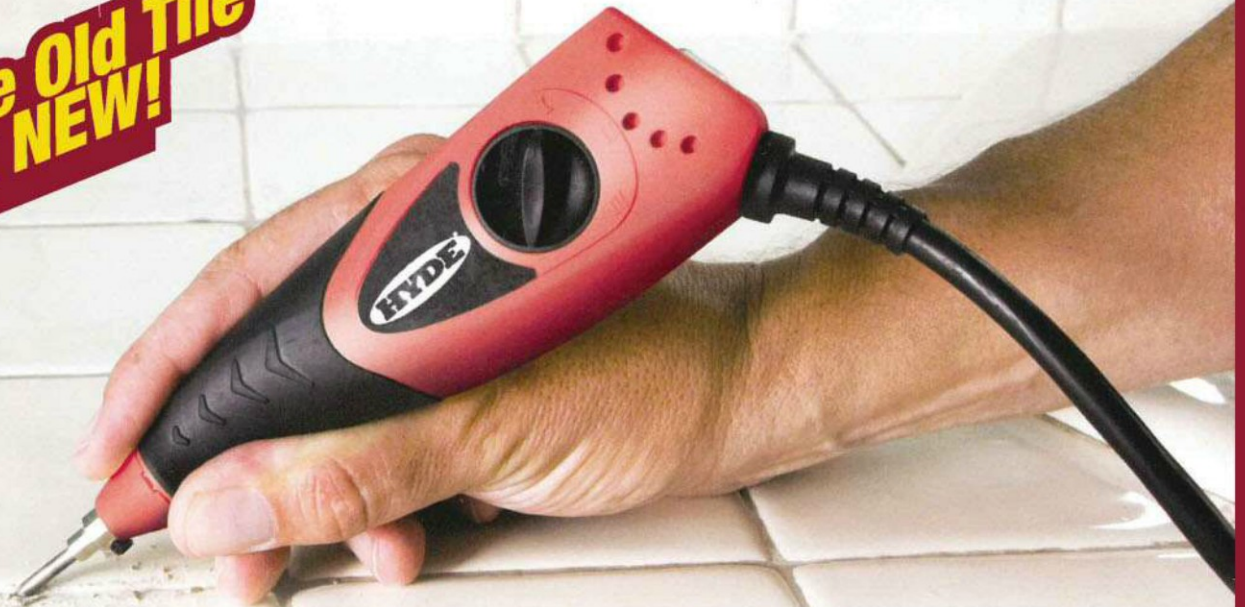


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FESTIVE
RECIPES

CHRISTMAS ON THE BARBIE

For a real DIY Aussie feast, cook a traditional turkey, glazed ham, grilled prawns and fruit cake in the backyard

RECIPES **DIXIE ELLIOTT** PHOTOGRAPHY **CHRIS L JONES** STYLIST **MARY HARRIS**



Whole turkey with
Spanish flavoured
stuffing

Carve up a classic slice of
Christmas with this tasty
turkey recipe complete with
homemade gravy

A hooded barbecue takes the cook out of the kitchen and into the backyard where all the action is

PREPARATION TIME 30 mins

COOKING TIME 3 hours

SERVES 6 to 8

INGREDIENTS

1 x 7kg whole fresh turkey
2 Tbsp olive oil
1/3 cup plain flour
2 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup sherry

STUFFING

40g butter, roughly chopped
Extra 2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Spanish chorizo, finely chopped
1 large brown onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp smoked paprika
1/2 tsp saffron threads
Sea salt flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
8 cups white breadcrumbs
3 tsp dried thyme
1 lemon, juiced and rind finely grated
2 eggs, whisked

1 PREHEAT THE BARBECUE to medium heat, about 180°C. Line a large roasting pan with baking paper.

2 TO MAKE THE STUFFING put the butter and oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the chorizo, onion and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, for eight minutes or until the chorizo is golden and onion soft. Add the paprika, saffron, salt and pepper and cook for one minute. Leave to cool.

Put the chorizo mixture, breadcrumbs, thyme, lemon rind, quarter cup of juice and eggs in a bowl. Stir until combined.

3 FILL THE FRONT and large cavities of the turkey with stuffing. Secure the legs with kitchen twine and tuck the wings under the body. Put the turkey in the prepared roasting pan. Drizzle with the oil and season with sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper.

4 ROAST THE TURKEY with the hood down for three hours or until cooked through when tested in the thickest part of a thigh with a bamboo skewer. If the juices run clear the turkey is cooked. If juices are pink, cook a bit longer. Transfer the turkey to a serving platter and cover to keep warm.

5 TO MAKE THE GRAVY drain the pan juices, return a quarter cup to the roasting pan and put over a medium heat on the barbecue grill. Sprinkle over the flour, whisk to combine and continue whisking for three minutes or until mixture is golden. Slowly add the stock and sherry, whisk to combine and continue whisking until the mixture comes to the boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for three minutes or until gravy has thickened. Strain through a fine sieve, season and pour into a jug. Garnish the turkey with wilted thyme and serve with the gravy on the side. ➤



Roast a turkey to celebrate the season.



The secret to a tasty and juicy bird is in the stuffing.



Feed the troops with a ham leg that's ready in two hours and serves a dozen.

Bourbon & orange marmalade glazed leg of ham

Classic and festive, ham is a crowd pleaser that makes for very popular leftovers the next day

PREPARATION TIME 30 mins
COOKING TIME 1 hour 25 mins
SERVES 10 to 12

INGREDIENTS

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 cup orange marmalade
½ cup bourbon
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
8kg whole leg of ham on the bone
1 Tbsp whole cloves

① **PREHEAT THE BARBECUE** on low to medium heat, about 160°C. Line a large roasting pan with baking paper and add a wire rack.

② **FOR THE GLAZE** put the sugar, marmalade, bourbon and mustard in a deep saucepan and stir over a medium heat until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture comes to the boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for five minutes. Cool.

③ **PREPARE THE HAM** for glazing. Put it on a large chopping board and cut around the shank of the ham in a decorative zigzag pattern about 100mm from the end of the shank. Remove the rind from the ham by running your thumb around the edge under the skin at the widest end and gently pulling the rind back over the shank. Discard the skin.

④ **CUT A DIAMOND PATTERN** into the fat of the ham using a small sharp knife. Put the ham on the wire rack in the prepared roasting pan.

⑤ **BRUSH THE GLAZE** generously over the ham. Insert a clove into the centre of each diamond. Roast in the barbecue for 40 minutes, brush with glaze and cook for a further 40 minutes or until ham is glossy, sticky and golden. Transfer the ham to a large serving platter and stand for 10 minutes before slicing. ➤

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Prawns make tasty bite-sized snacks while the party gets going.

Barbecue prawns with Vietnamese dipping sauce

Nothing says you're having an Aussie Christmas like prawns on the barbie

PREPARATION TIME 25 mins + standing time

COOKING TIME 4 mins

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch coriander with roots
- 1 small eschallot, peeled, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 Tbsp fish sauce
- 3 tsp caster sugar
- 1.2kg large green prawns, tails on, peeled and deveined

DIPPING SAUCE

- ½ cup lemon juice
- Extra 2 Tbsp fish sauce
- 40g palm sugar, grated
- 1 long red chilli, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 coriander root, finely chopped

1 CUT THE ROOTS off the coriander and wash thoroughly. Remove the sprigs and set aside. Finely chop two coriander roots and put in a large bowl. Add the eschallot, garlic, fish sauce and caster sugar. Stir until combined. Add the prawns, cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2 MAKE THE DIPPING SAUCE by combining the lemon juice, fish sauce, palm sugar, chilli, garlic and coriander root. Transfer to a serving bowl.

3 HEAT THE GRILL or hotplate of a barbecue on medium heat. When hot, add the marinated prawns and cook for two minutes on each side or until cooked through. Transfer to a platter, garnish with coriander sprigs and serve with the dipping sauce on the side. ➤

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Traditional
Christmas
cake

Rich and spicy, the sight
and smell of fruit cake says
special occasion better than
hanging up decorations

The best desserts can be made
in advance then put on display.

It wouldn't be Christmas without a fruit cake but forget slaving in the kitchen because this recipe can be done on the barbie, including the brandy butter icing

PREPARATION TIME 40 mins + the standing time

COOKING TIME 2½ hours

MAKES 1 cake

INGREDIENTS

1.7kg dried mixed fruit
1 cup brandy
1 orange, juiced and rind finely grated
250g butter, softened
1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
3 tsp vanilla extract
4 eggs
½ cup plum jam
2 cups plain flour
½ cup self raising flour
3 tsp ground cinnamon
3 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp nutmeg
1 tsp ground cloves
Extra ½ cup brandy

Extra 180g butter, softened
1¼ cups pure icing sugar, sifted
Extra 1 tsp vanilla extract

- 1 **PUT THE FRUIT** into a large bowl. Add the brandy, orange rind and half a cup of orange juice. Cover and stand for at least two hours or overnight.
- 2 **PREHEAT THE BARBECUE** on low to medium heat, about 160°C. Grease a deep 22cm square cake tin and line with two layers of baking paper. Put the butter, sugar and vanilla in a bowl and beat with an electric beater until light and creamy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the jam and mix to combine.
- 3 **ADD THE BUTTER MIXTURE** to the fruit mixture and stir with a large metal spoon until well combined. Sift over the flours and spices and stir until

combined. Spoon the cake mixture into the prepared tin, smooth the top with the back of a wet spoon and tap the tin on a flat surface to settle the mixture.

4 **BAKE THE CAKE** in the barbecue with the hood down for two and a half hours or until a skewer comes out clean when inserted in the centre. Remove from the barbecue and pour two tablespoons of the extra brandy over the cake. Cool the tin on a wire rack. When completely cold remove the cake from the tin.

5 **ICE THE CAKE** by beating the extra butter and icing sugar with an electric mixer for 10 minutes or until light and creamy. Add the remaining brandy and vanilla and beat until combined. Cover the cold cake with the brandy butter icing.

TIP The un-iced cake will keep for up to three months if stored in an airtight container and refrigerated. ➤



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Cranberry & lime juice punch

Jugs of fresh and fruity drinks are a must with an alfresco summer feast

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins

COOKING TIME Nil

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups cranberry juice

4 large limes

¼ cup caster sugar

250g punnet strawberries, halved

4 stalks fresh mint

750ml sparkling mineral

or soda water, chilled

Ice, to serve

Mint leaves, to serve

1 POUR THE CRANBERRY JUICE into a large jug. Juice two of the limes and add to the jug with the caster sugar, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Thinly slice the remaining limes and add to the jug with the strawberries. Pour chilled sparkling mineral or soda water into the jug and stir. Add the ice and top with mint leaves then serve.

A traditional festive favourite, cranberries are bursting with heathy goodness and flavour

Serve this sweet and refreshing punch with lunch, dinner or on its own.

Spanish-style sangria

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins

COOKING TIME Nil

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

3 large oranges, 2 juiced
2 lemons, 1 juiced
1/3 cup caster sugar
750ml bottle dry red wine
1 Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced
750ml lemonade, chilled
Ice, to serve

1 POUR THE JUICES into a large jug. Add the caster sugar and stir until dissolved. Add the wine and stir until well combined. Thinly slice the remaining orange and lemon and add with the apple slices to the jug. Pour in the lemonade, stir. Add ice and serve.

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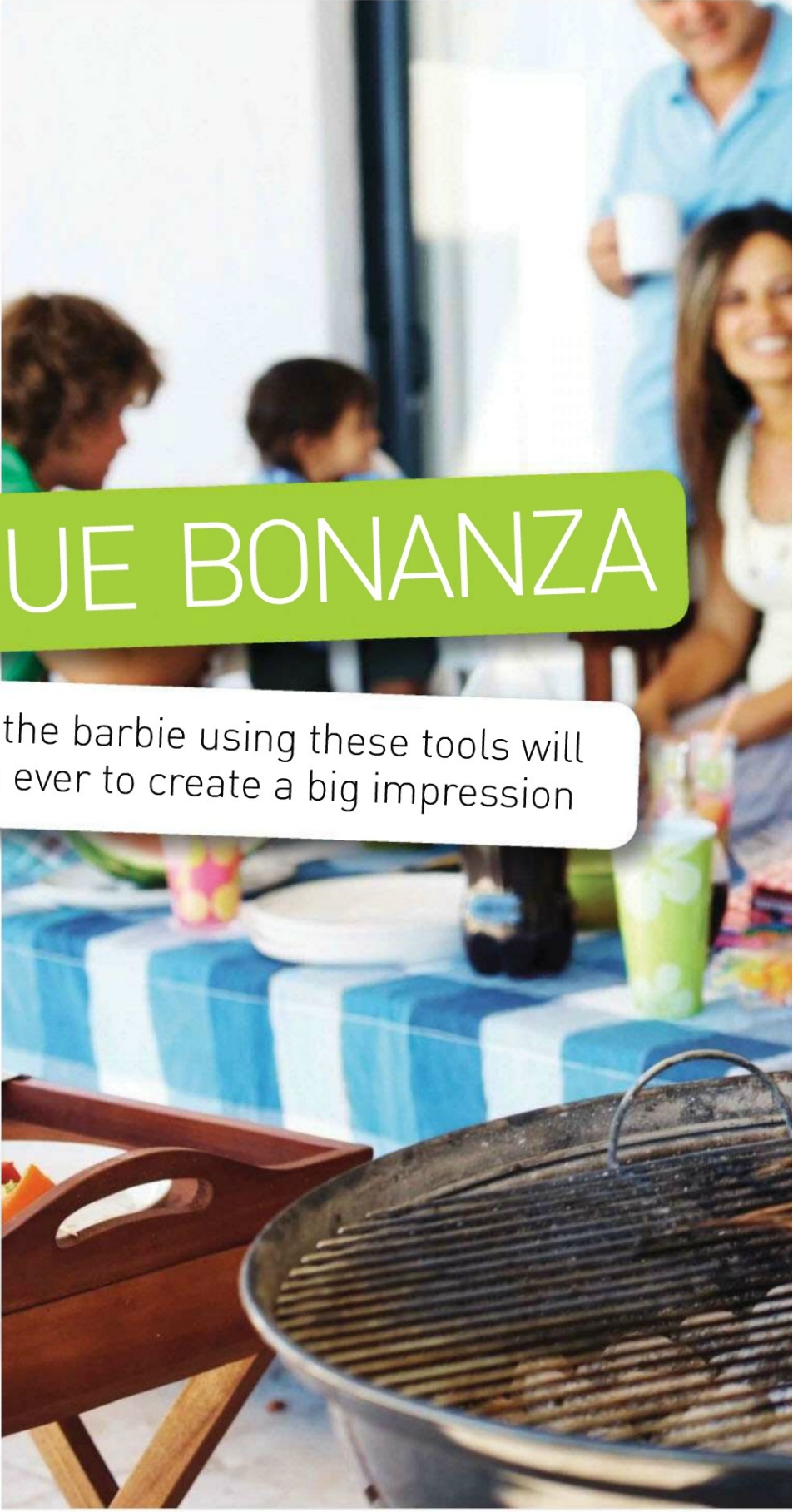
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OUTDOOR
COOKING



BARBECUE BONANZA

Cooking a meal on the barbie using these tools will make it easier than ever to create a big impression

There's no better way to enjoy an Aussie summer than a backyard barbie. Cooking and eating outdoors is the ideal way to take advantage of long days and warm nights.

After working hard mowing the lawn and scrubbing the deck to prepare the backyard for entertaining, the last thing you'll want to do is serve up burnt snags and charred onions.

Instead, impress guests with delicious creations using clever tricks and handy tools from BBQ Buddy (bbqbuddy.com.au).

These tasty recipes will help you create a feast that will be the talk of the neighbourhood. ➤





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Prawn skewers with lime mayo



These simple prawn skewers work equally well as a main meal or a tasty appetiser. For the best flavour and texture, purchase fresh prawns then peel and devein them at home.

SOAK THE SKEWERS in water and set aside, then blanch the snow peas and beans for 20 seconds in boiling water, drain and set aside to cool.

TIP Prawns will be cooked once they turn orange on the outside.

PREPARATION TIME 20 mins

COOKING TIME 10 mins

SERVES 4

TOOLS

Bamboo skewers

Tongs

INGREDIENTS

32 king prawns, peeled and deveined
100g baby spinach, washed
100g snow peas, trimmed, halved
100g green beans, trimmed, quartered
3 egg yolks
1 tsp Dijon mustard
2 limes, 1 juiced, 1 quartered
300ml olive oil
Salt and pepper

1 PREHEAT THE BARBECUE to medium heat, about 180°C. Put the baby spinach, snow peas and green beans in a large salad bowl and set aside.

2 MAKE THE LIME MAYO by whisking together the egg yolks, mustard and lime juice until light and creamy. Slowly add one teaspoon of olive oil at a time while whisking continuously, season and add the zest of half a lime.

3 PUT FOUR PRAWNS on each skewer and cook on the barbecue for three minutes on each side, turning only once.

4 DRESS THE GREENS with a squeeze of lime juice and a drizzle of oil, then season with salt and pepper and divide between four plates. Add two prawn skewers to each plate and serve with the lime mayo on the side.



BBQ Buddy Flat Bamboo Skewers, \$3 for a pack of 50.

Moroccan roast lamb



A leg of lamb is not the most common meal to cook on a barbecue but with a closed hood acting as an oven, baking and roasting is simple.

CHECK THE TEMPERATURE by inserting a digital thermometer into the meat to determine when it is cooked. Rare is below 55°C, medium is 65°C and well done is above 75°C.

TIP Serve lamb with couscous and roasted sweet potatoes on the side.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins

COOKING TIME 90 mins

SERVES 8

TOOLS

Wire roasting rack

Enamel tray

Digital thermometer

INGREDIENTS

2.4kg leg of lamb
1 lemon, juiced and zested
1 Tbsp dry oregano
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp chilli powder
3 Tbsp olive oil

1 PREHEAT THE BARBECUE to medium heat, about 180°C. To make the marinade for the lamb, put the lemon juice, lemon zest, oregano, paprika, chilli powder and olive oil in a small bowl and mix to combine.

2 PREPARE THE LAMB by cutting several small slits all over the leg, then use your hands to rub the marinade into the meat, pushing it into the slits with your fingers.

3 PUT THE LAMB LEG on a wire roasting rack with an enamel drip tray underneath. Partially fill the tray with water to 20mm deep, to stop it being burned by drops of fat.

4 COOK THE LAMB in the barbecue with the hood closed for about 90 minutes, using a thermometer to check the meat is cooked. Let the lamb rest for 10 minutes, carve and serve. ➤



BBQ Buddy Enamel Drip and Baking Tray, \$15.

Thai marinated snapper



Whole fish tastes fresher, lasts longer and is often better value than individual fillets. Cooking it whole on a barbecue is simpler than it seems and a 1kg fish can easily feed three to four people.

USE A FISH GRILLER to make it easy to turn the fish without it falling apart. Always wear gloves when handling the fish griller as it will be very hot.

TIP Serve with a side of steamed Asian vegetables such as baby bok choy.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME 20 mins
SERVES 4

TOOLS

Fish griller
 Spatula
 Gloves
 Tongs

INGREDIENTS

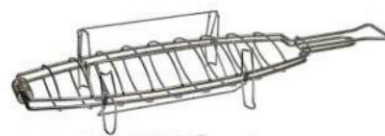
1kg whole snapper, scaled and cleaned
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 Tbsp ginger, finely chopped
 1 Tbsp fresh chilli, finely chopped
 1 Tbsp coriander, finely chopped
 1 lime
 3 Tbsp olive oil

- 1 **PREHEAT THE BARBECUE** to medium heat, about 180°C. Lightly oil a fish griller.
- 2 **PREPARE THE FISH** by trimming the tail and fins so they don't burn. Make

small incisions across the body spaced 10mm apart on each side of the fish to allow the marinade to seep through.

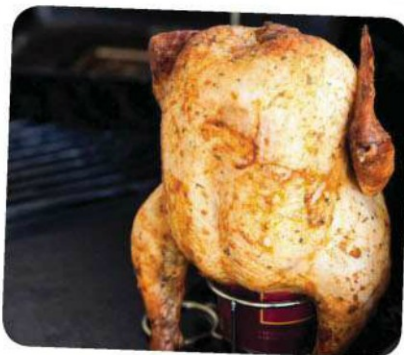
3 **MAKE THE MARINADE** by combining the garlic, ginger, chilli, coriander, zest of half the lime and olive oil, rubbing it into the fish. Cut the zested lime half into wedges, put them inside the fish and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

4 **PUT THE SNAPPER** in the fish griller and cook it on the barbecue over direct heat for about 10 minutes on each side. Remove the snapper from the fish griller wearing gloves and using tongs and a spatula, then put it on a platter and serve with lime wedges.



BBQ Buddy 2-Piece Fish Griller, 390 x 140mm, \$16.

Beer can chicken



Using a can of beer to cook a chicken on the barbecue results in delicious crispy skin on the outside and moist, flavourful meat on the inside. Ginger beer, chicken stock or even a can of baked beans make great alternatives.

OPEN THE BEER and have a mouthful, then place the can into the beer can rack on top of an enamel drip tray.

TIP Chicken is cooked if juices run clear when the meat is pierced with a skewer.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME 60 to 90 mins
SERVES 4

TOOLS

Chicken rack
 Enamel drip tray
 Digital thermometer

INGREDIENTS

1 medium sized chicken
 375ml can of beer
 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 3 shallots, finely chopped
 1 Tbsp oregano, finely chopped
 1 tsp rosemary, finely chopped
 ½ tsp chilli flakes
 ½ tsp coarse ground black pepper
 110ml extra virgin olive oil
 Salt to taste

- 1 **PREHEAT THE BARBECUE** to medium heat, about 180°C. Trim excess fat from

the neck and cavity of the chicken and cover the wingtips with foil.

2 **MAKE THE SEASONING** by mixing the garlic, shallots, oregano, rosemary, chilli and pepper, then add the oil and salt. Rub the seasoning on and under the chicken skin, and in the cavity.

3 **SIT THE CHICKEN** on the beer can and cook with the barbecue hood closed for 60 to 90 minutes. Chicken is ready when a digital thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh reads 75°C. Rest for five minutes then serve.



BBQ Buddy Stainless Steel Beer Can Chicken Rack, \$10.



Classic 4 Burner, \$599
3180406

BBQ BRILLIANCE

The Matador Classic 4 burner packs all the best features into one amazingly affordable barbecue. Ready to go with jet force ignition, it comes with enamelled cast iron grills and hotplates, side burner and handy warming rack. 304 high grade stainless steel on the fascia and hood ensures style that's durable and it comes with a 2 year warranty. Plus, you can keep an eye on your cooking with the glass viewing panel and temperature gauge built into the hood. For more details and to check out the full range of Matador barbecues go to matadorbbqs.com.au

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BARBECUES

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**GAS HOODED
BARBECUE**



COOK ALFRESCO

Barbecuing outdoors is one of life's great pleasures and, depending on the size of your backyard and how much you want to spend, there are many options from which to choose. **GAS BARBECUES** are incredibly convenient, available in both built-in and portable versions, and are easy to clean. They're often pricier than charcoal barbies, but create less mess. **CHARCOAL BARBECUES** are, according to some purists, the only option. They need to be manually lit, take more time to heat up, and are more difficult to keep at a constant temperature.

The flavour of the food is said to be better so if you like a smoky taste, they're worth the effort. **PIZZA OVENS** are a great way to bring entertaining outside, and an authentic wood-fired pizza at home will be a popular choice.

As well as pizzas, you can cook roasts, vegies and even desserts in them. They need to be preheated for an hour or two before cooking, and a supply of firewood is crucial.



**CHARCOAL
KETTLE**



**WOODFIRED
PIZZA OVEN**

GAS BARBECUES

*COOKING WITH GAS

Gas barbecues are quick to heat up, fuel-efficient and easy to use.

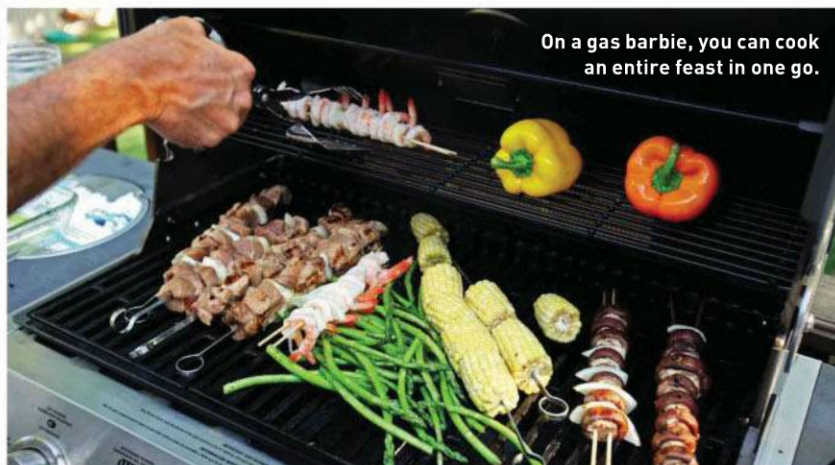
To start, open the valve on the gas cylinder all the way. Turn the burner knobs to high then press the ignition button in and hold the knob for about five seconds until the burners are lit.

Wait a few minutes until the grill or plate is fully heated then scrape any remnants of previous meals off the grill. Allow this to burn off completely, leaving the surfaces sterile and ready for cooking.

Once you have finished cooking, leave the burners on for five minutes to burn off any food left on the grill.

Turn the gas cylinder completely off to empty the gas lines, and only turn the burners off once the flames have been extinguished completely.

TIP If any hose appears damaged or cracked, it should be replaced to avoid dangerous gas leaks.



On a gas barbie, you can cook an entire feast in one go.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT HEAT

Having several burners gives you a range of options to tailor the cooking method to the type of food.

DIRECT COOKING involves frying or grilling food directly over the source of heat. This is ideal for sausages, steaks, fish and anything less than about 50mm thick. Keep all the

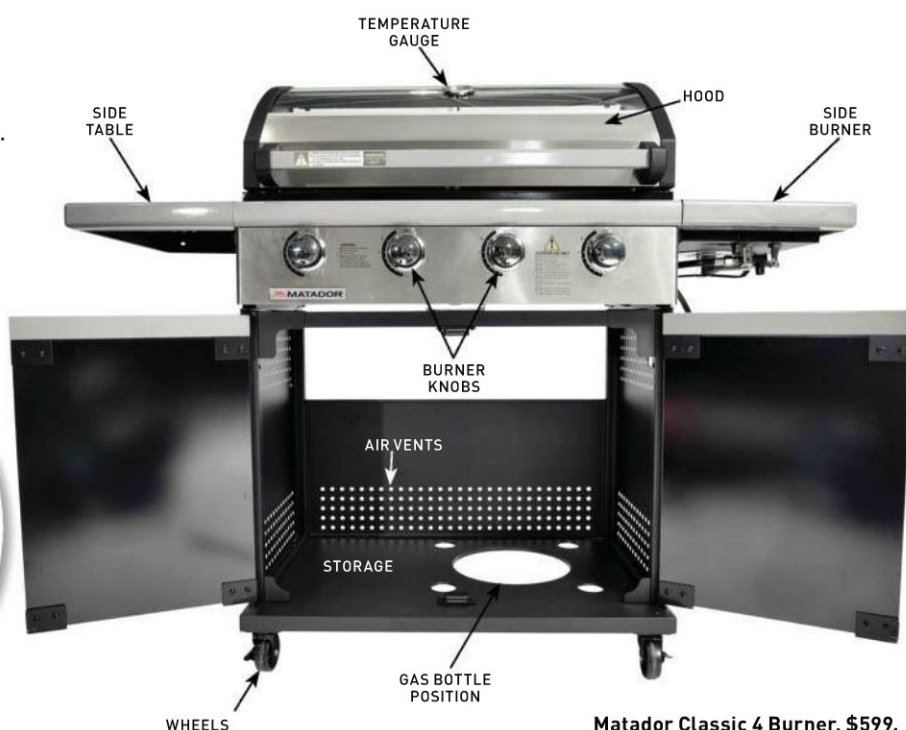
burners lit under the cooking surface you are using.

INDIRECT COOKING is a similar process to baking in the oven and is suitable for thicker meat.

To cook indirectly, turn either the middle or side burners off and position the food over the unlit portion of the grill.

*ELEMENTS OF A GAS BARBECUE

Gas barbies have a lot going on. Here's an example of a standard model and the features it includes.



Matador Classic 4 Burner, \$599.
bunnings.com.au

PICTURE (LEFT TOP) THINKSTOCK



* LPG VS NATURAL GAS

If you have access to natural gas, consider connecting it to the barbie. It's much cheaper than LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), there are no bottles to replace and you never have to worry about running out of gas.

In most cases, adapting the barbie to work with natural gas is a simple matter of adjusting the valves and changing the regulator, but these modifications must be made by a qualified gasfitter.



* HOW MUCH GAS IS LEFT?

To ensure you never run out of gas, attach a pressure gauge to show how much is left in the bottle.

These can indicate leaks and typically have an automatic shut-off function in case the hose ruptures or accidentally detaches.

The old-fashioned way to measure gas levels is to manually weigh the gas bottle when full and again when empty to be able to estimate how much gas is left.

TIP Never store gas bottles beneath an unventilated built-in barbecue.

* BE READY FOR ACTION

New barbies need to be cleaned before use, as does every grill after cooking. Season a new barbecue by burning it on high heat for an hour. Turn it off, let it cool slightly, then rub the cooking surfaces with a cloth dipped in cooking oil.

INTENSIVE CLEANING

Salts and marinades can damage metal so clean them as soon as possible after cooking by lighting the burners for a few minutes, then turning off the heat and scraping the surfaces thoroughly.

Give the barbie a serious clean at least once a year. Lay the grill and hotplate on newspaper, spray with oven cleaner and leave for 10 minutes before scrubbing with a scourer.

Rinse, dry and replace them, then apply a coating of cooking oil to protect against rust.

SCRAPE OFF THE GRIME

There's nothing worse than opening the lid of the barbie to find the cooking surfaces encrusted with bits of food so keep it clean for hassle-free cooking.



CLEAN THE GRILL with a wire brush after each use, brushing the top and sides of the bars, letting remnants fall through onto the fat tray for collection and removal later.



USE A SCRAPER to remove fat and food residue from the hotplate once the barbecue has cooled. **TIP** If it's going into storage, spray the cooking surfaces with cooking oil.

CHARCOAL BARBECUES

* GRILLING OVER CHARCOAL

Barbecue purists argue charcoal grills give the best flavour, although advocates of cooking with gas debate this, claiming that gas allows meat to retain its natural taste.

According to Mark Kleiner, Product Manager at Mayo Hardware, 'The mechanism that produces true barbecue flavour is the smoke.'

'Charcoal, even though it is just smouldering, still produces smoke, and this cannot be replicated by cooking on a gas barbecue.'

Cooking meat on a charcoal grill also tends to take longer, so the food has more time to be infused with the smoky flavour.

Another advantage is that the briquettes can be moved around to control the temperature precisely in specific parts of the grill.



Charcoal barbecues are cheaper than gas models but trickier to use.

* ELEMENTS OF A CHARCOAL BARBECUE

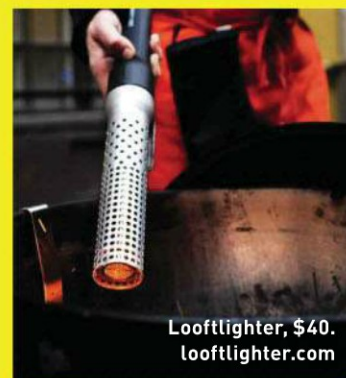
Charcoal barbecues are usually less feature-laden than gas models, but they fit a lot into a small package.



RAPID LIGHT

Arguably the fastest and easiest way to get briquettes burning is to use a Looftlighter, a high-tech yet low-cost invention that takes only about two minutes to get the grill ready for cooking.

The mains-powered element at the tip gets the charcoal glowing, then a high-speed stream of air spreads heat until the briquettes are ashen and ready to cook with.

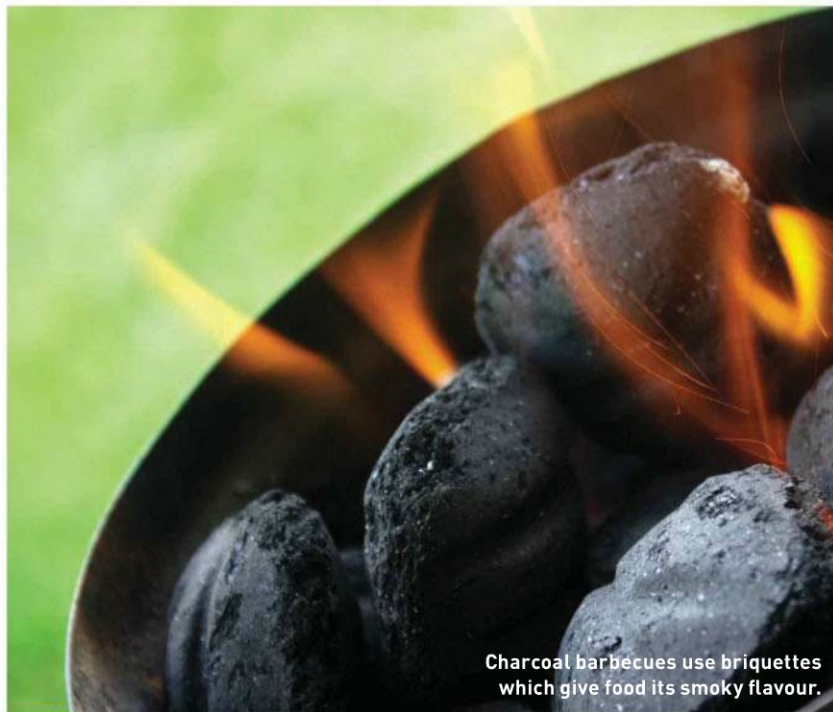


Looftlighter, \$40. looftlighter.com

PICTURE [TOP] THINKSTOCK

*HOW TO START BRIQUETTES

If you prefer the old-fashioned way of using naked flame to start the charcoal, you have several options. **FIRELIGHTERS** are efficient and safe fuel-packed cubes, but they need to combust completely before cooking otherwise they will infuse the food with a kerosene aftertaste. **LIGHTER FLUID** is a more dangerous option, as some contain substances that are harmful to ingest, and they can potentially cause an explosion. **KINDLING** is a natural way to start any fire, but it takes a bit of work to split wood down to an effective size. **BARBECUE STARTERS** are metal tins that you fill with briquettes then position over burning firelighters. Once the charcoal turns the colour of light ash, tip it out of the starter and into the barbie.



Charcoal barbecues use briquettes which give food its smoky flavour.

*COOKING A STEAK

Never cut steak to see if it's done, as cutting it will let the juices escape, making the meat dry and tough. To check, press the middle of the meat with tongs and compare its firmness with your face.

Poke your face with your fingers, not the tongs. The meat should feel like your cheek for rare, chin for medium or forehead for well done. **COOK THE STEAK** for two to three minutes each side if you want it rare, and six to seven minutes each side for well done, turning often. **REST THE MEAT** after cooking to let the juices spread evenly through it, ensuring it is tender and moist.

Cover the steak loosely in foil and leave it to stand before serving for about eight minutes if rare and about four minutes if well done. **CHOOSE MARBLED CUTS** of steak, as opposed to leaner cuts, for the richest flavour. For a healthier alternative, trim the fat off and opt for cuts with less marbling.

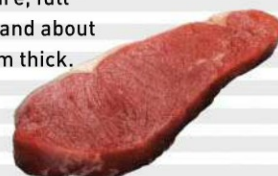
T-BONE

A T-shape bone with sirloin and fillet steak on each side.



SIRLOIN

Firm texture, full flavoured and about 20 to 25mm thick.



FILLET

The most tender cut, from the underside of the rump and sirloin.



RUMP

Full flavoured with a chewy texture.



PORTERHOUSE

About 50mm thick, cut from the rib end of the sirloin.



RIB EYE

Full flavoured with good marbling.



WOOD-FIRED OVEN

*THE VERSATILE WOOD-FIRED OVEN

Often called pizza ovens, wood-fired ovens can cook much more than just pizzas. You can use them to bake bread, roast meat and vegies, even cook desserts to perfection.

Handyman Managing editor Lee Dashiell says, 'Start by setting up the fire in the front or middle of the floor of the oven. This will get the warmth through the floor tiles where the cooking is done.'

'As with a fireplace, fire needs air to flow underneath and through it to create a draught.'

To light the fire, position three logs about 100mm in diameter parallel on the oven floor.

Scrunch up some newspaper and push it between the logs. Stack twigs on top and add more logs in crisscrossed layers.

Light the fire and leave it to burn for 45 minutes, then add more small logs on top. Allow it continue to burn for another 45 minutes before beginning to cook.

GET COOKING

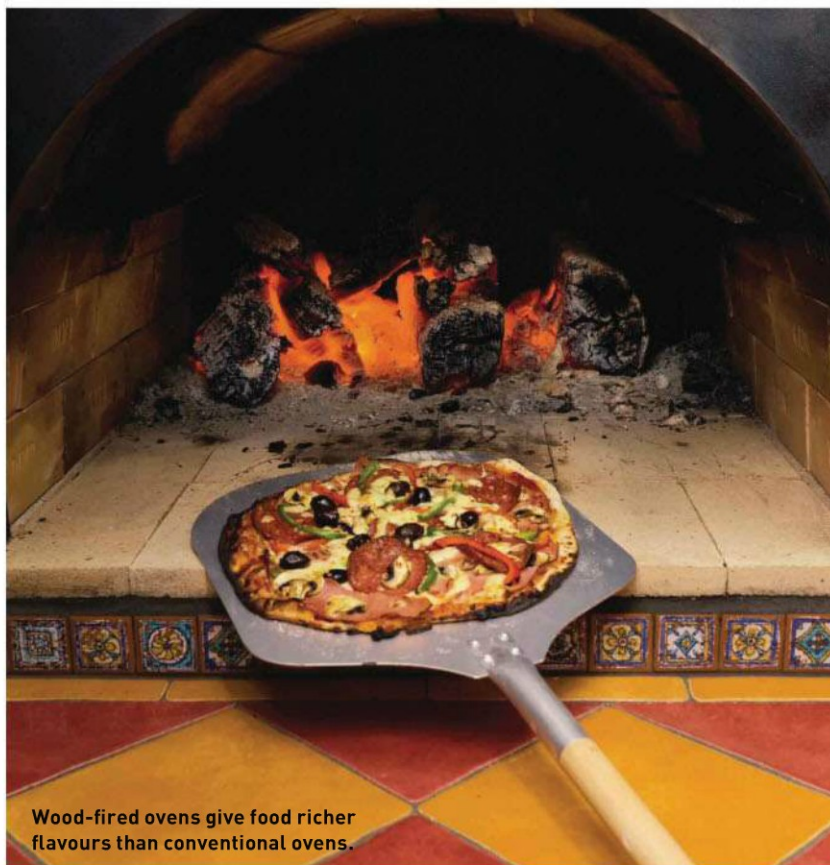
The easiest way to tell if the oven has warmed up sufficiently is to look at the bricks on the inside of the roof. Once they start turning white, you are ready to cook.

Use a hoe to push the fire to the back of the oven, then add a few more pieces of wood and sweep the coals on the floor to the back.

After another two minutes, it's time to cook pizzas. If you are cooking a roast, wait 20 minutes to prevent it from browning too fast.

'I once cooked 25 pizzas for a party, having had a production line in place,' says Lee.

'We've also cooked our entire Christmas feast, including the desserts, this way. The richness of flavour you get from a wood-fired oven is second to none.'



Wood-fired ovens give food richer flavours than conventional ovens.

*ELEMENTS OF A WOOD-FIRED OVEN

Wood-fired ovens are available either pre-built or as a DIY kit. They can be freestanding or incorporated into an outdoor kitchen area.



A pizza shovel lets you position the pizza within the oven.

A rocking pizza cutter allows quick, uniform cuts.



*PIZZA DOUGH

Authentic Italian pizza has a crispy base. This recipe makes one pizza, so multiply the ingredients by the number of pizzas required.

INGREDIENTS

1 tsp dry yeast
 ¼ cup lukewarm water
 1 cup Molini Pizzuti Fine 00 flour
 1 Tbsp olive oil
 ¼ Tbsp salt

1 PREHEAT THE OVEN then dissolve the yeast in the water with two tablespoons of the flour, leaving it until it bubbles. Combine with the remaining ingredients in a bowl, mix thoroughly and knead for about 10 minutes or until soft and flexible.

2 REST THE DOUGH in an oiled, covered bowl, keeping it in a warm place for about an hour to double in size. Knead the dough, then roll it out on a floured surface to form a 200mm diameter circle.

3 FLOUR THE OVEN FLOOR and top the dough with a variety of ingredients of your choice, then slide it into the oven using a pizza shovel. Cook until the base starts to brown, the toppings are golden and the cheese is melted.



Bake restaurant-quality pizza in your own oven at home.

BUYING GUIDE

Every Aussie household needs a barbecue, for entertaining friends outdoors or just cooking a family dinner. Whether you prefer a small charcoal kettle or long to fire up a backyard pizza oven, there's a model available to suit every alfresco taste.

GAS BBQS

SMALL



Small in size but big on features, this barbie has two open grills with optional hotplates and a thermometer on the hood.

Everdure E260 Portable Gas Barbecue, \$299. everdure.com

CHARCOAL BBQS



This compact charcoal barbie has a handy condiment rack, a porcelain enamelled cooking grid to minimise rust and vents to control airflow.

Wiltshire Kettle BBQ, \$99. wiltshirebbq.com.au

PIZZA OVENS



A freestanding, compact design on wheels for smaller backyards, this oven is made of powdercoated steel with a glass viewing window.

Jumbuck Outdoor Gas Pizza Oven, \$298, from Bunnings.

MEDIUM



Perfect for small backyards, this barbie features stainless steel burners, auto ignition, a side burner and two-door cabinet.

Jumbuck Four Burner Barbecue, \$199.



An insulated design uses less charcoal and provides a more even cooking temperature, plus it includes two fold-down shelves.

CharGriller Akorn Kamado Kooker, \$499, from Bunnings.



With assembly instructions on DVD, this DIY oven features a stainless steel flue and front floor plate. Render and base not included.

Woodfired Ovens DIY Pizza Oven Kit, \$999. woodfiredovens.com.au

LARGE



Powder coated construction with enamelled cast iron grills and hotplates, this sleek design features zoned cooking for better control.

Matador Six Burner Grande BBQ, \$899. matadorbbqs.com.au



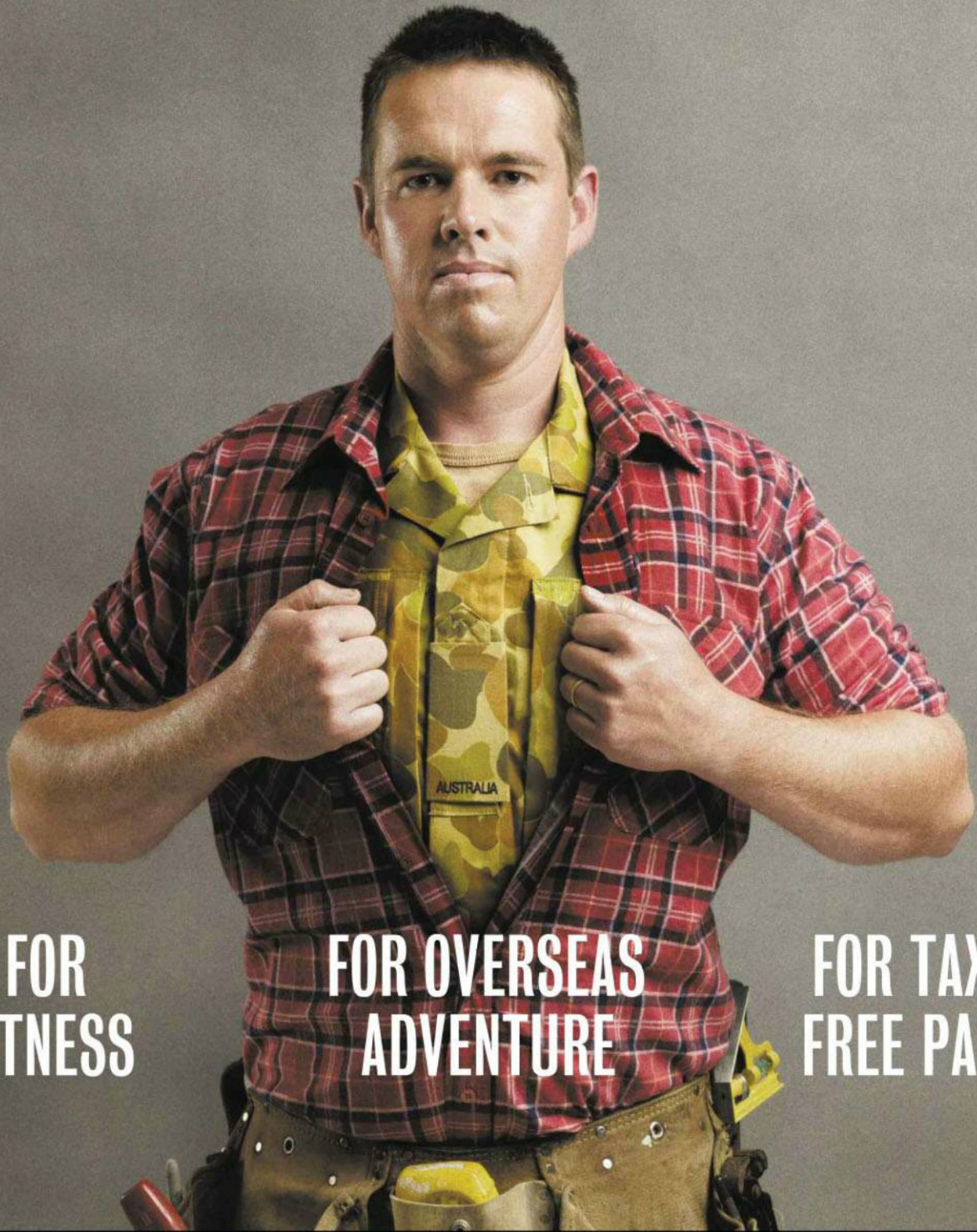
A chrome plated cooking grill with 240V rotisserie that can turn up to 10kg of meat. It's fuelled by either firewood or charcoal.

Jumbuck Mini Spit Roaster, \$79.



Featuring a commercial-size entry, this DIY wood-fired oven heats up in 45 minutes and retains heat for 12 hours for roasting and baking.

Woodfired Ovens Large Entertainer DIY Pizza Oven Kit, from \$2299.



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OPEN-PLAN
LIVING

Heavenly HOME

A former church undergoes a radical transformation to become a soaring and spacious family dwelling

Finding a large family home in an inner city suburb is not an easy task. As a result, more and more people are turning to conversion.

These days, it's not unusual to see families setting up home in renovated warehouses and industrial buildings.

But converting former churches into residences is much rarer.

David Donde and Jessica Gamsu were about to buy another property when they stumbled upon this disused church tucked away on a side street.

The building provided both ample space and the convenience of inner city living in a unique package.

It was the perfect blank canvas for the couple to create their dream family home, with the scope of the project limited only by their imaginations.

INSPIRATIONAL VISION

When David and Jessica found the building, it was little more than a shell, but they immediately saw the potential. Its gutted state meant the possibilities for renovation were endless.

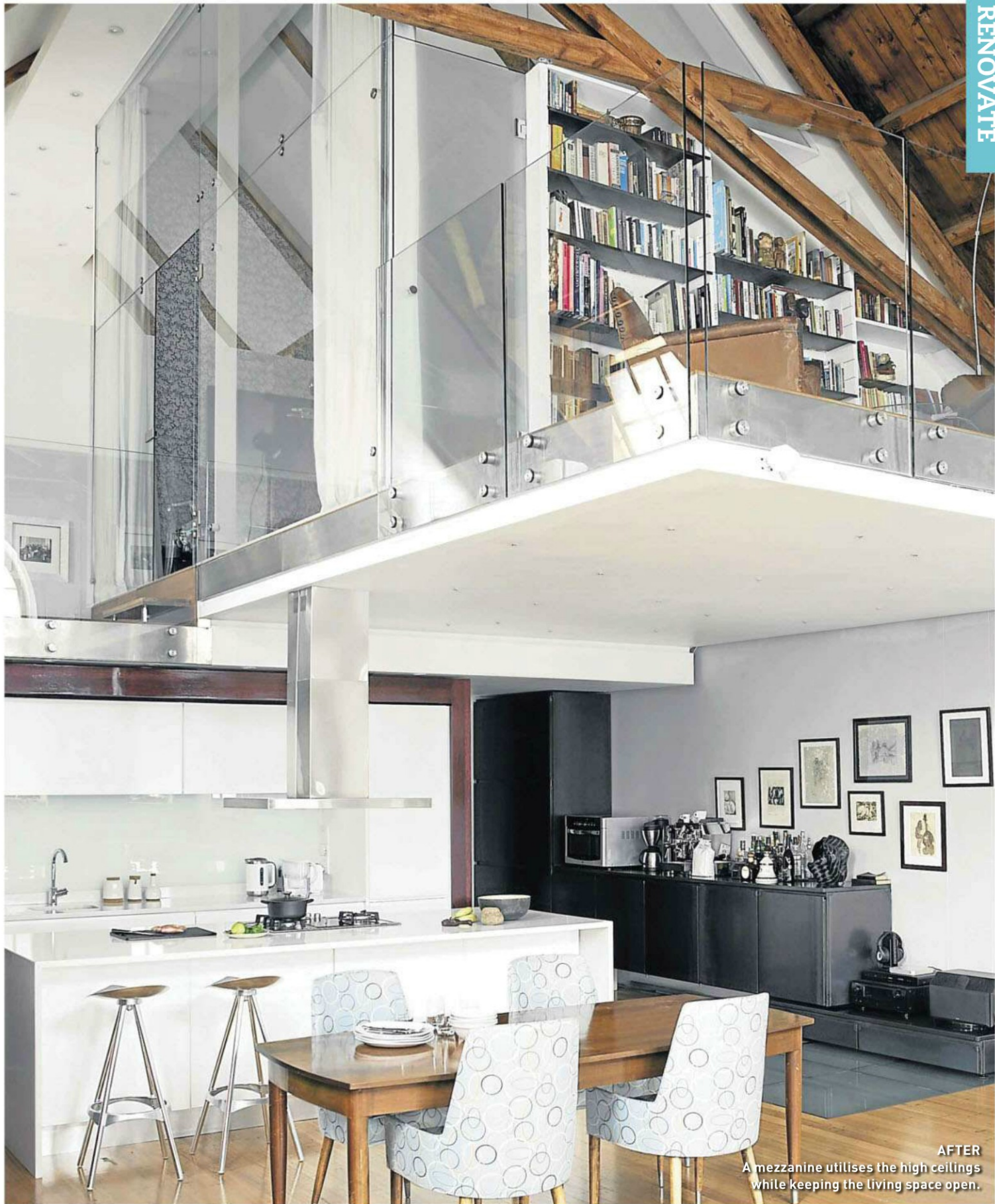
The couple brought a keen eye for detail and passion for quality to the project. They worked hard to ensure the home would be both an impressive achievement and a wonderful place to live.

Their ambitious vision paid off, transforming a grand old building into a stylish, modern and deceptively spacious home filled with interesting ideas and artistic value. ➤



The renovated home provides a modern, laid-back lifestyle for the young family.

PICTURES AUSTRAL



AFTER
A mezzanine utilises the high ceilings while keeping the living space open.

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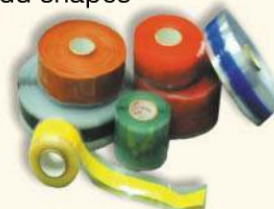
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An Italian designer sofa is teamed with an antelope-hide chair to dramatic effect.



The home is furnished throughout with a mix of modern and retro pieces.

OLD MEETS NEW

David, owner of a coffee emporium, and Jessica, who runs a headhunting agency, have created a flexible haven that's ideal for entertaining.

The original stone facade has been preserved yet it reveals few clues about the new interior that lies beyond.

Step inside, and the exposed brick and vaulted ceilings are evocative reminders of the building's past.



Sleek and streamlined, the kitchen has ample storage.

The decorating style has been chosen to reflect the home's metamorphosis, combining modern elegance with sentimental vintage pieces and well-placed artistic touches.

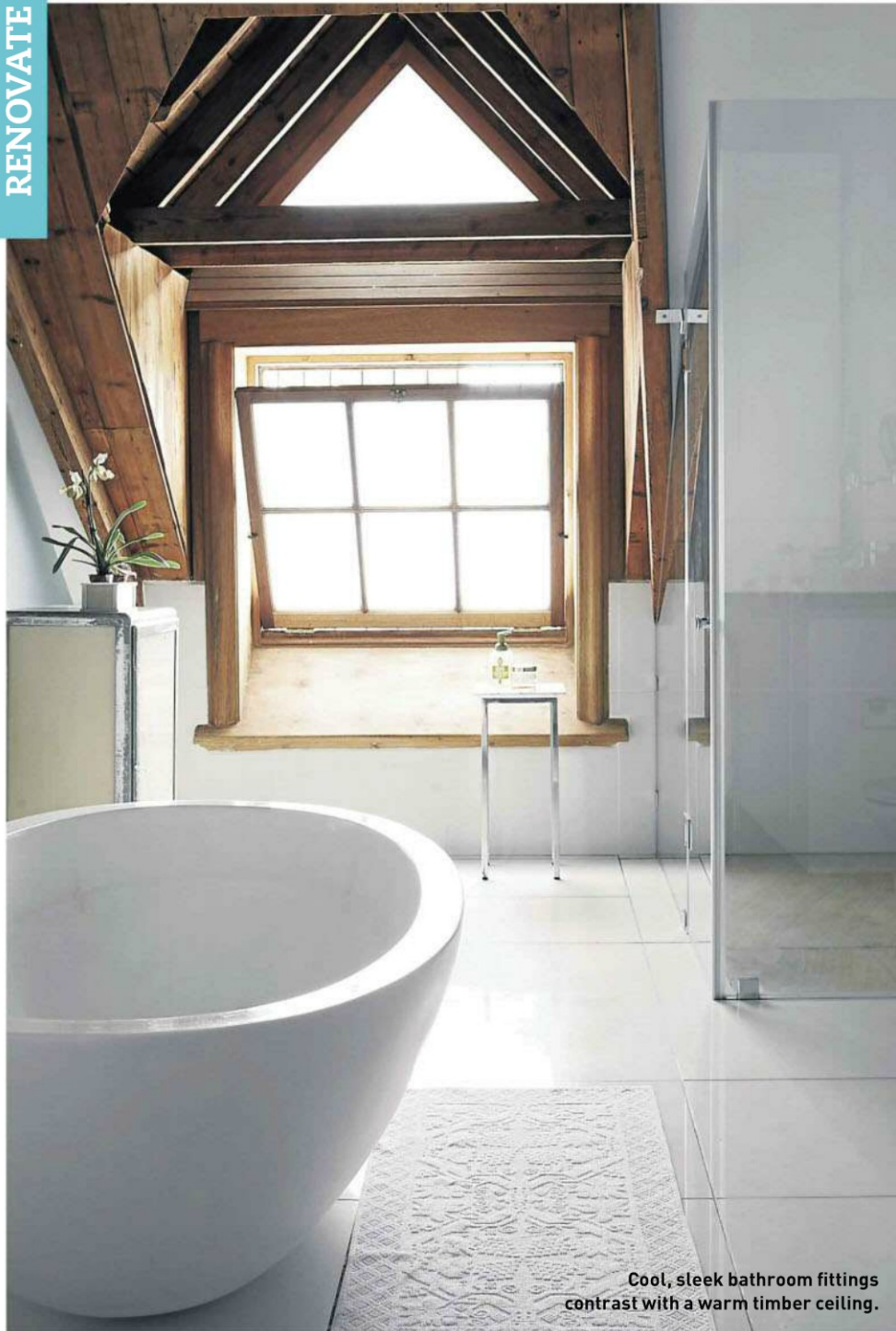
An Italian designer sofa sits where there were once pews, and is teamed with an antelope-hide chair.

Eclectic rugs and a 1950s drinks trolley that once belonged to Jessica's grandparents complete the look.

Huge, elevated windows fill the rooms with natural light, while still providing privacy from the street.

The layout is completely open plan, with the kitchen and living areas merging seamlessly. The kitchen is fitted out with dual ovens, marble benches and a large breakfast bar.

Tucked away behind the kitchen is daughter Georgia's bedroom and a guest room that doubles as a pantry. ➤



Cool, sleek bathroom fittings contrast with a warm timber ceiling.

ON THE MEZZANINE

The master bedroom, bathroom and study are located on the mezzanine level. Accessed by a black steel staircase and enclosed by glass walls, the entire floor seems to float on air.

In the elegant bathroom there's a freestanding curved bathtub, combined with white, understated fittings and touches of chrome and glass for a minimalist look.

Clean, sleek lines are offset by the natural timber that frames an enormous window.

A study overlooks the living area and features family heirloom armchairs and bookshelves that occupy an entire wall.

Cleverly tucked away behind these shelves is the master bedroom, where the wall extends only to half-height opening up the vaulted



In the master bedroom, one wall is only half-height, exposing the vaulted ceiling.

ceilings and continuing the seamless flow between the living areas.

Floor-to-ceiling windows flood the bedroom with natural light.

A CLEVER CONVERSION

Throughout the home the modern fittings and finishes, plus construction materials such as marble and metal, contrast beautifully with the original ecclesiastical window frames and warm timber floors.

Vaulted ceilings add a sense of drama, and increase the feeling of spaciousness in a property with a relatively small footprint.

One of the most innovative aspects of the renovation is the way in which ample storage has been cleverly hidden throughout the home, keeping clutter to a minimum and allowing the design features to take centre stage.

The result is a quirky home with bags of character that pays respect to its past, while simultaneously meeting the needs of a busy modern family.

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VIRTUAL MAKEOVER



After

Restoring the lawn and rendering the walls has made the backyard more inviting.



Ask Cherie

Cherie Barber is director of Renovating For Profit, a company dedicated to teaching people how to add value through renovation.

Cherie is offering a free virtual makeover to *Handyman* readers in need of inspiration.

Send us a photo of an area in your home that needs work and we'll show you what can be done. Go to handyman.net.au/mag and enter your details.

FROM MESS TO MODERN

A new lawn and deck help turn this eyesore into a welcoming garden

WORDS **CHERIE BARBER**

This barren backyard is as unattractive as the rotary clothesline that presides over it. In fact, drying the family washing is about all the space is good for.

Bare concrete, dead garden beds, a threadbare lawn and a decaying pergola are the telltale signs of years of neglect. It's time this place had a serious makeover.

THE CHALLENGE

Something needs to be done about the red brick walls. The style is very dated

and the stained masonry makes the whole backyard look gloomy.

The bare concrete is overgrown with weeds and looks disconnected from the equally neglected lawn.

The broken timber fence and mass of scrappy bushes to the right all need to go. We can make far better use of that space by building a modern deck.

Finally, the Hills Hoist has to move and the grass needs to be revitalised if we're going to turn this yard into a functional outdoor area. ➤



Tricks of the trade

- **LEVEL THE SURFACE** and improve the soil before laying a new lawn. Hire a bobcat to excavate the area then lay the turf.
- **CHOOSE SUITABLE PLANTS** for the garden, especially if it receives full sun during the summer months. Low-maintenance native species are ideal.
- **RAISE THE DECK** to the same level as the interior floor, creating a seamless transition between inside and outside.

The six secrets of success

1 CLEAR THE MESS

When it comes to revamping a neglected backyard like this one, it's best to start fresh. Removing the broken paling fence, the unsightly chimney, the rickety pergola, the mess of bushes and the ugly concrete slab results in a clean slate to work with.



Makita 1510W Demolition Hammer, \$1099.
makita.com.au

2 REVAMP THE LAWN

Moving the clothesline to the end of the yard means it's no longer the focal point. The lawn is in a bad state, so if the budget allows, laying new turf is the best option. Reseeding the lawn is simpler and less expensive, but the end result will take longer to achieve.



Sir Walter Buffalo Turf, \$10 per square metre.
sirwalter.com.au

3 RENDER THE WALLS

For the red bricks, a base coat of traditional sand and cement render can be used with a skim coat of Rockcote textured render on top, significantly slashing the rendering bill. You can tint to virtually any colour, and a pale grey will be ideal for this home.



Rockcote Portofino Texture Render, \$103 for 10L.
rockcote.com.au

4 PAINT THE CONCRETE

Paving paint will transform the bare concrete path, and is matched as closely as possible to the colour of the house render. This is a more cost-effective alternative to paving. The Colorbond fence also needs a coat of paint for a unified colour scheme.



Berger Jet Dry Gloss Paving Paint, \$83 for 4L.
berger.com.au

5 BUILD THE DECK

The dead zone to the right of the house will become a deck. By using Handi Blocks and timber joists as a decking support structure, we'll avoid having to dig footings or build piers, and just lay hardwood decking on top. Outdoor furniture completes the look.



Forest Reds 86 x 19mm decking, from \$5 per lineal metre, from Bunnings.

6 ADD GARDEN BEDS

Simple garden beds will complete the makeover, and westringia or rosemary finished with decorative woodchips will do the trick. A timber screen at the side of the house replaces the neglected paling fence, adding greenery and privacy.



Westringia Grey Box 140mm, \$10 each, from Bunnings.

WAGNER

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PAINT FAST

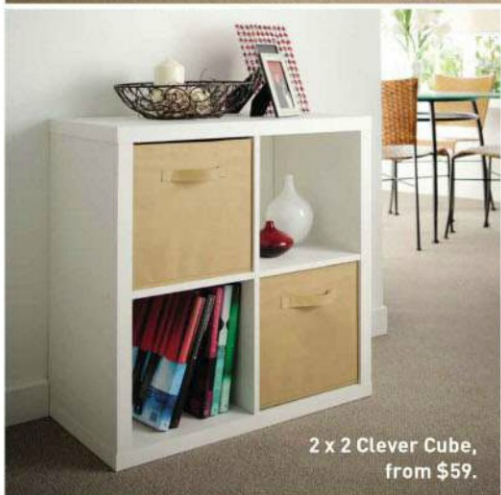


www.wagnerflexio.com.au
www.wagneraustralia.com.au

Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse



Cube shelves can hide clutter away while displaying decorative items.



2 x 2 Clever Cube, from \$59.



2 x 4 Clever Cube, from \$89.



4 x 4 Clever Cube, from \$139.

FIND IT AT
BUNNINGS

STORAGE CUBES

Keep clutter under control in every room of the house using a versatile shelving system

Clutter can make a room feel cramped and disorganised, and contributes to stress. A messy house makes items difficult to find, and common household tasks become difficult and time consuming.

A clever storage system will transform a room by keeping clutter organised and hidden away, while making frequently used items easier to access when required.

Cube shelves are an effective and affordable way to organise a room, especially in small apartments where space is an issue, or family homes where clutter can become a problem.

The Clever Cube Storage System comes in various sizes and features multiple useful accessories such as baskets, drawers and dividers.

Stagger baskets with decorative display nooks to create a customised storage system for the living room, bedroom or home office.

Cube shelves are ideal for storing clothes in the bedroom or towels in the bathroom. Use brightly coloured baskets to keep toys and games organised in the kids' rooms.

Mix and match

Baskets and drawers increase the adaptability of a cube shelving system by creating an attractive method for organising clutter. Collapsible fabric baskets can be stored out of sight when not in use to free up space.



**Clever Cube 33 x 33 x 37cm
Fabric Storage Baskets, from \$5.**



**Clever Cube Black Storage
Door, from \$30.**



**Clever Cube Wine Rack
Insert, from \$22.**

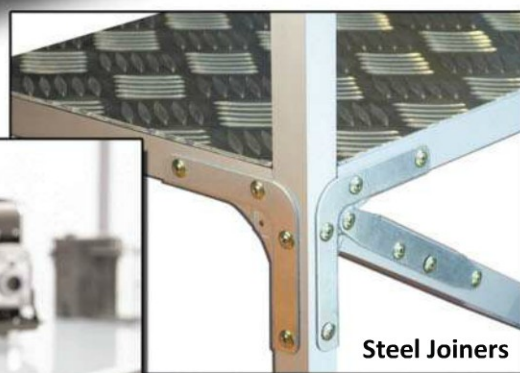


**Clever Cube Red
Storage Door, \$30.**



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Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

www.metalmate.com.au

SAFETY
BASICS


SMART SECURITY

Follow our expert advice and take steps to keep your home safe when you go on holiday

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

Christmas is the time when most homes are filled with expensive new gifts then left empty for weeks as we head off on holidays.

This provides rich pickings for any would-be burglars over the long summer break.

Last year, 372,400 Australian properties experienced a break-in,

with a further 295,000 attempted burglaries being recorded.

So how can you better protect your belongings without foregoing the summer family trip?

Justin Fankhauser, author of *Confessions of a Locksmith*, says there are plenty of easy ways to improve the security of your home.

'Change the locks before moving into a new house, make windows and doors visible from the street by cutting back shrubs, and don't leave packaging from big purchases, such as that new television, lying around,' says Justin.

Step up your security with a few precautionary measures and enjoy peace of mind while you're away. ➤

BARRIER OF STEEL

Make your home intruder-proof by adding a security screen door.

The Styleshield Steel Security Door is made to measure from high-quality steel and is available in a range of mesh styles and colour options to blend in with the design of any home.



Styleshield Steel Security Door, \$659, from Bunnings.

Cause for alarm

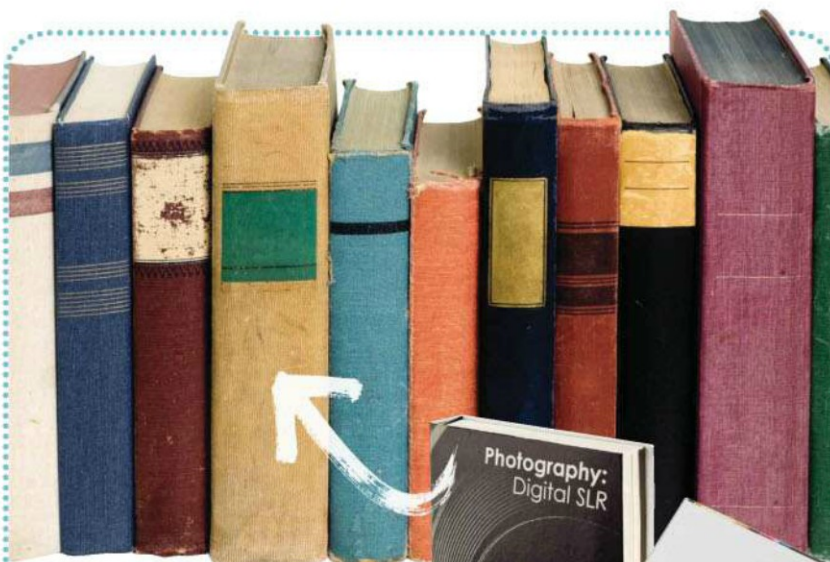
Put the fear of the law into any thief with a quality alarm system.

Burglar alarms are effective because they limit the amount of time an intruder has to ransack your home before the police or security company arrive on the scene, advises Fankhauser.

Easy to set up, the Arlec Wireless Home Security Alarm Kit has a delay of eight seconds to prevent false alarms, three motion sensors with a range of seven metres, and takes 9V batteries.



Arlec Wireless Home Security Alarm Kit, \$98. arlec.com.au



Misdirect and protect

Can't afford elaborate security measures? Conceal your valuables in a low-cost safe disguised as a book that burglars won't even notice sitting on the bookshelf.

The Sandleford Large Book Safe comes in five designs with real paper pages and an internal key-locking safe. If thieves do manage to break in, they'll never know it's there.



Sandleford Book Safe, Large, \$31. sandleford.com.au

THE RIGHT COMBINATION

Still hiding a key in a fake rock by the front door? It's time to upgrade to a better method. Burglars won't be able to break into the Masterlock Maxi Wall Mount Key Safe, so you can use it to store your spare car and house keys.

Reinforced to withstand sawing or hammering, the key safe has a combination, so you can stash the keys without stressing.



Master Lock Maxi Wall Mount Key Safe, \$79. masterlock.com.au



Don't hide keys somewhere obvious, invest in a combination key safe.

Create a dead end

Ensure you have deadlocks installed on all doors and windows, as they make entering and exiting the home a lot harder and prevent burglars from carrying off bigger items.

The low-cost Ikonic Deadbolt features a double cylinder lock and mounting hardware, making it easy to add extra security to your entrances.

Ikonic Deadbolt Lock,
\$10. bunnings.com.au



Keep an eye out

Stay vigilant by installing a CCTV system. It allows you to monitor your premises 24/7 from anywhere in the world and can also be used as evidence in court.

The new Swann Network Video Recording system records footage for up to 45 continuous days and has a 35-metre range of vision at night.

It will capture clear mugshots of any crims snooping around your place. Smile, you're on camera. ➤



Swann Platinum-HD Full High Definition Security System,
\$1500 for four-channel four-camera array. swann.com

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Loves the
SUN



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| • Coral | • Salmon | • Carmine Red |
| • Corona | • Red | • Electric Orange |



Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse



Unsecured windows are an easy point of entry for a determined burglar.

Batten the hatches

Don't assume your windows are intruder-proof. Make sure they have decent locks, and always engage them before leaving the house.

'We see a lot of break-ins where items have been stolen through windows,' says Fankhauser.

Secure windows with a flush fitting Delf Window Locking Drop Bolt made from durable aluminium.



Delf Architectural Window Drop Bolt, \$29. delfarchitectural.com.au

Code breakers

Always losing your keys? Fumble no more by installing the Lockwood Code Handle on the door of your home office or storeroom.

The Code Handle can remember up to nine user codes, programmed for different family members, and locks out after five failed code attempts.

Made from durable stainless steel, its sleek looks mean you don't have to compromise on style.



Lockwood Code Handle, \$220. lockweb.com.au

TUCK AWAY TOOLS

'Make sure you pack away any gardening tools or ladders in the backyard and keep everything locked in a shed,' advises Fankhauser.

If the garden shed doesn't have a lock on it, try the tough Masterlock Excel 50mm Padlock with reinforced steel core, octagonal boron carbide shackle and dual ball-bearing locking mechanism for maximum security.



Masterlock Excel 50mm Padlock, \$36. masterlock.com.au

STOCKED AND LOCKED

Are most of your valuables scattered around the house? Gather them up and guard them in a heavy-duty safe.

Fireproof and waterproof, the Sentry 56.6L Electronic Fire Safe will survive almost any attempt to crack it.

Secure even when dropped from nine metres, it is impenetrable thanks to its seven live-locking bolts, leaving burglars empty handed.



Sentry 56.6L Electronic Fire & Waterproof Safe, \$699. sentrysafe.com.au



Keep the shed under lock and key and out of reach for opportunistic thieves.



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G+ is a simple, smart, secure and affordable home access system that can be customised to suit your home. The G+ Access System gives you access to entry points, alarms, external lights and more, depending on the system you choose.



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www.gainsboroughhardware.com.au



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001TOUCH KEYLESS DIGITAL DEADLATCH



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HOW TO ENTER

Tell us your best home security tip in 50 words or less. Enter online at handyman.net.au before 15 January 2014 or send your contact details and answer to *Handyman* Lockwood Competition, GPO Box 4354, Sydney, NSW 2001. The winners will be published in the April 2014 issue.

SEVEN LUCKY READERS from across Australia will win a home security package. A Lockwood representative will assess each winner's home to determine their security needs and provide them with a tailored range of products to the value of \$1000.

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001 DEADLATCH



PARADIGM ROUND ROSE AND VELOCITY



ONYX SLIDING DOOR LOCK

DOGGY



beach hut

Build a spacious dog house, complete with a sun deck, to protect your canine companion from the elements

PROJECT **DARYL CHAPMAN** MAIN PICTURE **DANIA WARMERDAM**

DIY> \$160

HAVE IT DONE FOR \$560

SKILL> 1 2 3 4 5

TIME> 1 DAY

Now that summer's finally here, give your hound a lifestyle upgrade with this colourful new home inspired by the famous huts of Victoria's Brighton beach on Port Phillip Bay.

Constructed from treated pine framing clad in fence paling slats, this doggy holiday home provides shelter and comfort all year round.

The dog house is 900mm wide and 600mm deep, suitable for a small to medium dog, and has a lightweight skillion roof which is removable for easy access when cleaning.

The cheerful design also features a sun deck, which is an independent structure that can be easily removed if space in your yard is tight.

For maximum resistance to the elements, we used colours from the Dulux range in low-sheen exterior acrylic, which can be applied directly to raw timber without priming.

CUT THE PARTS

Use a sliding compound mitresaw to cut the parts, with 15° bevels on the side slats and top cleats. After securing the front and back side slats, mark cut lines for the remaining side slats from the top cleats and cut them as you go.

To mark the arched top of the door on the front slats, trace around a saucepan lid or similar object and cut out using a jigsaw.

Cut the roofing to size from an 1800 x 810 x 0.8mm sheet of Suntuf polycarbonate roofing in Greca profile, about \$20 (palram.com.au). Cut the corners off the front and back barges at 45° for a decorative look.

Trace around your dog's food and water bowls in the corners of the sun deck and use a jigsaw to cut out recesses to house the bowls. ➤

**PALE
DAFFODIL**

Dulux Weathershield Low Sheen Exterior Acrylic, about \$46 for 1L. dulux.com.au



Fasteners

Build the base frames, attach the sun deck and secure the top rails plus the purlins with 75mm x 10g galvanised countersunk screws.

Secure the decking boards and the inner layer of slats with 30mm x 8g screws.

Use 25mm x 8g screws to secure the top cleats to the front and back side slats, and 40mm x 8g screws for the other slats.

Secure the roofing with 65mm x 12g Clearfix screws.



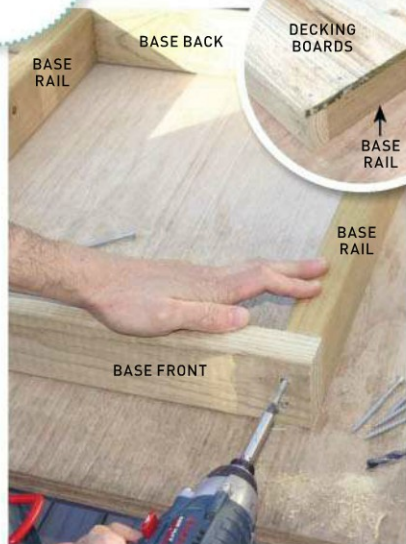
**CLEARFIX
SCREW**

WEEKEND
PROJECT



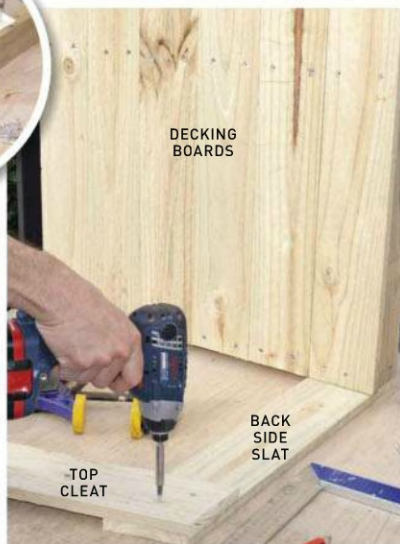
With a bright and roomy home plus luxury sun deck, this is one pampered pooch.

MAKE THE DOGGY HUT



1 Construct the bases

Make two identical base frames for the dog house and the sun deck. Drill pilot holes and position the base rails between the front and back rails, securing with screws. Attach the decking boards edge to edge on the top of each frame with screws.



2 Build the side frames

Use a sliding compound mitresaw to cut the front and back side slats with a 15° bevel at the top, securing them to the base frame with screws and using a paling offcut as a spacer. Cut the top cleats with opposing 15° bevels at the ends and secure with screws.



3 Add the top rails

Secure the top rails between the top cleats using screws. Add the outermost front and back slats flush with the edge of the front and back side slats, using a paling offcut as a spacer. Add two middle side slats on each side with 67mm gaps, securing with screws.



4 Attach the slats

Secure four more front and back slats, spaced with 66mm gaps. Attach the outer side slats with equal overlap, securing through the inner slats, then add the remaining front and back slats. **TIP** Mark the exact cut line on the side slats from the top cleat.



5 Build the roof

Clamp the purlins to the top rails with a 30mm overhang on the front and back then attach the side barges to the ends with screws. Secure the front and back barges to the purlins and side barges with screws. Mark a door on the front slats and cut out with a jigsaw.



6 Finish the dog house

Use a paintbrush to apply two coats of exterior acrylic in colours of your choice. Use aviation shears to cut a polycarbonate roofing sheet to fit then secure to the roof frame with specialised screws. Secure the sun deck to the base frame with screws.

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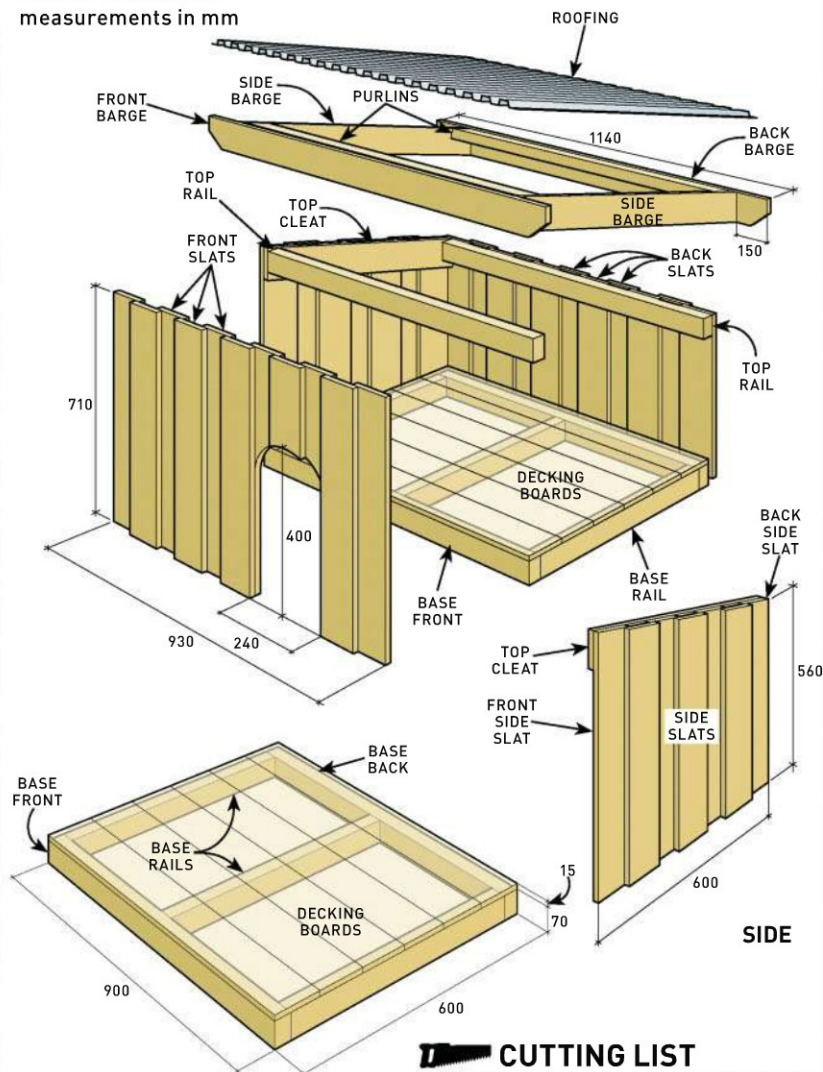
Available in a variety of sizes



coolaroo.com

DOGGY BEACH HUT

measurements in mm



SUN DECK

CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO.
TREATED PINE		
Base front/back	900 x 70 x 35	4
Base rails	530 x 70 x 35	6
Top rails	870 x 70 x 35	2
Purlins	950 x 70 x 35	2
FENCE PALINGS		
Decking boards	900 x 100 x 15	12
Front slats	710 x 100 x 15	11
Back slats	525 x 100 x 15	11
Top cleats	625 x 100 x 15	2
Front side slats	695 x 100 x 15	2
Back side slats	560 x 100 x 15	2
Side slats	680 x 100 x 15	10
Front/back barges	1140 x 100 x 15	2
Side barges	760 x 100 x 15	2

 **Handyman.net.au**

Download the tools, materials and costs for making this doggy beach hut.

EASY
BUILD

Take the fuss out of feeding time with a custom built fast-food system.

Fasteners

Laminate the sides and secure the front cleats using adhesive and 30mm x 8g screws.

Secure the remaining pine components using 40mm x 8g screws and attach the split batten to the wall with 50mm x 8g screws.

Use 30 x 1.6mm panel pins to attach the backing and moulding.

DRY FOOD DISPENSER



Build a wall-mounted storage system for a quick and easy way to serve up food for your four-legged friend

DIY > \$180

HAVE IT DONE FOR \$580

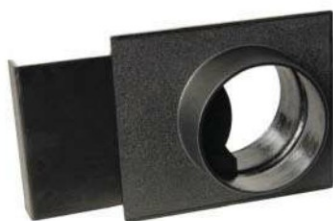
SKILL 1 2 3 4 5

TIME > 1 DAY

Larger breeds of dogs such as Malamutes and German Shepherds are popular pets. But if you have a big dog, or several smaller ones, you may find buying their pet food in bulk is an economic necessity.

This easy DIY dispenser takes the hassle out of feeding any number of hungry canines. It's made from dressed all round (DAR) pine, with masonite backing and Tasmanian oak trim.

To release dry food into your pet's bowl, the dispenser features blast gates,



Carba-Tec 100mm Blast Gate, \$9.
carbatec.com.au

usually used in dust extraction ducting and available from specialist suppliers.

An acrylic panel on the front shows how much food is left, and it can easily be refilled by opening the hinged lid.

The dispenser is finished with two coats of clear polyurethane and hung on a split batten secured to a masonry wall using screws with wall plugs.

TIP On a stud wall, use heavy-duty plasterboard anchors.

CUT THE PARTS

Use a sliding compound mitresaw to cut the pine to length, and a hacksaw to cut a 610mm length of piano hinge to size. Cut the masonite using a circular saw and straightedge guide.

Use a mitre box with a tenon saw to cut the trim from half-round beading, then cut a concave profile in the end of the centre piece using a coping saw, or file it to shape. ➤

Working with acrylic

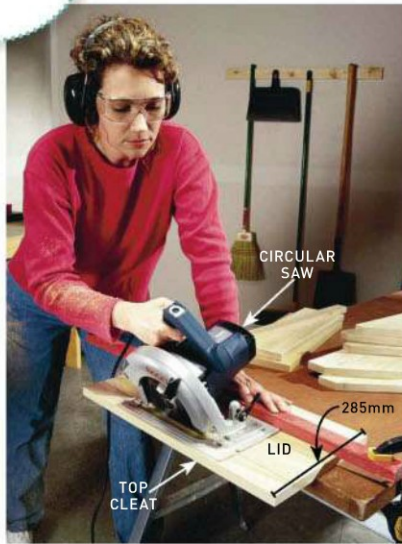
For the front of the dispenser, order a 686 x 425 x 3mm sheet of acrylic cut to size, or buy a 900 x 600 x 3mm HandiPanel, \$49, from Bunnings.

To cut it DIY, use a jigsaw at low speed and with the pendulum action off. Ideally, clamp the acrylic between two scraps of sheet material, such as plywood or MDF, to support it.

Work slowly to avoid chipping the acrylic and use slow revs when drilling clearance holes to secure it to the inner sides, cleats and divider.



MAKE THE DISPENSER



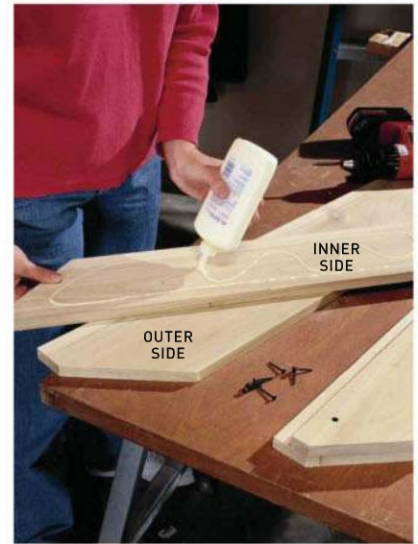
1 Cut the bevels

Set a circular saw baseplate to cut a 22.5° bevel then cut the lid and top cleat along the grain from 285 x 19mm timber, using a clamped straightedge as a guide. Set the saw to 45° and cut the split batten from 140 x 19mm timber.



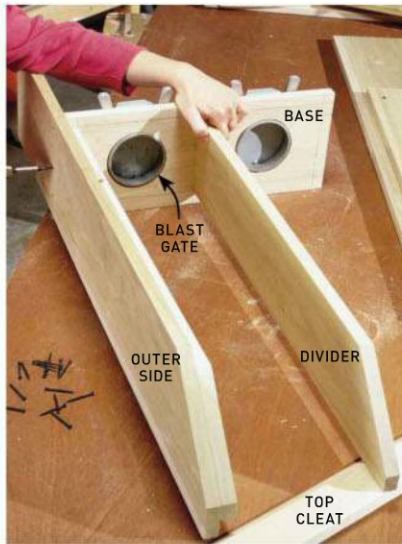
2 Install the blast gates

Mark 100mm diameter openings for the blast gates, centred 100mm in from the ends of the base. Use a 10mm twist bit to make starter holes then cut the openings with a jigsaw. Use construction adhesive to secure the blast gates.



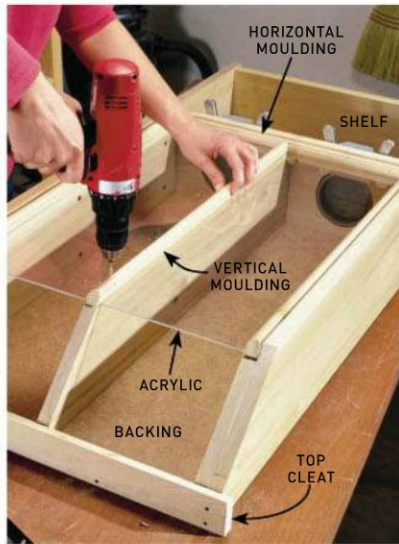
3 Laminate the sides

Use adhesive and screws to join the inner and outer sides with the back of each inner side 24mm in from the back of the outer side. Cut the piano hinge to 470mm and clean up the cut end with a file then secure it to the lid using the supplied screws.



4 Add the base and shelf

Use adhesive and screws to secure the base to the divider and the inner sides. Attach the shelf flush with the base of the outer sides, then secure the front cleats and top cleat. Secure the backing using adhesive and panel pins.



5 Secure the acrylic

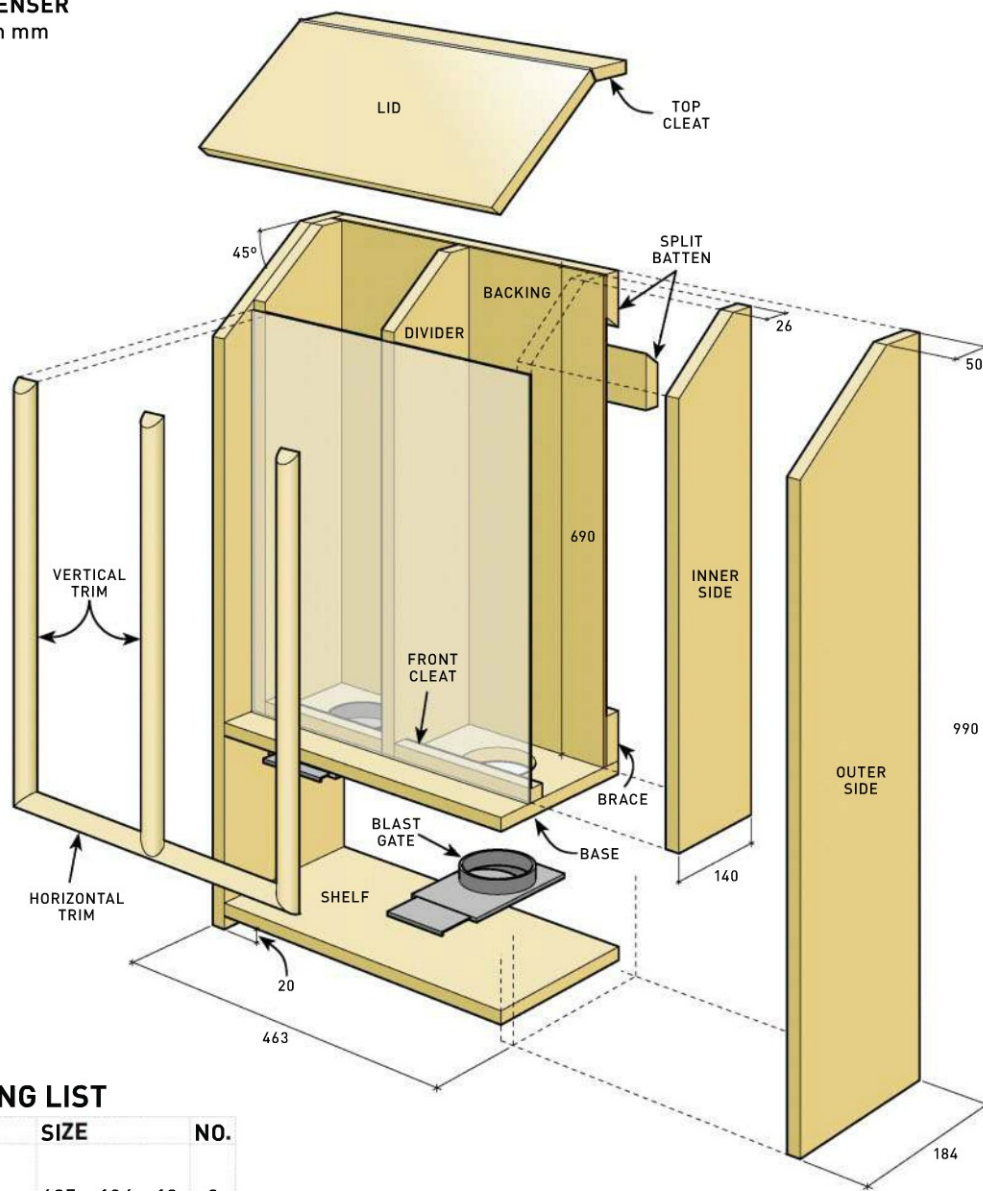
Position the acrylic and mark the mitred ends of the trim. Cut the trim to size as you go, then clamp it in position to drill 1mm diameter pilot holes. Enlarge the holes in the acrylic using a 3mm twist bit, then secure the trim with panel pins.



6 Hang the dispenser

Use adhesive and screws to secure the brace and split batten through the backing into the inner sides and divider then secure the hinged lid to the top cleat. On a masonry wall, attach the split batten using screws and wall plugs to hang the dispenser.

DRY FOOD DISPENSER measurements in mm



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO.
DAR PINE		
Base/shelf	425 x 184 x 19	2
Outer sides	990 x 184 x 19	2
Inner sides/divider	690 x 140 x 19	3
Lid	470 x 222 x 19	1
Top cleat	470 x 59 x 19	1
Front cleats	184 x 19 x 19	2
Split batten	425 x 87 x 19	2
Brace	425 x 70 x 19	1
TASMANIAN OAK		
Vertical trim	656 x 15 x 7	3
Horizontal trim	425 x 15 x 7	1
MASONITE		
Backing	690 x 425 x 4.8	1

Handyman.net.au

Download the tools, materials and costs for making this dry food dispenser.

DOG POO COMPOSTER

Improve the condition of your soil and nourish the garden by turning canine dung into a high-quality compost

WORDS **ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT**

Worms are nature's soil improvers, aerating soil and adding rich nutrients.

Worm composters are an eco-friendly way to dispose of food scraps, and now you can do the same with your dog's droppings.

The Yardart Pet Poo Composter, \$179 from Tumbleweed, comes with full instructions and everything you need to get started (tumbleweed.com.au).

The compost is ideal for flower beds but shouldn't be used on vegies.

TIP Don't compost a dog's poo for at least a week after it has been wormed.

Using worms

There are about 6000 species of earthworm worldwide.

Worms commonly referred to as compost worms are *Eisenia foetida* or tiger worms.

They are surface dwellers and can usually be found in leaf litter or decaying organic matter.

Buy two boxes of compost worms from Bunnings for about \$50 each, as the Pet Poo Composter requires 2000 worms to get started.



1 Prepare the bedding
Break up the bedding block in a large bucket of water with your hands, then dig a 400 x 400mm hole to 320mm deep in the chosen position in the garden.



2 Condition the soil
Spread a handful of worm farm and compost conditioner inside the hole. Position the assembled composter in the centre of the hole and check the pedal is just above ground level.



3 Backfill the hole
Shovel half the presoaked bedding around the composter and half inside. Backfill with soil to cover the lip. Put the worms on top of the bedding and leave for a week before adding dog poo.



Slimline and discreet, the composter turns dog poo into flower food.



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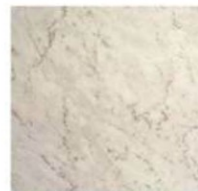
Travertine Stone



Char-Brown Slate

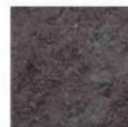


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Handyman

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- ▶ Porta's outdoor treated pine mouldings are suitable for outdoor, above-ground use.
- ▶ Protected from rot, fungal decay and termite attack.
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Treated Pine

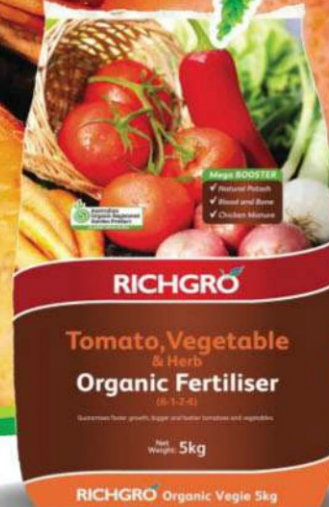
For more information visit:
www.porta.com.au



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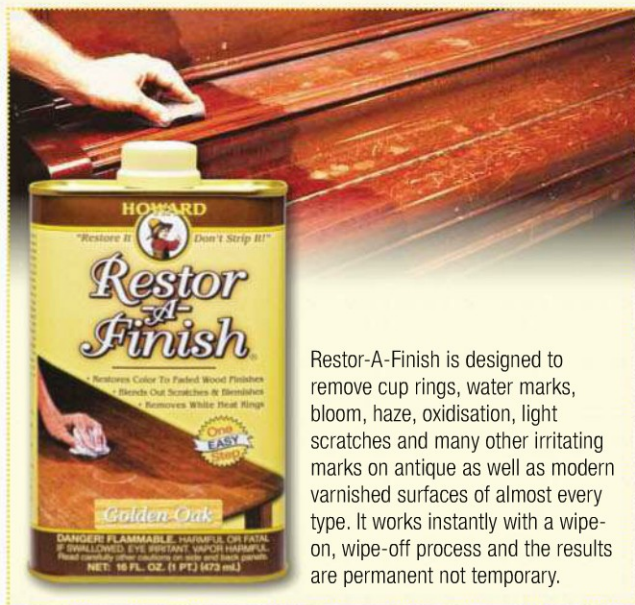
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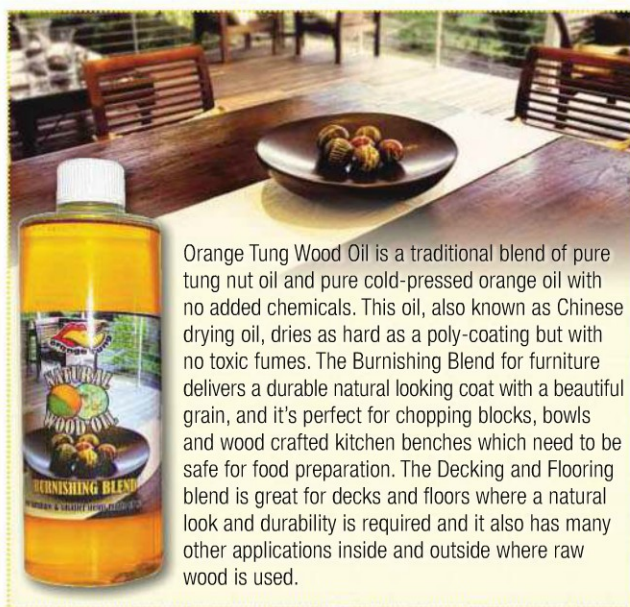
Restor-A-Finish is designed to remove cup rings, water marks, bloom, haze, oxidation, light scratches and many other irritating marks on antique as well as modern varnished surfaces of almost every type. It works instantly with a wipe-on, wipe-off process and the results are permanent not temporary.



Feed-N-Wax is a unique blend of soft beeswax and hard carnauba wax which is liquefied with pure orange oil. It squeezes out and spreads easily on polished furniture or raw wood surfaces. It reveals the hidden beauty of grain in all wood varieties and it creates a micro-fine yet incredibly durable coat of protection, which resists moisture and finger marks. It beautifies and adds rich character to both antique and modern finishes. It adds rustic good looks to raw wood surfaces while giving great nourishment and protection.



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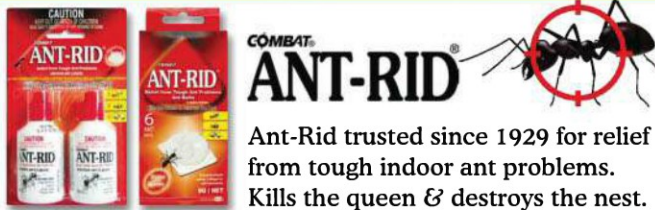


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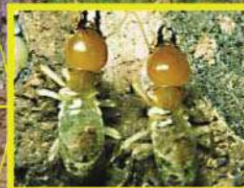
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A person wearing dark blue shorts with a white floral pattern is running through a lawn sprinkler. Water is spraying all around them, creating a misty effect. The grass is bright green and appears wet. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the lawn and some distant foliage.

GARDEN
BASICS

LUSH SUMMER *lawns*

Keep grass green and healthy during the hot months with these tips to mowing, feeding, watering and patching

WORDS AND PICTURES **ADAM WOODHAMS**

You've nurtured it through the late-winter blues, given it a good spring feed, and made sure it's received enough water.

Now is the time to take a breather and enjoy your lush, healthy and hopefully weed-free grass.

Beyond getting behind the mower every couple of weeks and watering when needed, summer lawn care is pretty simple.

The hot season is also the ideal time to fix any problem spots in grass like bald patches.

Otherwise it's all about enjoying a smooth and verdant swathe of that great Australian institution, the suburban lawn.

MOW HIGH OR LOW?

Old-school thinking is that you cut grass low to keep it down. This is actually a bad thing to do to the lawn, especially in the warmer months.

Cutting too low results in scalping and bare, scorched patches. It also puts a lot of stress on your lawn as it tries to repair the damage and regrow in often hot, dry conditions.

The correct height to mow varies with location and grass type, so it may take a bit of local knowledge and some trial and error to get it right.

As a starting point, set the blade height to at least 40mm and aim to leave enough leaf blade to protect the lawn roots and thatch.

After mowing, get down and look at the lawn leaf blades. They should be a good few centimetres long.

A longer lawn resists drying out, grows more slowly and has fewer weeds. Not only that, it looks fuller and feels heavenly on bare feet. ➤



Yates Lawn Master Rapid Greening Lawn Food, \$16 for 1L. yates.com.au

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and below the ground**

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MAKE CLEAN CUTS

Cutting the lawn cleanly is important as dirty or dull mower blades damage grass. It then takes longer to recover and can go brown at the tips.

To check your blades, mow a small patch then pick some grass and look at the cut edges. If they're split or ragged the blades need a wash or change.

Many mowers have a port to let you attach the hose and wash the blades while the mower is running.

If yours doesn't, turn the mower on its side with the air filter facing up, blasting the blades with a strong jet of water from the hose.

Inspect the blades and if they aren't smooth and sharp along the cutting edge it's time to replace them.

Take the machine to a mower shop for a service and blade change, or buy replacement parts and do it DIY.

TIP Always disconnect the spark plug before you clean or service a mower.



Mulch or catch?

Many mowers give you the choice of mulching as you mow or catching lawn clippings. In mulch mode the clippings are finely chopped then blown back at high speed to push them into the thatch.

Mulching as you mow should be done whenever possible as it covers the lawn with micro-mulch that breaks down quickly to provide nutrients and organic matter.

Plus it also helps grass runners stay insulated from temperature

extremes and retain valuable moisture.

But there are times when you shouldn't mulch. Long lawns need a catch-mow, while wet grass will form sticky clumps, defeating the purpose of mulching.

If you have friends coming over or the kids are planning a game of footy, avoid using mulch-mode as the fine clippings will end up sticking to shoes, clothes and sports gear. ➤



If the grass is long or wet use a catcher, otherwise mow and mulch.



FEED THE GRASS

The two main times for feeding the lawn are early spring and late autumn, but it's still a good idea to have a green-up in the warmer months.

When the clan is coming over to visit, the last thing you want is a tired looking lawn. For a quick fix, apply a premixed hose-on lawn food or soil treatment.

Hose-on lawn foods are very fast acting and easy to use. They generally contain a high amount of soluble nitrogen and it's this that contributes to green foliage and makes your lawn look lush fast.

When nitrogen is applied in liquid form some of it is absorbed directly through the foliage, greening up the lawn overnight. The remainder of the nutrients make their way to the soil where they are absorbed more slowly.

Hose-on soil treatments like Seasol or UltraBoost+6 work from the ground up by stimulating biological activity and nutrient release in the soil.

As they don't actually contain nutrients they won't produce the near-instant greening effect of a liquid fertiliser, but after about seven days the lawn will show an improvement.

If you want to get maximum bang for your buck from a hose-on lawn food, apply a hose-on soil treatment immediately afterwards as it will amplify and prolong the effect of the fertiliser. ➤

Water less often but for longer periods to keep grass green.

Watering wisely

A well-watered lawn is also a low-maintenance lawn. But this doesn't mean waving the hose around on warm afternoons.

■ **TIMING** is key with the best time to water being in the cool of early morning. Watering in the evening increases the risk of fungal diseases and moisture loss due to evaporation from warm soil.

■ **INTENSITY** is important, so water less often but deeply. Let water sink right down into the soil, encouraging deep roots and making the turf more able to withstand hot, dry conditions.

TIP Make sure you're aware of any local water restrictions.

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For a medium size lawn grab the 1400 watt mower with 380mm cutting width and 35 Litre catcher or for smaller lawns there's the 1000 watt model with 320mm cutting width and 30 Litre catcher. Make life easy in the garden with the Ozito range of electric mowers. Another reason to give it a go with Ozito.

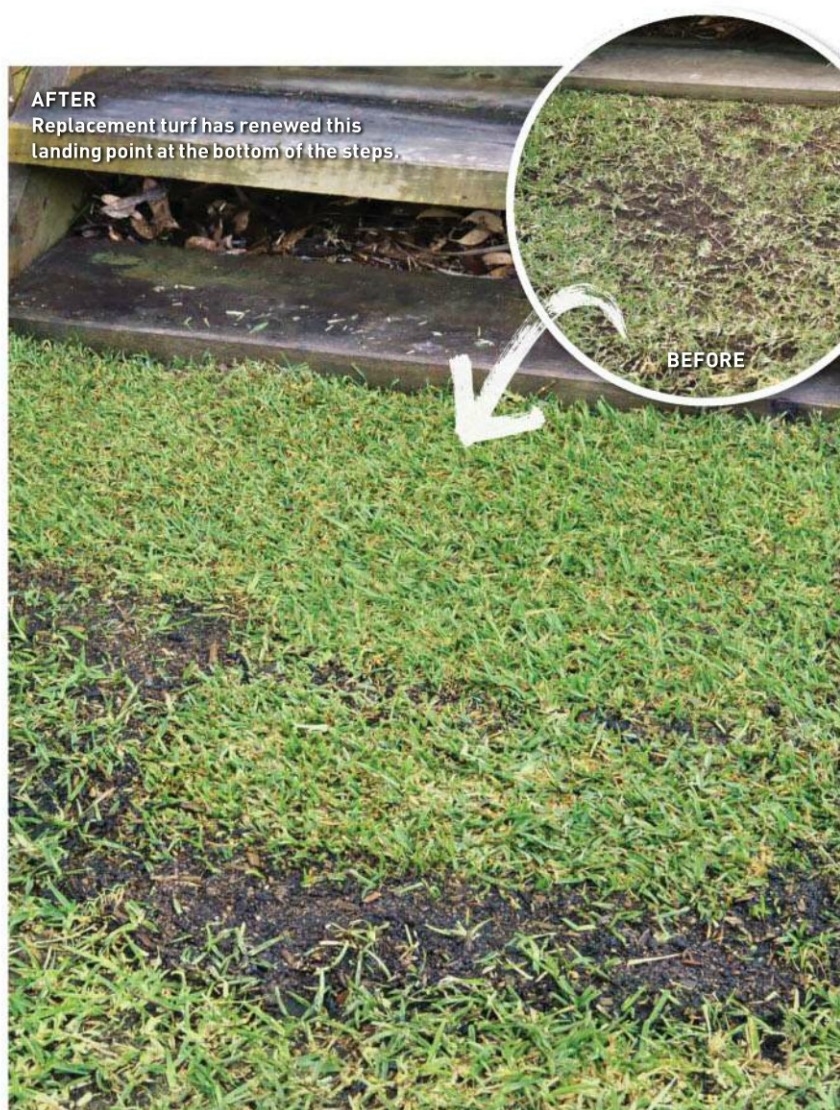
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FIX BALD PATCHES

Bare patches in the lawn are very common. They can be a legacy of winter or a sign of underlying soil problems. Bald spots are easy to fix once you know the cause.

A light prune and patch works if the problem has been caused by overshadowing in winter, but if it's wear and tear in a high-traffic area you'll need to lay new turf.

FOR A LARGE AREA or when you want to keep your lawn as a single grass variety, use turf. A roll covers about 1sqm, just cut it to shape and lay.

You'll also need a bag of lawn underlay or top-dressing mix with a high sand content.

FOR SMALL REPAIRS patching with a seed mix is an effective way to fix the problem if you're not concerned about matching grass types.

Scotts Patch Magic has seeds, starter fertiliser and expanding mulch to ensure seed is kept moist as it germinates. Just sprinkle and add water.



Scotts Lawn Builder Patch Magic, \$30 for 3.6L. scottsaustralia.com.au



1 PREPARE THE AREA by using a sharp-bladed spade to cut neat, straight square-edged lines around it. Dig out all existing grass and weeds then trim the edges to a neat shape.

2 AERATE THE SOIL by pushing a garden fork into it at regular intervals. Remove any excess soil with a spade, using a landscape rake to bring it to level.

3 CHECK THE HEIGHT of the new turf roll thatch against the depth of the excavated area. There should be a difference of about 20 to 30mm to allow for new soil.

4 LEVEL THE SOIL then use a garden fork to lightly fluff it up. Spread a lawn top-dressing mix and go over it with a rake. Add the new soil a little at a time, levelling as you go.

Aerating the soil



A lawn can develop bare spots due to soil compaction. Clay soil can become very solidly packed down in areas of only moderate foot traffic, but even good quality soil can become too compacted for roots to penetrate if it has a lot of wear. The solution is to aerate the soil.

IN SMALL SPACES simply push a garden fork into the soil to a depth of about 50mm and gently rock it back and forth. Repeat this about every 100mm.

IN LARGE YARDS rent a spiked lawn roller. Looking somewhat like a medieval torture device, these rollers make aerating big areas a breeze. Just fill with water and drag or push it around the lawn.

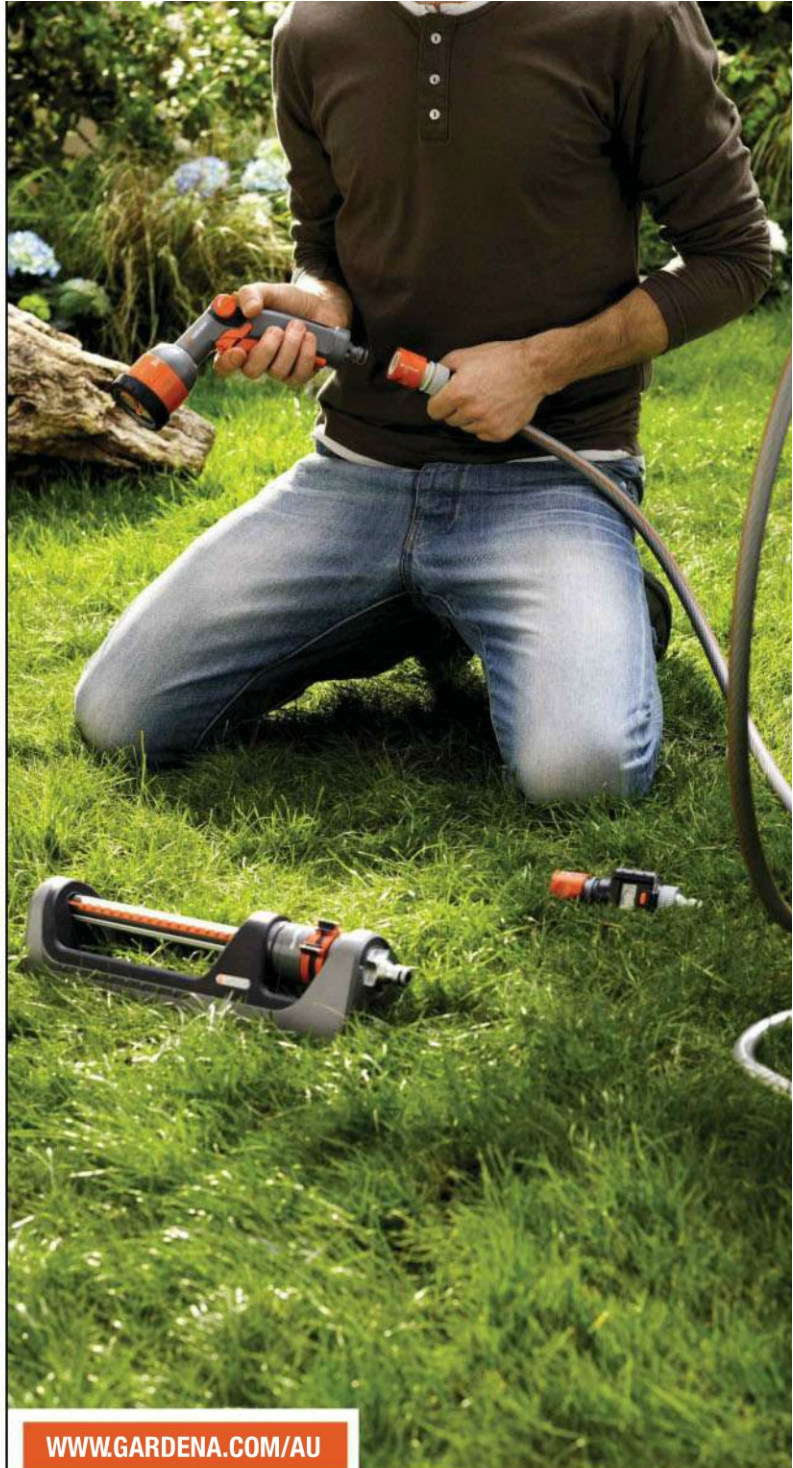
After any aeration the best technique to ensure a long-lasting effect is to rake dry washed river sand or coarse sand into the holes you have opened up. This keeps the aeration and drainage channels open.

TIP With heavy clay soil you may also want to add some gypsum or clay breaker.



● **LAY THE TURF** over the area, rolling it out and trimming to fit with a spade. Fill the joints with top-dressing mix to help the new turf knit with the existing grass.

● **WATER THE TURF** in well then apply a hose-on soil treatment. Water the new turf regularly and avoid walking on it for a few weeks or until it is well established.



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INSTALL DRIP IRRIGATION

Sustain your plants with a watering system that makes every drop count

PROJECT AND PICTURES **LEE DASHIELL**

Keeping your plants consistently watered throughout summer is essential for a healthy and disease-free garden.

Targeted watering of plants directly at their roots is the most efficient way of ensuring they stay hydrated, and minimises water wastage. Drip irrigation is a proven method of

providing a consistent amount of water at ground level where plants need it most, and it's also easy to install.

To start, sketch out the area you want watered and figure out where the main irrigation tube should go, bearing in mind the position of the tap. Next decide how much tubing is needed and what type of drippers you want.

When you have a rough outline, you can start to put together a list of the pieces you need.

After installation, check the system by turning it on slowly and gently until the tubes are filled with water and there is a consistent flow from all drippers.

TIP If the pressure is too high, some drippers may pop out of their tubes. ➤



Designing a system

Irrigation systems are built using a series of individual components, so you can create one according to the needs of your garden. Use the various parts, including tubes, plugs, connectors and clamps, to customise your own hydration structure.





Keep the garden green with a DIY irrigation system that delivers the right amount of water every time.

INSTALL THE IRRIGATION



1 Position the tubing

Lay the main irrigation tube over the surface of the garden bed, rolling it out to the full length of the area to be watered. Weigh down each end of the tube with a rock or brick to keep it in position. Cut the tube to length using secateurs.



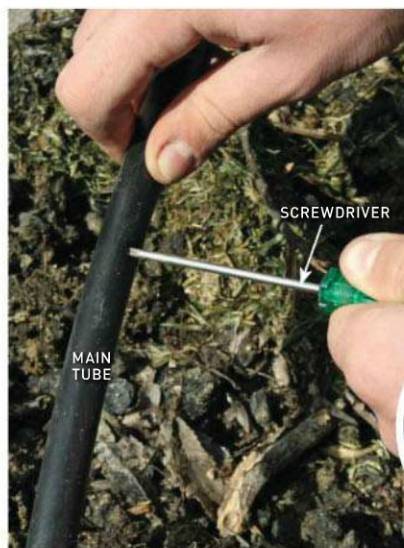
2 Insert the end plug

End plugs are barbed and can sometimes be a little stiff to insert into the tube by hand. To protect your fingers, soak the end of the tube in a cup of boiling water to soften it first, or use a hammer to nudge the end plug firmly into place.



3 Attach the clamp

Clip a ratchet clamp onto the end plug to lock it to the irrigation tube and prevent it from sliding off under the force of the water pressure. Tighten the ratchet clamp manually, then use pliers to squeeze it tighter.



4 Pierce the tube

Work out where the drip tubes are to be located along the main irrigation tube. Using either a piercing tool or a small screwdriver, make holes in the tube to fit the joiners.

TIP Take care not to cut through both walls of the tube.



5 Insert the joiners

The joiners act as the links between the drip tubes and the main tube. Insert one end into the main tube and attach the other to the drip tube. Joiners can be spiky to grip, so hold them in position using pliers.



6 Cut the drip tube

Use secateurs to cut each drip tube to length, so that they will reach to the centre of the plants to be watered. Attach a spike end and dripper to each drip tube and drive them into the ground. Test the system by slowly turning on the tap.



Hidden hydration

For the main irrigation tube of this system to reach the tap, three elbow joiners were used to direct the tube so it could be buried under the grass and back up again to connect to the water source.

Adding a timer

Timers are great tools for irrigation systems as they basically do the watering for you. There are two types of timer to choose from.

MECHANICAL TIMERS prevent water wastage by stopping the flow after a set time. It is easy to forget the irrigation system has been switched on, but a mechanical timer will tick down until it's set to turn off, so you don't have to worry about wasting water.

AUTOMATED TIMERS can be programmed to go on between set times on selected days. This takes all the guesswork out of watering the garden and when you go on holiday, you can rest assured that your garden is being looked after and won't dry out.



Holman Two Hour Tap Timer, \$12.
holmanindustries.com.au



Pope Multi Program Electronic Tap Timer, \$45.
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SUMMER
INVADERS

PEST PATROL

Keep nuisance insects and snakes out of the house and under control so you can enjoy the warm weather in peace

The biggest downside to the Australian summer is the hordes of bugs, spiders and snakes that come out of their winter hiding places just in time for the festive season.

Like embarrassing relatives you prefer to avoid, these pests tend to drop in unexpectedly for barbecues, backyard parties and even in the middle of the night.

Deterring pests from entering your home and preventing them from taking hold is the best way to keep them under control.

When it comes to spiders and snakes, knowing which pests are dangerous and which are harmless is key to keeping your family safe.



Planting marigolds is a natural way to deter mosquitoes.



Don't let pests stop you enjoying the outdoors.

Protecting your property

Pest-proofing your home will help the family stay safe all summer. Try some of these quick and easy methods to keep intruders firmly out.

FIX leaking taps that provide moisture sources for insects.

STORE food in sealed containers to limit attractant odours.

TIDY wardrobes and storage rooms, and clear subfloor areas of debris.

SEAL gaps in wall cavities, subfloor areas and under external doors.

REPAIR or install flyscreens on all windows and doors.

TRIM tree branches to remove access to the roof cavity.

CLEAR the yard of rotting vegetation that cockroaches feed on.

REMOVE stagnant water that mosquitoes use for breeding.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Flies, cockroaches and mosquitoes are all too familiar summer arrivals. These pests can spread disease or cause nasty bites, so taking action to reduce their numbers in your home is the first step to a comfortable and pest-free summer.



FLIES

Flies survive by feasting on animal faeces and garbage, picking up germs before landing on your skin or food, potentially spreading disease.

Flies breed in environments full of bacteria, reproducing quickly when the weather turns warm.

PHYSICAL CONTROL Put kitchen scraps in a plastic bag and use a bin with a fitted lid. If using scraps for compost, add sawdust or shredded newspaper to absorb moisture and odours so flies are not attracted.

NATURAL CONTROL Reduce fly numbers by using barriers such as flyscreens or sticky flypaper traps, or control them with swatters or carnivorous plants. Flytraps use baits with pheromones to attract and kill the insects.

CHEMICAL CONTROL Use low toxicity surface or contact sprays to repel and kill flies. Personal insect repellents applied directly to the skin stop flies from landing and spreading harmful germs.



COCKROACHES

These bugs carry disease and can trigger asthmatic reactions in sufferers when particles of discarded skin become airborne.

Cockroaches are most active at night, hiding in wall cavities, subfloors or roofing during the day.

PHYSICAL CONTROL Cockroaches need water to survive so check dripping taps and wipe kitchen and bathroom sinks dry. Limit food sources by disposing of scraps and keeping food in sealed containers.

NATURAL CONTROL Buy sticky traps and place them in areas of high activity. To make a trap, grease the rim and inside of a round plastic container with butter. Cockroaches will be attracted to the butter, fall inside and get stuck.

CHEMICAL CONTROL Insecticide sprayed at entry points and around drains keeps them out. Baits provide poison food that cockroaches spread to the nest. Use low-toxicity Permethrin dust on breeding sites.



MOSQUITOES

Female mosquitoes deposit saliva containing an anticoagulant when they suck blood to feed their eggs.

Skin reacts because immune systems produce histamine to combat the substance. Apply an ice pack to bites for relief.

PHYSICAL CONTROL Mosquitoes breed in still water so empty saucers under potted plants and fill with damp sand, rake up wet leaves and install a pump in ponds to keep water moving.

NATURAL CONTROL Reduce numbers by planting citrusa geranium, marigold, catnip and rosemary in the garden close to the house and outdoor entertaining areas, as these plants emit odours that mosquitoes don't like.

CHEMICAL CONTROL Insect repellents containing DEET are the most effective solution. They mask the smell of human sweat, the scent that alerts mosquitoes to the presence of a meal. ➤

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SPIDER IDENTIFICATION CHART

To treat a spider bite, wash it with soap and water then apply an antibiotic cream and ice. Elevate the affected area and seek emergency treatment straight away, giving a description of the spider if possible so doctors know which antivenom to use.

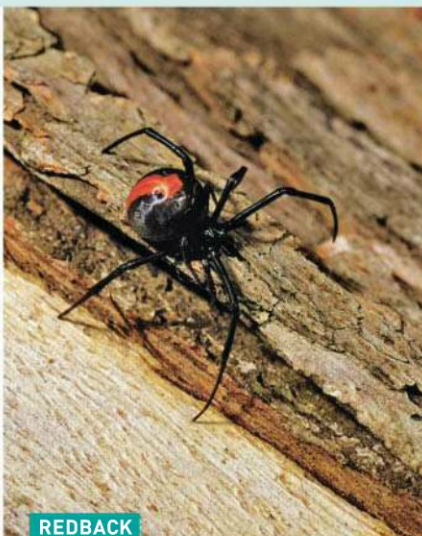


FUNNEL-WEB

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT The body is about 30mm long, black and shiny with a brownish abdomen and spurs on two legs.

LIVES East coast of Australia from North Queensland to Tasmania.



REDBACK

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Black with a red streak on the abdomen, the males are tiny, females are about 10mm long.

LIVES Dry and built-up areas throughout Australia.



WHITE TAIL

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT The body is about 20mm long, grey to black in colour with a white tip at the end.

LIVES Common in urban areas throughout Australia.



HUNTSMAN

NON-VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Beige with some dark patches, it has a 15 to 20mm body and legs up to 45mm long.

LIVES Can be found anywhere in Australia, often in houses and cars.



ST ANDREW'S CROSS

NON-VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Striped yellow and brown with legs arranged in a cross shape, it grows up to 15mm long.

LIVES Eastern Australia, found in webs with white zigzag patterns.



GARDEN ORB WEAVING

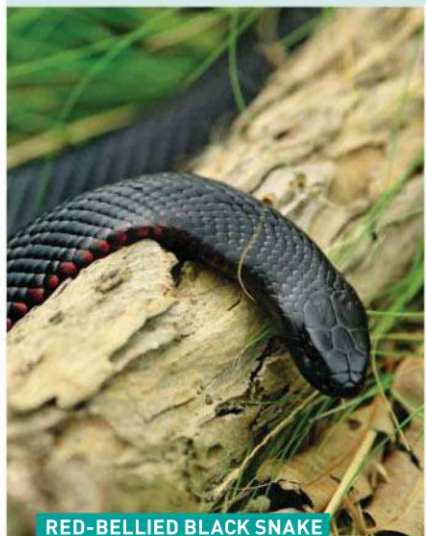
NON-VENOMOUS

SPOT IT The body is brown or grey and 15 to 30mm long with a fat, triangular abdomen.

LIVES Found in large, intricate webs in gardens throughout Australia. ➤

SNAKE IDENTIFICATION CHART

To treat a snake bite, apply a compression bandage but not so tightly it cuts off blood supply. Use a splint to immobilise the limb and keep still because activity quickly spreads venom. Seek medical assistance and give a description of the snake.



RED-BELLIED BLACK SNAKE

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT A bright red belly, black on top, and measuring up to 1500mm in length.

LIVES Found on the east coast of Australia, usually near water.

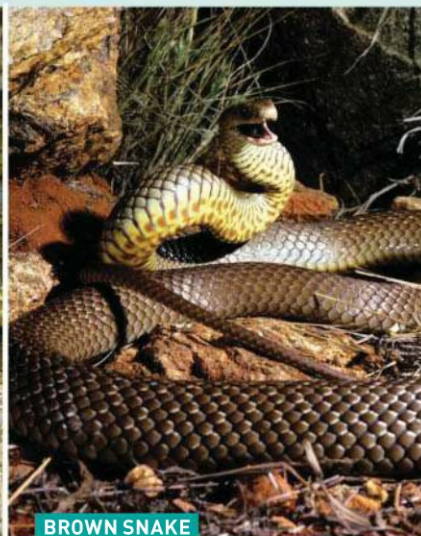


TIGER SNAKE

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Up to 2100mm long, yellow, olive or brownish with a lighter coloured belly.

LIVES Southern areas of Australia, Tasmania and coastal islands.

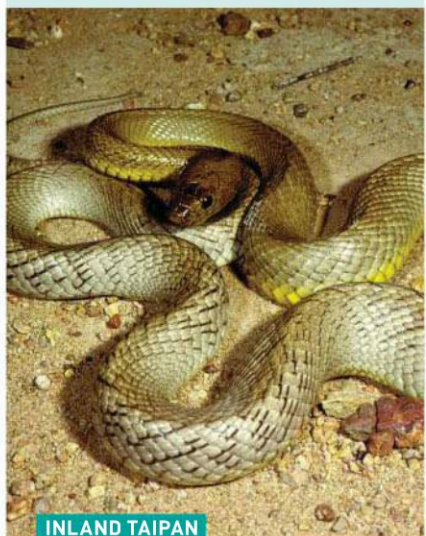


BROWN SNAKE

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Various shades of brown with a lighter colour on the underside, and up to 2000mm long.

LIVES Most of eastern Australia, often spotted near homes or farms.



INLAND TAIPAN

VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Brown with a cream head and yellow belly, measuring up to 3000mm long.

LIVES The convergence of the SA, NT and Queensland borders.



DIAMOND PYTHON

NON-VENOMOUS

SPOT IT This species has a yellow and black diamond pattern, and measures about 3000mm.

LIVES Coastal areas of NSW, usually in rainforests and woodlands.



GREEN TREE SNAKE

NON-VENOMOUS

SPOT IT Growing up to 1200mm long, varies from green to brown with a yellow throat.

LIVES The northern tropics and eastern Australia.



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ACTION
PLAN

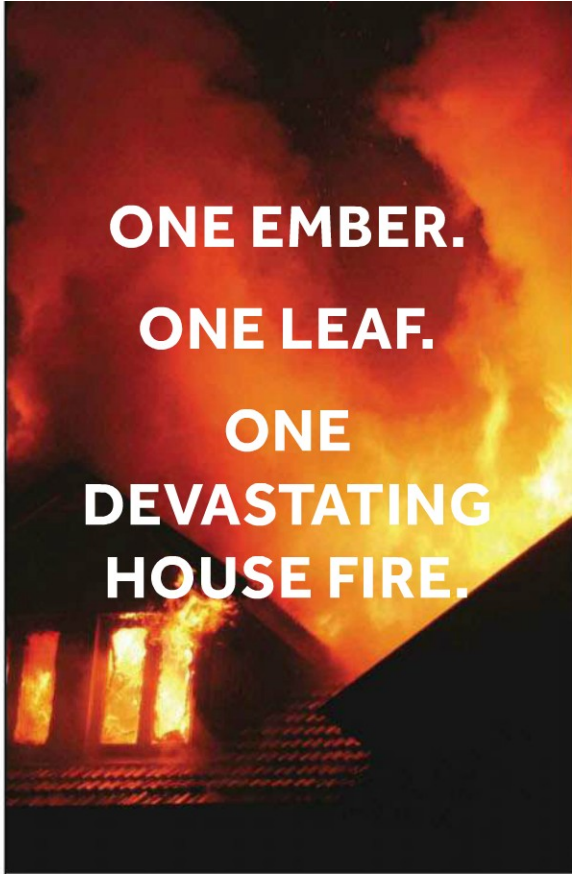
BUSHFIRE SAFETY

Protect your family and your property during bushfire season by equipping and maintaining your home

WORDS **DANIEL BUTKOVICH**



Bushfires are an ever-present threat during the Australian summer.



**ONE EMBER.
ONE LEAF.
ONE
DEVASTATING
HOUSE FIRE.**

**CHOOSE THE RIGHT
GUTTER GUARD THAT
OFFERS UNRIVALLED
BUSHFIRE PROTECTION**



Bushland homes need the best bushfire protection – and that means Blue Mountain Mesh. Our 2mm, superfine, all-steel gutter guard is manufactured to Australian standard **AS3959-2009/Amdt2011**, with proven compliance as an ember guard at all Bushfire Attack Levels.

So when the safety of people and property depends on bushfire protection, there's simply no substitute for Blue Mountain Mesh ember guard.



Bluemountainmesh

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
BLUE MOUNTAIN MESH
EMBER GUARD.**

**TALK TO US TODAY
1800 612 908**

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- ◆ Stops leaves, vermin & pests
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Bushfires are a fact of life in Australia and with urban areas continuing to expand, more people are now living in, or close to, bushfire-prone areas.

This year saw an early start to the bushfire season, following one of the warmest and driest winters on record.

That means the threat of bushfires for the summer ahead is already greater than ever.

Upgrading your home to withstand a fire and keeping the property maintained can mean the difference between the house withstanding a bushfire and being destroyed.

PLANNING AHEAD

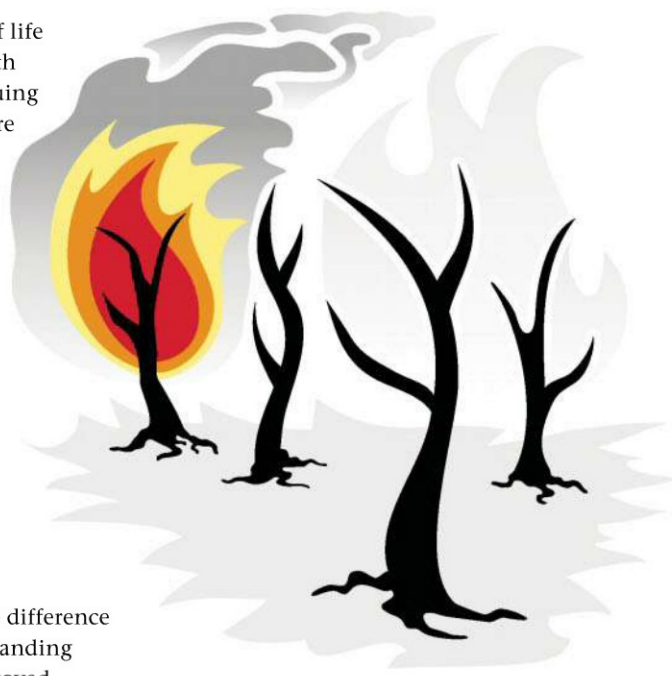
Having an up-to-date survival plan ensures you and your family know what to do in the event of a bushfire. Review your plan with your family every year and be ready to act when necessary.

On hot, dry or windy days, stay informed by paying attention to local TV and radio broadcasts so you know

if your area is at risk. If a fire breaks out in your area, enact your bushfire survival plan immediately.

Deciding whether to leave early or stay and defend the home depends on how prepared your home is and whether you are physically and emotionally ready to defend it.

If in doubt, leave early and head to the nearest safe place. ➤



Understanding Fire Danger Ratings

Following the Victorian bushfires of 2009, a new Fire Danger Rating system has been developed to include a 'Catastrophic' or 'Code Red' rating.

On these days, fires are likely to be uncontrollable, unpredictable and very fast moving.

If there is a fire in your area on a day rated as Catastrophic or Code Red, staying to defend is unsafe and leaving early is the best option for survival.

Visit the fire service website for your state to make sure you fully understand the Fire Danger Rating system.



PREPARE FOR BUSHFIRE SEASON

If you live anywhere near bushland, there are several steps you can take to prepare your home and your family for a bushfire threat. Keep maintenance up to date and ensure fire fighting equipment is in working order at all times.

UPGRADING THE HOME

Make your home less vulnerable to bushfires and easier to defend if one breaks out near you.



INSTALL metal gutter guards, rooftop sprinklers, a water tank and a long hose that can reach the whole house.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

Keep your yard tidy and your home in good condition to reduce the chance of embers causing a fire.



REPLACE broken roof tiles, repair gaps in walls and enclose underfloor areas to stop embers from penetrating.

PREPARE YOURSELF

On high-danger days, the whole family should wear protective clothing and have an emergency survival kit ready.



WEAR work boots, cotton socks, denim jeans and a long-sleeved cotton or wool shirt.



SWAP flyscreens, doormats and timber fences for equivalent, non-combustible metal items.



CLEAN leaf litter from gutters and keep mulch, firewood, rubbish and fuel away from the house.



PREPARE a survival kit containing a first aid kit, radio, torch and bottled water before bushfire season starts.



ATTACH a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign to your front fence if you have a pool, dam or water tank.



MOW lawns regularly, cut back overgrown tree branches and plant shrubs with a low oil content.



PUT on a wide-brimmed hat, protective glasses, leather gloves and a cotton face mask if a fire is near.

Einhell

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50 Years of Experience



GE-WW 5537 E
550W Home
Water Works



GE-GP 9041 E
900W Garden Pump



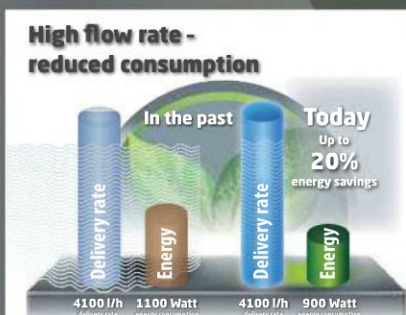
RG-DP 1135 N
790W Dirty Water
Pump



RG-DP 8735
690W Dirty Water
Pump

Pressure Transfer Submersible

Help the environment
and your hip pocket



- Lower your energy consumption up to 20%
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For more information on Einhell products visit:

www.einhell.com.au

[f](#) Power Tools 101

[t](#) Einhell Australia Tools_101

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warehouse

When fire breaks out, being prepared could save your life.

Fireproofing tools and equipment

On hot, windy days, embers can be spread up to 30km ahead of the fire front. Well-prepared homes have a much higher chance of surviving a bushfire attack, so equip your home to make it safer during bushfire season.



Yardworks 25m Fire Fighting Hose, \$72.
ozito.com.au



Sentry 10.3L Fire Proof Safe, \$119.
sentrysafe.com.au



Ironclad Ranchworx Gloves, \$45.
ironcladgloves.com.au



Melro 5000L Slimline Polyethylene Water Tank, \$1602.
melro.com.au



St John Ambulance 150 piece First Aid Kit, \$50.
stjohn.org.au



Yardworks 6.5hp Petrol Fire Fighting Pump, \$699.



Blue Mountain Steel Gutter Mesh, made to order.
bluemountainmesh.com.au



Protector Disposable Respirator, \$10 for two.
scottdiysafety.com.au



Cyclone Fire Fighting Rakho, \$70.
cyclone.com.au

Your bushfire survival plan

If you live in a high-risk area, consider your options and discuss them as a family before any threat of fire occurs. Review your plan regularly by keeping up to date with the bushfire advice on your local fire safety website.

EVACUATE EARLY

When the fire danger rating is catastrophic.

- ✓ If your property and home aren't prepared.
- ✓ If there are children, elderly or disabled people involved.
- ✓ If you have a house that is vulnerable to fire, such as a timber-clad home.
- ✓ If you are not confident using fire safety equipment.
- ✓ If you don't have adequate protective clothing.

We will leave early under these circumstances:
(fire nearby, smoke, loss of water, power, ability to leave home safely)

The safe place we will go to is:

The route we will take to get there is:

Our alternative route is:

The important papers, medications, and kids' and pets' needs we will take are:

We will tell these neighbours, family and friends where we are going and how we will get there:

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- ✓ Close doors and windows, bring outdoor mats and timber outdoor furniture inside.
- ✓ Fill a stocking with sand to block downpipes and fill gutters with water.
- ✓ Take phones and chargers, important papers, medications, wallets and keys.
- ✓ Turn off the gas and electricity supply.
- ✓ Move pets and livestock to safety.
- ✓ Leave the front gate open for emergency services.

STAY AND DEFEND

When the property is prepared and well maintained.

- ✓ If you're emotionally and physically prepared to fight a fire.
- ✓ If you know what to do before, during and after a fire.
- ✓ If you know how to use the fire safety equipment.
- ✓ If you have head-to-toe safety clothing to wear.
- ✓ If you have a backup plan in case something goes wrong.

These people will stay and defend:
(if kids or others will be relocated, list who is going and where they will go)

As fire or embers approach we will:

When the fire arrives our plan is to:
(stay inside, check roof space, put sprinklers on)

After the fire has passed we will:
(include places you will check for embers over several hours, animals' welfare, and other actions)

BEFORE FIRE APPROACHES

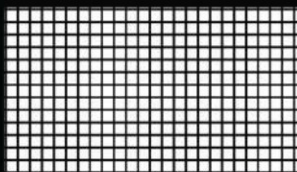
- ✓ Listen for alerts on ABC local radio.
- ✓ Dress in protective clothing.
- ✓ Drink lots of water.
- ✓ Shut all doors and windows.
- ✓ Place wet blankets or towels under doors and windows to keep embers out.
- ✓ Turn off the mains gas supply.
- ✓ Block downpipes and fill gutters with water.
- ✓ Move cars away from the house.
- ✓ Turn on the sprinkler system.

+ Get more online

Visit handyman.net.au/mag for more advice and tips on how to Be Prepared For Bushfire.



FOR EXTRA RESISTANCE TO EMBER ATTACK



Corrosion Resistance	★★★★
UV Resistance	★★★★
Strength Rating	★★★★

ALUMINIUM

HEAVY DUTY INSECT SCREENING

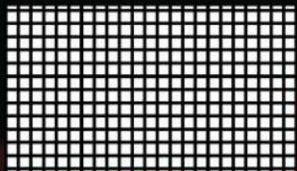
Cyclone Aluminium insect screening is ideal for screening windows and doors where extra strength and impressive visibility through the screen are required. The aluminium is powder coated in a charcoal finish to minimise glare.

This high quality Aluminium insect screening provides additional resistance to ember attack and is manufactured to the requirements for aluminium screening, as detailed within the Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas.

Available in widths: 610, 760, 810, 910, 1220mm

Specifications

- ▶ Powder coated aluminium
- ▶ 0.23mm diameter wire
- ▶ 18 x 16 strands per inch



Corrosion Resistance	★★★★
UV Resistance	★★★★
Strength Rating	★★★★

TUFFlite™

INCREASED GAUGE HEAVY DUTY INSECT SCREENING

Cyclone Tufflite insect screening is ideal for screening windows and doors in tough and demanding conditions. The thicker wire is powder coated in a charcoal finish to minimise glare.

Tufflite insect screening provides additional resistance to ember attack and is manufactured to the requirements for aluminium screening, as detailed within the Australian Standard AS 3959-2009 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas.

Available in widths: 910, 1220mm

Specifications

- ▶ Powder coated aluminium
- ▶ 0.28mm diameter wire
- ▶ 18 x 15 strands per inch

For further information, contact Cyclone Customer Service
on 1800 335 019 or visit www.cyclone.com.au



Information on AS 3959-2009 Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas – Screens for Windows and Doors.

-Where the construction of new buildings, alterations and extensions is to be carried out in bushfire-prone areas, screens for windows and doors (where fitted) must comply with the requirements for the relevant Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) detailed within AS 3959-2009. Please refer to AS 3959-2009 for the requirements specified for window and door screens for each BAL.

- For a BAL assessment of your site, please contact your local authority for further information and advice.

The above information regarding AS 3959-2009 is provided as a guide only – please refer to AS 3959-2009 for further details, or contact your local authority for information and advice.

School holiday projects

»If the kids are driving you crazy over Christmas then look no further than these great projects from Wippers

Don't let the kids get under your feet this summer. Send them outdoors to make something that will enhance the garden.

Wippers has a range of great project kits that kids aged three and up can easily make in an afternoon. Just paint, build and enjoy.

The range includes a gnome, a scarecrow and a birdhouse.



WIPPERS D.I.Y. PROJECT KITS



Our gnome, scarecrow and birdhouse will keep the kids busy for quite a while.

»Three easy projects



1 PAINT THE GNOME using the colours supplied, in any style you like. We chose a Santa theme but let your imagination run wild.



2 STUFF THE SCARECROW with straw then give him a little face.
TIP Be careful when assembling the frame as it can be quite fragile.



3 MAKE THE BIRDHOUSE and pop some seed or nesting material inside. Then hang it in a tree and wait for feathered friends to arrive.

D.I.Y. Workshops

»Brush up your knowledge and gain new skills with workshops for everyone, including the kids

Bunnings Gift Cards

The Bunnings Gift Card is the perfect present to give to your loved ones this Christmas. You can even personalise your gift online with a Bunnings Photo Gift Card. Simply upload your favourite photo at bunnings.com.au to have the cards delivered to your door (postage and personalisation fees apply). Did you know Bunnings also has e-gift cards? Easy to purchase and convenient to use, they can be instantly emailed to the recipient or sent on a chosen date.



SATURDAY 7 DECEMBER
PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS
KIDS' WORKSHOP SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS GIFTS
KIDS' WORKSHOP CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL STORE

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER
PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS
KIDS' WORKSHOP SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS GIFTS
KIDS' WORKSHOP CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL STORE

SATURDAY 14 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS GIFTS
KIDS' WORKSHOP SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

SATURDAY 28 DECEMBER
BASIC D.I.Y.
KIDS' WORKSHOP HOLIDAY FUN

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS GIFTS
KIDS' WORKSHOP SANTA'S LITTLE HELPER

SUNDAY 29 DECEMBER
BASIC D.I.Y.
KIDS' WORKSHOP HOLIDAY FUN

Our workshops are held every weekend at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. For specific topics, ask in-store or go to bunnings.com.au. If you live in South Australia, speak to a team member about one-on-one sessions.

SAVE TIME, MONEY AND WATER



**TANK GUARDIAN
EASY-CLEAN**

WIN

ONE OF TEN

\$300

RAINWATER TANK PRIZE PACKS

Handyman is giving away \$3000 worth of Rain Harvesting products

A rainwater tank is a great way to save water but it's important to maintain the tank and keep it working effectively to reduce the risk of contamination.

Preventing problems before they arise will save you time, money and water.

Install appropriate screens and rain heads to prevent debris and insects entering the pipes to your tank. If you find mosquitoes or other pests in your tank, locate the entry point and close it.

Adding a first flush device is vital to stop sediment polluting the tank water.

Reduce maintenance time by installing an Upgrade Screen to your rain head, and a Tank Guardian Easy-Clean to your tank screen to protect from build-up of debris.

HAVE A QUESTION or just need further information? The Rainwater Knowledge Centre provides free information on rainwater collection for homeowners and professionals. Ask experts and join the free online rainwater tank maintenance program to get regular reminders, updates, hints and tips.

Visit www.rainharvesting.com.au

PRIZE INCLUDES:



1 x DOWNPIPE FIRST FLUSH WATER DIVERTER KIT



2 x LEAF EATER ORIGINAL RAIN HEAD



1 x WIRELESS TANK GAUGE



1 x TANK GUARDIAN EASY-CLEAN



2 x EVERY LITTLE DROP HOSE METER

HOW TO ENTER

TEN LUCKY READERS from around the country will win a Rainwater Harvesting housekeeping prize pack worth \$300.

For your chance to be a winner, tell us your best tip for saving water in 50 words or less.

Enter at handyman.net.au before 15 January 2014, or send your contact details and answer to *Handyman* Rain Harvesting Competition, GPO Box 4354, Sydney, NSW 2001.

The winners will be published in the April 2014 issue of *Handyman*.

+ Handyman.net.au

Go online before 15 January 2014 to enter, plus check the terms and conditions.

Rain Harvesting
www.rainharvesting.com.au

HOUSEKEEPING FOR THE RAINWATER TANK

Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

Do now

■ **ENJOY** fresh food all summer long and save the surplus with our guide to growing, harvesting and using vegies, from page 174.

■ **ZAP** common summer pests to keep edibles and ornamentals thriving throughout the season, see page 188.

■ **PAINT** an old metal plant stand and use it to showcase annual bloomers, on page 198.



THIS MONTH

Feed, weed and water regularly to beat the heat and keep the garden green during the hot, dry weather



Sow now

For a late summer and early autumn display, get these flower seeds in now.

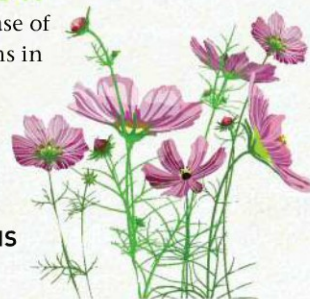
- **AGERATUM**
- **ASTER**
- **CELOSIA**
- **TORENIA**
- **ZINNIA**



Plant now

Create a showcase of colourful blooms in beds and pots.

- **COSMOS**
- **IMPATIENS**
- **PETUNIAS**
- **MARIGOLDS**
- **SNAPDRAGONS**



Prune now

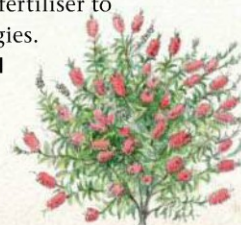
- **PINCH** out unwanted side shoots on standards and prune after flowering.
- **CLIP** and shape topiary to define the profile.
- **TRIM** hedges to keep them neat and tidy.
- **DEADHEAD** flowering plants regularly to promote more blooms.
- **PRUNE** lilac, lavender and any shrubs that have already flowered.



Feed now

Give natives a boost and apply another dose of fertiliser to crop-bearing vegies.

- **BOTTLEBRUSH**
- **CITRUS**
- **LAVENDER**
- **ROSE**
- **TOMATO**



PICTURES: THINKSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES

Add a water feature

Bring the sight and sound of water into the garden to add tranquillity during the sunny days and hot nights of summer.

For an instant and budget option, float hibiscus flowers in shallow decorative pots filled with water and position on plant stands out of direct sunlight on the deck or patio.

Install a pump in a still pond and attach the tubing to a fountainhead to create a cascade. Or simply buy an all-in-one plinth and pedestal style water feature.

Add aquatic plants to help keep the water algae-free.

TIP Top up the pond regularly to maintain an even water temperature for the plants.



Holiday care

Summer is when most of us go on holidays but it's also when plants and lawns need regular watering to survive. Here's how to prepare the garden and keep it maintained while you're away.

■ **INSTALL** an automatic drip irrigation system with a timer. Set the system to water the garden in the early morning to reduce evaporation and help prevent fungal diseases.

■ **MOW** the lawn and arrange to have it cut every few weeks.

■ **GROUP** outdoor pots together in a shaded, sheltered position.

■ **PUT** small outdoor containers in larger pots filled with moist sand.

■ **HAVE** a friend come by regularly to water indoor plants, outdoor pots and hanging baskets.

■ **WEED** the garden thoroughly before you go and mulch beds and pots to suppress weeds. ➤

Top pick

For vivid colour that can stand the heat, the Salvia 'Heatwave' Collection from PMA features pink, crimson, white and apricot blooms with names like Blaze and Sizzle (pma.com.au).

Featuring evergreen foliage, a long flowering season and compact rounded habit they can tolerate dry conditions.

Grow them in full sun to part shade in free-draining soil. They suit coastal areas and poolside plantings. Use them in pots or in beds where they'll reach 700mm high and a metre wide.

Prune after first flowering for more blooms and a denser habit.



SALVIA HEATWAVE
'SIZZLE'





Seasonal jobs

The garden is at its peak in summer, here's how to keep it looking good.

- **GIVE** houseplants a holiday outside to enjoy fresh air and gentle rain but protect them from wind and sun.
 - **BUY** a potted Wollemi pine as a Christmas tree, keeping it in light shade outdoors during the year.
 - **RAISE** the height of mower blades and cut the grass more often.
 - **APPLY** liquid fertiliser regularly, using products formulated for the species to keep plants healthy.
 - **SPRAY** plants as soon as pests are seen, and pick up any fallen tomatoes to help control fruit fly.
- TIP** Don't apply weedkillers or fertilisers during hot, dry spells.

Fruit picking

Summer is stone-fruit season with lots of varieties ready for picking after spring flowering. Fruit is ripe when it feels firm and has a sweet smell.

APRICOTS are small, golf-ball sized fruits. Harvest when red-gold in colour and just starting to soften, leaving any apricots with a green tinge to ripen on the tree.

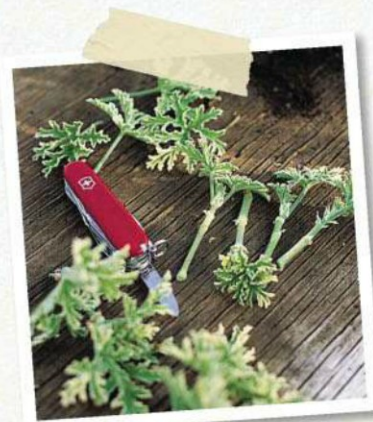
PEACHES have a downy skin and bruise easily, so look for unblemished fruit and handle gently. Store them in a plastic bag in the fridge.

NECTARINES are closely related to peaches but have a smooth surface. Pick when firm with no green skin.

TIP Ripe fruit has juicy flesh, not hard or chewy. Squishy fruit is overripe.



Soak hanging baskets in a bucket of water during dry weather to keep the rootballs moist



Take tip cuttings

Now is the time to take soft tip cuttings of perennials like verbena, salvia and pelargonium to propagate them ready for planting out in beds and pots in late spring next year.

Select non-flowering shoots, dip the bases in hormone powder and pot up. Leave the cuttings to root for eight weeks then repot in small containers to stop the mix getting waterlogged, which can cause root rot.

Overwinter the pots indoors on a windowsill or in a mini greenhouse.



REVITALISE ANY PROJECT AROUND THE HOME

Enhance the overall look of any project around the home with Dy-Mark's Lifestyle range. Suitable for use on a variety of surfaces, these products are available in a wide selection of modern colours and finishes.

Dy-Mark's Lifestyle range includes; Revolution™ Enamel, Revolution™ Plastic Primer, Water-Based Enamel, Epoxy Coat and Epoxy Coat Water-Based.



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www.dymark.com.au

Available at
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PRODUCE
PATCH

HOME GROWN *harvest*

Sow and grow your best backyard vegies ever with this guide to raising a bumper summer crop

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS

Most of us stay on top of the watering when the mercury soars, and pull up weeds regularly so we can enjoy the sights and scents of the summer garden.

Another must-do activity is mowing the lawn, but the warm months aren't just about basic maintenance. They are also when lots of tasty vegies are in season.

Now is the time to sow seeds or get seedlings in the ground for a summer crop of salad staples such as beans, cucumbers and tomatoes, plus an autumn harvest of favourites to roast like pumpkin and zucchini.

TIP Seed-filled produce are technically fruits, but for gardening and cooking purposes they are treated like vegies.

THE VEGIE BASICS

Before you start planting, prepare garden beds to give vegetables all the nutrients they need to thrive.

Choose a sunny location with well-drained soil, dig in compost or manure and add lime to very acidic soil, as edibles like a pH of 6.5.

In containers, use a potting mix that's formulated for vegetables.

Sow seeds or transplant seedlings according to the instructions on the packet or label and water in well.

Water in the morning from ground level to prevent mildew and fungal issues and reduce evaporation.

Apply a thin layer of mulch once plants are established. Use an organic type, like lucerne hay, keeping it

100mm from the stems. Feed plants with a complete fruit and vegetable fertiliser during the growing period.

Regularly check for diseases and pests, treating problems immediately.

For a low-maintenance patch, grow disease-resistant varieties and install a drip-irrigation system to take the effort out of watering.



Miracle-Gro All Purpose Plant Food, \$30 for 10kg. scottsaustralia.com.au

PICTURE (TOP) BETTY IMAGES



Warm-season vegies such as beans and cucumbers crop in just weeks.

Growing in your zone

Here is a guide to sowing vegetables in December and January across Australia. Successful growing depends on microclimates and available water, so check with your local nursery about what works best in your area.

TROPICAL

Sow beans, broccoli, capsicum, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, pumpkin, melons, silverbeet, snake beans, spring onion, squash, sweetcorn and tomatoes.

SUBTROPICAL

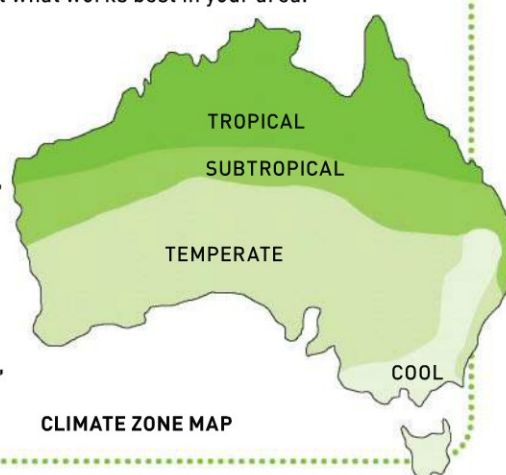
Sow beans, broccoli, capsicum, cauliflower, cucumber, eggplant, melons, radish, silverbeet, squash, sweetcorn and zucchini.

TEMPERATE

Sow beans, beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, capsicum, celery, cucumber, lettuce, parsnip, potato, radish, silverbeet, squash, sweetcorn and turnip.

COOL

Sow beans, beetroot, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, leeks, lettuce, radish, spring onions and turnip. ➤





Runner beans are climbers that bear red flowers and long green pods.

Green beans

Climbing runner beans are fast growers, providing lots of fresh food for little work. They also add colour to the vegie patch when in full flower and laden with pods.

Runner beans are described as perennial because they grow and produce all summer and autumn, then die down in winter when they go dormant, emerging again in spring.

They feature large seeds in long green pods and typically have red flowers although certain types bear white, pink or multicoloured blooms.

Ideal for small gardens, runner beans take up little room if grown on a tripod, teepee or wigwam.

SOW SEEDS 50mm deep in moist soil from spring to midsummer or plant

seedlings every 150mm in double rows spaced about 600mm apart.

Guide the stems up a support and secure using soft ties, and the bean plants will climb naturally.

WATER PLANTS regularly in hot, dry weather then increase watering when in flower and the pods begin to swell, making sure the soil never dries out.

HARVEST FRUIT from eight weeks when the pods are 170mm or less, picking beans two times a week.

LOOK FOR slugs and snails, removing them from the leaves of young plants by hand. Also check for signs of fungal diseases like bean rust.

Apply a fungicide if leaves drop, wither or yellow, and brown or red spots appear on foliage, pods or stems.

TIP Runner beans produce edible flowers but picking them prevents pods forming, so you need to choose between blooms and vegies.



Eden 90cm Tee Pee Plant Support, \$12. edenbrand.com

Mediterranean green beans

Top and tail 450g of green beans and boil in a saucepan for three minutes or until just cooked but still firm. Refresh under cold running water, drain and pat dry.

Heat one tablespoon of olive oil in a frying pan and stir-fry one thinly sliced onion over a medium heat for about eight minutes or until softened.

Stir 16 whole red cherry tomatoes and two teaspoons of olive oil into the onions. Cook for two minutes, turning the tomatoes gently once or twice.

Add the cooked green beans to the pan and stir over the heat for one minute to warm through. Add 30g flaked toasted almonds before serving.

COOK'S TIPS

- Serve these beans with beef or chicken as a side dish.
- To make the dish a main meal, add 200g diced cooked potatoes to the pan with the onions.



Tracking snails

One of the biggest threats to the veggie patch, snails eat crops under cover of darkness, leaving a slimy trail behind to show just where they've been.

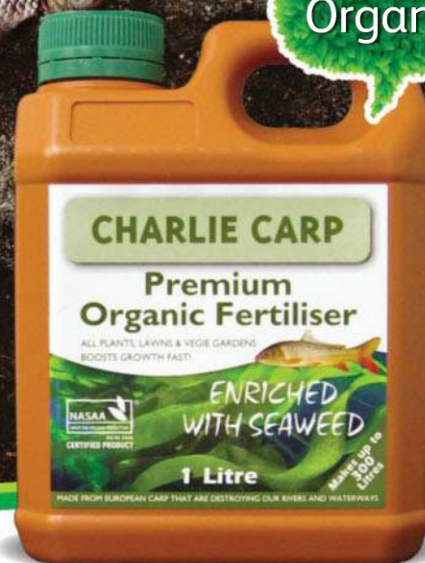
But a new study in the UK by the University of

Exeter has revealed the secret lives of snails.

They can cover 25m in 24 hours and travel in convoys, piggy-backing on the slime of other snails to save their energy for ravaging your vegies. ➤

Put Charlie Carp to work in your garden

Certified Organic



Thanks CHARLIE!

Charlie Carp's Premium Organic Fertiliser has all the natural goodness of your favorite natural fish formula with added seaweed extract for an extra organic boost. It is also very economical with 1 Litre making up to 300 Litres!

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Cucumber

A sprawling vine or bush plant, cucumbers are fast croppers that can fruit well into autumn and the more you pick them, the more they grow.

Cucumbers can bear the usual long green fruit and also pale green or white round varieties called apple cucumbers. Apple cucumbers are not ideal where mildew is a problem.

Gherkins are immature green cucumbers, picked young and pickled. Any green variety can be used but the traditional type has short spiny fruit.

Keep cucumbers in the fridge crisper and use quickly in salads and sandwiches to enjoy them while fresh.

For pickles and relishes, try firm varieties like County Fair and Picklebush. Regal is a high yielding and disease resistant variety while Lebanese cucumbers are great all-rounders that fruit prolifically.

SOW SEEDS in fertile, well-drained soil in full sun. Space vine types about a metre apart and let them trail on the ground or train them up a trellis.

Bush varieties need to be spaced 400mm apart and are ideal for pots.

WATER PLANTS regularly, making sure to never let the soil dry out.

HARVEST FRUIT from eight weeks at 200mm long. Pick apple types when the size of a cricket ball.

LOOK FOR mottled yellow leaves and stunted growth caused by cucumber mosaic virus. There is no treatment or cure, affected plants must be removed and destroyed.



Johnsons Lebanese Cucumber Seeds, about \$4. johnsons-seeds.com.au

Pickled cucumber

Prepare the vinegar two months in advance by combining 7g each of cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, whole nutmeg, allspice and white peppercorns in a muslin bag.

Pour one litre of vinegar into a bottle and add the spice bag. Leave it to steep for two months, shaking the bottle occasionally.

Wash three cucumbers, wipe dry and cut in half lengthways then chop into 10mm thick slices. Layer with coarse salt in a deep dish and leave for 24 hours.

Drain the liquid and rinse cucumbers in cold water. Drain again and pack into sterilised jars then cover with hot, spiced vinegar and seal. They will be ready to eat in a week.

Pumpkins

Eaten mostly as a winter food, pumpkins should be planted now. Seeds need to be sown into warm soil in order to germinate and December or January is the ideal time to get started for an autumn harvest.

With a sprawling habit, pumpkins can take up a lot of space, so in small gardens train the vines up the side of a shed then use a ladder to harvest them from the roof. Or choose bush varieties like Golden Nugget that can be grown in large containers.

SOW SEEDS in saucer-shaped troughs on mounded soil. Space the mounds one to two metres apart, sow five seeds into each and cover with mulch.

The mounds keep roots cool and improve drainage while the troughs direct water to the roots.

WATER PLANTS regularly to stop the fruit splitting, and to protect their shallow roots in dry or windy weather.

HARVEST FRUIT from 14 to 20 weeks, depending on the variety. Leave as much stem as possible attached to help pumpkins last longer.

LOOK FOR powdery mildew, a disease common to vines, that spreads a white film on leaves. Treat with a fungicide.

TIP Damp soil can cause pumpkins to rot so put young fruit on boards raised off the ground to protect them. ➤



Save space
and grow
pumpkins up
a trellis but
give them
help to climb
when young

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Squash & zucchini

Summer squash is the name given to a range of vegies of different shapes and sizes, from light to dark green and bright yellow in colour.

This includes dark-green zucchinis and round or oval fruit in a lighter green. Squash usually refers to the button varieties in green and yellow.

Zucchini and squash can spread over a wide area and are good, fast croppers so you only need a few of each plant to feed the average family.

SOW SEEDS in well-drained, fertile soil improved with well-rotted compost. Mound up the soil and sow two or three seeds at 25mm deep, spaced about 700mm apart.

WATER PLANTS regularly and increase watering when flowering starts and the fruits are growing and ripening.

Don't let the soil dry out but don't overwater either as this can promote leaf growth at the expense of fruit.

HARVEST FRUIT often when the plants are at their peak in summer. Cut off zucchini with a sharp knife when about 150mm long. Pick squash when young. Regular picking encourages the plants to keep fruiting.

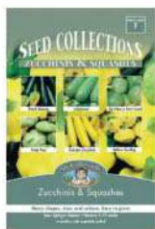
Don't leave even one zucchini to turn into a marrow when harvesting or fruit production will slow down.

LOOK FOR snails and slugs which can strip seedlings overnight and lay baits or scatter pellets. Powdery mildew can be a problem, so cut off leaves showing a white film and treat the plant with an organic spray.

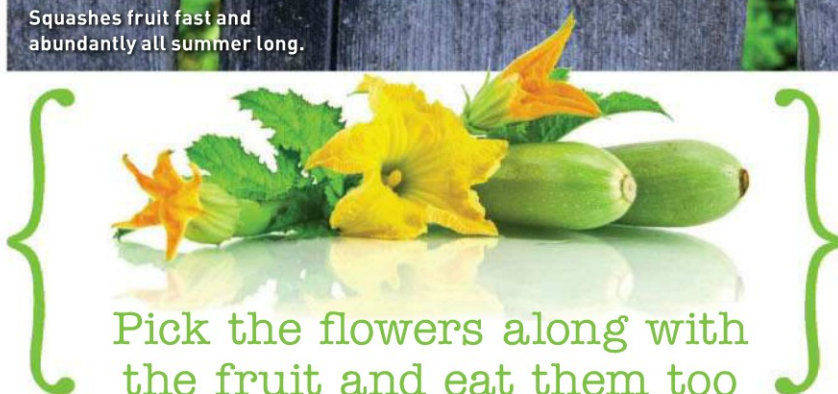
TIP If growth is slow, give the plants a liquid feed once a month.



Squashes fruit fast and abundantly all summer long.



Mr Fothergill's Seed Collections Zucchini & Squashes, \$4. mrfothergills.com.au



Pick the flowers along with the fruit and eat them too

PICTURES (TOP AND LEFT) THINKSTOCK

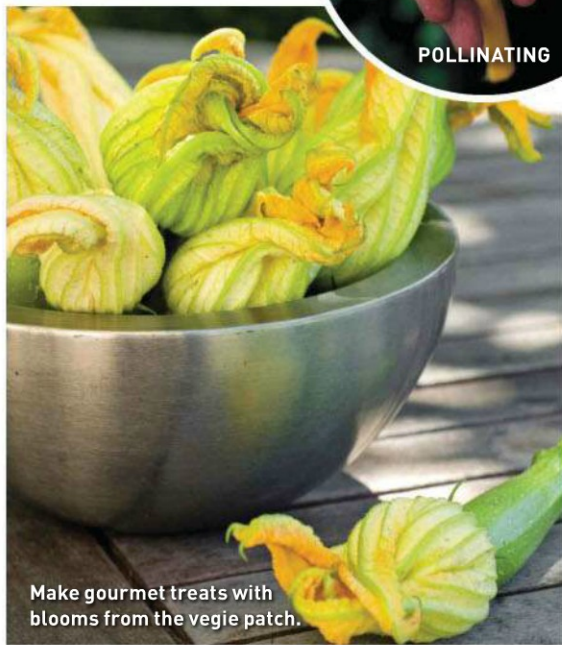
Pollinating vegie flowers

Cucumber, zucchini, pumpkin and squash have male or female flowers. The females need to be pollinated to produce fruit. In sunny weather bees do the job but in cool or wet conditions, hand pollination can ensure a good crop. The female flower has tiny fruit behind it.

■ **TEST THE MALE** with a fingertip when the flowers are fully open. If pollen grains stick it's ready.

■ **PICK THE FLOWER** and gently strip the petals, then press into the centre of a female flower or use a dry paintbrush to transfer the pollen. Use one male on four females and repeat three days in a row.

TIP For large fruits allow only one flower to develop on each stem.



Make gourmet treats with blooms from the vegie patch.

EATING THE BLOOMS

The yellow trumpet-shaped flowers of either sex are edible but the males are mostly used in cooking as they can be picked without stopping fruit production.

■ **PICK THE FLOWERS** and cut off the stems then rinse and gently pat dry between paper towels. If they are not to be eaten straight away, put them in a plastic bag and store in the fridge crisper for a few days.

■ **DIP IN BATTER** and deep-fry in oil, add raw to salads or stuff with a rice, cheese and herb mixture then bake.

TIP Only eat flowers you know have been grown organically without the use of pesticides. ➤

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Tomatoes

A sweet, juicy fruit you can pick and eat fresh from the vine, tomatoes are easy to grow in the garden or pots.

Make sure they have support, as they can reach from 900mm to over three metres. Tie the stems to stakes or use a tomato cage.

Feed tomatoes with potash, not a complete fertiliser, to make them flower earlier and produce more fruit. **SOW SEEDS** in early summer to 5mm deep or transplant seedlings, burying the stem up to the first set of leaves.

WATER PLANTS little and often, so the soil doesn't dry out. If the plants are lush but not setting fruit, water less.

HARVEST FRUIT when ripe, cutting the stalk but leaving the calyx.

LOOK FOR tomato caterpillars that feed on new growth and eat fruit from the stem. Spray with pyrethrum.



Whites Outdoor 1.9m Jumbo Tomato Cage, \$15. whiteswires.com.au



Sweet and juicy, tomatoes range in proportions from bite-sized to beefy.



Double cropper

A hand-grafted plant that grows tomatoes and potatoes is being sold by UK company Thompson & Morgan. This double cropper is called The TomTato and is sure to be a big hit, though it's not yet available in Australia. ➤



Fresh tomato sauce

Peel and deseed then chop a kilo of tomatoes. Heat two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil in a large pan.

Add one finely chopped large onion, a chopped garlic clove, the tomatoes, 150ml vegetable stock and two tablespoons of chopped basil. Cook over medium heat for 30 minutes or until the sauce is thick.

Cool slightly and puree until smooth then pass the sauce through a fine sieve. Add a pinch of sugar and freshly ground black pepper to taste.



Capsicums are a sweet-tasting fruit eaten raw, pickled, dried or roasted.

Capsicum

Also known as peppers, capsicums are large bell-like fruits. They grow on small bushes with dark-green leaves and white, cream or purple flowers.

They are green before they ripen then turn red, yellow or purple as they mature. Picking green fruit produces a bigger crop but ripe capsicums have a sweeter taste.

SOW SEEDS or transplant seedlings in early summer. Capsicums need heat and humidity, so give them a sunny sheltered position in beds or pots.

HARVEST FRUIT when full sized using secateurs to cut the fruit with 25mm of stalk attached. Don't pull them off the stem, as this can cause damage and provide an entry point for disease.

WATER PLANTS regularly as changing moisture levels can cause blossom end rot, which looks like a brown, dead patch at the base of the fruit.

LOOK FOR aphids and spray with eco oil, and set out baits for fruit flies. ➤



Floriana Cut & Cook Capsicum Californian Wonder, about \$14. floriana.com.au

Holiday care for vegies

If you are planning to go away for more than a week the best thing to do is arrange for crops to be harvested and watered while you're gone.

Peas, beans, capsicums and tomatoes need to be picked as they mature. Root vegetables in particular need regular watering but all plants require water to develop new fruit.

If you can't get outside help, here are ways to prepare the vegie patch.

■ **SPREAD ORGANIC MULCH** around widely spaced plants like cabbages to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

■ **REMOVE FLOWERS** from plants that may set seed or develop fruit.

■ **PICK CUCUMBERS** no matter how small and new fruits will develop and be ready to pick when you return.

■ **GIVE PLANTS** a good soaking to encourage the new fruits and set up soaker hoses on an automatic timer.



PICTURES (TOP) SHUTTERSTOCK (LEFT) THINKSTOCK



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Preserving vegies

Vegetables have to be picked when ripe otherwise they will drop or rot, and once harvested they have to be used raw or cooked within days.

If you had a bumper crop this year don't give it all away. Here's how to store the surplus so all that food doesn't go to waste.

The three most common ways to preserve food are drying, freezing and pickling, making fruits and vegetables available out of season.

Only preserve produce that is firm, ripe, well coloured and free of blemishes. Most produce needs to be cut or trimmed first.

Blanching vegetables helps them keep their vitamins and colour. It's especially important before drying to destroy potentially harmful bacteria.



QUICK PICKLING

A popular method of preserving vegies is to pickle them in spiced vinegar.

It's a big flavour booster and prolongs shelf life by several weeks. You can preserve whole or cut vegies and combine different types in one jar.

Varying the amount of vinegar, sugar, salt and spices in the mixture takes the method beyond pickling and into the territory of producing relishes and chutneys.

Use sterilised glass jars and utensils for storing preserved produce. Wash them in hot, soapy water then boil in a pan for 15 minutes and heat in the oven for 10 minutes or until dry.



BACKYARD DRYING

Using the sun to dry produce is the oldest and simplest way to preserve.

Vegies suitable for drying include green beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, capsicum and chillies.

Spread the vegies in a single layer on a drying tray and leave in a warm spot elevated 150mm off the ground to allow air to circulate. Cover the tray with weighted cheesecloth to protect it from insects, adding canvas overnight.

Sundried vegies are preserved in oil with herbs and spices in sterilised jars.

TIP Grind dried vegies into powder, store in an airtight container and use in soups, stews or casseroles.



EASY FREEZING

Freezing is a simple and reliable way to store food, retaining its flavour, colour, texture and nutritional value better than food preserved any other way.

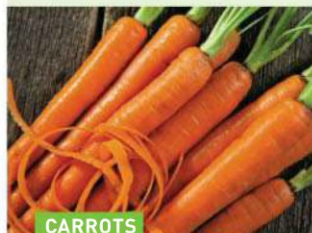
Freezing maintains the appearance of the food, so pick young vegies at peak flavour and freeze immediately. Vegies that are usually cooked before serving are suitable for freezing.

Blanch them in boiling water then pack meal-sized portions in strong freezer wrap or bags, expelling as much air as possible. Label then freeze.

Cook frozen vegies for a shorter time than usual, as they're partially cooked from the blanching process.

BLANCHING BASICS

To prepare vegies for preserving, immerse in boiling water then cool under running water.



CARROTS

PREP Peel and slice, cube or julienne

TIME Four minutes

METHOD Freeze or pickle

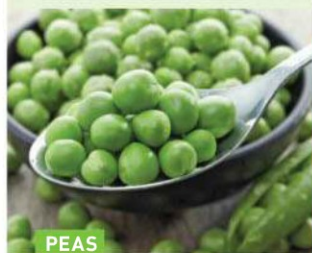


GREEN BEANS

PREP Wash and trim off the ends

TIME Three minutes

METHOD Freeze or dry

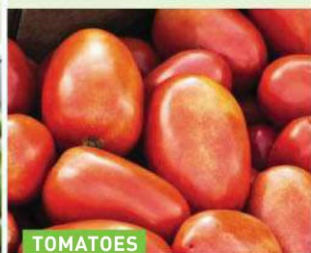


PEAS

PREP Shell then blanch

TIME One minute

METHOD Freeze



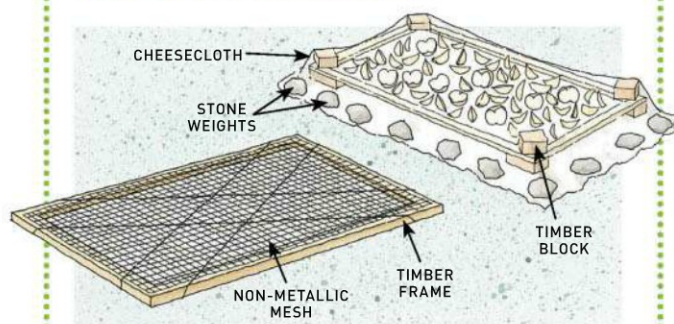
TOMATOES

PREP Blanch then peel

TIME One minute

METHOD Dry or freeze

Sundried tomatoes



Wash and dry tomatoes then cut in half lengthways, leaving the seeds in. Position cut-side up on a drying tray, sprinkle with salt and cover with cheesecloth.

Drying trays have timber frames and non-metallic mesh or slats. Put the tray outside until the tomatoes are completely dry. Leave the tray in full sun then ventilated shade for six days each, ensuring the tray is kept dry.

The oven can also be used to dry tomatoes on the lowest setting, just make sure they don't start to cook. It takes about 12 hours.



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SUMMER GARDEN PESTS AND DISEASES

**RUSSET MITE**

SPOT IT Too tiny to see, these mites turn leaves of tomato, chilli and capsicum yellow then brown and papery. Stems turn brown and lose their hairs, and it also affects the fruit.

ZAP IT Spray with wettable sulphur or tomato dust. Don't plant tomatoes in the same spot next year.



Yates Tomato & Vegetable Dust,
\$10. yates.com.au

**SPOTTED WILT**

SPOT IT Spread by thrips, this virus affects tomato, lettuce, potato and capsicum. Dead patches appear on the leaves, often in concentric circles. Crops are stunted.

ZAP IT Remove and destroy infected plants. Control weeds and spray with maldison or pyrethrum to control thrips.



Richgro Beat-A-Bug,
\$10. richgro.com.au

**CATERPILLAR**

SPOT IT Chewed plants are the first sign, young caterpillars feed on new growth and the mature ones eat fruit from the stem.

ZAP IT Pick off and squash individuals. For infestations, use Dipel bacteria or a pyrethrum-based plant spray.



Yates Pyrethrum Insect
Pest Gun, \$8.

**26-SPOTTED LADYBIRD**

SPOT IT Green-yellow 6mm long larvae covered with black spines cause skeletonised round patches in leaves. Adult ladybirds have 26 or 28 spots.

ZAP IT Pick off and squash. If you have a severe infestation and no beneficial ladybirds, use a general insecticide.



Hortico Systemic Insect Killer,
\$7. hortico.com.au

**METALLIC FLEA BEETLES**

SPOT IT Shiny 3mm beetles cause small, irregular holes in young leaves and buds. Often on lettuce, hibiscus, rhubarb and grape.

ZAP IT For an organic treatment, use sticky traps and dispose of by hand. Or treat with a diluted detergent or pyrethrum-based insect spray.



Multicrop Pyrethrum Long Life
Insect Spray, \$11. multicrop.com.au

**DOWNY MILDEW**

SPOT IT Pale green spots appear on the upper side of leaves with furry growth beneath.

ZAP IT Increase space between plants to reduce humidity. Spray with 100ml of milk in 900ml of water, adding a pinch of bicarbonate of soda to the mix, or use a commercial oil on a cloudy day.



Hortico White Oil
Aerosol, \$6.



GARDENING THIS MONTH



Summer has finally arrived and it's time to start reaping the benefits of earlier plantings. Harvest strawberries and Summer vegetables regularly keeping them well watered and fed to ensure abundant crops. Watering is key throughout Summer and it's best to apply in the late afternoon to early evening.

Plant successive crops of Summer vegetables such as Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Beans, Chillies and Squash ensuring a long and uniform harvest period. These plants cope well with heat, as long as they are planted in well-prepared soil with thick mulch and are watered regularly. Mulching keeps the plant's root system cool and adds nutrients and organic matter to the soil as it breaks down.

Early Summer is a great time to sow many of the classic cottage flowers including Asters, Cosmos,

Foxglove, Hollyhock, Poppies and Zinnias.

They will be ready for planting out early in the new year to provide an array of colour in late Summer through Autumn.

If you have kids in the family, keep them entertained during the holiday season with gardening projects. These can be both educational and fun, keeping kids busy and learning about their natural environment.

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www.mrfothergills.com.au



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FRUIT FLY

SPOT IT Ripe fruit is rotted from its maggot-chewed centre. Flies are attracted to yellow surfaces.

ZAP IT Seal infected fruit in a plastic bag, cook in the sun then throw in the bin. Apply fenthion-based spray regularly or use a fruit fly bait.



Cera Trap Organic Fruit Fly Control, \$30. ceratrap.com



BACTERIAL BLIGHT

SPOT IT Common on peas, leaves develop spots that turn brown or black and shrivel. Green spots on pods turn dark brown.

ZAP IT It's introduced from infected seeds so buy new each year. Rotate crops next season. Spray with a copper-based product and water in the morning only.



Multicrop Kocide Blue Xtra Fungicide, \$8.



APHIDS

SPOT IT These small green sap suckers prefer warm environments and live mainly on the softest plant parts, such as the stems and underside of leaves.

ZAP IT Combine 100ml of vegie oil with a litre of water and a teaspoon of grated natural soap, mix and treat weekly, or use a rose spray.



Eco Oil Concentrate, \$18. ecoorganicgarden.com.au



SCALE

SPOT IT Tiny white lumps cling onto stems or the underside of leaves, the honeydew they produce encourages black sooty mould.

ZAP IT Treat as for aphids, or remove small infestations with a toothbrush or scrape off with your fingernail.



Resolva All-in-One Bug and Fungus Killer, \$11. resolva.com.au



CHRISTMAS COLOUR

Give bright-leafed poinsettias as gifts, use lilies as festive centrepieces or celebrate the season with a native bush

WORDS **ARTEMIS GOUROS**

Flamboyant and eye-catching, poinsettias are classic Christmas plants. Native to Mexico, they grow wild in tropical forests, yet can withstand some cold.

Poinsettias can be enjoyed as indoor plants all year round but really come into their own during the festive season when they are used as decorations or given as a gift.

In the northern hemisphere, poinsettias are traditionally used as living Christmas decorations because their leaves and bracts suit a red and green colour scheme.

They are used the same way here but the bracts of the plants

have to be forced into putting on a bright red display out of season.

For brilliant bracts by Christmas, keep the plants in the dark for at least 14 hours a day from mid spring. Overnight between 5pm and 8am is the easiest time to do this.

Give them a sunny north-facing position or bright filtered light in temperatures of about 21°C and they will last indoors with little care for weeks or even months.

Water only when the mix is dry to the touch and always empty the saucers so the plants don't sit in water.

After the holidays are over, put poinsettias in a lightly shaded

position to recover. When exposed to summer daylight again the bracts will revert to green leaves. ➤



Poinsettia 140mm Red Bauble Ceramic Pot, \$25, from Bunnings.

CHOOSING A COLOUR

Poinsettia cultivars come in lots of colours, not just the red and green. Visit your local nursery around Christmas to choose a plant that suits your holiday decorating scheme, as they will have been forced into colour at that time of year.



WHITE



PINK



YELLOW



APRICOT



Keeping the colour

Poinsettias are low-maintenance, but several factors can affect the appearance and health of the leaves and bracts.

SMALL BRACTS on a young plant need more light to mature.

YELLOW LEAVES dropping off a new plant mean it is adjusting to the new environment.

FADED BRACTS are caused by too much sun, as direct light bleaches the deep colours.

DROOPING LEAVES in a regularly watered plant can be a sign of root rot due to poor drainage.

Cheerful and bright, poinsettias are a classic Christmas gift.

BRACTS NOT BLOOMS

Many people think of poinsettias as having large, showy red petals but these are modified leaves called bracts.

They grow around the true flowers, which are insignificant white to yellow blooms massed together in the centre of each leaf cluster.

Euphorbia pulcherrima is the common single red variety. Some cultivars, like 'Henriette Ecke' have double red leaves and hybridisation techniques have led to a wide range of bract colours including white, yellow, orange, pink and even purple.

Poinsettias produce a sticky white sap. When using them as cut flowers stand the stems in very hot water until it cools to thicken the substance.

The plants bought at this time of year as gifts are sold as dwarf varieties but have actually had their growth stunted by hormones so they only grow about 300mm high and wide.

If planted out they reach a natural height of three or four metres.

They only last a year but cuttings from summer and winter pruning can be used to propagate new plants.

Take 300mm stem cuttings, dip the ends in water then insert into potting soil and keep moist for several weeks until the cuttings begin to make roots.

TIP To keep the plant bushy, lightly tip-prune at least once in summer. ➤



In the garden poinsettia is a rounded shrub that grows to four metres tall.



Planting poinsettias

In the warmer zones of Australia, including regions of Qld, NSW, SA and WA, poinsettias can be grown outside. In cooler areas, plant in a sheltered position or grow them indoors.

Choose a spot with full sun and well-drained slightly acidic soil improved with organic matter.

Dig a planting hole slightly larger than the rootball, position the plant so

10mm of the rootball is above ground level then backfill. Water in well then at least weekly and feed regularly.

Left alone poinsettias get leggy and straggly. In late winter or spring, cut them back hard after flowering. Take the plant almost to soil level for new shoots in a few weeks.

Prune again in late summer and apply liquid potash during autumn.



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GROWING A FESTIVE NATIVE

Certain Australian natives that flower around the end of the year are commonly called Christmas plants and have been used as festive flora since the 1800s. Grow them in pots and keep indoors during the season then plant them outside.



NEW SOUTH WALES

Ceratopetalum gummiferum
Christmas bush

- Shrub to 5m high and 1m wide
- White star-like spring blooms
- Red calyces in summer
- Full sun in well-drained soil



VICTORIA

Prostanthera lasianthos
Christmas tree

- Shrub or small tree
- Grows from 2m to 10m tall
- White, pink or mauve blooms
- Heavy shade or full sun



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Bursaria spinosa
Christmas bush

- Hardy shrub from 3m
- Masses of white flowers in late spring and summer
- Light shade in well-drained soil



WEST AUSTRALIA

Nuytsia floribunda
Christmas tree

- Grows to 10m tall
- Bright orange summer blooms
- Full sun
- Frost resistant



QUEENSLAND

Calanthe triplicate
Christmas orchid

- Evergreen orchid good for pots
- Heavy shade in moist soil
- White flowers on 1.5m long spikes in summer



TASMANIA

Blandfordia punicea
Christmas bells

- Red 10mm long bell-shaped flowers with yellow tips
- Flower stalks to 1m high
- Full sun in sandy soil ➤

Christmas lilies

Featuring white, trumpet-shaped blooms on long stems, the heavily scented *Lilium longiflorum* or Christmas lily is a favourite both indoors as a cut flower and outside in the garden.

They bloom from late spring and throughout summer and are also called November lilies, depending on the climate and when they first flower.

Liliums are true lilies and there are hundreds of hybrids in a huge array of flower forms and colours.

The time to plant bulbs is late autumn to winter but Christmas lilies and other varieties of Asiatic and Oriental liliums are readily available as potted plants at this time of year.

Keep them in their containers or plant out in the garden in well-drained soil in a position with morning sun, watering well during summer.

TIP Liliums are big feeders so fertilise regularly during the growing season.



Lily Looks, 170mm Asiatic Lilium, about \$15, from Bunnings.



Add potted Christmas lilies to the deck or give them away as gifts.

Arranging cut flowers

Liliums make wonderful cut flowers and if cared for can last two weeks.

Put the flowers in a bucket of lukewarm water then, working underwater, cut 25 to 50mm off the stems on a 45° angle using a sharp, clean knife.

Add clean water and flower food to a vase, remove any leaves below the water line and arrange the lilies.

Position the vase out of direct sun and change the water every few days.

The pollen can stain fabric, skin and furniture, so snip off the anthers on the end of the stamens as the flowers open to prevent them dropping.

Lilies are highly toxic to cats, so make sure they don't bite the leaves or petals, lick pollen off their fur or drink the vase water.



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POTS OF COLOUR

Give a rusted plant stand a complete overhaul then add potted blooms for a bright display of summer annuals

PROJECT AND PICTURES **ARTEMIS GOUROS**

Handyman Deputy editor Artemis Gouros picked up a metal rack at a garage sale, intending to give it a coat of new paint and use it as a plant stand.

The stand was on the DIY to-do list for years, getting rustier and rustier.

'I decided to revamp the plant stand in time for this summer and use it to display annuals,' says Artemis.

'It is the perfect size for flowerpots and metal suits the rustic look in my yard. I like using plant stands, as

you're less likely to forget to water the flowers when they're all in one spot.

'There was rust on the stand but I found a range of products for metal by White Knight. I treated the rust and applied a metal primer to protect against corrosion before painting.

'I chose Marine Blue but the epoxy enamel used can be tinted to any Colorbond or Taubmans colour.

'With preparation work and drying times in between coats, the makeover took a few days to complete.

'It took a lot of elbow grease and brushstrokes but now the stand looks so good my sister wanted it for her new deck.

'I said no, but that I'd keep an eye out for another one and paint it for her.' ➤



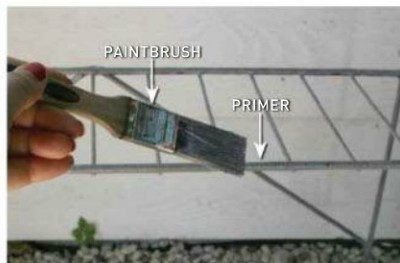
White Knight Rust Converter, about \$14 for 125ml. whiteknightpaints.com.au

Painting rusted metal

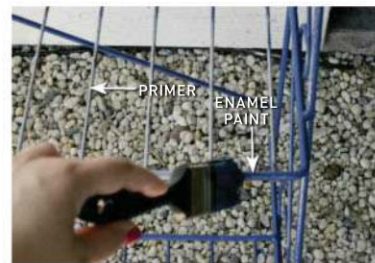
Metal surfaces have to be free of dust, dirt, grease, oil and rust before they are painted, so use a wire brush to remove flaking rust and old paint then scrub with soapy water and leave to dry.



● **SCRUB THE METAL** with steel wool and a wire brush to remove flaking paint or loose rust, then sand with 60 grit abrasive paper.



● **TREAT THE SURFACE** with a rust converter, applying it with a brush and leaving it to dry, then apply a metal primer using a paintbrush.



● **PAINT THE STAND** with two coats of a rust-inhibiting enamel paint, applying it with a brush.
TIP You can also use spray paint.



AFTER
Painted blue and rust-free it makes
a great plant stand for colourful displays.

BEFORE

Old and rusty, this metal stand was a good
size and shape but needed a makeover.

Summer blooms

The best way to inject colour into the garden during summer is with a display of annual flowers.

Annuals are short-lived plants that germinate, mature and die within months, completing their entire life cycle in one growing season.

It's not too late to plan a showcase if you didn't prepare beds in spring, as many annuals can be sown or grown from December to February.

Sow seeds now for flowers in eight to 12 weeks, depending on the variety. Or transplant seedlings and water them in with a seaweed solution to help the plants form strong roots.

If you lack flowerbeds, create a potted display and change it with the seasons. For instant results, buy potted colour from your local nursery.

TIP To prolong the flowering show, deadhead blooms regularly.



Johnsons Mixed Annuals, about \$3 for 200 seeds. johnsons-seeds.com.au



Mass-plant annuals in garden beds for a brilliant summer show.

Choosing annual flowers

Here are five flowering plants that can be sown or grown during summer. Consult your local nursery for varieties to suit your area.



SUNFLOWER



MARIGOLD

ZINNIA



AGERATUM



PETUNIA

+ Get more online

Visit handyman.net.au/mag for an easy guide to Sowing An Annual Bed.

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