

AUSTRALIAN

Handyman

We show you how

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PROJECTS**

21 ways to add colour
& style outside

WIN

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TOOLKIT**

**GREAT
GIFT
IDEAS**

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Build a pergola



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World's most trusted pool safety gate latch

Dec/Jan *issue*



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WIN

THE ULTIMATE TOOLKIT **p66**
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ADAM WOODHAMS

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to *Handyman* **p110**



*A Christmas
to remember*

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and have a very merry time

68

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Each year, our Dec/Jan issue is our most popular and biggest-selling edition, reflecting how Aussies love outdoor living and entertaining.

And what better way to embrace this than to build a deck that will become the place you spend most of your summer, enjoying the sunshine or just kicking back with friends.

Over the years, we've featured lots of decks, and shown you step-by-step how to put one in at your place.

This issue has three great deck building projects and an ultra-modern pergola, starting on page 23. We also give advice on keeping any existing decks in tiptop shape, on page 53.

For even more ideas and deck designs you can build, check out our website handyman.net.au.

Happy holidays

Why leave Christmas shopping to the last minute and add stress to your life? We've done the legwork for you and come up with fantastic choices for the family and the home, on page 11.

There's also a delicious Christmas feast to prepare on page 68, and festive decorations you can make on page 84.

Fun projects

When you have time off work, it's satisfying to get through that list of jobs you've been putting off, like regrouting tiles and fixing flyscreens.

But you could try our holiday projects instead, on page 129, which

are much more creative and will add colour and fun to your outdoor areas.

They're ideal to do with the kids, and most use materials you probably have lying around in the garage.

Stay safe

The holiday season is also a time when those of us living in bushfire-prone areas need to be prepared, just in case.

To make it easier and less stressful for you, we've devised a checklist to help protect you, your house, your family and your pets, on page 121.



The Handyman team, from back left: Gun, Frank, Lee, Artemis, Connie, Ashleigh, Daniel, Kate and Amanda.

Another thing to be on top of during the holidays is home security, especially if you're going away. So we share tips and tricks to help keep your home safe, on page 116.

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR
LEE DASHIELL

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All do-it-yourself activities involve a degree of risk. Skills, materials, tools and site conditions
vary widely. The editors have made every effort to ensure accuracy but the reader remains
responsible for the selection and use of tools, materials and methods. Always obey local
codes and laws, follow manufacturers' operating instructions and observe safety precautions.

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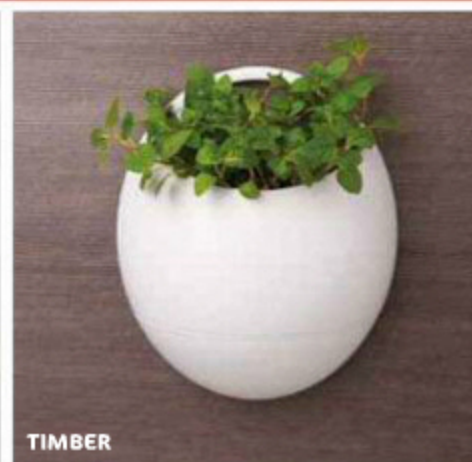


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HANDYSTUFF

Pick out the perfect present for everyone this holiday season from this round-up of must-haves

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



- 1 CHARGE SMARTPHONES** and tablets with the two-port Energizer Powerbank, \$100. energizerbatteries.com.au
- 2 ATTRACT WILDLIFE** to the garden with the colourful Garden Trading Co Bird Feeder, \$5, from Bunnings.
- 3 LIGHT THE WAY** using a 125 x 75 x 75mm Orange Butterfly Candle Lantern, about \$4, from Bunnings.
- 4 KEEP INDOOR PLANTS** watered for up to four days with a Scheurich Froggy Water Reserve, \$6, from Bunnings.
- 5 PAINT IT FAST** with a Wagner Flexio 585 Spray Gun for small to medium jobs, \$229. wagneraustralia.com.au
- 6 DETECT MOULD RISK** and thermal bridges with a Bosch Thermo Detector Measurer, \$179. bosch-do-it.com.au
- 7 PRINT WIRELESSLY** at home or in the office with a Fujixerox DocuPrint CM215fw, \$405. fujixerox.com.au

PICTURES (BIRD FEEDER, LANTERN) MICHAEL BLAECK (BACKGROUND) THINKSTOCK



- 1 REMOVE RESTRICTION when using a Makita 115mm 18V Angle Grider, \$119, skin only. makita.com.au
- 2 TRY GOURMET barbecue recipes with *King of the Grill* by Ross Dobson (Murdoch Books, \$40). murdochbooks.com.au
- 3 GO SHORT with a VS Sassoon For Men Crew Cut Kit, including a cordless trimmer, \$120. vssassoon.com.au
- 4 GRILL IT using a Samba BBQ Smoking Gift Pack with smoker box and three smoking chip packs, \$20, from Bunnings.
- 5 COOL DOWN using a Coleman Game Day Chilla Chair Combo with space for 18 cans, \$39. colemanaustralia.com.au
- 6 BRING BEER in an Esky 38L Soft Wheeled Cooler, which holds up to 42 cans, \$50. colemanaustralia.com.au
- 7 SWITCH BETWEEN battery or corded power sources with a Ryobi 18V Hybrid Line Trimmer, \$199. ryobi.com.au ➤

PICTURES: HAIR CLIPPERS, WOOD CHIPS: MICHAEL BLACK



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THIS ISSUE



1



3



4



2



5



6



7



PICTURES (BLENDER, GLASSES) MICHAEL BLAICK

- 1 **GET OUT** the door faster with a Kambrook Blitz2Go Active Personal Blender, \$50. kambrook.com.au
- 2 **WELCOME BIRDS** with fresh water in a Gardman Cast Iron Antique Hanging Bird Bath, \$16. brunnings.com.au
- 3 **PROTECT EYES** from the sun and projectiles with UV Wraps Safety Glasses, \$16. uvwraps.com.au
- 4 **FIX IT** using an Ozito 3.6V Li-ion Cordless Screwdriver Torch Kit with 54 screwdriver bits, \$29. ozito.com.au
- 5 **CALL BACK** friends and family using a Uniden Modro 15 Series Retro Style Home Phone, \$50. uniden.com.au
- 6 **RECLINE IN** style and relax on a comfy wicker Mimosa Balmoral Day Bed with Canopy, \$899, from Bunnings.
- 7 **MOVE IT** with ease around the deck on an Eden 35cm Pot Plant Trolley made from cast iron, \$20, from Bunnings. ➤



For the kids

- 1 GET KIDS into gardening with a fun Munakuppi Grow Hair Kit, \$5. mrfothergills-seeds-bulbs.com.au
- 2 WATER IT with a Sontax 1.8L Blue Watering Can made from galvanised iron and stainless steel, \$9. sontax.com.au
- 3 PROTECT HANDS while in the garden with a pair of Wells Lamont Kid's Washable Gloves, \$5, from Bunnings.
- 4 MAKE TASTY icy treats for the children in just 10 minutes with a Zoku Ice Cream Maker, \$40. zokuhome.com
- 5 ADD ADVENTURE with Uniden Camouflaged UHF Radios, which have a 3km range, \$60 for two. uniden.com.au
- 6 DIG IN using a My First Fiskars sturdy shovel, spade, rake or broom, about \$17 each. au.fiskars.com
- 7 BE CREATIVE with a Wood Worx Fashion Jewellery Craft Kit or Street Racer Kit, \$16 each. colorific.com.au >

PICTURES: WATERING CAN, GLOVES: MICHAEL BLACK

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BUYER'S GUIDE

REPEL INSECTS

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT PICTURES STUART SCOTT

Keep bugs at bay the easy way this barbie season with these good-looking coils, zappers and candles

Safe zone

Make sure mosquitoes don't mute the mood of your dinner party with the Mortein Outdoor Mosquito Lantern, \$13. The candle odourlessly repels for up to four hours, creating a 5 x 5m barrier.

Flame fortress

Remove the risk of being attacked when dining outside with the Waxworks Brushed Stainless Steel Table Top Burner, \$19. The sleek design will complement any outdoor setting.

Diffuse it

Sniff the smooth scent of sandalwood with the New Mountain Portable Diffuser, \$17. It includes five sticks that give two hours of protection each, whether you're in the yard or away camping.

Wick away

Safeguard against all-night itching with the Waxworks Citronella Zen Bucket, \$10. It has a wind-resistant wick and is available in three vibrant colours, green, blue and red.

Party trooper

Set up for a successful soiree with the Haven 7cm Ceramic Candle Holder, \$7. Just pop in a citronella candle to keep bugs from bothering your guests, without compromising your table setting.

Cotta have it

Take no chances at your next barbie with the Waxworks Citronella and Sandalwood Mozzie Coils in a Terracotta Diffuser, \$5. It uses natural repellents to make sure you have no unwanted guests. ➤

Centre peace

Make a statement with the Waxworks Aura Table Top Citronella Candle, \$16. The paper wick is wind-resistant while the citronella essential oil keeps the mozzies away from the table.



BUYER'S GUIDE

ZAP INSECTS



Bug blaster

Get rid of irksome biters with the Yard Guard Bug Vac Triple Action Flying Insect Trap, \$90. Attracted by the UV lamp, a fan sucks the insects into detergent-spiked water where they get stuck and drown.



Shock therapy

Attract and attack backyard blood suckers with the Magic Touch Stinger Solar Insect Killer, \$45. The UV light draws them to the 1500W killing grid, and can be switched to a white LED path light.

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Add an alfresco room
Construct a modern timber pergola over a patio or courtyard to define the space and provide a sturdy frame to hold climbing plants for shade.

When covered with climbers, this pergola will provide ample shade.

DIY

Outdoor spaces

Create your ultimate entertaining area with 11 inspiring projects and upgrades for decks, courtyards and patios

Landscape with decking
Use modern decking materials to landscape a split-level yard and add a functional outdoor extension of the home in a narrow space.

Design and create a space for eating and relaxing outside.

PICTURES (MAIN) THINKSTOCK (INSETS) STUART SCOTT

This deck works as a natural link between the house and the yard.

ADD A PERGOLA

Define an outdoor room and provide support for climbing plants by constructing an impressive timber feature

PROJECT FRANK GARDNER MAIN PICTURES STUART SCOTT

Courtyards invite us outside in the warmer months but provide little protection from the sun.

For this exposed courtyard, a solid 6 x 2.4m timber pergola was built as a framework for climbing plants to shade the area, and supported by a ledger secured with Dynabolts to the rendered side wall of the house.

Before starting the build, ensure timber sizes meet Australian standards

and check whether council approval or building plans are required.

We used Woodhouse Weatherproof Pink Primed LOSP Architectural Pine (woodhouse-weatherproof.com.au).

Treated to an H3 level to be termite and fungal resistant, it needs finishing with two coats of paint. The posts and beams are GL8 laminated pine, while the rafters, ledger, battens and braces were cut from structural F7 pine. ➤

Building the frame

Prepare the site using stringlines to set out a 6 x 2.4m rectangle.

Check the area for square with a builder's square and take diagonal measurements between corners.

Mark the positions of the footing holes and excavate the holes to the required size then fill with concrete.

1 **INSTALL** three 135 x 135mm posts secured to concrete footings on galvanised supports and attach a ledger to the side of the house.

2 **ADD** a roof by bolting front and side beams to the posts and ledger.

3 **SECURE** rafters set at a 5° angle between the ledger and front beam.

4 **TOP** the rafters with six equally spaced battens for lateral stability, set parallel to the front beam.

5 **BRACE** the structure with knee braces positioned parallel to the house wall off the corner posts.

Footing sizes vary with soil type and wind ratings. In high-wind areas, specific post supports that must be anchored in the concrete footings are needed, so check all requirements with your local building authority.

Seal cut timber ▼



For an exterior build, it is essential to finish the timber correctly.

SEAL all cut ends, drilled holes, notches and rebates using an APVMA registered timber preservative end sealer.

PRIME all sealed surfaces once they are dry to ensure the treatment area is thoroughly sealed.

Enseal Clear Timber Preservative, \$16 for 300g. aftek.com.au



PICTURE (TOP LEFT) THINKSTOCK



BUILD

TIME 3 DAYS
SKILL INTERMEDIATE
DIY \$2380
TOOLS MITRESAW,
DRILL, CIRCULAR SAW

After

Providing a framework to support climbers for shade, the pergola makes an exposed courtyard much more inviting.

Escape

the Heat

and Stay Cool

this

Summer

With a

HOLMAN

Misting System

HOLMAN

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The HOLMAN Misting System product range comprises of three box kits, and an individually available selection of parts, that allow you to set up the design that best suits your location. For fully automatic Misting, we recommend adding the HOLMAN Misting Tap Timer to your system. (Product Code: CO3009). Misting System 7M Kit - Product code: MK21013, Misting System 4M Expansion Kit Product code: MK21014, Misting System 20M Deluxe Kit - Product code: MK21015. *Now that's smart watering!*



Complete the space with vibrant outdoor furniture that will withstand the elements.

Prepare the posts

To give the pergola structural strength and a solid look, we chose treated pine posts with a large 135 x 135mm section size, but 88 and 112mm square posts are also available.

Before erecting and securing the three posts, secure supports to the bases and brace the posts in position. Establish the finished height and mark it on the post tops.

Cut the housings in the top of the posts to carry the front beam, then seal all cut ends ready for installation.

To finish, apply two coats of semi-gloss exterior acrylic to the posts and all pergola components to provide protection from the elements. We used the Colorbond colour Dune to blend in with the house.

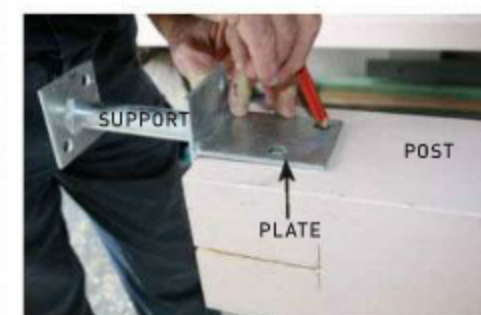
TIP To make finishing quicker and easier, apply at least one coat of paint before building starts. ➤



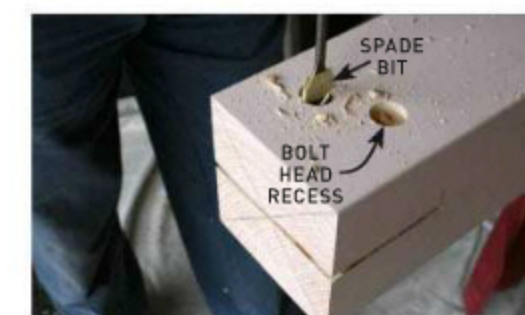
Taubmans Endure Semi Gloss for Exterior Walls, \$67 for 4L.
taubmans.com.au

Installing the supports

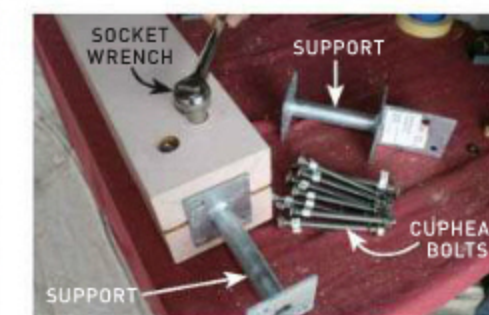
The post bases had 5mm wide slots cut 110mm deep to accommodate the centre-fix supports, then bolt holes were drilled through the posts to align with the holes in the support plates. **TIP** Seal the cut ends with timber preservative.



1 CUT SLOTS for the support plates, 110mm high and 5mm wide with a circular saw, then a handsaw. Centre the support to mark bolt hole locations on both sides of the post.

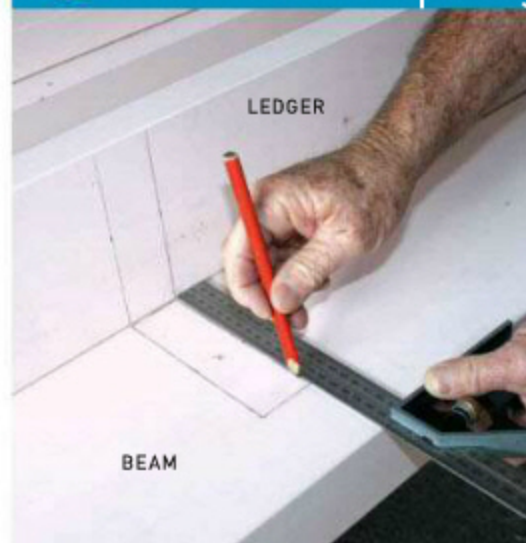


2 DRILL THE HOLES to 20mm deep with a 25mm spade bit to make recesses for the washers and nuts. Use a twist bit matching the bolt size to drill through from both sides.



3 INSTALL THE SUPPORTS by tapping the plate into position. Align the holes and secure using stainless steel cuphead bolts, washers and nuts, tightened with a socket wrench.

Build the pergola



1 Set out the rafters

Mark the rafter setout on the ledger, aligning the first and last rafter with the ledger ends and locating the rest at 832mm centres. Position the ledger on the beam, setting it 65mm in from each end, then transfer the setout to the beam with the rafters 60mm from the base.



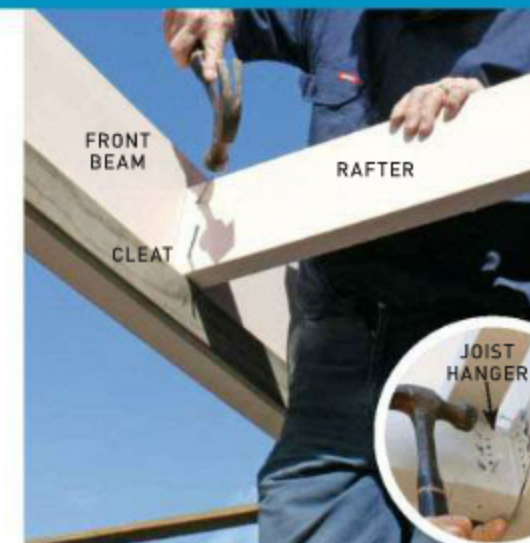
2 Attach the ledger

Mark hole locations at 450mm centres on the ledger, drilling recesses 25mm in diameter and 20mm deep, finishing with a 12mm twist bit. Flick a level chalkline to show the height, then prop the ledger in position. Use a hammer drill to bore 12mm holes, securing the ledger with Dynabolts.



3 Mark the post heights

Brace an end post in position, then cut a 5° bevel on one rafter. Butt the cut end of the rafter against the ledger so it slopes at 5° past the post, then clamp it to the post and mark the position. Repeat for the other end post, checking for level using a water level.



7 Add the rafters

Cut the rafters with 5° parallel bevels on each end. Use screws to temporarily secure cleats to the beam and ledger, then position each rafter in turn on the setout marks, securing with pairs of skewed nails on either side, then with 140 x 45mm joist hangers and clouts.



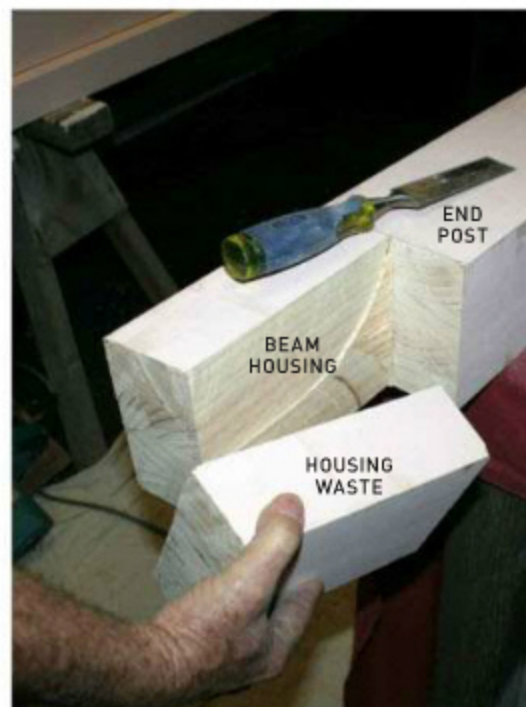
8 Attach the side beams

Cut the side beams to length with 5° parallel bevels on each end, then clamp them to the end rafters and secure to the front beam using screws. Secure the side beams to the end rafters from the inside with screws at 500mm centres, then secure the side beams to the ledger with screws.



9 Secure the battens

Position the first batten on the rafters next to the front beam, then cut spacers to position the remaining battens. Drill 8mm clearance holes in the battens to secure to the rafters with screws. Countersink the screw heads just below the surface, cover with timber filler and sand when dry. ➤



4 Cut the beam housings

Set out the beam housings on the end posts, measuring 60mm down and 42mm up from the rafter positions, then cut the top of the end posts to align with the top of the rafters at 5°. Use a circular saw to cut away the housing waste, finishing with a chisel. Seal the cut ends of the timber.



5 Erect the posts

Stand the two end posts and secure to the concrete footings using Dynabolts. Brace them plumb and stretch a stringline between the end posts to locate the housing position on the centre post. Cut the centre post to length, prepare the beam housing, then brace and bolt it in position.



6 Secure the front beam

Cut 65 x 30mm rebates on the beam ends, chiselling out the waste, then lift it into position on the posts. Drill offset 25mm recesses to 20mm deep in the back of each post, then finish drilling through with a 10mm auger bit. Tap in the bolts and secure the beam using a socket wrench.

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Pergola measurements in mm

RAFTER SETOUT

6000

832 832 832 832 832 832 832

440 440 440 440 440

2400

65 135 2300 135 2300 135 432 65

6000

POST SETOUT

198

2400

240

2772

2402

130

450

CONCRETE FOOTING

POST

FRONT BEAM

BATTEN

42

138

60

SIDE BEAM

END RAFTER

5°

WALL

LEDGER

LEDGER

RAFTER

BATTEN

END POST

KNEE BRACE

CENTRE POST

FRONT BEAM

HOUSING

SIDE BEAM

END POST

Brace the pergola by adding knee braces inside the corner posts. Use a mitresaw to cut them with opposing 45° angles on the ends. Position between the front beam and posts, drill 8mm countersunk clearance holes and secure with screws.

TYPE	USE
Dynabolts, M10 x 50mm	Post supports
Stainless steel cuphead bolts, M10 x 130mm	Post to support and front beam
Galvanised Dynabolts, M12 x 100mm	Ledger
Galvanised clouts, 40 x 2.8mm	Joist hangers
Galvanised nails, 75 x 3.5mm	Rafters
Galvanised bugle screws, 75mm x 14g	Rafters to side beams, battens and knee braces
Galvanised bugle screws, 100mm x 14g	Beam corners

PART	SIZE	NO
GL8 H3 LOSP Pine		
Posts	2600 x 135 x 135	3
Front beam	6000 x 240 x 65	1
Side beams	2365 x 240 x 65	2
F7 H3 LOSP Pine		
Ledger	5870 x 138 x 42	1
Rafters	2293 x 138 x 42	8
Battens	5870 x 66 x 42	6
Corner braces	480 x 90 x 42	2

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RAISE A DECK

Adding an outdoor room to this coastal home opened up the views

PROJECT FRANK GARDNER MAIN PICTURE STUART SCOTT

The original design of this home, belonging to *Handyman* Technical editor Frank Gardner, featured a narrow balcony that didn't take full advantage of the sweeping bay and mountain views.

'We love eating alfresco, so we decided to knock down the balcony and build a deck big enough for the whole family to enjoy our beautiful outdoor setting,' says Frank.

Engineer-specified plans, including dimensions, heights and material sizes, were drawn to scale, then submitted to council for development approval.

Concrete footings were poured, then brick piers erected to carry the weight of the deck, with steel beams positioned on top and tied to the piers using threaded rod.

A ledger was bolted to the floor joist stubs of the original balcony to support the new joists, which were then fitted inside the steel beams and braced with blocking.

To finish, blackbutt decking boards were laid and a new stainless steel wire balustrade was installed. ➤

Off with the old ▼

The old balcony was supported by the house floor joists cantilevered at the front of the house.

First the balustrade and decking were removed, then the joists cut back to within 10mm of the rendered brickwork.

'The remaining joist stubs were used as solid attachment points for the new ledger instead of securing it with Dynabolts to the soft dry-pressed brickwork of the house,' says Frank.

Footing the bill

He knew the deck could blow out the reno budget, so Frank worked with tradies to help save on labour costs and sourced some of the materials, like the bricks, from recycling yards.

'The money we saved went towards a set of cedar French doors between the family room and the new deck,' says Frank.

To prepare the site, the old 1200mm wide balcony was removed, then the deck area was set out and squared up at ground level.





The pier height allows the deck to be level with the house's upper floor.

Setting out the deck

'It was important to have a seamless transition from the house to the deck across the door sill,' says Frank.

To achieve this, the new joists were positioned flush with the top of the remaining floor joist stubs.

'It was easy in the end, as we simply aligned the new joists with the old because they were spaced at perfect 450mm centres,' says Frank.

Plumb lines were established from the outer joist stubs down to ground level and a 5.9 x 5m stringline setout was pegged in position, then the footing locations were marked.

The engineer-designed footings were dug using a shovel and fencing bar, then once council inspection was complete, they were filled with just over half a cubic metre of concrete.

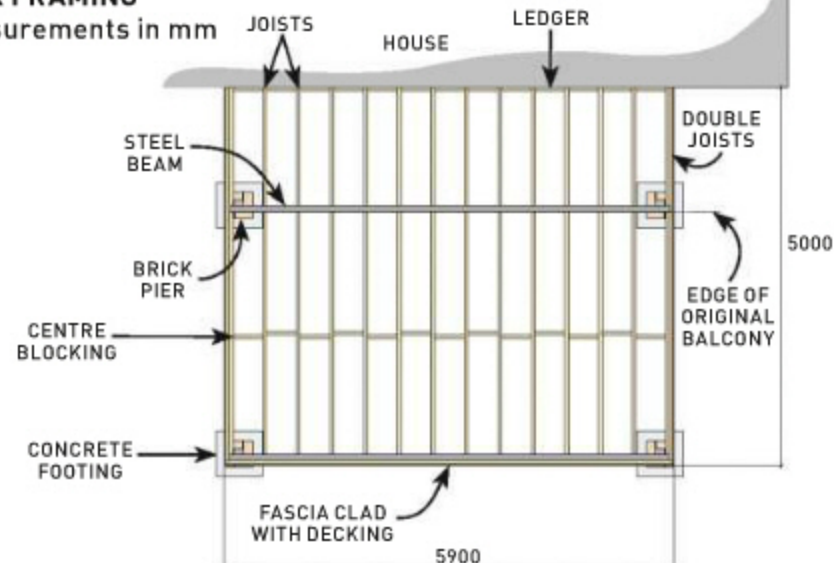
A steel float was used to level the concrete just above ground level, then a bricklayer was employed to build the four 350 x 350mm piers up to a height 195mm below floor level.

'I mixed the mortar and also lugged the bricks to help save on labour costs,' says Frank.

M12 threaded rod was embedded in the centre of the brick piers to tie down the steel beams.

DECK FRAMING

measurements in mm



Steel beams ▼

Two hot-dipped galvanised steel beams were positioned on top of the brick piers to carry the deck load. At either end of the beams, 15mm holes were drilled for the threaded rod.

Says Frank, 'I held my breath as the beams were lowered into place.'

'Amazingly the holes aligned perfectly and the rods slotted smoothly through the holes.'

The beams were then secured in position using washers and nuts.



The rod was cut to length using an angle grinder and metal cutoff wheel.

Attaching the ledger

The joist setout was marked on the ledger and notches cut to fit over the joist stubs, then recesses were drilled for coachscrew heads and the ledger was secured flush to the wall.



1 **CUT NOTCHES** to a depth of 10mm at the back of the ledger between the setout marks using a circular saw. Use a chisel to square up the notches and remove the waste.



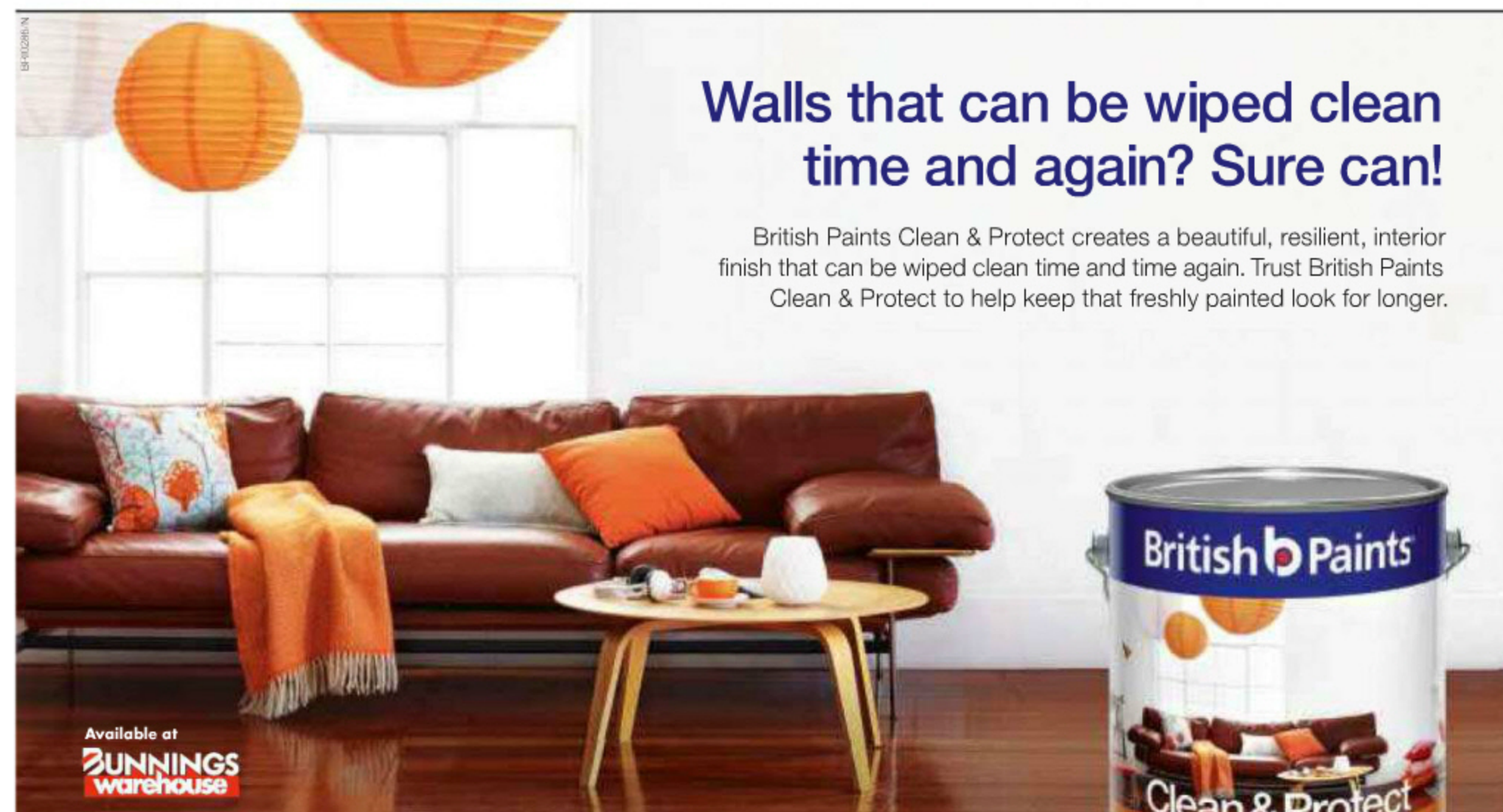
2 **DRILL THE RECESSES** by turning the ledger over, then using a 25mm spade bit to drill 15mm deep recesses to accommodate the screw heads on the front between the joist setout lines.



3 **SECURE THE LEDGER** by propping it in position with the notches slotted over the joist stubs. Drill pilot holes into the joists, then secure with stainless steel coachscrews. ➤

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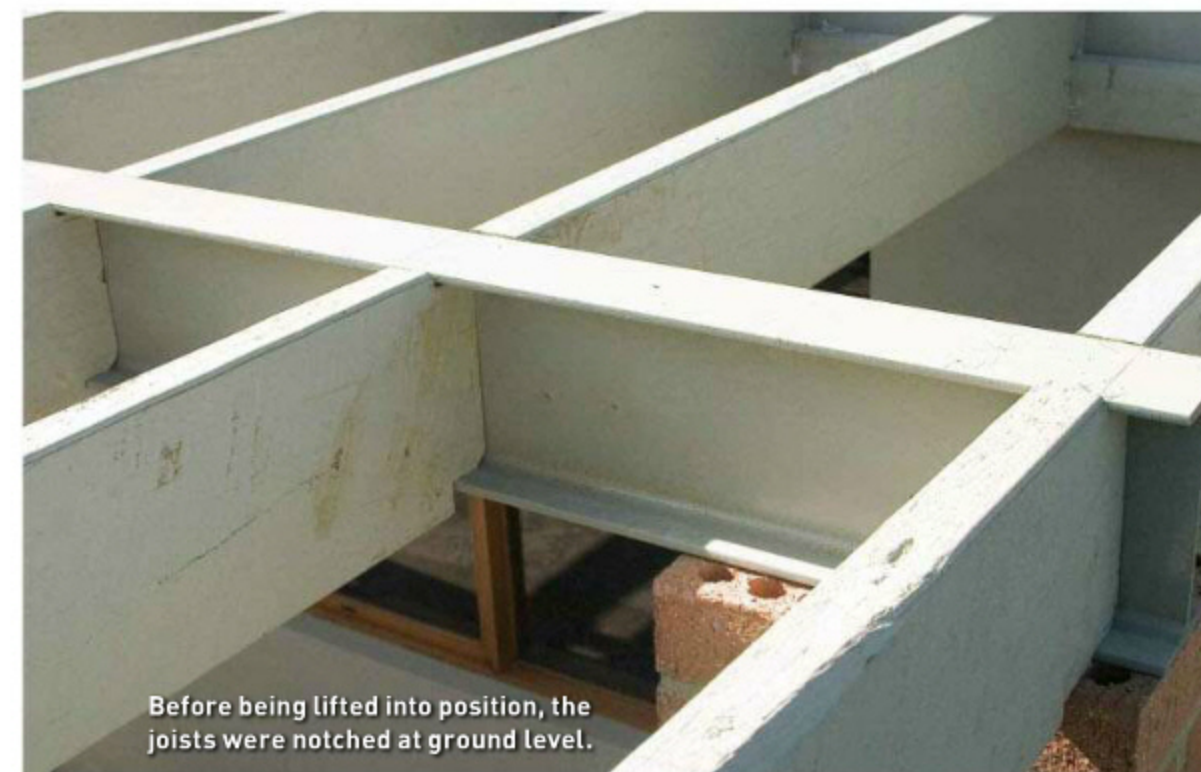
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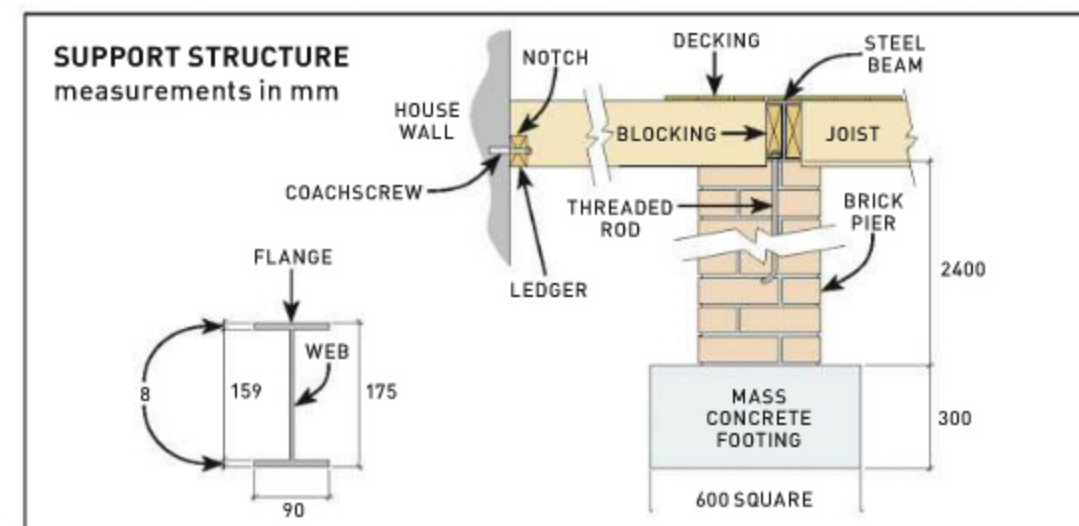
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Before being lifted into position, the joists were notched at ground level.



Adding the joists

'This was the most time-consuming part of the job, as 30 joists had to be prepared before securing,' says Frank.

The top of the joists had to be level with the top of the steel so the decking could remain flush across the beams. This meant notches needed to be cut in the ends before they were secured.

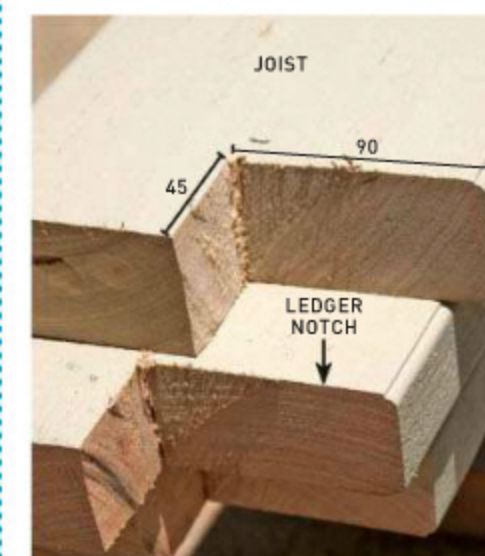
Once the joists were in position and supported by the base flanges of the beams, they were then aligned with the setout marks.



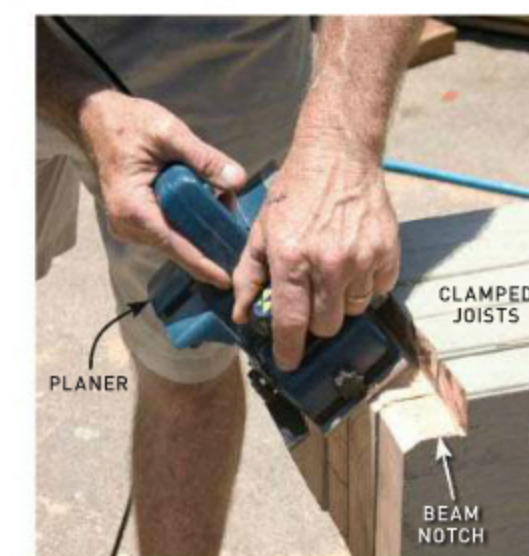
The 450mm joist setout was marked on top of the ledger and both steel beams.

Preparing the joists

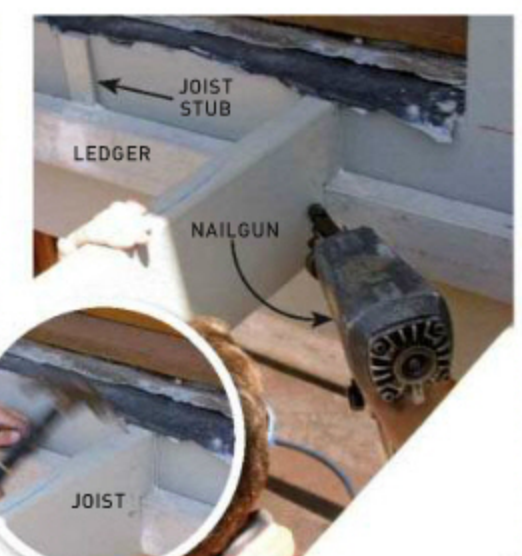
The short joists needed a single notch at one end to fit over the ledger, and two notches at the other end to fit inside the flanges of the I-shaped beam, while the long joists needed double notches on both ends.



1 CUT NOTCHES for the ledger at one end of the shorter joists, marking 90mm in from one edge and 45mm from the end, then cut them out using a handsaw.



2 PREPARE THE BEAM NOTCHES by clamping five joists together and cutting 40 x 10mm notches on the top ends and 40 x 25mm notches on the base ends, then chamfer the corners using a planer.



3 SECURE THE JOISTS to the ledger by first skew-nailing through the sides and through the top into the joist stubs. Attach joist hangers to bring the joints to full strength. ➤

Bracing the joists

‘To prevent any lateral movement of the joists in the beams, 140 x 45mm timber blocking was cut to fit between each pair of joists,’ says Frank.

Three 5mm clearance holes were drilled through the vertical web of the beam, then the blocking was secured

using 40mm x 8g stainless steel screws through the clearance holes.

To attach the blocking on the other side, 10mm holes were drilled in the blocks to provide access for drilling clearance holes through the steel.

The block ends were also skew-nailed to the joists using a nailgun.



The exact spacing between the joists was measured to fit the blocking.

A sliding mitresaw was used to cut the blocking to fit between the deck joists.

Clearance holes 5mm in diameter were drilled through the steel web.

Laying the boards

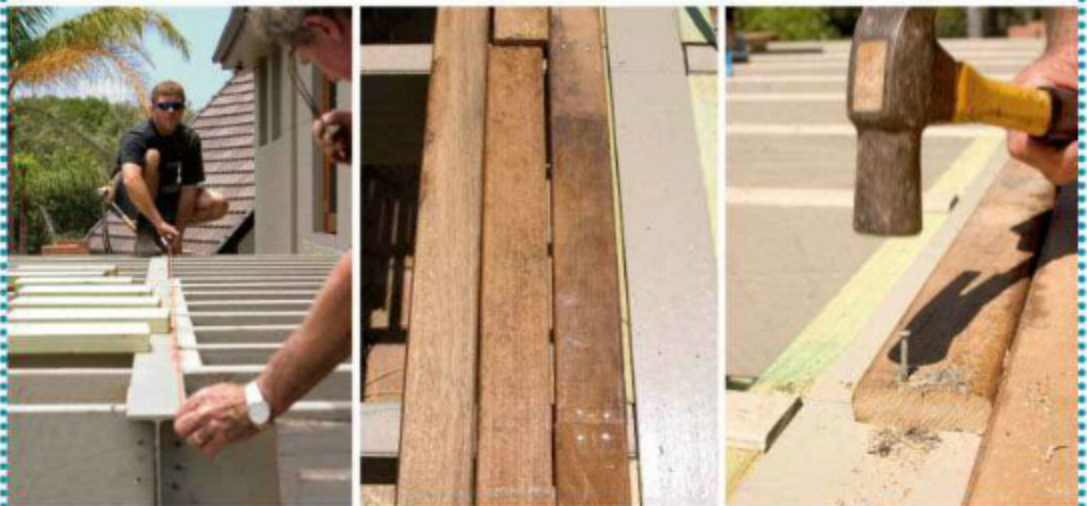
To clad the framework, 86 x 19mm decking boards were chosen.

‘We started laying the boards at the side of the steel beam closest to the house, then worked our way back to the house, and finally out to the front of the deck,’ says Frank.

Three rows of boards were laid down at a time and secured to the joists, with pilot holes drilled in the board ends to prevent splitting.

Clearance holes were drilled through the top of the steel beams to secure the boards to the blocking.

The balustrade was secured, then the boards were left for six weeks to release the tannins, and the deck was oiled to finish.



Check the steel beam for straightness before aligning the boards.

Lay out and secure three or four rows of decking boards at a time.

Drill clearance holes to secure the decking boards to the blocking.

Finishing touches

Once the framework was complete, it was time to cover the exposed beam as well as add bracing and blocking for maximum strength and rigidity.



ADD THE FASCIA

Treated pine was clamped to the outside of the front beam and held with Ramset nails before being secured from the reverse side with screws. Decking boards were then secured to it with nails.



CROSS-BRACE THE DECK

For further stability, metal strapping was crisscrossed corner to corner and tightened using a tensioner. This bracing was secured to the joists using 40 x 2.8mm galvanised clouts.



SECURE THE CENTRE BLOCKING

A centre row of blocking was secured perpendicular to the joists. Every second block was offset 45mm so the blocking could be secured through the sides of the joists using nails.

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PROJECT FRANK GARDNER MAIN PICTURE STUART SCOTT

Adding an extension is a great way to increase both the value of a house and available living space, but sometimes it affects how adjacent areas can be used.

When the owners of this beachside home extended up and back, they needed to cut into the sloping block, resulting in a change of level between the house and backyard.

A timber retaining wall was installed, but a solution needed to be found for the 1500mm wide strip of rubble that remained between the back of the house and the retaining wall.

The owners decided to cover the gap by building a timber deck matching the floor level of the home, extending from the back of the house to the retaining wall.

A low 15.6 x 1.5m deck was designed to be built DIY using H3 treated pine for the ledgers and joists, and H4 treated pine for the in-ground stump posts.

Choosing the type of decking to lay was an important decision. The deck had to be tough enough to withstand year-round exposure to the elements and the rigours of three young children playing on it, while being low maintenance.

The deck plan

The treated pine framing was clad with Ekodeck, an engineered composite decking material from Ekologix (ekologix.com.au).

Ekodeck boards come in 5.4m lengths, which worked well with the almost 16m long deck area.

Composite boards are extremely durable and easy-care, requiring neither oiling nor painting.

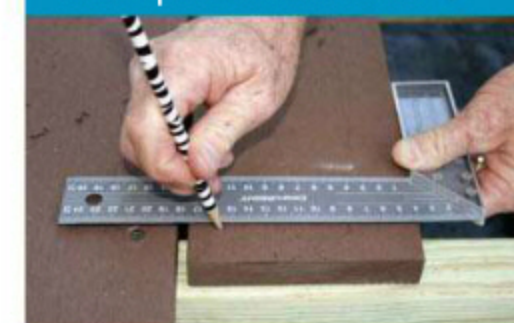
Made of natural fibres, including bamboo with reclaimed timber and recycled plastic, this product range is available in four colours with boards either 137mm or 88mm wide.

When planning a deck, ensure the timber sizes, spans and spacings meet Australian standards and check with council whether approvals are needed.

If using manufactured boards like Ekodeck, carefully read the manufacturer's installation guide before commencing any work. ➤

Ekodeck Boards,
137 x 23mm, Dark
Brown, \$62 each.
ekologix.com.au

Composite boards ▼

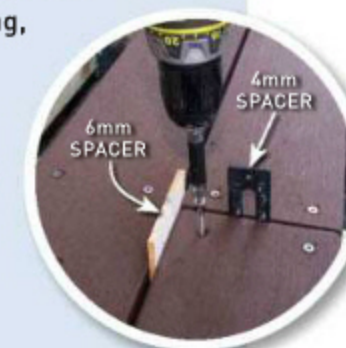


A 6mm gap is needed between Ekodeck boards. Cut 20 spacers from 70 x 35mm scrap timber with a circular saw. Use 4mm spacers for the butt-joined ends.

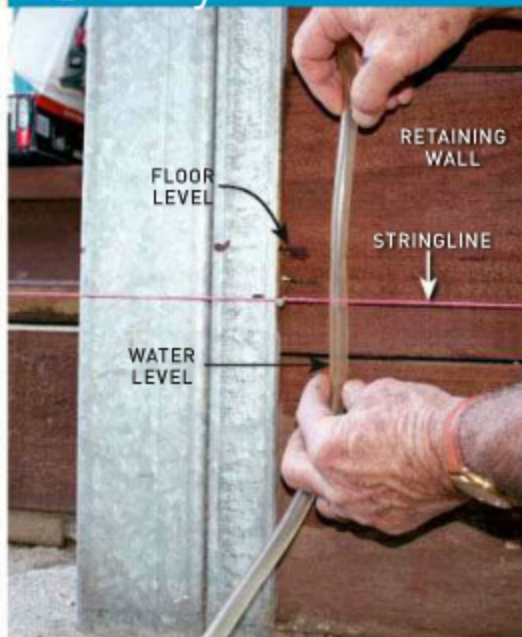
To prevent the boards from mushrooming, countersink all pilot holes.

In warm climates, predrill holes slightly larger than the screw diameter, minimising joist penetration.

This will allow for any increased movement caused by expansion and contraction. **TIP** Nailing is not recommended for composite boards.



🔧 Lay the deck



1 Set the deck levels

Use a water level to transfer the house floor level to the ends of the wall at the back of the house and to the retaining wall. Measure down 23mm from these level marks, allowing for the thickness of the decking boards, to establish the ledger heights and set taut stringlines in position.



2 Secure the wall ledgers

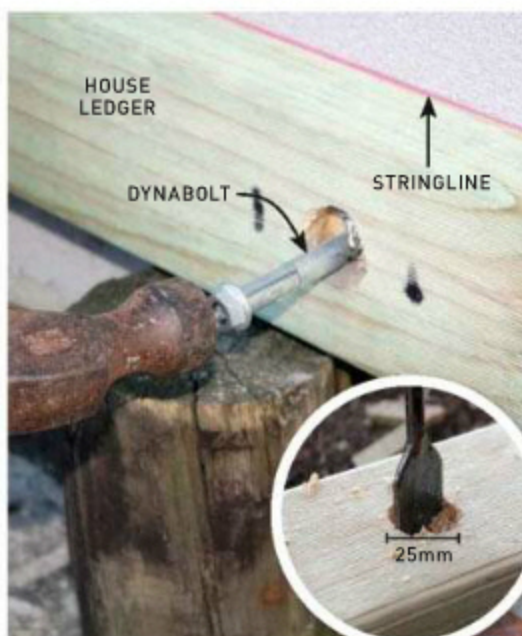
Prop the retaining wall ledgers in position to the set stringline and drill 4.5mm diameter pilot holes at 450mm centres. Use a 5mm hex drive bit to secure the ledgers to the wall using galvanised bugle screws.

TIP Use a cordless impact driver or electric drill for maximum torque.



3 Sink the stumps

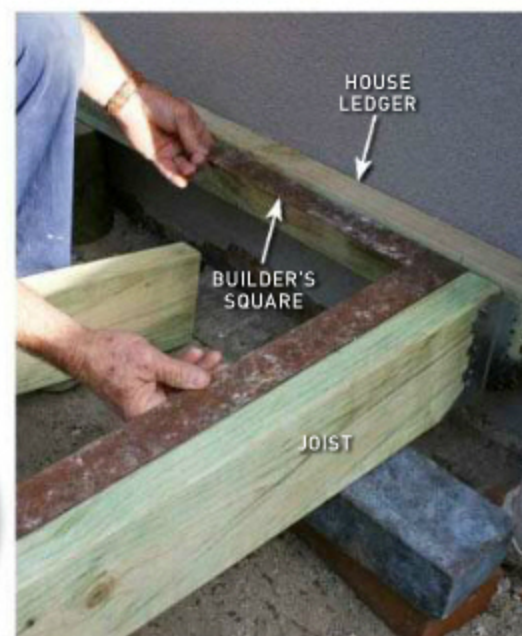
To prevent the retaining wall from carrying the deck's weight, support the ledger on treated pine stumps. Cut a housing for the ledger in the top of each stump, then dig 300mm diameter holes 450mm deep. Secure the stumps to the ledger using bugle screws, then concrete them in position.



4 Add the house ledger

Drill 25mm recesses 20mm deep, then 12mm diameter holes through the ledger at 450mm centres. Prop the house-side ledger in position and drill holes in the wall with a 12mm masonry bit, securing with Dynabolts.

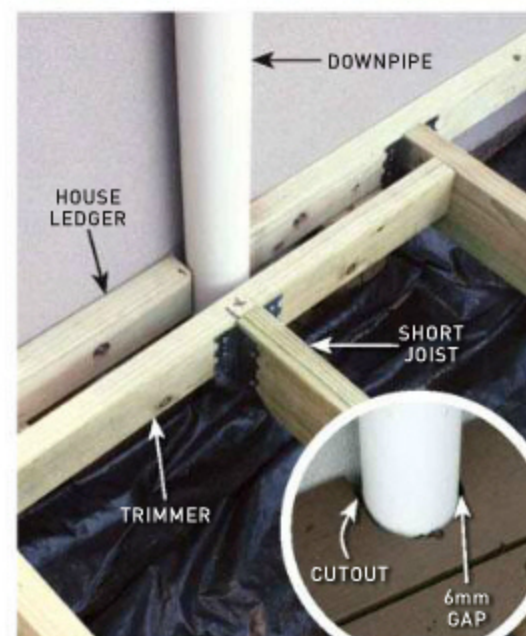
TIP Cut the house ledger to fit neatly around the downpipes.



5 Hang the first joist

Cut the joists to fit, then secure a joist hanger bracket on each end with clouts. Prop the first joist in position and use a builder's square to set it square, then secure using galvanised clouts, flush with the ledger top.

TIP Spray the joist hanger brackets with a rust-guard paint.



6 Fit the trimmers

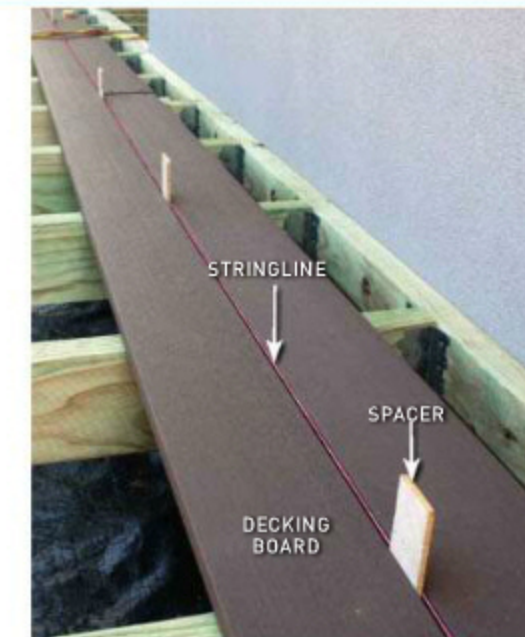
Secure a trimmer between two joists, supporting a shorter joist to accommodate each downpipe. When the decking is being laid, use an offcut of stormwater pipe to mark the cutout on the board nearest the wall. Use a jigsaw to cut out the shape, keeping a gap of 6mm around the pipe.



7 Attach the joists

Measure and mark the 450mm joist spacing on both ledgers. Working with a helper on the opposite side of the framework, square up each joist, then secure the hanger brackets to the ledgers using galvanised clouts.

TIP Cut 405mm wide timber spacers to speed up the process.



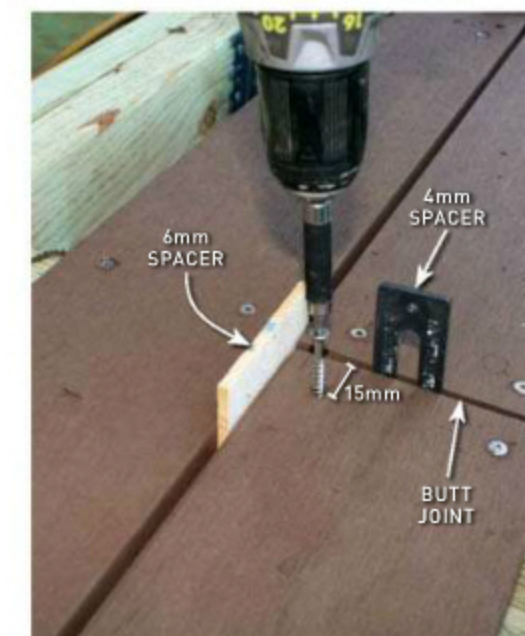
8 Lay the first boards

Set a stringline 287mm from the house wall to avoid the downpipes, then lay a row of boards against it and drill countersunk clearance holes, securing with screws. Position the next row of boards, using a spacer at every second joist to ensure the required 6mm gap is consistent.



9 Add the blocking

Cut and secure timber blocking to each joist under the butt joints of the boards to stop the joists from splitting. Stagger the joints by changing the length of the starting board in each row from a full-length 5400mm board to an 1800mm board, then a 3600mm board followed by another full board.



10 Finish the decking

Secure the remaining boards with pairs of screws at each joist, using a 4mm thick spacer to maintain the required gap at each butt joint. Use a stringline to check the alignment of the boards after every three rows are laid, scribing the last row of boards to fit the available gap. ➤

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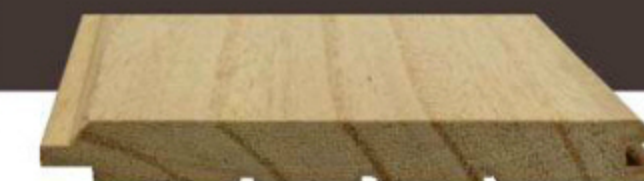
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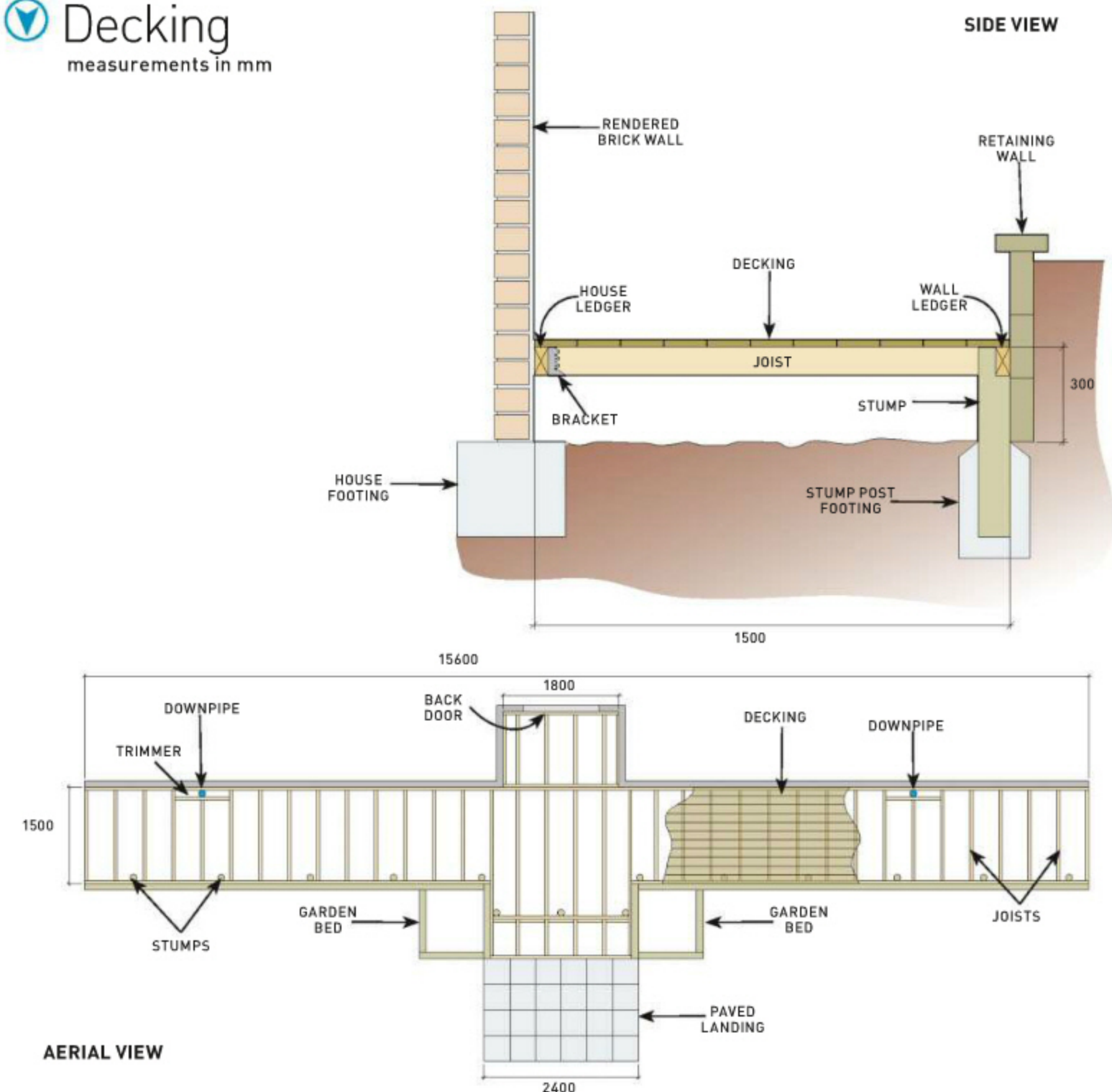
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warehouse

Decking

measurements in mm



FASTENERS	
TYPE	USE
Galvanised bugle screws, 100mm x 14g	Retaining wall ledger, stump posts
Galvanised Dynabolts, M12 x 100mm	House ledger
Galvanised clouts, 40 x 2.8mm	Joist hangers
Stainless steel decking screws, 50mm x 8-10g	Decking boards

CUTTING LIST		
PART	SIZE	NO
Treated pine		
Posts	600 x 100 dia	14
Ledgers	5400 x 90 x 45	4
	4800 x 90 x 45	2
	2400 x 90 x 45	1
	1800 x 90 x 45	2
Joists	1410 x 140 x 45	36
Trimmers	900 x 140 x 45	2
Blocking	200 x 90 x 45	33
Decking	5400 x 137 x 23	40

Handyman.net.au
Download the tools, materials and costs for this project.

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NO OILING, PAINTING OR SEALING REQUIRED



88mm x 23mm x 5.4m
\$5.98
per linear metre

137mm x 23mm x 5.4m
\$11.48
per linear metre



AVAILABLE IN 4 COLOURS: Dark Brown Mountain Oak Silver Ash Red Rock

- No oiling or painting
- Mould and mildew resistant
- Scratches repaired by sanding
- Resistant to rot and decay
- Weather resistant
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- Termite resistant
- Use standard wood-working tools
- 10 year warranty

www.ekodeck.com.au

Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

REVAMP THE BALCONY

Upgrade the boards and balustrade, then add a timber screen to overhaul a small deck

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

A timber deck is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to expand or create an outdoor living space DIY.

Once you've added or extended a deck, maintenance is fairly basic, but there does come a time when the boards need more than just their annual cleaning and oiling.

Looking after decking boards will certainly extend their lifespan but timber deteriorates over time, making replacement inevitable.

This job is easier than you may think, even if you've never laid decking before. The key is to measure up accurately, then lay the boards systematically, securing them to the existing joists.

Make it new

This neglected elevated deck had become a desolate and unused space.

It was also dangerous because of the condition of the balustrading and several rotten boards. The timber decking and balustrading had to be

completely removed and replaced to make the deck safe and usable.

Measure up to buy new decking, allowing for spacing between boards.

If possible, order decking boards long enough to fit the required length without joints. Lengths up to 5.4m are readily available, but boards 6m long can often also be ordered.

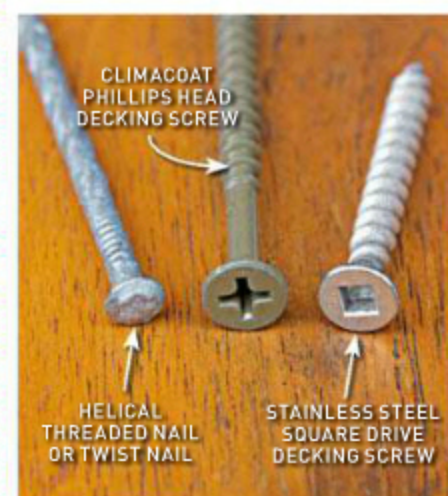
For this deck, ACQ treated pine 5400 x 90 x 22mm decking boards, about \$13 each, were used, and finished with exterior oil in a natural tone.

The new balustrade was built by securing 2400 x 900mm black fence panels to the timber posts. The Flat Top Protector Aluminium panels cost \$59 each (protectoraluminium.com.au). ➤



Cabot's Aquadeck Natural Exterior Decking Oil, \$68 for 4L. cabots.com.au

Decking fasteners

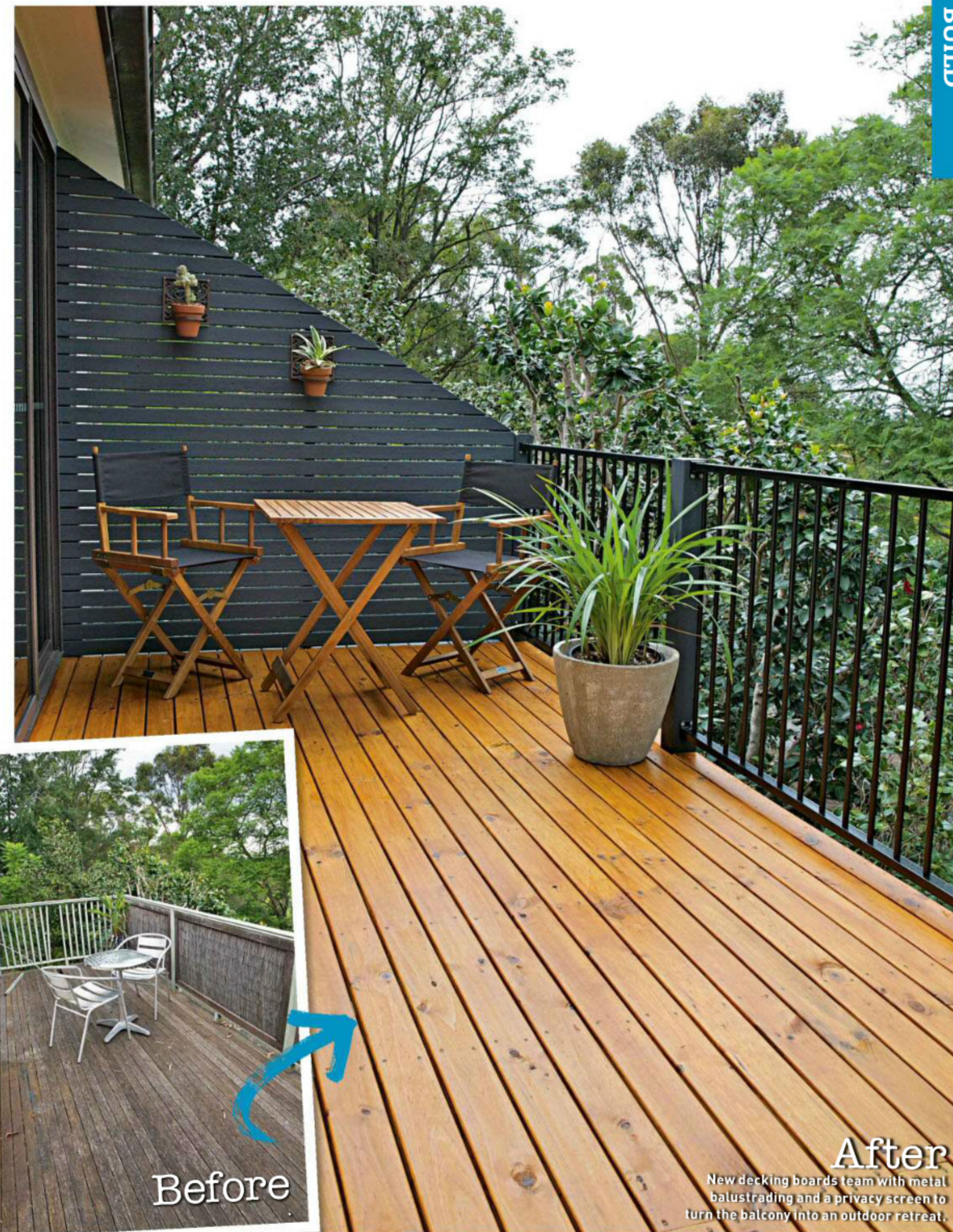


Timber decking boards are secured using galvanised or stainless steel screws or nails.

For ACQ treated decking, it's critical you use ACQ rated nails or screws. This is because ACQ timber corrodes conventional fasteners more quickly than regular treated pine or hardwood.

TIP Drill pilot holes for fasteners in hardwood decking or joists.

PICTURE (TOP LEFT) THINKSTOCK



Before

After

New decking boards team with metal balustrading and a privacy screen to turn the balcony into an outdoor retreat.

🔧 Lay new decking



1 Remove the old boards

Start by removing the existing boards. Ideally, you want the nails or screws to come out when you lift the boards. On this deck, a wrecking bar had to be hammered under each board to loosen the nails.

TIP Take care not to damage the joists.



2 Paint the posts

If you plan to paint, you'll find it much easier to do this before the new decking is laid. We painted the timber balustrade posts with an exterior low-sheen paint in a charcoal shade to complement the colour of the new balustrade panels.



3 Secure the new boards

Working from the outside edge in, attach the boards with two fasteners at each attachment point, using a large chisel as a spacer for even gaps. Drill pilot holes to prevent splitting.

TIP When joining boards, the shortest must be secured to at least three joists.



4 Install the balustrade

When the new decking boards have all been secured, install the new balustrade panels. The mounting brackets come with screws for securing into timber. If securing into timber, you will need 65mm x 12g hex-head timber screws.



5 Oil the decking

Clean the new timber decking boards and seal with a quality decking oil, applying it with a long-handled lamb's wool applicator pad.

TIP We used Cabot's Aquadeck, and a 10L Deck Hand Bucket, designed to make it easy to apply decking oil.



Build a platform ▼

To make working on a deck safer, even at ground level, join four of the old boards with screws for a work platform. Use it to safely inspect the joists and bearers for damage and make repairs, and to remove any protruding nails.

Installing a privacy screen



Mimosa Three-piece Timber Balcony Setting, \$115, from Bunnings.

One end of this deck lacked privacy, so a screen was built.

A frame was made from 90 x 45mm treated pine, then the slats were attached using a cordless brad nailer.

For the slats, salvaged timber from the old deck was cleaned and cut down to size. To install this type of screen, it's faster and easier to paint the slats before attaching them to the frame.

It's important on elevated balconies that the slats are spaced a maximum of 5mm apart, so kids can't get their fingers or toes in the gaps, then climb the screen.



Ryobi One+ 18V Cordless Brad Nail Gun, \$199 skin only. ryobi.com.au



Dulux Weathershield Low Sheen, about \$88 for 4L. dulux.com.au

➤ **Get more online**
Visit handyman.net.au/mag for 8 Deck Design Ideas.



INSTANT **HOT** WATER SYSTEMS

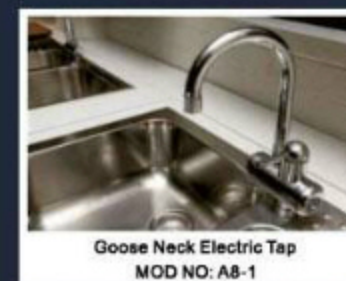
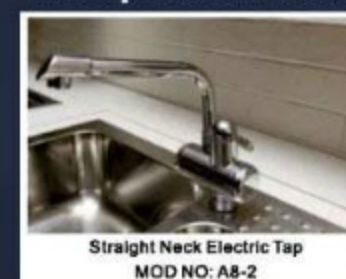


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www.heyprestohotwater.com

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Decking decisions

A deck will add value to your home, as long as it's well built and maintained. The choice of timber largely comes down to aesthetics, but the biggest decision is between hardwood, softwood or composite boards. Hardwoods are tough and dense, softwoods are easier to work with and less expensive, while composite boards are low maintenance.

MERBAU

This South-East Asian hardwood ranges from pale to dark reddish brown. Resistant to termites and decay, it has a class 1 durability rating and is suitable for bushfire zones. It costs about \$5 a metre for 90 x 19mm boards.

TREATED PINE

Environmentally sustainable and treated to survive the elements, this very durable softwood is easy to cut and work with. Budget-friendly, it can be stained as desired. It costs about \$3 a metre for 90 x 22mm boards.

SPOTTED GUM

This Australian hardwood has pale to dark brown colouring and a heavy, variable grain. It has a class 1 durability rating and is termite-resistant. It costs about \$7 a metre for 86 x 19mm boards.

BLACKBUTT

A common Australian hardwood with a cream to pale brown colour, this timber is durable, termite-resistant, stains well and is suitable for bushfire zones. It costs about \$6 a metre for 86 x 19mm boards.

COMPOSITE

Made from reclaimed timber, bamboo and recycled plastic, composite decking resists rot, mould and termites, and is maintenance-free. A 5.4m length of 88 x 23mm decking costs about \$31, roughly \$6 a metre.

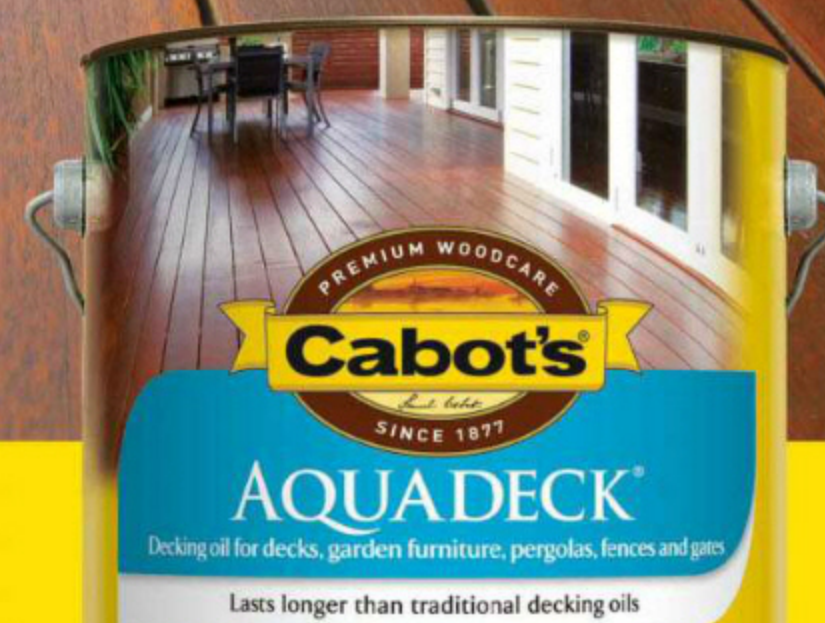
PICTURES: STUART SCOTT (BACKGROUND); THINKSTOCK

Fight the visible signs of ageing.

Before

After

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www.cabots.com.au



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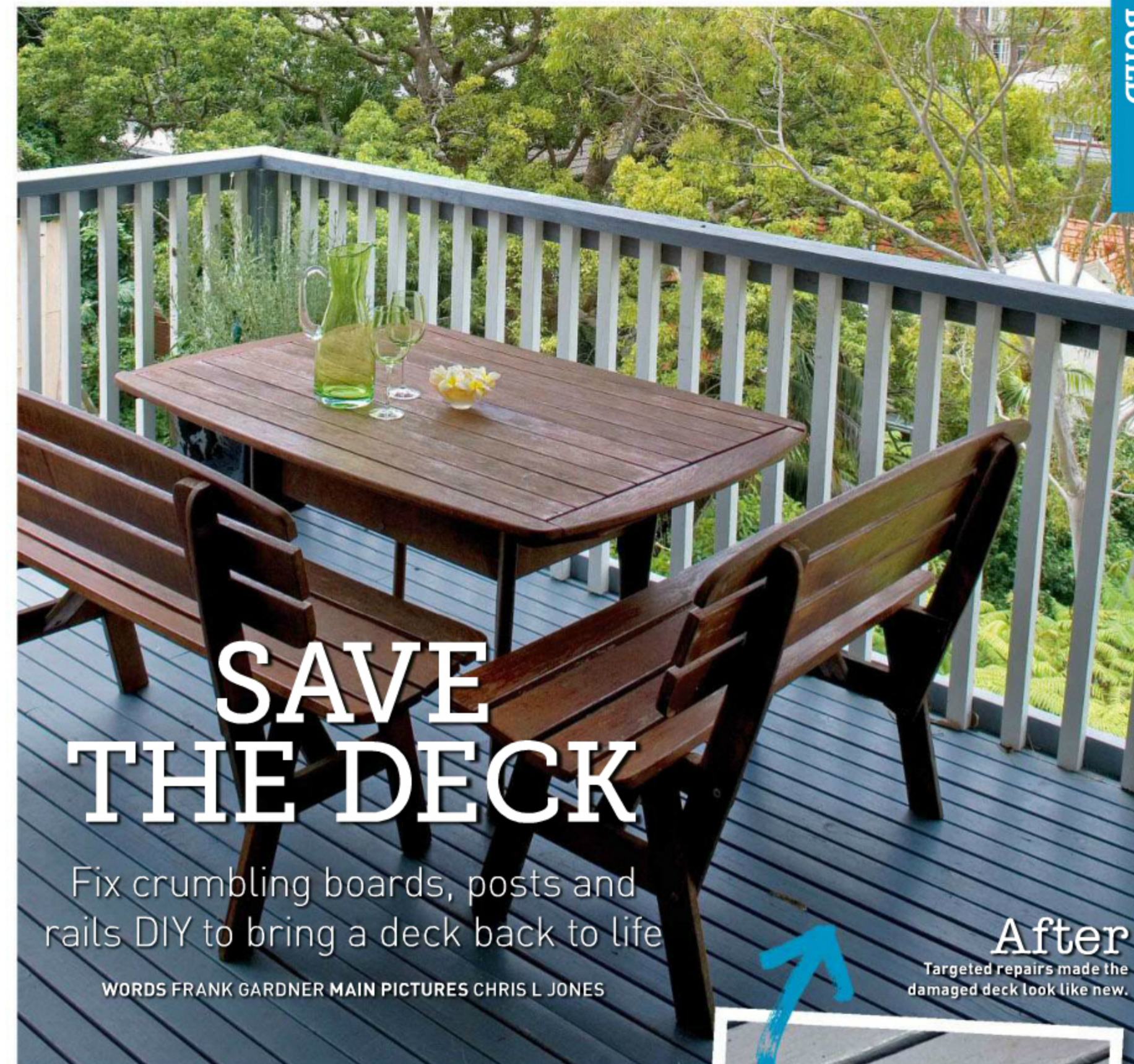
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SAVE THE DECK

Fix crumbling boards, posts and rails DIY to bring a deck back to life

WORDS FRANK GARDNER MAIN PICTURES CHRIS L JONES

After

Targeted repairs made the damaged deck look like new.

A run-down deck with rotten boards might look like it needs to be demolished, but if the damage is localised, you can fix minor issues to avoid total replacement, and still have a safe outdoor area.

This deck had seen better days, but was still structurally sound. A few simple repairs brought it back to life.

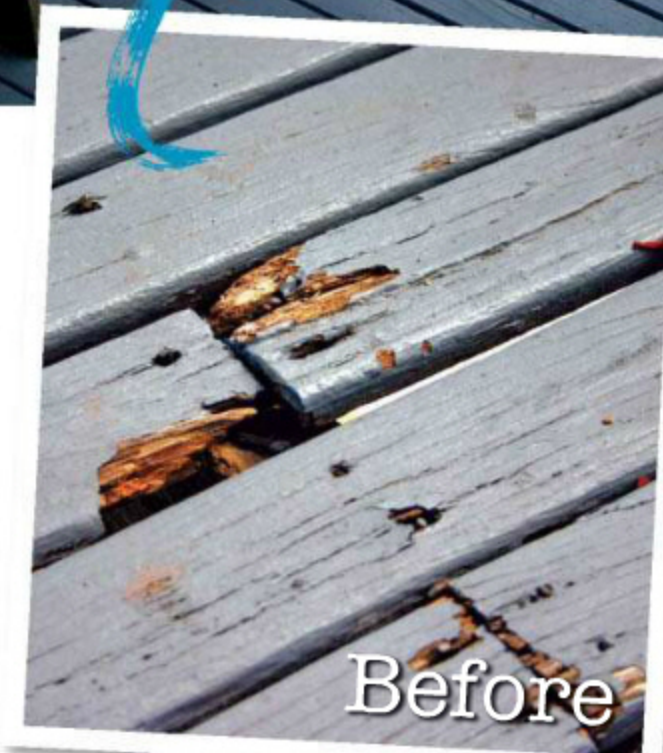
Timber structures like decks, pergolas and balconies have a lot of enemies. Termites feed on timber, while corrosive elements, such as salt-laden coastal air, deteriorate nails, bolts, screws and fixing plates.

Do an annual inspection of timber structures, looking for early warning signs such as corrosion, excessive weathering or movement.

PROTECT the base of posts against rot, and the timber against weathering, by painting, staining or using water-repellent preservatives.

SEAL joints that have opened up. **REPLACE** corroded bolts, popped or rusted nails or screws, using stainless steel fixings for longevity. **TIGHTEN** loose balustrades.

CONSULT a structural engineer if you have any doubts. ➤



Before

🔧 Replace the decking boards



1 Remove old boards

Use a pry bar to lift and remove the section of old boards. Remove any nailgun-driven steel nails that have pulled through the deteriorated decking and remained in the joists using a claw hammer.



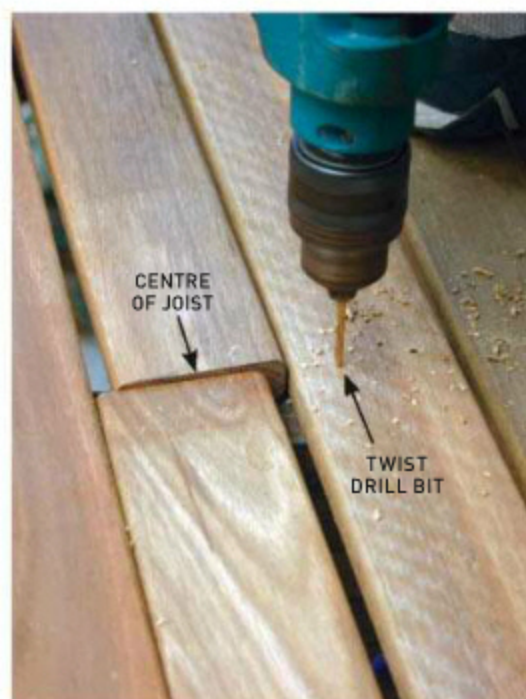
2 Clean up the joists

Fill splits and nail holes in the top of the joists with a two-part filler. Once the filler has hardened, paint or seal the top of the joists to protect against water penetration and increase the longevity of the timber.



3 Lay out the boards

Loosely lay out the new decking boards in a staggered pattern and make sure there are no butt joints side by side on adjacent boards. Mark the position of the cuts using a pencil and try square.



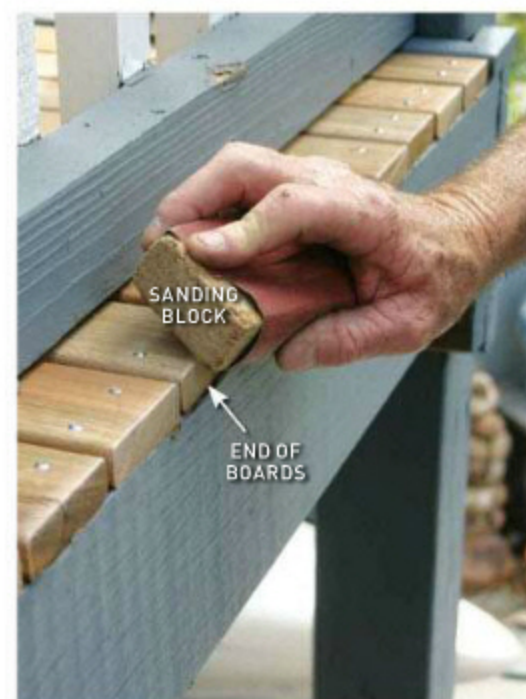
4 Drill the pilot holes

Use a mitresaw to cut the decking boards to length so all the joints fall on the centre of a joist. Over the centre of each joist, drill two pilot holes with a 2mm twist drill bit through each board.



5 Secure the boards

Drive in 50 x 2.8mm stainless steel twist nails to secure each board. Check the alignment of the boards with a stringline, using a chisel to space and flex the boards straight before driving in the nails.



6 Tidy the ends

Cut off any overhang so the ends of the decking boards are even. Sand or plane to round the edges and remove any splinters for safety. Apply oil, stain or paint to the new boards to match the original decking.

Repairing a post

The top of the corner post on this deck beneath the damaged mitred corner of the handrail was decayed due to an ant infestation in the moist timber.

The base of the post had been encased by a newer concrete slab, making it impossible for the timber to dry. This resulted in excess moisture, which accelerated decay and caused the galvanised saddle to corrode.

Treating these minor problems avoids an expensive post replacement.

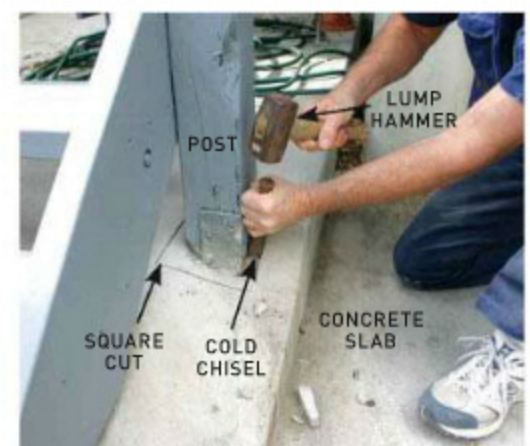


1 SEAL THE TOP of the post with timber preservative after dusting to eradicate the ants. Use a two-part exterior filler, scraping it into the damaged area using a spatula. This seals the area from water penetration and discourages pests.



2 CUT A SQUARE in the concrete around the base of the post using an angle grinder with a diamond cutting disc. Leave about 30mm between the cuts and the base of the post.

TIP Wear safety glasses, ear muffs and a dust mask when cutting concrete.



3 CHISEL OUT THE WASTE using a lump hammer and cold chisel until the base of the post and saddle are exposed and the concrete is no longer touching the timber. Cut a drainage line in the concrete so water doesn't pool and damage the end grain. ➤

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ROCKET

Look in the sandpaper section at Bunnings.

Rotten crossrail

The crossrail beneath the handrail had also decayed and at one corner the end was no longer attached to the post. The last 400mm of crossrail was removed and replaced with a new piece, joined to the intact section.



H3 Treated Pine, 90 x 35mm, \$4 per metre, from Bunnings.



Before



After

The deck balustrade will last much longer after the repairs.



1 Cut the crossrail

Mark a 45° line just before a picket across the old crossrail with a pencil, then cut along the line using a handsaw to remove the damaged section of crossrail. Sand the cut edges to remove any splinters.



2 Attach the new section

Measure the new section length and cut a new piece to size, square-cutting one end to butt into the post and matching the mitre on the other end. Apply construction adhesive to the ends and secure with screws.



3 Attach the pickets

Reposition the pickets and check they are plumb. Drill pilot holes and attach the pickets to the crossrail with 65mm x 8g stainless steel screws. Drive the screw heads below the surface and fill holes with putty, then apply paint.

Decayed handrail



Before

The handrail was decaying at the mitred corners and where it butted into the posts. The end grain hadn't been sealed with timber preservative or paint and no silicone or gap sealant was used, allowing moisture to get in.



Ryobi One+ 18V Cordless Jigsaw, \$99, skin only. ryobi.com.au



After

Replacing the damaged handrail makes the deck look well maintained.



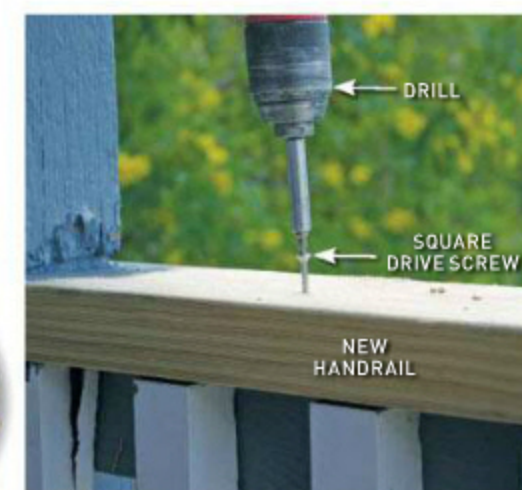
1 Recut the handrail

Remove the old handrail with a pry bar and use it as a template or measure and mark out the new sections of handrail. Use a jigsaw to cut out around the posts, and a sliding compound mitresaw for the mitres.



2 Reseal the end grain

To prevent decay, apply timber preservative or oil-based paint to the end grain. Apply construction adhesive to the top of the crossrail and exterior silicone compound along the meeting faces of timber to be butted together.



3 Secure the handrail

Drill pilot holes every 750mm and attach the handrail to the crossrail and posts with 65mm x 10g stainless steel square drive screws. Drive screw heads below the surface and cover them with exterior putty, then prime and paint.

Find it at Bunnings

Refinish the boards

Clean and recoat weathered boards to protect the timber and keep decking looking its best

PROJECT LEE DASHIELL MAIN PICTURE GEOFF BECK

Protecting your timber deck with oil or timber finish will make it look new again while adding years to its life. This easy DIY task should be done every two years or so and only takes about a day and a half.

Test your timber by dropping a few drops of water on an exposed area. If the water soaks in, the timber needs to be oiled. If the water forms droplets on top of the boards, the timber repels moisture and doesn't need refinishing.

This five-year-old merbau deck is exposed to the hot afternoon sun,

which dries out the timber, leaving it susceptible to rot and damage.

After cleaning, three coats of Feast Watson Wet Look Deck finish were applied.

This gave the timber a deep rich colour and a gloss finish to make it look well maintained.



Feast Watson Wet Look Deck, \$85.90 for 4L. bunnings.com.au



A cleaned and refinished deck will repel water and last longer.



WEATHERED BOARDS

HIGH-PRESSURE NOZZLE

1 Rinse the deck

Remove all furniture and pot plants from the deck. Sweep away dirt and debris, then wash off the deck using a high-pressure nozzle on the hose. Ensure any dried leaves or bird droppings have been removed.



DECK CLEANER

SCRUBBING BRUSH

2 Scrub the boards

Dilute one part deck cleaning solution with four parts water. Apply to the deck with a stiff scrubbing brush. Allow this to sit for 20 minutes, then scrub it one last time before rinsing with a hose and leaving to dry.



APPLICATOR

NEW FINISH

3 Apply the finish

Stir the finish thoroughly and pour into a paint tray. Dip a lamb's wool applicator into the finish and drag it along the whole length of the deck, a few boards at a time. Allow to dry for four hours, then apply two more coats.

No more mess

When you refinish a deck, there is nothing more disappointing than birds making a mess of the beautiful glossy boards.

To deter them, position a bird-scaring owl near the problem area and they should disappear.

Birds are clever and will soon realise the owl is an imposter, so move it around every couple of days to make it seem more realistic.

Brown Owl 41cm Bird Scarer, \$10. bunnings.com.au

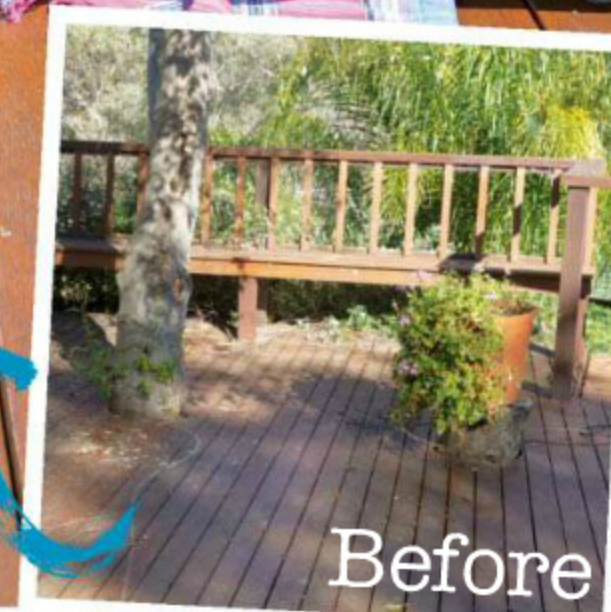


PICTURE GEOFF BECK



After

The recoated deck is protected and looks as good as new.



Before

Find it at Bunnings

Alfresco living

Select your furniture to get the outdoor space you've always wanted

Dining outdoors is one of the best things about summer, with the warm weather providing the ideal conditions.

Choose a theme for the space and set up your entertaining area with outdoor seating. Add a barbecue for cooking and a table for dining, then sit back and enjoy.

Everyday living

Create a classic and inviting outdoor space by decking out your patio with comfortable and casual lounge seating made from solid timber.

Add a reclining deck chair for the ultimate in relaxation and scatter a few colourful or patterned cushions to complete the timeless look.

- 1 MIMOSA Fresco Timber Daybed with Cushions, \$499.
- 2 MATADOR Maverick Four-burner Hooded Barbecue, \$599.
- 3 MIMOSA Fresco Sunlounge, \$249.
- 4 MIMOSA Five-piece Timber Lounge Setting, \$899.
- 5 MIMOSA Fresco Corner Sofa with Cushions, \$1299.

Extend your living area outdoors with lounges and a table setting.



Set up the ultimate entertaining area for parties, meals and relaxing.

Contemporary design

Attractive aluminium furniture and a sleek stainless steel outdoor kitchen will add a touch of class and glamour to a luxurious outdoor room.

A clean, modern table setting pairs well with a comfortable corner lounge and matching coffee table. Brighten it up with colourful cushions to create an outdoor space that will be the envy of all your neighbours.

An outdoor kitchen is the ultimate piece of equipment when it comes to preparing and cooking food outside.

Combining the traditional barbecue with storage and extra bench space makes preparation easier, so you can entertain in style every weekend. ➤

- 1 MIMOSA Cocobana Corner Lounge setting, \$2399.
- 2 MIMOSA Cable Beach Five-piece Aluminium Bar Setting, \$549.
- 3 MIMOSA Cable Beach Nine-piece Aluminium Setting, \$699.



Matador Supernova Six-burner Hooded Outdoor Kitchen, \$1999.



Urban style

Architect-designed houses and landscaped gardens need outdoor furniture that complements the modern, streamlined look.

Use charcoal tones to give your space a contemporary edge, adding colour with plants and tableware.

- ① MATADOR Boss Six-burner Hooded Barbecue, \$949.
- ② MIMOSA Andaman Cantilever Umbrella, \$499.
- ③ MIMOSA Wicker Sunlounge with Cushions, \$299.
- ④ MIMOSA Cable Beach 11-piece Aluminium Setting, \$899.



Country classic

Rich timber furniture works especially well in a rustic sun-soaked Australian setting. Bench seating is versatile and great for entertaining, while a clever freestanding hammock is ideal for relaxing in the shade.

The natural textures of stacked stone cladding on a well-equipped outdoor kitchen complete the theme.

- ① MIMOSA Rotonda Red Gum Timber Bench, \$199.
- ② MIMOSA Hammock with Curved Timber Frame, \$229.
- ③ MIMOSA Red Gum Three-piece Timber Bench Setting, \$699.
- ④ MATADOR Icon Four-burner Hooded Outdoor Kitchen, \$1999.



European elegance

Set up your deck or courtyard like a Mediterranean villa, with luxurious seating and a solid timber table for long afternoon lunches.

Cook up a feast on a large gas barbecue, and make authentic homemade creations in a pizza oven.

- ① MATADOR Titan Hooded Four-burner Barbecue, \$998.
- ② FORNETTO Alto Wood Fire Pizza Oven, \$1299.
- ③ MIMOSA Seville Teak Timber Dining Table, \$1499.
- ④ MIMOSA Wicker Dining Chair with Cushion, \$149.



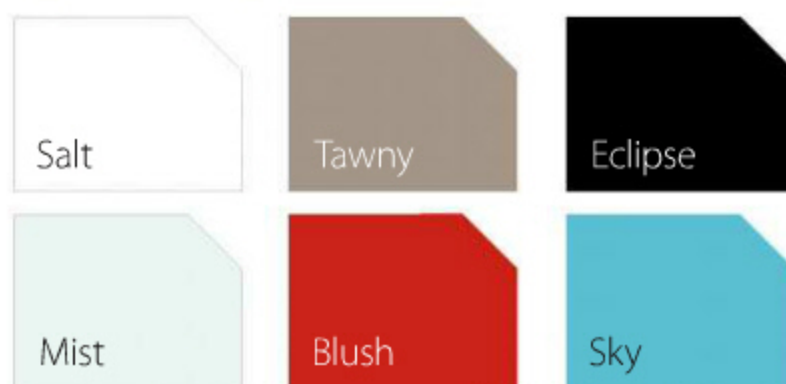
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STANLEY

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FATMAX**

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Serve up a fabulous feast this festive season and have a very merry time



Menu

Starters

- Parmesan paper-thin bread with mushroom pâté
- Asparagus with yoghurt cheese and basil pesto
- Spinach and Gruyère soufflé
- Cold Spanish almond soup
- Pancetta with white wine mussels

Mains

- Gammon with honey and mustard glaze
- Turkey in the barbie
- Leg of lamb with herbs, fetta and parmesan
- Wholegrain mustard baby chickens

Sides

- Baby apples stuffed with sage pork
- Duck-fat potatoes
- Cauliflower with parmesan sauce
- Tomato and fetta salad

Desserts

- Pavlova Christmas wreath
- Fruitcake ice-creams
- Chocolate crème caramel

RECIPES AUSTRAL PICTURES (MAIN) AUSTRAL (RIGHT) THINKSTOCK

Parmesan paper-thin bread with mushroom pâté



Cover the bread with baking paper and tie with pretty kitchen string.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins,
plus 30 mins standing
COOKING TIME 25 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

½ cup water
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups plain flour,
plus extra for rolling out
1 cup finely grated parmesan

MUSHROOM PÂTÉ

2 tablespoons olive oil
60g butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
500g brown mushrooms, chopped
2 sprigs fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 x 250g containers cream cheese

1 MAKE the mushroom pâté by heating the oil and butter in a medium pot. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for

2-3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and thyme, and cook, stirring often, for 5-8 minutes. Add the vinegar and season with salt and pepper. Allow to cool, then transfer to a food processor with the cream cheese and process on high speed until smooth. Spoon into serving bowls and sprinkle over a little olive oil.

2 PREHEAT the oven to 220°C. Put the water, oil and salt in a medium bowl. Stir with a wooden spoon and gradually add the flour until a stiff dough forms.

3 KNEAD on a floured surface for 5-8 minutes or until the dough is smooth and elastic. Set aside in a clean, greased bowl in a warm place for 30 minutes.

4 DIVIDE the dough into eight portions, then roll out on a floured surface until paper thin. Line a baking tray with baking paper and spray with non-stick cooking spray. Put the dough on the tray and sprinkle over the parmesan.

5 BAKE for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown and crispy. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Serve the bread with the pâté.

Asparagus with yoghurt cheese and basil pesto

PREPARATION TIME 5 mins,
plus 2 days straining
COOKING TIME 10 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

1L natural Greek yoghurt
2 teaspoons salt
3 sprigs thyme, finely chopped
Freshly ground black pepper
400g asparagus
¼ cup olive oil
15g butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
40g wild rocket
Whole basil leaves, to garnish
125g store-bought basil pesto

1 MIX the yoghurt, salt and thyme in a bowl, then season with pepper. Line a large fine sieve with muslin, allowing it to overhang. Place the sieve over

a large bowl to drain. Pour the yoghurt mixture into the sieve, then pull the cloth tightly around the mixture and tie the ends together.

2 ALLOW the yoghurt mixture to hang in the fridge above the bowl for two days so the whey can drip into the bowl.

3 BRING a saucepan of water to the boil and add the asparagus. Boil for 3 minutes, then drain well. Heat the oil and butter in a large frying pan over medium heat, then add the asparagus and fry, turning, for 1 minute. Season well with salt and pepper, then set aside on a plate.

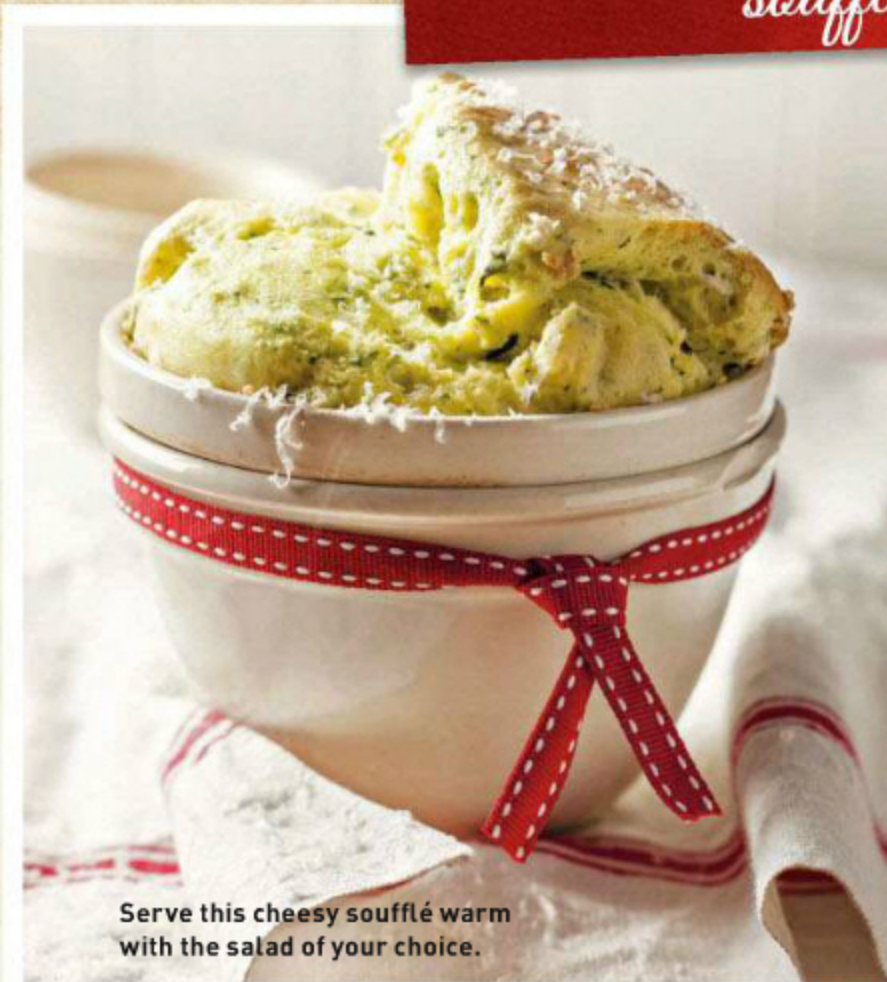
4 SPOON the yoghurt mixture into a serving bowl and flatten slightly with the back of a spoon. Arrange the asparagus on top of the yoghurt mixture, then sprinkle with the rocket and basil leaves. Serve topped with the basil pesto.



This strained yoghurt is a great base for both savoury and sweet dishes.

PICTURE (BACKGROUND) THINKSTOCK

Spinach and Gruyère soufflé



Serve this cheesy soufflé warm with the salad of your choice.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME
1 hour and 20 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

200g baby spinach
125g butter
2 cloves garlic,
finely chopped
1 cup plain flour
4 cups milk
100g Gruyère cheese,
finely grated
Salt and freshly ground
black pepper
5 eggs, separated

1 BRING a pot of water to the boil, then add the spinach. Cook for 1 minute, then drain, squeezing out as much water as possible. Process in a food processor until finely chopped.

2 MELT the butter over medium heat in a large pot. Add the garlic and fry for

1 minute. Stir in the flour. Add the milk and whisk until well combined and smooth. Reduce heat to low and simmer, whisking slowly for 3-5 minutes or until the sauce thickens.

3 REMOVE from the heat and add the cheese, stirring until melted. Add the spinach and mix well. Season well with salt and pepper. Allow to cool to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 180°C.

4 ADD the egg yolks to the sauce and stir until smooth. Whisk the eggwhites until soft peaks form, then carefully fold into the sauce.

5 POUR the sauce into a 1L ovenproof dish. Bake for about 70 minutes or until golden, set and well risen.

TIP You can make this soufflé ahead of time. Before serving, bake it in the oven for 5-8 minutes or until it is warm and puffed up. ➤

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Perfect for hot days, this chilled soup is filling and easy to make.

Cold Spanish almond soup

PREPARATION TIME 25 mins,

plus 10 mins standing

COOKING TIME 5 mins

SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

400g flaked almonds

4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

10 slices white bread, crusts removed

4 cups milk

2 tablespoons olive oil

¼ cup dry sherry

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 bunches (300g) white grapes, halved

Toasted flaked almonds, to serve

1 HEAT a frying pan over medium heat until warm and toast the almonds until golden brown.

2 PUT the almonds, garlic, bread and milk in a food processor, then process on high speed until it forms a smooth puree. Allow the mixture to stand for 10 minutes, then drain through a sieve.

3 ADD the oil, sherry and vinegar, then mix well to combine. Season well with salt and pepper. Put in the fridge until ice-cold.

4 DIVIDE the soup between small serving bowls and top with the grapes and toasted almonds to serve.

Pancetta with white wine mussels

PREPARATION TIME 25 mins

COOKING TIME 25 mins

SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

200g pancetta, cut into cubes

1 cup white wine

1 cup cream

Handful of parsley, finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2kg black mussels, cleaned

1 HEAT the oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and pancetta, then stir-fry for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown and crispy.

2 POUR in the wine and cream. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes or until creamy. Stir in the parsley and season with salt and pepper.

3 ADD the mussels and cook, covered, for 5-8 minutes or until the shells open. Remove any unopened shells. Serve.



For a flavour change, swap the pancetta for bacon.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins

COOKING TIME 4 hours

SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS

1 large (about 4kg) gammon with bone and skin

2 onions, halved

4 bay leaves

10 black peppercorns

Handful of whole cloves

Segments of 4 mandarins or oranges, to serve

HONEY AND MUSTARD GLAZE

1½ cups honey

¼ cup wholegrain mustard

2 cups orange juice

1 PUT the gammon in a large pot. Add the onion, bay leaves and peppercorns. Cover with water and bring to the boil over high heat, then boil for 3½ hours.

2 REMOVE the gammon from the water and take off the skin while still warm so that the fat layer is visible. Put in a roasting pan, then use a sharp knife to cut out a diamond pattern in the fat layer. Push a clove into the centre of each diamond shape. Preheat the oven to 180°C.

3 MAKE the glaze by putting the honey, mustard and orange juice in a medium pot and bringing to the boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 1 minute, then remove from the heat. Pour the honey and mustard glaze over the gammon.

4 PUT the gammon, uncovered, in the oven and roast for 30 minutes or until golden brown, spooning the glaze from the roasting pan over the gammon every 10 minutes.

5 PLACE on a large serving plate and arrange the mandarin or orange segments over the top, then serve.

TIP You can make this recipe up to Step 3 the day before you plan to serve the gammon.

Check with your local butcher, as you may need to order the gammon a few days beforehand. ➤



Gammon with honey and mustard glaze

Take the time to cook your own gammon joint this Christmas and coat it with a delicious citrus glaze.



Turkey in the barbie

PREPARATION TIME 20 mins
COOKING TIME 3 hours
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

250g butter, at room temperature
Handful of thyme, rosemary,
sage and parsley, chopped
250g bacon, finely chopped
Juice and rind of 2 lemons
1 turkey (about 2.5kg)
3 whole lemons, halved
6 red onions, quartered
4 garlic bulbs, halved through
the centre
2 cups chicken stock

- 1 PUT** the butter, herbs, bacon, and lemon juice and rind in a food processor, then process coarsely.
- 2 LOOSEN** the skin on the turkey breast using your fingertips. Insert half the butter mixture under the skin and spread evenly. Push the lemon halves into the carcass and tie the legs together securely with kitchen string. Put the turkey in a roasting pan that will fit in a kettle barbecue, then spread over the remaining butter mixture.
- 3 PUT** the onion and garlic bulb halves in the pan and add the stock. Place in a kettle barbecue with briquettes at medium heat and cover with the lid.

The vents of the barbecue must be open halfway or the briquettes will suffocate. Allow the turkey to roast slowly for 3 hours. Open every hour and spoon the pan juices over the turkey.

4 HEAT extra briquettes, so you can add them to the barbecue every hour. To check if the turkey is cooked, insert a knife into the thickest part of the meat around the thighs. Leave the knife in the turkey for 15 seconds. If it is very hot and the juice runs out clear, the turkey is cooked.

5 TRANSFER the turkey to a serving platter, remove the vegetables from the roasting pan and serve with the turkey.

A barbecued turkey makes for a very Aussie Christmas.



Leg of lamb with herbs, fetta and parmesan

Make the festive season extra special with a juicy leg of lamb.

PREPARATION TIME 20 mins
COOKING TIME 3½ hours
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

½ cup toasted blanched almonds
6 anchovy fillets
Handful of herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and oregano, finely chopped
150g fetta, crumbled
2 slices white bread, crusts removed
80g butter, melted
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 large leg of lamb, deboned
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1½ cups red wine
300g green beans, trimmed

- 1 PREHEAT** the oven to 180°C. Put the almonds, anchovies, herbs, fetta,

bread, butter and garlic in a food processor, then process on high speed until well combined.

2 USE a sharp knife to cut the lamb open, then season well with salt and pepper. Spoon the stuffing into the meat and spread evenly. Roll up the meat tightly and tie with kitchen string.

3 POUR the wine into a roasting pan, add the lamb to the pan, then season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and roast for 3 hours, checking every hour to ensure there is enough liquid in the pan. Add more wine, if necessary.

4 REMOVE the foil and add the beans. Roast for a further 30 minutes or until golden brown. Serve.

TIP Ask your butcher to remove the bone from the lamb but keep the shank, as it will give the meat extra flavour. ➤

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Wholegrain mustard baby chickens

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME 1½ hours
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

2 onions, quartered
4 carrots, cut into rings
1 cup white wine
2 cups chicken stock
Handful of herbs, such as rosemary, thyme and oregano
8 baby chickens or 1 large chicken
½ cup wholegrain mustard
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
400g fresh asparagus

- 1 PREHEAT** the oven to 200°C. Put the onion and carrot in a roasting pan, then add the wine and stock.
- 2 PRESS** the herbs into the belly of each chicken and put the chickens in the roasting pan. Cover with the mustard and sprinkle over the garlic. Season well with salt and pepper.
- 3 COVER** the pan with foil and roast for 45-60 minutes, or 1-1½ hours if you are cooking one large chicken.
- 4 REMOVE** the foil and add the asparagus to the roasting pan. Roast, uncovered, for a further 20-30 minutes or until the chickens are golden brown and cooked through.
- 5 TRANSFER** the vegetables to a serving dish and top with the chickens to serve.



Tie the chicken legs with decorative kitchen string for a festive touch.

PREPARATION TIME 10 mins
COOKING TIME 20 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

6 pork sausages with sage
8 apples, cores removed, stalks intact
1 cup apple juice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 PREHEAT** the oven to 180°C. Remove the skin from the sausages and fill the apples with the meat.
- 2 ARRANGE** the apples in a roasting pan and pour over the apple juice. Season with salt and pepper.
- 3 BAKE** the apples in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until the apples start to burst open. Serve warm.

Baby apples stuffed with sage pork



Sweet and savoury team up together to make a mouth-watering side dish.

Duck-fat potatoes

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME 55 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

2kg potatoes, peeled
550g duck fat or 500ml canola oil
4 sprigs thyme
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 PREHEAT** the oven to 180°C. Bring a pot of water to the boil and add the potatoes. Boil for 8 minutes, drain and allow to cool. Use a fork to score the potatoes all over.
- 2 PUT** the duck fat or oil, thyme and garlic in a roasting pan, then heat in the oven for 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and add the potatoes. Roast for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown and cooked, turning over the potatoes halfway through cooking. Drain on kitchen towel and season with salt and pepper. Serve. ➤



For golden, crunchy roast potatoes, it's hard to beat duck fat.

PICTURE (TOP LEFT) THINKSTOCK



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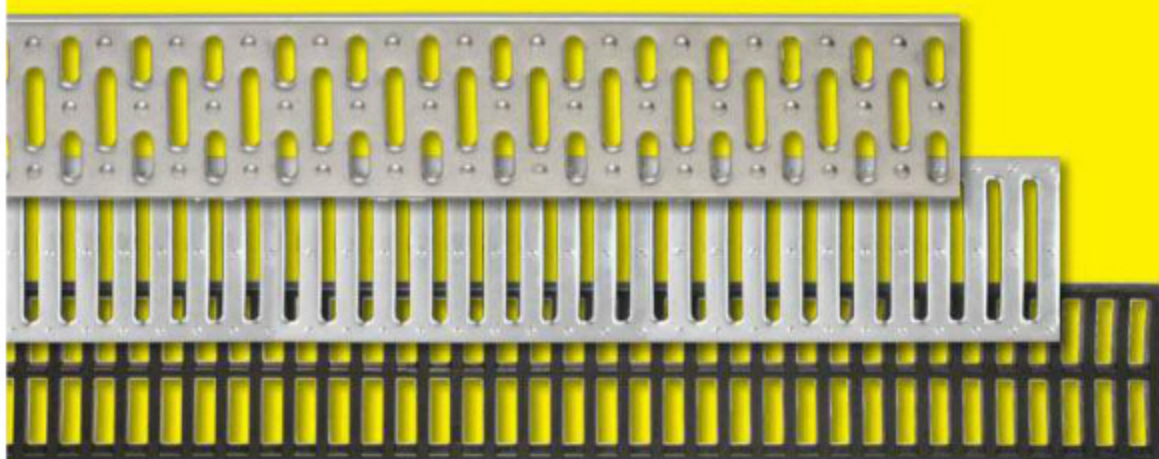
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Cauliflower with a creamy parmesan sauce is a must-have at Christmas.

Cauliflower with parmesan sauce

PREPARATION TIME 5 mins
COOKING TIME 20 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

2 large cauliflowers, cut into florets
60g butter
⅓ cup plain flour
500ml cream
1 cup finely grated parmesan
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ teaspoon nutmeg

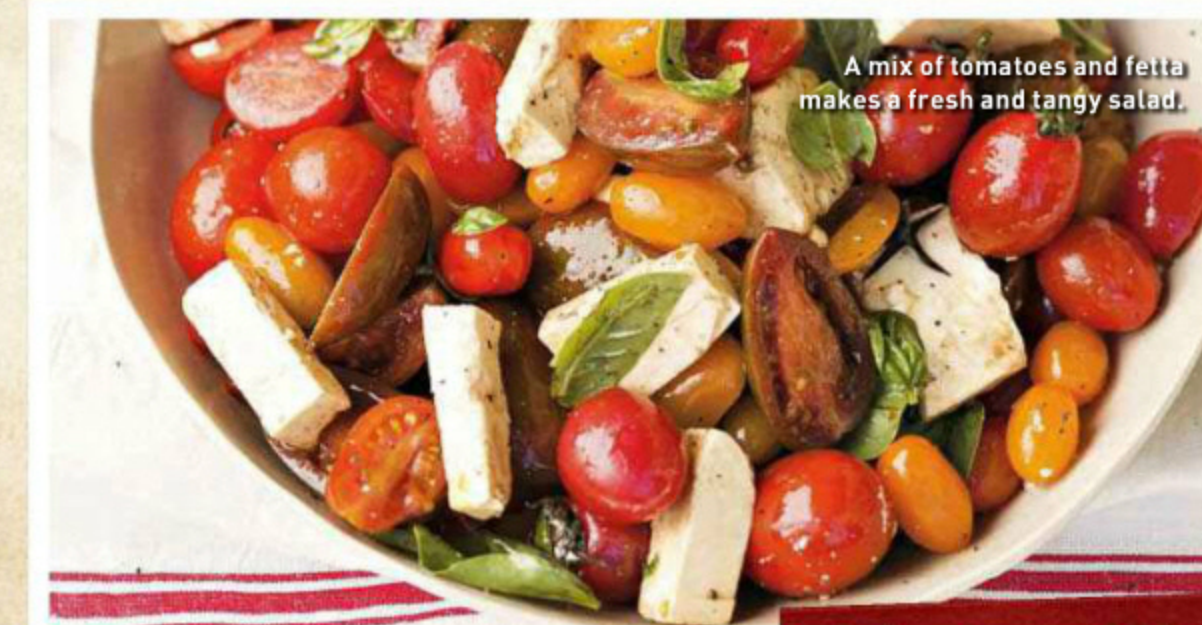
- 1 BRING** a pot of water to the boil, add the cauliflower and boil for 5 minutes or until cooked.
- 2 PUT** the butter in a medium pot and melt over high heat. Add the flour and stir with a metal whisk until well combined. Add the cream and mix until smooth.
- 3 COOK** the sauce, stirring occasionally, until it has reduced by half. Remove the pot from the heat and add the parmesan. Stir until smooth, then season well with salt and pepper.
- 4 ARRANGE** the cauliflower on a serving plate. Pour over the sauce and sprinkle with nutmeg. Serve warm. ➤

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME Nil
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil
⅓ cup balsamic vinegar
500g mixed tomatoes of your choice, halved
200g fetta, cut into rectangles
30g fresh basil leaves, roughly torn
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 MIX** the oil and vinegar in a bowl.
- 2 PUT** the tomato, fetta and basil in a serving bowl. Pour over the dressing and toss lightly. Season with salt and pepper to serve.



A mix of tomatoes and fetta makes a fresh and tangy salad.

Tomato and fetta salad



Pavlova Christmas wreath

This edible Christmas wreath tastes as good as it looks.

PREPARATION TIME 10 mins
COOKING TIME 1 hour
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

8 eggwhites
2½ cups caster sugar
20ml white vinegar
¼ cup cornflour
¼ cup good-quality cacao powder
250g mascarpone cheese
1L dark chocolate ice-cream
250g berries of your choice
Cacao powder, for sifting
⅓ cup honey

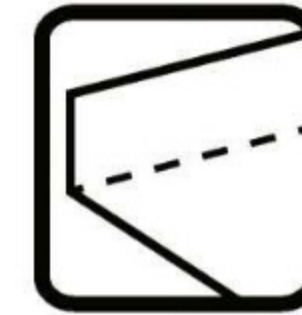
- 1 **PREHEAT** the oven to 160°C. Put the eggwhites in the bowl of an electric blender and whisk on high speed until soft peaks form. Keep whisking while gradually adding the sugar until the mixture is shiny and stiff.
- 2 **ADD** the vinegar and whisk for a further 1 minute, then fold in the cornflour. Spoon one-third of the meringue into a clean mixing bowl, add the cacao, then mix well. Lightly fold the cacao meringue into the remaining meringue so it resembles marble.
- 3 **LINE** a large baking tray with baking paper and spray with non-stick cooking

- spray. Spoon the meringue onto the baking tray so it looks like a wreath.
- 4 **BAKE** for 45-60 minutes or until the meringue is crispy on the outside but soft on the inside. Allow it to cool on the baking paper, then transfer it carefully with a spatula to a large serving plate.
 - 5 **SPOON** the mascarpone onto the meringue with scoops of ice-cream, then sprinkle with the berries. Sift over the cacao and drizzle with honey. Serve immediately.
- TIP** If the meringue wreath breaks when transferring it to the plate, just place the two halves next to each other. ➤



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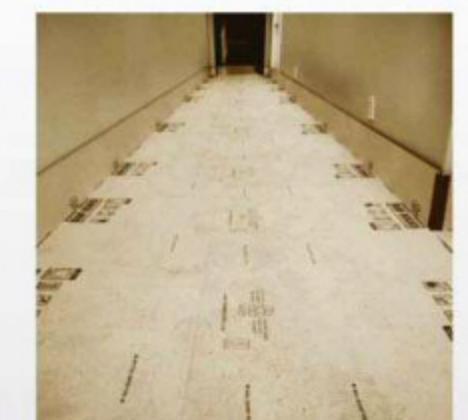
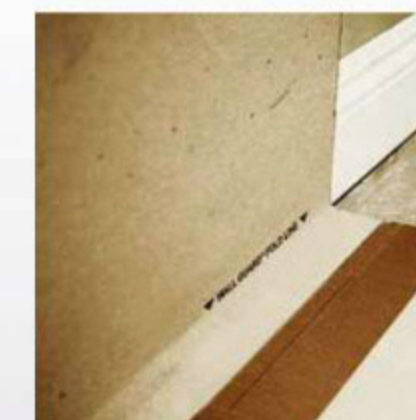
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Fruitcake ice-creams

PREPARATION TIME 20 mins,
plus overnight freezing
COOKING TIME Nil
MAKES 12

INGREDIENTS

1L vanilla ice-cream
350g fruitcake of your choice
300g dark chocolate, melted
100g white chocolate, melted

1 PUT the ice-cream in a large mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until

it softens. Crumble the fruitcake over the ice-cream and mix well.

2 SPOON the mixture into 12 hollows of an ice-cream mould or use empty yoghurt containers. Add ice-cream sticks and freeze overnight until hard.

3 REMOVE the ice-cream mixture from the moulds, dip in dark chocolate, then place on baking paper in the fridge until set. Use a teaspoon to drizzle white chocolate in a thin stream over the dark chocolate. Allow to set. Serve in a large serving bowl over ice cubes.



The kids will love these ice-cold choc treats.

PREPARATION TIME 15 mins
COOKING TIME 1 hour and 10 mins
SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

80ml water
¾ cup caster sugar
1 cup milk
½ cup pure cream
4 egg yolks
2 eggs
¼ cup cacao powder
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
⅓ cup caster sugar
8 chocolate macaroons
125g fresh strawberries, halved

1 PREHEAT the oven to 160°C. Bring the water and ¾ cup sugar to the boil in a medium pot and boil for 8-10 minutes until it forms a golden caramel.

2 SPRAY a 10 x 15cm bread tin with non-stick cooking spray. Pour in the caramel and allow to stand until set.

3 BRING the milk and cream to the boil in a pot. Whisk the egg yolks, eggs, cacao, vanilla and ⅓ cup sugar until light and creamy, then stir in the milk mixture. Sieve the mixture into the bread tin, then put the tin in an ovenproof dish.

4 FILL the dish halfway with warm water, cover the bread tin with foil and bake for 50-60 minutes or until set. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly, then chill in the fridge.

5 TURN out carefully onto a serving platter, then top with the macaroons and strawberries to serve.

Chocolate crème caramel



If you love chocolate and caramel, this dessert will delight your senses.

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Succulents for the season

Forget the tree and make a stunning living door wreath, table centrepiece or hanging ball this Christmas

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS

At this time of year, succulents can be put to work as living festive decorations, as they have a wonderful diversity of leaf shapes and colours, and are water-wise.

Start at the front door with a living wreath. All you need is a wire frame, from craft stores, a block of sphagnum moss and galvanised tie wire.

A succulent wreath needs sun, but it can survive on a shady door for the few weeks leading up to Christmas.

After the festive season, the wreath can be used to decorate a sunny wall or laid flat on an outdoor table as a centrepiece. You can also recycle the succulents to create a tapestry effect in a large, low pot. ➤



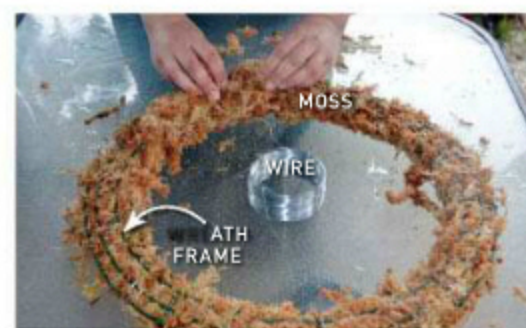
Brunnings Sphagnum Moss, about \$10 for 150g. brunnings.com.au

Making a wreath

A wreath requires lots of plants, so take cuttings from mature plants, and divide your echeverias and sempervirens. To enjoy the wreath for many months, water it regularly and fertilise monthly with a soluble complete plant food.



1 PREPARE THE CUTTINGS from your succulents, removing the lower leaves for a stem about 50mm long. Lay cuttings in the shade for three days so the stem ends form a callus.



2 PACK THE FRAME tightly on both sides with a generous amount of wet sphagnum moss. Attach a piece of wire to the frame, wrapping it around the moss at 50mm intervals to secure it.



3 ADD THE PLANTS using a pencil or chopstick to make a small hole in the moss. Secure with hairpins to hang the wreath, or lay it flat for six weeks until the cuttings have rooted.



A wreath of succulents suits the hot and sunny Christmas season.

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Clever centrepieces

A special succulent centrepiece for your table need not break the budget. It is as easy as turning to your garden or local nursery and letting your imagination run wild.

Succulents are resilient and tough. You can take them from a pot, use them for a special purpose and then return them to their original pot.

Just about any container can be used to create a centrepiece, from a glass bowl to a novelty planter.

This teacup had a drainage hole so we planted an aeonium as a feature, adding lower-growing bright-green succulents around the base.

For a seasonal centrepiece, arrange succulent cuttings and divisions around a candle, then after Christmas, plant them in a permanent spot.

Try a vase, fishbowl, large shell or even a piece of old driftwood. Secure the succulents in pebbles or gravel and spray lightly with water. ➤



Burgundy Aeonium 'Zwartkop' makes a structural statement.



Succulents surround a candle in this simple glass bowl.



The leaves of Aeonium 'Tricolor' are striking in a glass-doored lantern.



Ask friends for cuttings and raid your own garden to get enough succulents to make this ball.

Succulent ball

Christmas guests will be amazed when they see this beautiful succulent ball suspended from a tree or pergola, or taking centrestage in a courtyard.

It's easy to make, just buy two wire-framed hanging baskets, remove the liner and replace with moss, then plant the basket from the outside with a selection of succulents.

You can use cuttings in the ball but leave them in a brightly lit spot for three days to form a callus before planting. Or divide echeverias and sempervirens to use the small rosettes.

Once it is hung, water the ball well, then at least once a week, and feed every couple of months with a soluble complete plant food.

Keep in mind the ball is alive and growing, so after about a year you'll have to rejuvenate it by replacing plants that have outgrown it.

If you have enough succulents, make a second ball to give as a gift. ➤



Osmocote Cacti & Succulents Mix, \$11 for 25L. scottsaustralia.com.au



1 Plant the cuttings
Take cuttings and remove the lower leaves for a stem of 50-80mm. Line each basket with a generous amount of wet sphagnum moss. Starting from the base, make holes in the moss with a chopstick, inserting the plants.
TIP Secure any loose cuttings and rosettes with bobby pins.



3 Make the ball
Invert a basket and position it on top of a plastic bucket or have a friend hold it. Position the other board on top, aligning one basket directly on top of the other. Slide out the board and hold the baskets together.
TIP To test that roots have formed, gently tug on a cutting or rosette.



2 Add the potting mix
When the sides of the baskets are planted, fill them with a good-quality cacti and succulent potting mix. Position a flat board over each basket to keep the moss and compost in place, then invert them. Stand the baskets for six weeks in a sunny spot until roots form. Water once a week.



4 Hang the ball
Cut 100mm long pieces of wire to join the baskets. Slip the wire behind the frame of each basket where they meet, twisting it around both. Wire the frame at 50mm intervals. Attach an S-hook to the basket frame at the top of the ball, then add a chain to hang the ball in a sunny spot. ➤

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Seasonal trees

This year, swap the plastic tree for a potted plant to have a real green Christmas experience.

Instead of buying a tree that has been cut down and won't survive past the new year, decorate with a living specimen that can be kept potted or planted out after Christmas.

Many small conifers can live in pots and can be brought indoors and decorated for Christmas. When the festivities are over, use them to green up a courtyard or balcony.

For an Aussie-themed Christmas, the Wollemi pine is a standout and will live happily outdoors in a large pot for the rest of the year.

A potted plant also makes an excellent gift. Box it up and decorate the outside or adorn the pot with ribbons and bows for a festive feel.

TIP Keep potted Christmas trees indoors for a maximum of three weeks and don't forget to water them.



An evergreen olive tree in a box makes a great gift.



Put conifers in white jugs and buckets and attach Christmas decorations.

PICTURES AUSTRAL



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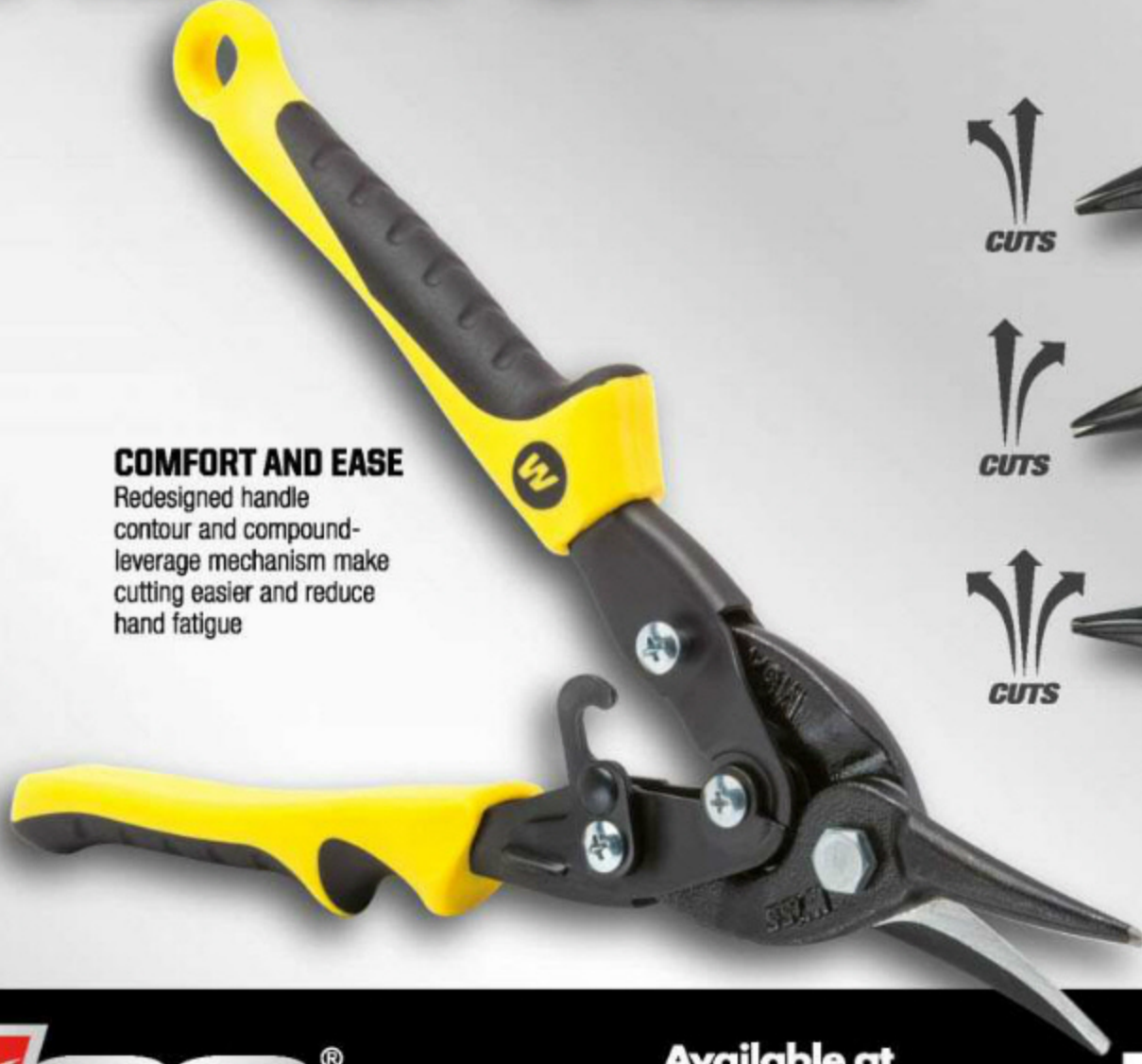
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Gift guide

Head instore for the latest products to give as presents this festive season



FLIP AND FRY with the Matador Three-piece Tool Set, which includes a scraper, tongs and spatula.



COOK UP a storm on the Maverick Four-burner BBQ Kitchen, \$1399, including a WELS Five-star 6L/Min rated tap.



KEEP KIDS HEALTHY and active in the backyard these holidays with Play Equipment Six-function Swing Set, \$149.



TEMPT TODDLERS outside with the tyke-sized Fountain Products Clam Shell Sandpit, \$12.50.



ADD ADVENTURE to the garden with the My First Deep Ocean Sandpit, \$49, for hours of exploring for hidden treasure.



BE PREPARED for wild winds or thunderstorms with the iWeather Weather Station, \$98.



CLEAN IT UP with the Gerni Classic 120.4 Titan, \$298, to remove caked-on dirt and dust.



SKIP A TRIP with the Hose Reel Auto Retractable Gardena 13mm x 35m, \$349, for a tidy yard.



GET IT WET using the Nylex Never Kink 12mm x 15m Garden Hose, \$46.94, fitted with heavy-duty, anti-leak connectors.

Luxury lanterns

Add a sense of intimacy to your next outdoor dinner party by lighting the night with a stylish lantern to suit your taste in place of harsh spotlights.



ADD ATMOSPHERE with a Euro Design Coastal Lantern, \$39.98.



GET A GOLDEN glow with a Euro Design Moroccan Lantern, \$59.95.



BRIGHTEN THE NIGHT with a Euro Design Rattan Lantern, \$49.98.



DAPPLE BY DESIGN with a Euro Design Lattice Lantern, \$53.98.



MAKE A STATEMENT with a Euro Design Woven Lantern, \$69.95.



LIGHT THE WAY with a Euro Design Cage Lantern, \$79.95.



SIT IN THE SHINE of a Euro Design Moana Lantern, \$59.98.



CHANNEL THE CHURCH with a Euro Design Chapel Lantern, \$69.98.



FRAME THE FLAME of a candle with a Euro Design Java Lantern, \$49.98.

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DIVE INTO D.I.Y. using the Bosch 10.8V Three-piece Handyman Kit, \$99, which includes a two-speed drill/driver, multi sander and reciprocating jigsaw.

ASSEMBLE IT with less fuss using the Redline Rapid Fire 11-piece Bit Set, \$12.98.



KEEP TOOLS ORGANISED in the spacious 36-inch Kincrome Tool Chest with Trolley and 10-drawer Combo, \$699.



GET A GRIP using the Trojan Multigrip Rapid Adjust Pliers, \$24.98 for two.



BE READY for anything with the Swiss-made Victorinox Spartan Pocket Tool, \$24.98, which has 12 functions.



MAKE DAD'S DAY with the gift of a Rhino Galvanised Tool Box Twin Pack, \$89, to ensure his tools stand the test of time.

Get organised



STAY IN CONTROL using the Tactix Clipboard Organiser with Powerbank, \$59, specifically designed to hold, protect and charge tablets. Perfect for the tech-savvy tradie or handyman in your household, it has a removable powerbank and a foam lining.



FAKE A FAIRY garden with the Solar LED Lily Flower Stake Lights, \$24 for a four-pack, which turn on automatically at dusk.



SET THE SCENE with a water-resistant Frangipani Solar String Light, \$20, for a summer-themed garden party.



DITCH DUST and dander with the Black & Decker 14.4V Lithium-ion Flexi Dust Buster with Pet Brush, \$159.



SPEED UP home repairs using a Ladder Limb, \$19.98, which fits into the hollow rungs of ladders to hold tools.



COOL OFF using the Ryobi 18V One+ Misting Fan, \$99, with a run time of up to 16 hours and a pivoting head.



FINISH THE JOB using the Ryobi 18V One+ Hybrid Light, \$99, with a 360° rotating head and 20W LEDs.



SPOT IT with an Arlec 2 x 20W 2700 Lumens LED Work Light, \$59, for working once the sun has set.

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Flipping houses

Cherie Barber shares her secrets for renovating success

WORDS LEE DASHIELL

Australia is full of houses that are structurally sound, but cosmetically tired, according to Renovating For Profit's Cherie Barber.

Earlier architectural styles, such as Federation and Victorian, have an integrity and charm worth preserving, but late-20th century houses were built for function over style.

And while the materials used were considered trendy at the time, the styles haven't stood the test of time.

Most salvageable details from this era are not often available for recycling at restoration companies, as they're not architecturally significant.

These types of properties are ripe for a makeover, and given the right guidelines, can be dramatically updated to look fresh, clean and modern. ➤

Turn your renovating hobby into a full-time job with Cherie's tips and tricks.

PICTURES: RENOVATING FOR PROFIT

Learn the ropes

Cherie's company, Renovating for Profit, runs three-day intensive workshops, with training on how you can turn what may be just a renovating hobby into a full-time business.

'But don't go tossing in your job tomorrow,' Cherie strongly advises. Instead, take your time and follow her process to make sure you have all the knowledge necessary before stumping up your money.

By following her step-by-step guide for finding the right suburb as well as the right house, knowing how to renovate it within a very tight budget and how to sell it, you can make a profit that's way beyond your expectations.

And after you have tasted success with your first renovation, you may even feel confident enough to start renovating as a full-time occupation. But it's all about getting it right to start with.

Due diligence

If you are buying a house to make a renovation profit, first look at the suburb and then at the house.

SUBURB When evaluating the area, start to gauge which blocks of land are the most valuable. Is it good to be near amenities such as hospitals, schools, public transport and shops?

Before settling on an investment area, do your due diligence to ensure it ticks all the boxes that confirm it is a suburb that could make you a profit.

Once you're convinced that you've chosen a winning area, it's time to look at individual houses.

HOUSE How do you know whether or not the price of a house is an accurate reflection of its true value?

Real estate agents can guide you and have a good knowledge of their patch, but they work in the interests of the seller, and their commission also relies on the price achieved.

How much did similar houses in the same street sell for? Did they have superior or inferior features?

You must carry out extensive research to find a property that has a basic structure suitable to make it a worthwhile project.



Before



After

Resurfacing this house's exterior and adding comfy outdoor seating dramatically improves it.

Cosmetic vs structural

When starting on a renovation journey, you need to decide whether you want to be a cosmetic or structural renovator.

With a cosmetic renovation, you can generally do most of the work without council approval, and many can be completed within six weeks.

This is ideal for a first renovation for profit, and may lead to you being able to have two or three projects on the go.

The profit margin is significant, but not as much as from a structural renovation. These tend to take up to 18 months to complete and usually involve council approval, architect fees and major building works.

While there is a big improvement in the potential profit margin, there is much more work involved, possible setbacks and the chance the market won't be as strong when you sell.

Whatever your choice, Cherie's workshop arms you with the necessary knowledge to be successful. ➤

After

A coat of render, new porch screen and picket fence totally transform this house.



Head over heart

People who buy houses they fall in love with often pay more and their projects aren't as profitable.

'Renovating to make money is not about finding a house you love and making it pretty,' says Cherie.

'Look at it objectively, at its potential, and the structure, land and condition. Think, is it a house I can make money from?' she says.



Before

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After

Modern furniture and a papered feature wall give this living space a streamlined look.

Set a budget

People who renovate older-style houses often think that everything needs to be ripped out and replaced. While this is a surefire way to have a new modern interior, it isn't necessarily the best approach if you want to make a profit.

Check every room in minute detail and make a priority list as to what must stay, what can stay, and what must go.

Across the entire renovation project, you'll need to carefully choose from this list what will make the most impact within your renovation budget. This prep work must be carried out completely before an offer is made.

Have it inspected

Once you have decided on the house you want, ask your solicitor to make it a condition of the contract that the house must pass a building, pest and asbestos inspection.

By making the sale subject to these approvals, it means you retain

negotiating power if there are problems.

Otherwise, any repairs to these hidden faults may absorb your profit margin.

Hire tradies

A quick house flip is the objective, and while you may have DIY skills of a high standard, it could be a better option to remain a project manager and not do the actual labour yourself.

Hiring skilled labourers means the job will be completed efficiently, faster and with a polished professional finish.

Organising the timings and order of events is the key to a swift renovation. Give the tradies a tight brief and check you're happy with the work at every stage, which means being present on the site is essential.



Before

Making sure you have everything the tradies need on site is also crucial. If you don't have the toilet yet and the plumber is ready to install it, you will have wasted valuable time.

You'll also have to pay the plumber additional fees, as they will need to come back when the loo is delivered.

These types of delays waste cash, digging into your profit margin, so being organised is paramount.

Making a good first impression

While you looked at the house in a business frame of mind, your potential buyers are viewing it in an entirely different way.

Among the first to view the property are usually the people who are known as the 'heart buyers'.

These are the people who fall in love with a house and can envisage living there or aspire to having a home as nice as this one. And they'll often give you your highest price.

It is imperative to make the first impression memorable for the wow factor and clever choices you have made to improve the property.

From the front gate and garden beds to the door, these elements can

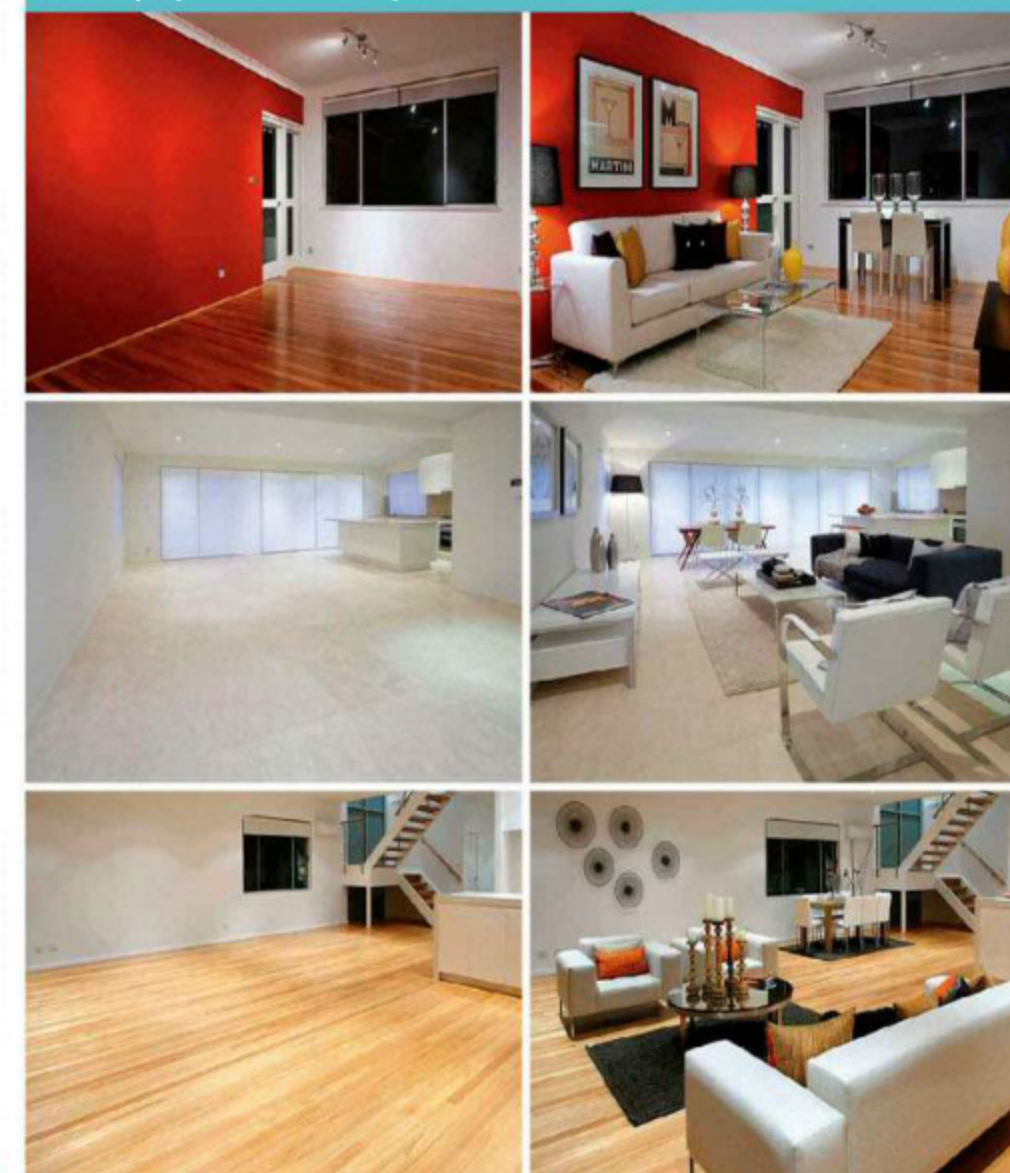
put people in a positive frame of mind before they even see the interior.

Once they're inside, you need to wow them again. This is done with the superior finish you've applied to the walls, ceilings and floors, the abundant light you've created and the sleek kitchen and bathroom refresh.

An essential part of making your house look its best is to hire a stylist to furnish it. This can be a bit pricey, but it creates a mood that can escalate the house's perceived value.

You are creating a lifestyle look people want, so don't try to save on this cost or you risk reducing your profit. These before and after photos prove the value of this expense. ➤

Empty versus styled ▼



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ROCKET

Look in the sandpaper section at Bunnings.

Taking the course ▼

Cherie's three-day workshop, *Renovating for Profit*, is full of information, with a detailed step-by-step process for every stage, from choosing which suburb, which house and which tradies to dealing with real estate agents and the legalities.

She also shares her winning transformation process from resurfacing the inside and outside, to the most practical ways to create dramatic impact and give the house the wow factor that buyers will clamour for.

There are guest speakers sharing their knowledge on topics such as wealth creation, getting finance to start the process and even how to succeed at conflict resolution.

Each workshop attendee is given a huge pack of books, reference manuals and DVDs, so they can refresh their memory.

Cherie's designed several spreadsheets that will become the to-do list on everything from doing due diligence on the suburb and house to calculators for all aspects of the reno budget.

There's also a spreadsheet of more than 5000 lines for each detail of the house from wall surfaces and light switches to the garden. You delete the lines that don't apply to your project to give you a running list of every single job for the renovation in order of operation.

This allows your tradies to give you an accurate quote, as every job is detailed.

Cherie has put together a buyers' group, offering discounts on the main purchases for bathrooms, kitchens, flooring and more.

The workshop isn't cheap, but if you use the tried-and-tested research properly, you can be confident you'll make a profit. It will more than pay for itself, most likely on the first renovation. Find out more at renovatingforprofit.com.au.



After
In the overhauled bathroom, a freestanding tub adds wow factor.



Before



After
The old kitchen was stripped and replaced with a sleek modern design.



Before



After

With a cosmetic reno, Wayne and Jan have turned their property from daggy and dilapidated to deluxe.

Wayne and Jan, Perth

'This property ticked all the boxes, location, transport, cafe strip and near the Perth CBD,' says Wayne.

'We bought it in December 2013 for \$420,000 and spent \$165,400 on renovations including acquisition, holding and sales costs. In May 2014, we were offered \$750,000 cash prior to auction, making a profit of \$165,000.

'It was a cosmetic reno. We stripped every room in the house and replaced the roof. We put in new plumbing, rewired, painted inside and out, and did full landscaping. The whole reno took five months from purchase to sale,' says Jan.

'Getting the right quotes and dealing with tradesmen, I estimate we would have spent at least \$20,000 more on the wrong quotes than what we did without the knowledge and strategies that Cherie teaches.



Before

'The most satisfying part was just doing the reno and seeing the finished job. And of course, the sale price was a fantastic outcome,' says Wayne.

'We got so many positive comments once we'd finished. The property was featured in WA's *The Weekend West* paper with a great review, which really

added to the marketing leading up to the auction,' says Jan.

'Our downfall was not doing a written scope of works for the tradies, so we had a few miscommunications. I was on site every day, but still had issues with them if I had to go. Besides that, it ran smoothly,' says Wayne. ➤



After

The hard work paid off for Rachael and her house was short-listed for Renovation of the Year 2013.

Student success story
PROFIT
★\$115,000★

Rachael, Brisbane

'I bought a 1920s three-bedroom timber cottage in a popular Brisbane suburb, close to the CBD. It was derelict and unliveable, but despite this, it had good bones and I could see it had great potential,' says Rachael, who attended Cherie's workshop.

'I paid \$400,000 for it in December 2012, spent \$105,000 on renovations, plus staging and other costs and sold it in May 2013 for \$650,000, making a profit of \$115,000.'

Here's a run-down of the works completed over the 12-week reno.

- House restumped and levelled.
- Asbestos removed.
- Roof replaced.
- New electrical wiring and plumbing installed.
- New dining area ceiling relined.
- Walls removed, structural beams installed to support the ceiling.

- New kitchen installed.
- Back exterior wall, stairs and windows removed to make way for a new deck.
- Bathroom moved upstairs to replace the exposed shower room under the house.
- New laundry built under the house.
- Original front verandah opened up and a handrail added.
- Walls and doors added and removed for new study at the front.
- A porch and footbridge built to provide easy street access.
- New driveway and carport added.
- New picket fence, retaining wall and a side fence installed.
- Garden landscaped and turfed.
- Entire house repainted.
- House staged and furnished.

'It's hard to strike the right balance between spending as little as possible

and creating something people will love. You have to be a tough negotiator and a smart shopper,' says Rachael.

'Regulations are also much stricter in Queensland than in NSW, so it's harder to get things done without licences and insurances. Council delays and red tape can also cause problems.

'But it was a great feeling to have created a beautiful and functional home that sold within a few days.

'I've started my own company, Front Porch Properties, and project manage other people's renos as well. I feel very fortunate to be able to live and breathe what I love every day.'



Before



After

A spacious new kitchen was installed in this derelict home.



Before



After

Walls were demolished to create a light and airy open-plan living area.



Before

IDEAL WINTON VINYL TILES

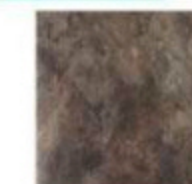
45 SERIES

45.7cm x 45.7cm
(5 tiles = 1sq. mtr)

7 YEAR
Domestic Warranty

They are suitable for
WET AREAS

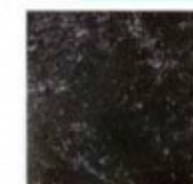
SELF STICK
For quick installation



Char-Brown Slate



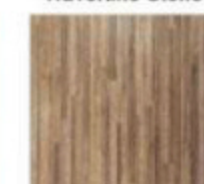
Travertine Stone



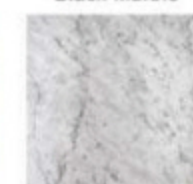
Black Marble



Natural Wood Plank



Mocha Parquet



White Marble

30 SERIES

30.5cm x 30.5cm
(10.75 tiles = 1sq. mtr)

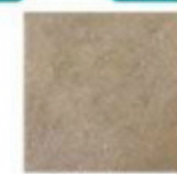
3 YEAR
Domestic Warranty

They are suitable for
WET AREAS

SELF STICK
For quick installation



Black Diamond



Beige Stone



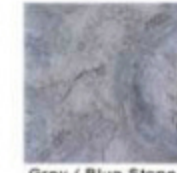
Charcoal Stone



Finger Parquet



Black & White Cheq



Grey / Blue Stone



Green Slate



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Keep your cool

Beat the heat and chill out with these five smart strategies

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

Summer's here and as usual it brings sweltering temperatures that can quickly turn the home into an unbearable furnace.

Air conditioning is an effective solution, but there are also simple preventative steps you can take to minimise heat build-up and create a comfortable, cool sanctuary.

1 Add insulation

If you're renovating an older home, wall and ceiling insulation is one of the best ways to control the temperature and, in many cases, it is mandatory to have it installed.

Up to 87% of a home's heat is gained through windows, so double glazing or window films can keep temperatures low especially when combined with insulated curtains.

Sealing gaps in walls and around windows as well as installing door seals also helps keep the house cool.

2 Shade windows

Protecting the interior of the home from direct sunlight can reduce the temperature. Installing awnings and eaves over windows and doorways prevents heat entering during summer without blocking out the sun in winter.

3 Create ventilation

Make use of the natural breezes by opening a small window on the cool side of the house and a large window on the hot side.

This will create a vacuum that draws in cool air and expels hot air. It also prevents a build-up of heat and makes your home less stuffy.

Keep the windows and doors closed during the hottest part of the day and open them at night once the temperature has dropped.

TIP Roof ventilation prevents heat build-up in the roof cavity, which in turn reduces room temperature. ➤

Provide extra shade in the backyard with an umbrella.



Cooling on a budget

A few simple practices will cool the house and save you money.

- **USE FANS** to circulate the air in the house before turning on the air conditioning.
- **COOK OUTSIDE** on the barbie to minimise the amount of heat generated inside the house.
- **CREATE SHADE** over outdoor areas so they remain cool in the evening for alfresco dining.
- **TURN OFF APPLIANCES** at the wall as many use power and heat up even when in standby mode.
- **POSTPONE CHORES** until the evening to stop appliances from heating the house.
- **USE LEDs or CFLs** (compact fluorescent lights), as they generate less heat than incandescent bulbs and will also reduce your power bill.

Take advantage of summer breezes by relaxing in a shady outdoor area.

PICTURES ALAMY, THINKSTOCK



A climber over a pergola gives you a gorgeous living canopy.



Create a calming ambience in the garden with a fountain.

4 Cool efficiently

When it's so hot that the air conditioner is necessary, you can still make it run efficiently to keep bills low.

If yours is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it with a new model, choosing one that suits the size of the room. Keep it efficient by shading the external unit and cleaning the filter every month during summer.

Set the thermostat as high as you can tolerate and close rooms you aren't using so it won't need to work as hard.

Adding a water feature

When landscaping a backyard, incorporating a water feature can help make the area more comfortable through evaporative cooling.

It also adds a peaceful ambience, providing a relaxing environment that can take away the stress of a hot day.

5 Smart landscaping

Create a shady oasis in the backyard with smart planting and landscaping. Deciduous trees planted on the northern and western side of a house will provide shade in summer without impeding sunshine in winter.

Use shade structures like pergolas or awnings over concrete or paved areas, as hard surfaces can reflect and radiate heat towards the house. Solid walls can also provide shade to create a cool and relaxing area in the yard.

A water feature that you can cool your feet in or a small plunge pool is even better, as nothing beats a quick dip in the heat of summer.

TIP Add a fountain to ensure that the water is always circulating to discourage mosquitoes.

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Pest busters

Get rid of any creepy-crawlies and critters that have taken up residence in your home

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

Summer is a prime time for pesky uninvited house guests to move in. As the weather heats up, hordes of bugs and rodents come out of hiding and make your home theirs.

And an infestation can be an embarrassment when the pests make unexpected visits while you're entertaining over the holiday season.

Deterring them from entering your home and preventing them taking hold is the best defence.

Knowing your adversaries and their weak points is the first step in protecting your home from becoming their permanent residence.



Trapping mice

Eradicating a mice infestation can be tricky, as they're often only active at night and nest in your walls and roof space.

While it's hard to pin down the exact number roaming your home, persistence is a key factor in addressing the problem.

There is a variety of removal solutions, including classic snap traps, radar rodent repellers, poisoned bait or, for the soft-hearted, cage traps to catch them alive.

Set up your chosen method on pathways the mice use, which can be identified by their droppings, and by entry points in the walls. Or lay traps near food sources like a dog bowl, keeping your pet safely away.

It's also a good idea to place traps next to vertical surfaces, such



as skirting boards, as they prefer to travel close to walls or furniture.

Use multiple traps to fix the infestation quickly and repair any damaged seals and doors to prevent a second infestation in the future. ➤



The Big Cheese Ultra Power Pest Repeller, \$60.
the-bigcheese.com.au



Nooski Trap Systems Mouse Trap, \$10.
nooski.com



Ratsak Disposable Mouse Bait Station, \$7.
ratsak.com.au

PICTURES (TOP, CENTRE) THINKSTOCK



Eradicating rats

Having these common household pests move in can pose a health risk to your family, not to mention the smelly urine trails they leave behind. Rats chew through food packaging and electrical wiring, increasing the risk of a household fire starting. Prevention is the best protection, so block any potential entry points to

your home, clear leaf litter and debris from the garden and keep rubbish bins firmly closed. Trim branches away from the roof and install wire mesh over compost bin vents. If they've already settled in, get rid of them easily by using poisoned baits, removing nests or setting out traps for a pet-safe solution.



The Big Cheese Rat Cage Trap, \$33. the-bigcheese.com.au



Gotcha! Clean Touch Rat Trap, \$4. bunnings.com.au



Fast Action Ratsak Wax Blocks, about \$6 for six. ratsak.com.au

Cockroaches

Hiding in wall cavities, subfloors, or roofing during the day, these nocturnal lurkers carry disease, and their discarded skin can trigger an attack in asthma sufferers. To hinder their march around your home, dispose of scraps and keep food in sealed containers to limit their access and wipe down sinks in

the kitchen, bathroom and living areas, as they need water to survive. There's a range of products on the market to wipe out cockroaches. These include baits containing poison, which they carry back to the nest, sticky traps, aerosols that let you kill them on sight and bombs that give up to three months of protection.



Raid Exterminator Insect Control Bomb, \$14 for three. raidkillsbugs.com.au



Roach Kill Cockroach Gel Bait, \$8 for 5g. roachkill.com.au



Mortein Lure N Kill Cockroach Baits, \$4 for six. mortein.com.au



Ants

Controlling an ant infestation in your home can be tricky as ants can detect common insecticides, avoiding sprayed areas, and nests are often in walls or under the house. To solve an ant problem, use an insecticide formulated to target the queen, and remove access to water and sources of food such as dead insects or scraps.



Richgro Ant Killers, about \$21 for 2.5kg. richgro.com.au



Combat Ant-Rid, \$7 for six baits. antrid.com.au

Zapping flies

Rapidly reproducing in warm weather, flies feed on faeces and garbage before spreading bacteria where they land. To keep your home free of flies this summer, put kitchen scraps in a bin with a fitted lid, add sawdust to your compost pile, fit windows with flyscreens and try sticky paper traps or low-toxicity sprays.



EnviroSafe Fly Trap, \$17 for a twin pack. envirosafeaustralia.com.au



PestXpert Pro-Spray Flying, \$13 for 500g. pestxpert.com.au



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*when used as directed

DIY SECURITY TRICKS

Protect your home from a break-in when you head off on holiday

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

Empty houses full of Christmas presents make summer holidays a high-risk time for break-ins, and it takes just seconds for a thief to make off with your valuables.

To fool the casual observer into thinking you're at home while you are actually away, try these simple techniques and safety measures.

Mow the lawn

An overgrown lawn can be a red flag that announces a house is unoccupied. Cut the grass before you leave and have a friend or lawn service do the mowing if you're away for a long time.

Ozito 36V Li-ion Cordless Lawn Mower, \$399. ozito.com.au



PICTURE: THINKSTOCK



Lock it down

Deadlocks fitted onto all doors make entering and exiting a house difficult. They can also prevent intruders from carrying off larger items like a flatscreen TV.

Lockwood Electronic Keyless Deadlatch, \$319. lockweb.com.au

Make the entrance to your home secure.

Light it up

Attaching sensor lights near potential points of entry can alert neighbours to suspicious visitors. It can also scare off those who thought they'd get in and out undetected.

Arlec Twin Sensor Detection Security Light, \$40. arlec.com.au

Keeping a lookout

Even with the best locks, break-ins can still occur, so having a quality CCTV system can help police catch those responsible. The footage can even be used in court as evidence to prosecute the offenders.

Handy features to look out for include motion activation, night vision, multiple channels and a live link to a smartphone app.

If you can't afford to fork out for a full surveillance system, setting up faux cameras can be enough of a deterrent. Mimicking the real deal, only you will know they aren't recording.

Swann 8 Channel Digital Video Recorder, \$688, and Dummy Security Camera, \$24. swann.com.au



Catch offenders in the act with a security camera.

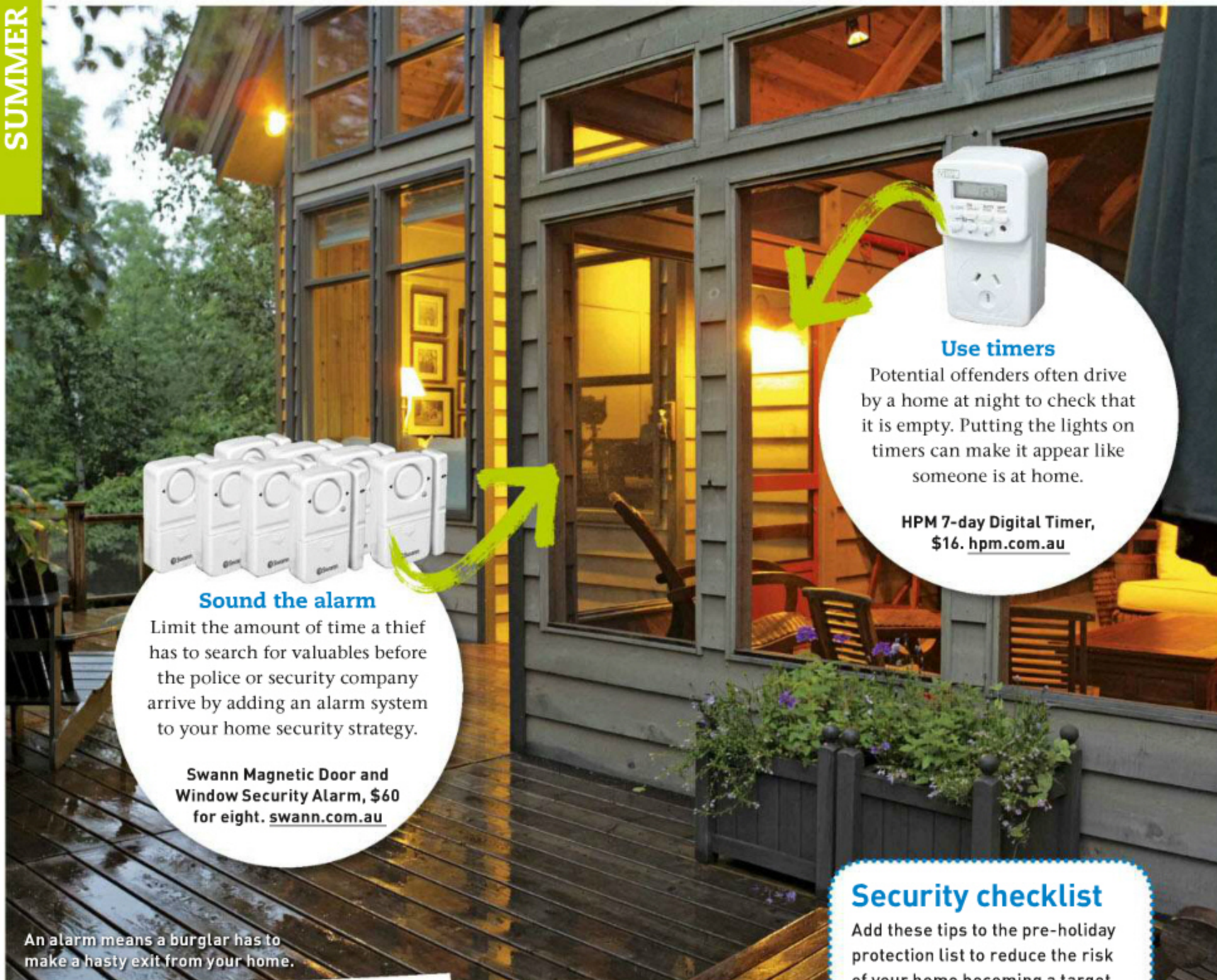


Hide the mail

Investing in a lockable mailbox will protect personal information from criminals. Choosing a box with space for a package also prevents anyone stealing your online shopping goodies from your doorstep.

Pakman Parcel Delivery Box, \$299. pakmanparcelbox.com.au





Sound the alarm

Limit the amount of time a thief has to search for valuables before the police or security company arrive by adding an alarm system to your home security strategy.

Swann Magnetic Door and Window Security Alarm, \$60 for eight. swann.com.au

An alarm means a burglar has to make a hasty exit from your home.



Use timers

Potential offenders often drive by a home at night to check that it is empty. Putting the lights on timers can make it appear like someone is at home.

HPM 7-day Digital Timer, \$16. hpm.com.au

Security checklist

Add these tips to the pre-holiday protection list to reduce the risk of your home becoming a target.

- ✓ **LOCK THE SHED** as garden and DIY gear is valuable and can also be used to break in to the house.
- ✓ **LEAVE A CAR** parked in the driveway to make the house look occupied while you're away.
- ✓ **LOCK AWAY VALUABLES** such as laptops and cameras, which are easy to pawn, and hide keys.
- ✓ **ENSURE PACKAGING** from boxes of gifts such as bikes or TVs aren't poking out of the bin.
- ✓ **CHANGE THE LOCKS** on a new home before moving in and ensure only those you trust have a key.
- ✓ **KEEP A LOW PROFILE** on social media. Change your settings to private and don't announce that you're going away.



Make sure the garden is well tended while you're away.

Water the garden

An uncared-for lawn and drooping plants can indicate a property has been unoccupied for a while. If you can't impose on a friend to water for you, try out a tap timer.



Pope Easy Set Digital Tap Timer, \$59. popeproducts.com.au

PICTURES THINKSTOCK



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For more information contact Cyclone Tools Customer Service on 1800 335 019 or visit www.cyclone.com.au

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Fireproof the yard

Replace timber fences, doormats and flyscreens with non-combustible metal items to lower the risk of fire.

Trim trees

Cut back overgrown trees and shrubs near the house. Mow the lawn regularly and dispose of waste.

Fix the house

Replace broken roof tiles, repair gaps in walls and enclose underfloor areas to stop embers penetrating.

Equip yourself

Install roof sprinklers and attach a hose that reaches around the house. Add a Static Water Supply sign for a pool, tank or dam.

Clean gutters

Burning embers can ignite leaf litter in gutters, so clear them out and install metal guards so they don't become clogged.

Make a plan

Review your bushfire survival plan and prepare a survival kit containing a first-aid kit, radio, torch and bottled water.

Bushfire prep

Stay safe throughout summer by fireproofing your home and backyard

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

Another hot, dry summer means the risk of bushfire is as high as ever, so it's vital you make preparations to ensure the safety of your home and your family.

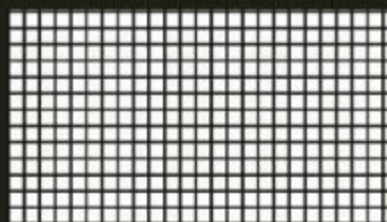
If you live anywhere near the bush, your home is potentially at risk. The majority of homes destroyed in bushfires are due to burning embers that can be blown up to 30km from a fire front, so it pays to be ready.

Having an up-to-date bushfire survival plan is essential, because when a fire is approaching, there is little time to make difficult decisions like when to leave, what to take and whether you will stay and defend.

Visit the fire service website for your state to familiarise yourself with the Fire Danger Rating system, make your bushfire survival plan and stay updated on the latest conditions. ➤



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UV Resistance	★★★★
Strength Rating	★★★

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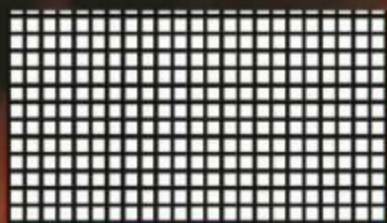
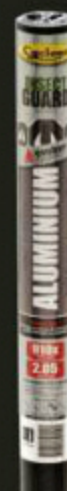
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Cyclone Aluminium insect screening is ideal for screening windows and doors where extra strength and impressive visibility through the screen are required. The Aluminium is powder coated in a charcoal finish to minimise glare.

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 prepack widths: 910, 1220mm
Cut-to-measure widths: 610, 810, 910, 1220mm



Corrosion Resistance	★★★★
UV Resistance	★★★★
Strength Rating	★★★

- Powder coated Aluminium
- 0.28mm diameter wire
- 18 x 15 strands per inch

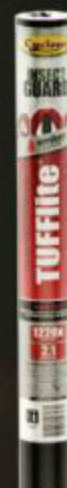
TUFFlite™

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 prepack widths: 910, 1220mm



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 AS3959-2009. 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 AS3959-2009 is provided as a guide only - please refer to AS3959-2009 for further details, or contact your local authority for more information and advice.

For more information contact Cyclone Tools Customer Service on 1800 335 019 or visit www.cyclone.com.au

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On hot, windy days, bushfires can move at up to 25km an hour.

Reduce your risk

In bushfire-prone areas, keeping your property maintained and equipped with fire prevention tools can reduce the risk of losing it.

While new houses that are built close to bushland are subject to strict regulations to give them a greater chance of withstanding a bushfire, older homes are more susceptible.

Inspect your property, looking for hazards that could cause a fire.

Flammable material such as firewood and petrol should not be stored within 20m of the property, lawns should be mowed short and leaves removed.

Trees and shrubs should be kept neat and compact, and spaced apart to help prevent fires from spreading. Prune the lower limbs and remove bark and growth from the base of trees.

Consider landscaping the yard, using paths and driveways to provide a firebreak. Install sprinkler systems

on lawns and in garden beds and avoid using timber sleepers for garden beds near the house.

Seal all gaps in walls including the underfloor area, under eaves, and around windows and doors. Replace broken tiles and seal the roof around chimneys and vents.

If you have a dam or water tank, install a firefighting pump fitted with a long hose that can reach all the way around the house. ➤

PICTURE THINKSTOCK



Well-equipped homes are more likely to survive a bushfire.

Safety equipment

Bushfires move quickly on hot and windy days, and well-prepared homes have the best chance of survival. Install fireproofing and firefighting equipment, keep your valuables safe and protect yourself and your family.



Protector Disposable Carbon Respirator, \$10 for two. scottdiysafety.com.au



Sentry 10.3L Fire And Water Proof Safe, \$99. sentrysafe.com.au



Ironclad Ranchworx Gloves, large, \$45. ironcladgloves.com.au



Graf Plastics 1500L Underground Tank, \$1755. grafplasticsaustralia.com.au



Selecta 6.5hp Fire Fighting Pump And Hose Kit, \$899. silvan.com.au



Cyclone 1220mm Aluminium Insect Screen, \$27 for a 2.05m roll. cyclone.com.au



St John Ambulance 150-piece First Aid Kit, \$50. stjohn.org.au



Cyclone Fire Fighting Rakho, \$72. cyclone.com.au

PICTURE THINKSTOCK

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 to keep it up to date.

EVACUATE EARLY

When the fire danger rating is catastrophic:

- ✓ If your property and home have not been 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 and power, and the 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, medicine, and kids' and pets' needs we'll take are:

We will tell these neighbours, family members and friends where we are going and how we will get there:

BEFORE LEAVING

- ✓ Close doors and windows, bring mats and outdoor timber furniture inside.
- ✓ Block downpipes with a sand-filled stocking and fill gutters with water.
- ✓ Take phones, chargers, important papers, medicine, wallets and keys.
- ✓ Turn off the gas and electricity.
- ✓ 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'll go):

As fire or embers approach, we will:

When the fire arrives, our plan is to (stay inside, check the roof space, put on the sprinklers):

After the fire has passed, we will (include places to check for embers over several hours, animals' welfare):

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 to keep embers out.
- ✓ Turn off the mains gas supply.
- ✓ Block downpipes with a sand-filled stocking and fill gutters with water.
- ✓ Move cars away from the house.
- ✓ Turn on the sprinkler system.

Get more online

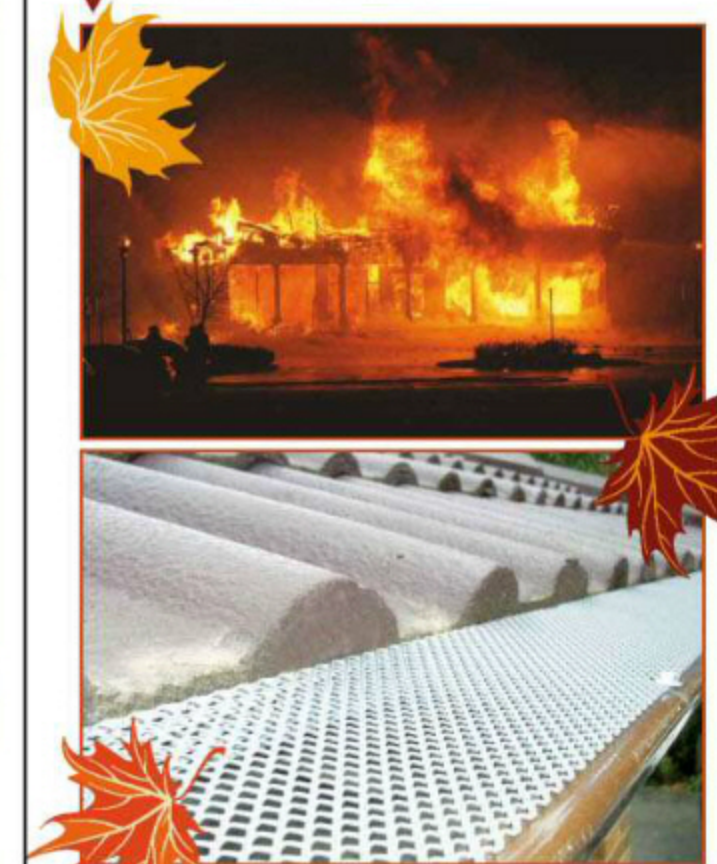
Visit handyman.net.au/mag for more on How To Be Prepared For A Bushfire.



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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 it from build-up of debris.

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OUTDOOR



FUN HOLIDAY PROJECTS

Get into summer living and entertaining with these easy DIY ideas to bring colour to your outdoor spaces

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS PROJECTS GEMA BENEITEZ PICTURES SUE FERRIS



Floral foldout

A small folding table can be painted to make it suitable for use outdoors. Give it a garden theme with a floral top, using a stencil and spray paint in bright blue and white.

Use it as a side table for books and other items when relaxing on a deck or patio, or to hold flowers, drinks and candles when entertaining.

When it's not in use, simply fold it up and tuck it away, making sure it has a spot undercover.

To make the stencils, draw flowers onto paper with a marker pen and cut out. Trace the template onto the back of Contact paper and cut out the stencils.



1 Prepare the timber

Sand back the timber table using 180 grit abrasive paper or a sanding sponge. Wipe off the table with a dry, soft cloth, then apply a coat of exterior acrylic spray paint. Working in a well-ventilated area, hold the can about 300mm from the surface, spraying in a side-to-side motion.



2 Apply the stencils

To protect the table legs from overspray, use painter's tape to attach sheets of A3 paper to mask off the tabletop. Position the flower stencils on the painted tabletop and when you are happy with the arrangement, peel off the paper backing from each one and secure them to the surface.



3 Finish the table

Apply two coats of white spray paint to the tabletop, allowing it to dry between coats. Remove the tape and paper from the legs, then leave the paint to dry. Carefully peel off the flower stencils from the tabletop while the paint is still slightly tacky to reveal the blue flowers underneath.



Tyre table

Give old car tyres a new lease of life as a coffee table. Choose tyres about 650mm in diameter and paint them white to contrast against grass or timber decking.

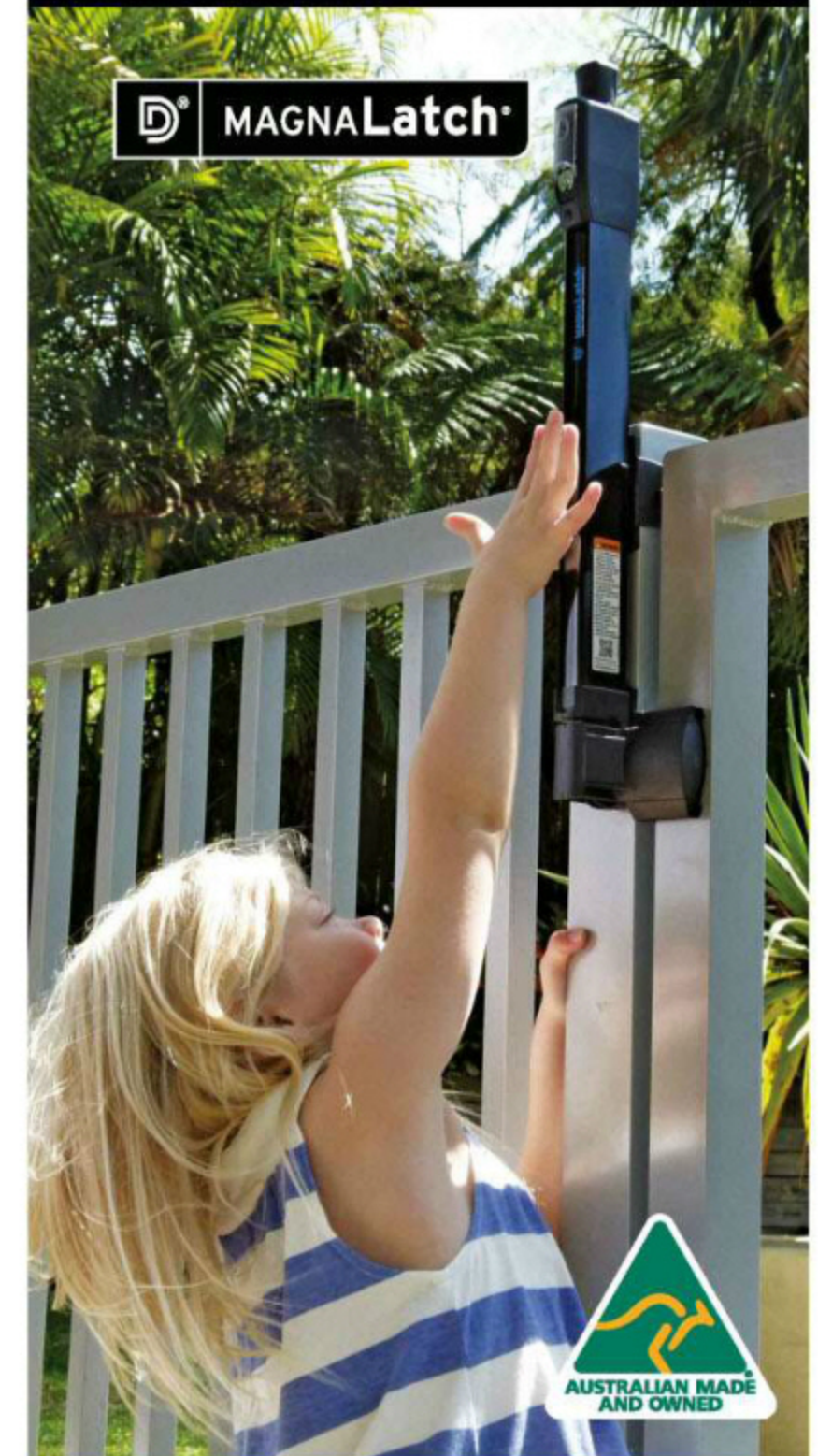
Working in a well-ventilated area on a dropsheet, hold the can 300mm from the tyres, spraying lightly from side to side.

Stack the tyres once the paint has dried and add a glass top that's 850mm in diameter. Recycle glass from an old table or buy a piece from a salvage yard. ➤



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Dipped chairs

White plastic chairs are a backyard staple, as they're budget-friendly and stackable. To transform plain chairs into party-ready seating, all you need is a couple of cans of spray paint.

To get the designer paint-dipped look DIY, use painter's tape to mask off the chair legs. Spray the seat and back in one colour and the legs in another to get the two-toned effect.

Choose a product that bonds to plastics like Rustoleum 2X Ultra Cover Paint + Primer, about \$11 for a 240g can (rustoleum.com.au). Or apply a primer first, then two coats of exterior paint.

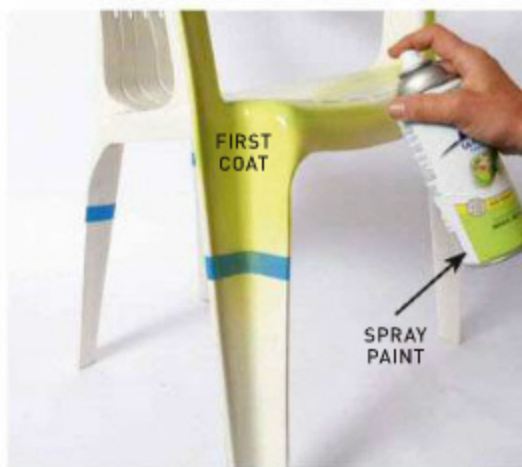


Paint plastic chairs to create bright seating for parties and barbies.



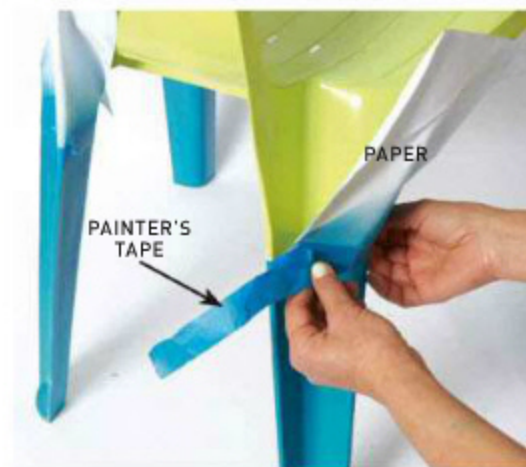
1 Prepare the chairs

Wash the plastic chairs well with warm, soapy water to remove all traces of dirt, dust and grease, then leave them to dry thoroughly. Measure about two-thirds of the way up each leg and mark a line using a permanent marker, then use painter's tape to mask off the legs.



2 Paint the seat

Working in a well-ventilated area on a drop sheet or in a homemade cardboard spray booth to protect surrounding areas from overspray, paint the seat and back. Apply two coats, holding the can about 300mm from the surface and spraying lightly in a side-to-side motion.



3 Finish the legs

Leave the paint to dry, then mask off the painted section of the chair with painter's tape and paper. Follow the contours of the chair to attach the tape tightly with a small overlap. Spray the legs with two coats of paint and leave to dry, removing the paper and tape while the paint is still tacky.



Add a little fun to a paved surface with squares of bright colour.

Painted pavers

Give plain concrete pavers a colour boost with paving paint. First, clean up dirty or discoloured pavers, using a pressure washer to blast away grime. Scrub off any moss or algae and leave them to dry.

Apply two coats of paving paint with a wide brush, choosing the pavers beforehand to create a seemingly random effect.

For easy clean-up, use a water-based product like White Knight Ultra Pave, \$37 for 1L (whiteknightpaints.com.au). ➤



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Get creative with fabric paint and design original cushion covers.

Painted cushion

Adding a big, comfy cushion is a fast way to soften up a timber garden bench.

To make a simple cushion, all you need is a length of calico, a fibrefill insert and basic sewing skills.

Sew the cushion cover, including a zipper, then paint an original design on the front using fabric paint.

Available from craft stores and online suppliers, fabric paint comes in lots of bright colours. It's easy to use and cleans up with water.

To make painted designs colourfast, they have to be heat-fixed. The easiest way is with an iron, but it's essential to get the temperature right. ➤



1 Sew the cushion

Cut two squares of calico at least 400 x 400mm. With right sides facing, sew around three sides by hand or use a sewing machine, leaving a 10mm seam allowance. Insert a zipper in the open side. To prevent the paint from bleeding through the layers of fabric, add a protective plastic insert.



2 Paint the fabric

Decorate the front of the cushion cover using fabric paint. Use a craft sponge applicator and a paintbrush to dab and splatter paint onto the cushion. Don't try to build up a 3D effect, let the paint penetrate the fabric and flow out flat to prevent it from cracking and peeling later.



3 Heat-fix the design

Let the fabric paint dry for 48 hours, then position a cotton cloth over the cushion cover to apply heat for up to five minutes using the iron.

TIP To test the time and temperature needed for heat-fixing, paint a scrap piece of fabric, iron it, then wash it in the machine on a heavy-duty cycle.

Pot tables

Garden furniture has to be tough and durable, as it is exposed to the elements all year round, but that doesn't mean it can't be fun.

Plastic flowerpots or fibreglass planters can be painted and used to create colourful outdoor side tables.

To create a shapely side table, join two pots of the same size at the base using a cuphead bolt, then add a pizza tray, also called a crisper, as a top.

Choose shallow pots for a low table you can use while seated, and higher pots for a taller table.

The tables are lightweight so they can be moved to where you need them or tucked away when not in use. ➤

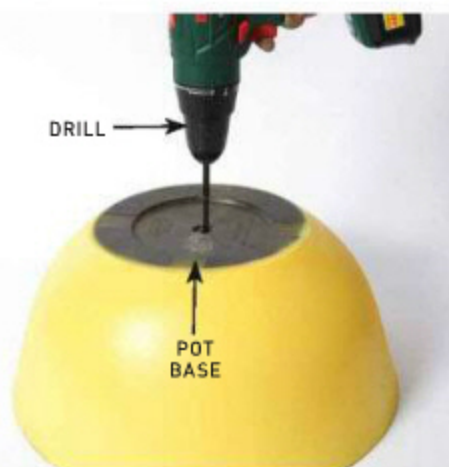


Make bright and cheerful side tables out of simple flowerpots.



1 Apply the paint

Wash the pots with warm, soapy water to remove all dirt, dust and grease, then leave them to dry. Paint the pots, working in a well-ventilated area on a drop sheet. Apply two coats, holding the can about 300mm from the surface and spraying lightly in a side-to-side motion.



2 Drill the holes

Leave the pots to dry, then invert them on a flat working surface to drill a hole in the base of each pot using an 8mm twist bit. Drill holes through offcuts of 45 x 45mm timber, matching the holes so they line up when the pots are stacked on top of each other.



3 Join the pots

Invert one pot and position the other the right way up on the base. Position the timber block in the pot base and line up the drilled holes, threading the cuphead bolt through. Turn over and secure the other block using the supplied washer and nut. Add the top.

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Woven seat

Revamp a beach or camping chair that's gone past its use-by date into a comfortable and colourful seat for relaxing in the back garden.

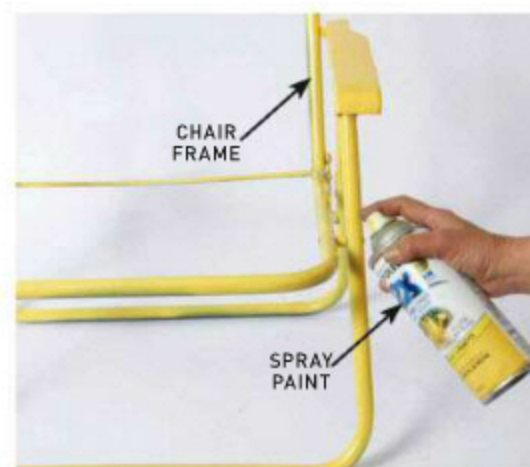
A chair with an aluminium frame and plastic armrests is easy to make over. Remove the existing canvas or webbing from the frame and give it a bright new look using spray paint.

To create a new seat and back for the chair, weave one DIY using inexpensive flexible cord or poly rope from the hardware store.

Choose ropes that are similar or identical in thickness and buy at least a 20m roll of each one, using four or five different colours or patterns. ➤

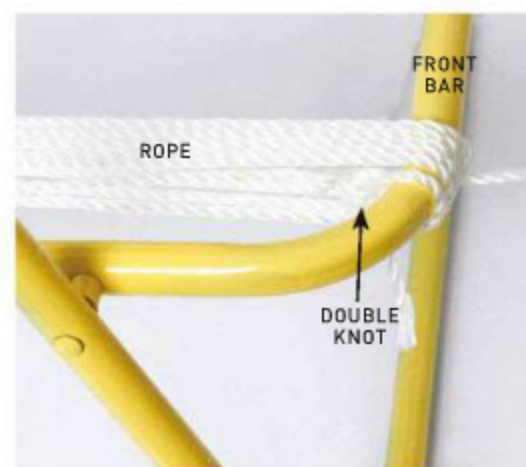


Weave a comfortable garden chair using simple rolls of rope.



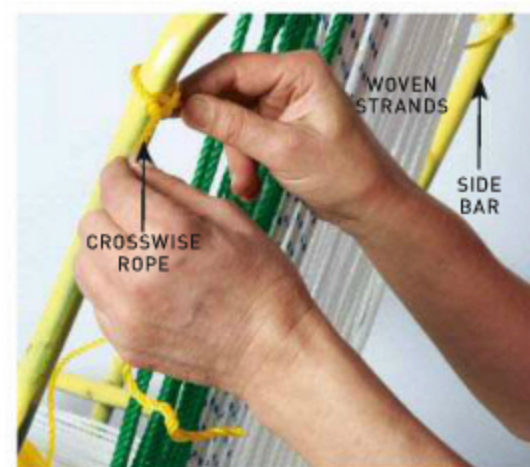
1 Paint the chair

Wash the chair frame with warm, soapy water to remove all dirt, dust and grime, then leave to dry. Apply two coats of spray paint, working in a well-ventilated area. Choose the first rope colour and tie a double knot around the edge of the front bar of the seat frame.



2 Weave the rope

Take the rope under the central bar of the chair, up and over the frame top, back under the central bar, then around the front bar next to the first knot, pulling it tightly. Continue weaving until the rope is about to end, then tie a double knot on the frame, leaving enough rope to tuck in.



3 Finish the seat

To weave crosswise, tie a rope to a side bar of the chair back, leaving a 200mm tail. Take the rope under and over the woven strands, around the side bar and then back. For a triangular effect, count the strands and weave more every fourth time. Trim the loose tails, leaving enough to tuck in.

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Gutter garden

Hanging baskets green up a pergola or patio fast, but for a lush effect in front of a wall or fence, planters work better.

Lengths of PVC guttering make great lightweight hanging planters and can be cut down to any size to suit the available space.

Choose shallow-rooted species that don't need deep pots, or those that can be planted close together, like ferns.

Trailing plants are ideal, as they cascade over the side, obscuring the white plastic. Strawberries are always a popular option for gutter planters.

Use chain to hang the gutter planters in pairs near a wall or fence.



GUTTER PLANTER SUPPLIES



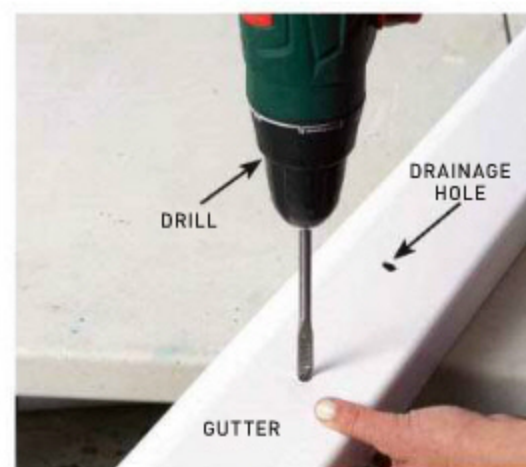
Create a hanging garden effect using simple guttering and chains.



1 Cut the guttering

Measure and cut 3.6m lengths of white plastic quad guttering into 1200mm lengths using a hacksaw. Roughen the edges with 180 grit paper to provide a key for the adhesive.

TIP To colour the planters, a product like Rust-Oleum 2X Ultra Cover Spray Paint is suitable for plastic.



2 Drill the holes

Mark and drill evenly spaced drainage holes on the base of the lengths of guttering with a 10mm spade bit, starting 50mm from the ends. Drill hanging holes at least 15mm from the top edge of the guttering at the back. Attach the end caps using PVC pipe cement.



3 Hang the planters

Loop two 4m long chains over a beam or rafter on the pergola or patio, then secure to the hanging holes in the gutter planters using S-hooks. Fill the gutter planters with potting mix, make planting holes and add the plants, firming the mix down by hand and watering in well.

Decking rug

A plain sisal rug can be painted to make a colourful striped ground covering. One of the toughest natural fibres, sisal is ideal for outdoor living.

Use it on hard surfaces like a deck or concrete patio as a picnic rug or to create a space for relaxing.

Go online to find a good deal on sisal, ranging from \$200 for rugs sized about 160 x 230cm.

To give the rug a striped pattern, all you need is a tape measure and a couple of rolls of painter's tape.

Choose bright colours in an exterior quick-drying spray paint, like Dy-Mark Water-Based Enamel, \$8 for a 300g can (dymark.com.au). ➤

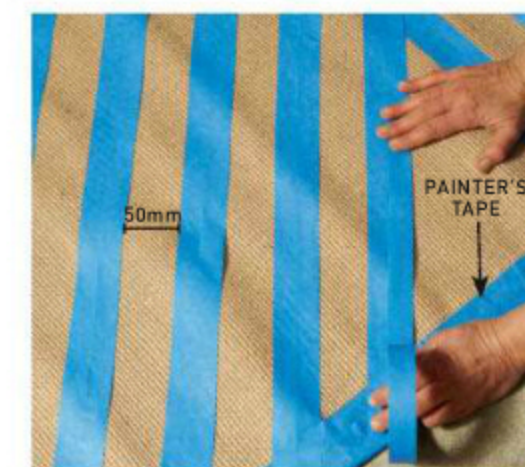


Add coloured stripes to a sisal rug and lay it on the deck for outdoor living.



1 Mark the design

Lay out the rug on a canvas drop sheet on a flat surface. Design a pattern of horizontal and diagonal stripes within a border and draw it on paper, transferring it to the rug using masking tape. Use a tape measure to space the strips of tape an equal distance apart for a perfectly symmetrical pattern.



2 Apply the tape

This design used 50mm wide stripes with 50mm in between. To mask off the rug, two pieces of 25mm wide tape were used for each stripe, but 50mm tape could be used instead. When all the stripes have been taped, mask off the darker border of the sisal rug.



3 Paint the rug

Spray the rug, using one colour for the diagonal stripes and another for the horizontal stripes. Hold the can 300mm from the rug's surface and spray lightly, working from side to side. **TIP** Work in a well-ventilated area and wear a safety mask and goggles, using drop sheets to protect from overspray.

Flowerpot shelf

A great way to bring living colour to a small outdoor area without taking up floorspace is to add a floating shelf with cutouts for pots.

Made from primed LOSP pine, this shelf is built using 220 x 220mm timber verandah brackets, about \$12 each, from hardware stores.

It's designed to hold three 200mm terracotta pots in circle cutouts. We used Décor self-watering pots, about \$9 each (decor.com.au).

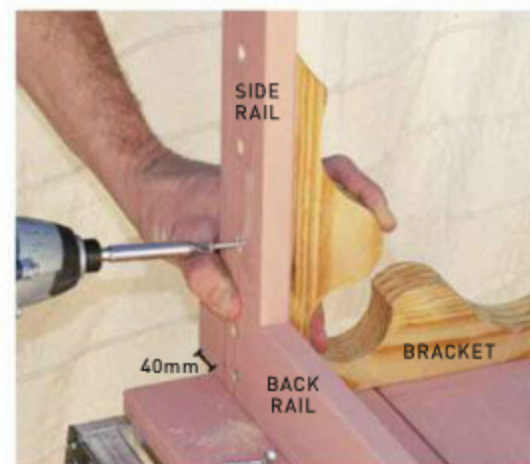
For the shelf, cut two 1130mm boards from 138 x 18mm pine. Cut two 200mm side rails and one 1130mm back rail from 66 x 18mm pine. ➤



GERANIUMS



For colourful flowers that won't wilt in the heat, plant geraniums.



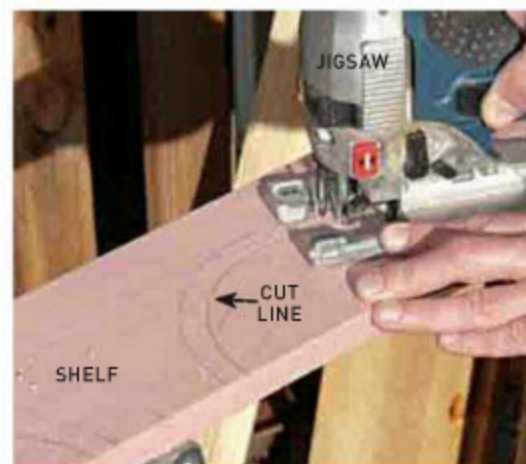
1 Assemble the frame

Mark 40mm decorative cutouts at the base corners of the back rail and cut with a jigsaw. Position the side rails on the back rail 40mm from the ends and position the bracket. Drill and countersink pilot holes, securing with exterior grade adhesive and 40mm x 8g galvanised timber screws.



2 Mark the cutouts

Position the two 1130mm long shelf boards together and mark the outline of the frame on the top, then centre the pots evenly to mark around the rims. Remove the pots to mark a cut line 10mm around the inside. **TIP** These pots sit 90mm apart and are located 175mm from the shelf ends.



3 Cut the holes

Use a jigsaw with a scroll blade to cut the pot holes. Position the shelf boards on the frame, drill countersunk pilot holes and secure with three screws each end. Sand with 180 grit abrasive paper, then apply two coats of exterior acrylic. Hang the shelf with 65mm x 10g screws through the rails.

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AS SEEN ON TV



The Home Team

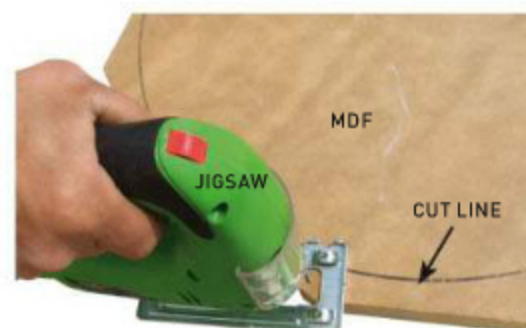
Cushion basket

Turn a wicker clothes hamper, about \$20 from bargain shops, into a storage basket for outdoor cushions.

Paint the basket, then make a bag liner from laminated cotton. Add castors to the base and an MDF top so it can double as a drinks trolley.

Cut two fabric rectangles, then sew around three sides with the right sides facing. Start 10mm from the edge of one short side and leave a 10mm hem, then fold over the top and sew around the bag, leaving the ends open.

Attach a cord to a large safety pin and feed it through, then knot the ends and turn the bag inside out.



1 Paint the basket

Wash the basket with warm, soapy water so it is free of dust, dirt or grease and let it dry. Paint the basket by spraying it with exterior primer inside and out, then apply two coats of white exterior acrylic, holding the can 300mm away from the surface and spraying from side to side.

2 Make the top

Use a jigsaw to cut two discs the size of the basket top from 16mm MDF, then laminate them together using exterior PVA adhesive. Cut a disc from 12mm plywood to fit inside the base, mark the castor screw locations and position the disc on the basket base to drill clearance holes through both.

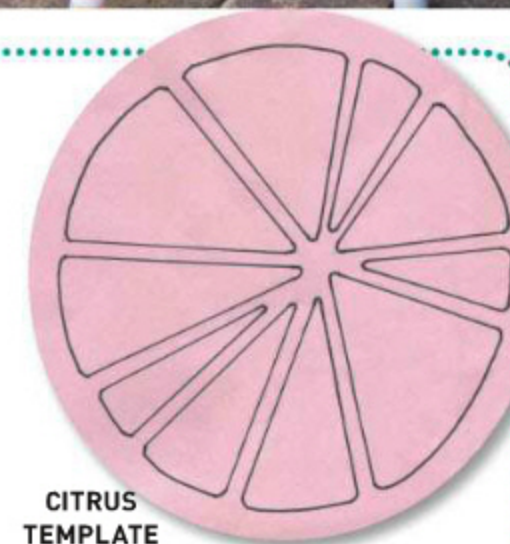
3 Finish the basket

Prime and paint the MDF top, then mask off the basket with painter's tape to apply blue exterior acrylic with a paintbrush. Position the disc in the basket base, using 30 x 3mm machine screws, washers and nuts to secure the castors through the ply. Position the painted MDF top on the basket.



Citrus stools

Give metal outdoor stools a fresh, fruity new look. Clean them with soapy water, then apply two coats of metal primer. Draw citrus slices with different-sized segments on paper and cut out. Secure to the seats with tape, masking off the pips. Paint the top and rim with two coats of exterior paint, add a green border, then decorate the legs. ➤



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Rhubarb pavers

Create leaf-shaped garden pavers in just a day and use them to lay a stepping stone path in the lawn.

To make the pavers, take a simple concrete cast from rhubarb leaves. Rhubarb leaves are a good choice for pavers because of their size.

As the pavers aren't structural, use quick-set concrete, mixing it to a creamy consistency so it takes a detailed imprint from the thick and fibrous leaves.

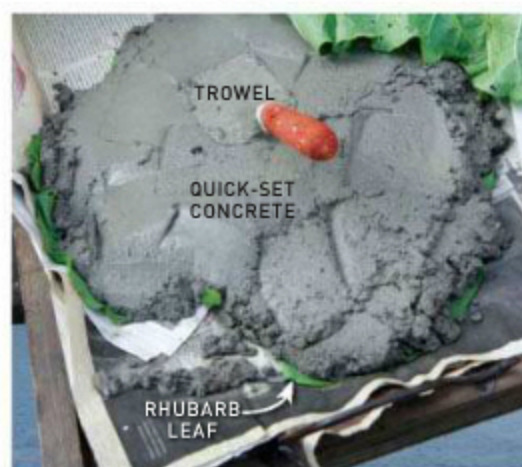
Use tinsnips to cut chicken wire mesh 30mm smaller all around than the leaves, embedding it in the concrete to reinforce the pavers. ➤



PAVERS



Create a pathway in a grassy area with leafy DIY concrete stepping stones.



1 Spread the concrete

Position a rhubarb leaf vein-side up on a flat surface covered in newspaper. To make the paver cast, mix quick-set concrete to a creamy consistency, then spread it over the leaf to at least 20mm thick using a trowel. Add chicken wire mesh cut to size and apply another 20mm layer of concrete.



2 Finish the cast

Leave the concrete to set, then once it is dry, peel away the rhubarb slowly and carefully, working from the edges in and then from the stem towards the top end.

TIP Use an old kitchen knife to scrape out any pieces of leaf that remain in the surface of the concrete.



3 Lay the pavers

Mark the locations of the pavers on the ground to create a pathway. Lay the pavers as stepping stones directly onto packed-down soil. In a grassy area, use a spade or mattock to cut out the paver outlines and remove the turf, spreading a 20mm layer of mortar to bed each paver in position.

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Grass stools

Artificial turf has come a long way since its debut in the 1970s. Not only did it look unrealistic, but it also had a habit of causing friction burns if anyone came into contact with it.

Now fake turf looks more like real grass but without the maintenance. Pet and child-friendly, it's made from hard-wearing synthetic materials, making it ideal for outdoor use.

Use it to cover timber stools that can double as ottomans like these grass cubes. The turf is designed for all weather, so use galvanised or stainless steel hardware to keep the seats outside permanently.

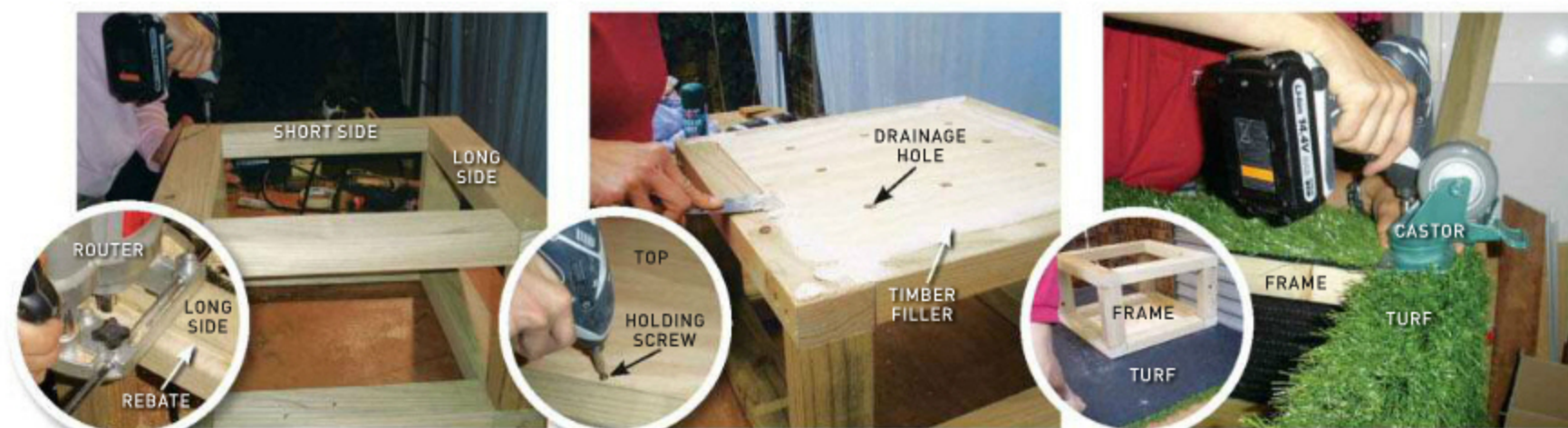
Square-cut the treated pine frame pieces using a mitresaw, joining them with 75mm x 8g treated pine screws in 3mm pilot holes. For extra support, add angle brackets in the corners.

Cut out the top from marine plywood using a jigsaw and sand the edges with 150 grit abrasive paper.

To cover the cubes with turf, use a solvent-based adhesive like Selleys Kwik Grip and stainless steel staples. Add castors for mobility, with at least two lockable ones on each stool. ➤



Make timber cubes and cover them with artificial turf for outdoor stools.



1 Make the frame

Drill 10mm holes 20mm deep on the ends of the long sides to recess the screw heads, then secure to the short sides. Attach the uprights, offsetting the screws. Use a router with a 16mm straight cutting bit to rout a 20mm wide rebate to 9mm deep, making several passes to complete the rebate.

2 Secure the top

Apply exterior adhesive around the rebate, then position the top, adding holding screws on each side until the adhesive dries. Round the outer edges with a block plane, then use a 12mm bit to drill nine drainage holes in the top. Fill any gaps between the top and the frame with timber filler.

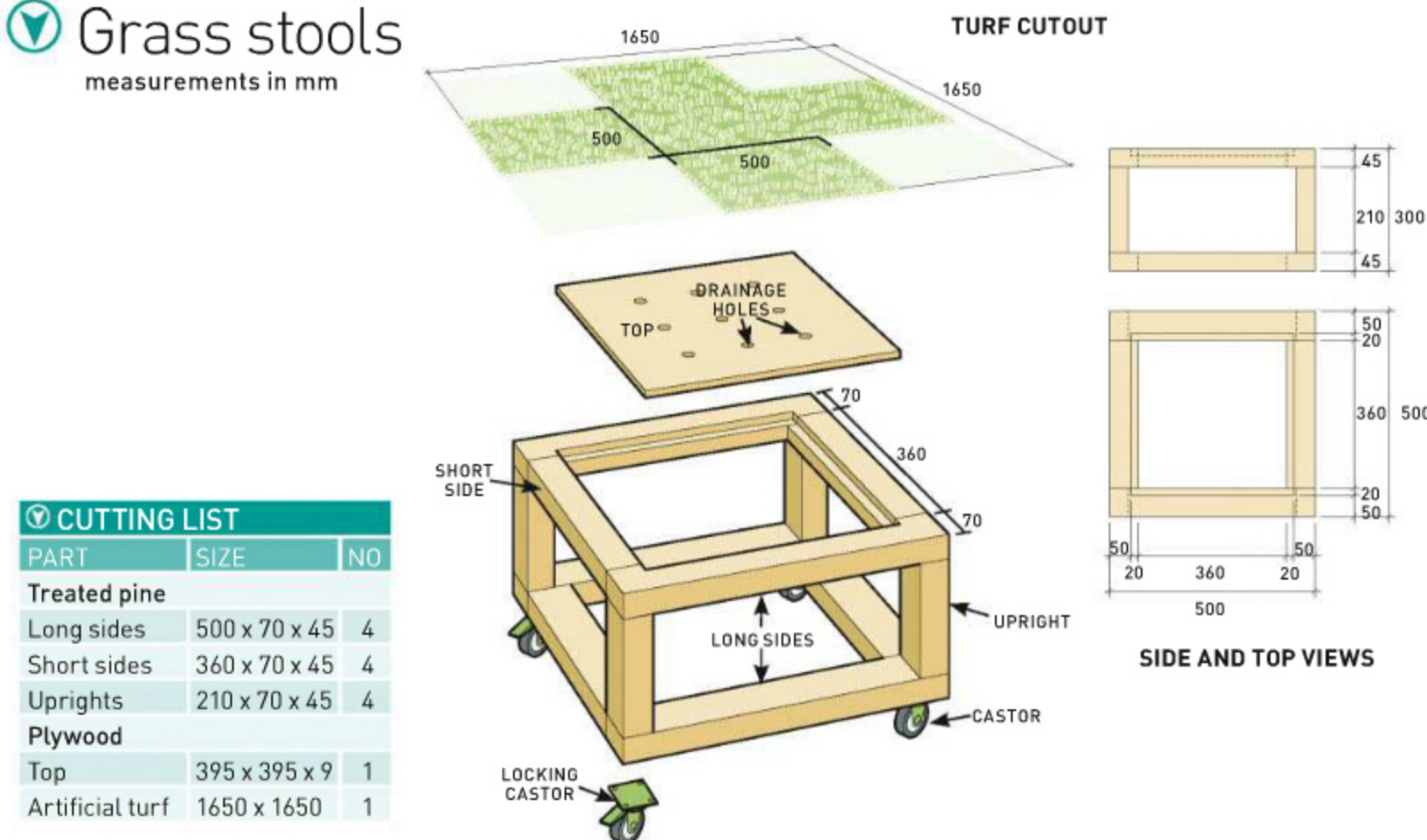
3 Cover with turf

Position the cube upside down on the turf, cutting a cross shape using a utility knife. Apply contact adhesive to the frame top and back of the centre turf square, then press together. Wrap the turf under the base using staples to secure it to the frame sides and uprights. Add castors to the base.

PROJECT FLAVIA TEIXEIRA

Grass stools

measurements in mm



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Wall-mounted planter

Free up floorspace with a vertical garden. Wall-mounted planters are good for small areas and are also easier on the back than garden beds.

Make one from a plastic storage container, adding dividers and fabric to keep the soil and plants in place.

Avoid large plants that put weight on the roots and use a potting mix that contains water-storage crystals.

Plants that thrive in shallow soil are best. Try small-leafed ferns or bromeliads on a shaded wall, and in full sun use succulents.

TIP Spray the plastic with a primer then apply a matt black paint.

PLASTIC STORAGE CONTAINER



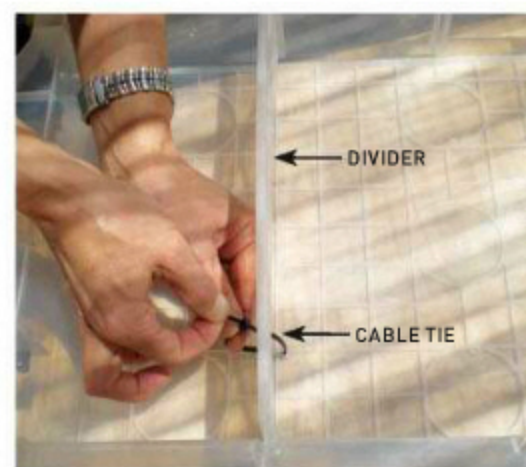
Mount a space-saving vertical garden to a courtyard wall.



1 Make cutouts in the lid

Use a marker pen to mark around the compartments on the container lid about 50mm from the edges, scoring the plastic repeatedly with a utility knife to cut through.

TIP Keep the plastic offcuts and attach them to the box back as reinforcement when securing it to the wall.



2 Secure the dividers

Position the dividers in the box and use cable ties to secure. Drill 4mm holes through the box and corners of the offcuts from the lid, then use 15 x 3mm stainless bolts, nuts and washers to secure. Drill 4mm drainage holes through the box base. Cover the drainage holes with geotextile fabric.



3 Position the plants

Fill the box with potting mix and cover it with geotextile fabric. Starting at the base, cut horizontal slits in the fabric. Tease out the roots of each plant, then insert them into the slits and firm the soil around the roots, adding more if needed. Attach the planter to a masonry wall using wall anchors.

PICTURE (MAIN) TIM BAUER

Glow-in-the-dark path

Add a fun touch to garden pathways while making them visible at night with glow-in-the-dark paint.

To make a path glow, apply a base coat of the clear sealer, then sprinkle the supplied flakes over the surface, finishing with another clear top coat.

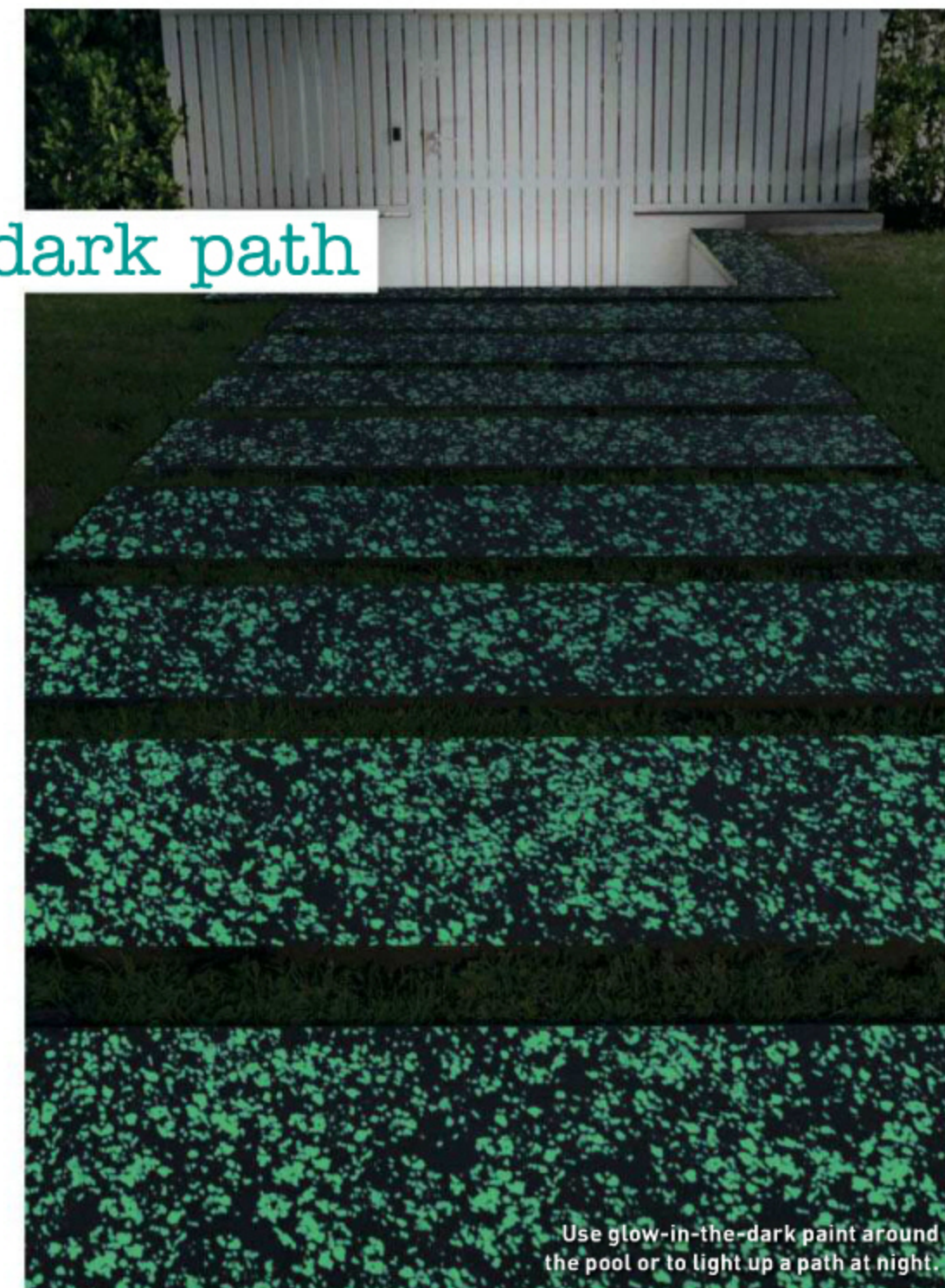
Barely visible during the day, the sun charges the flakes so they can glow brightly at night.

Make sure the location where you apply the paint gets at least six hours of direct sunlight during the day for optimum brightness at night.

TIP Use it on plant pots or to display the house number on the footpath. ➤



Berger Jet Dry Night Bright, \$60.
bergerjetdry.com.au



Use glow-in-the-dark paint around the pool or to light up a path at night.



1 Apply the base coat

Check if the area to be covered is suitable by dropping a little water on the surface. If the water beads, etch the concrete first with an etching solution. If the water absorbs, it is ready. Thoroughly brush the surface to get rid of all dirt and grime, then apply the clear base coat.



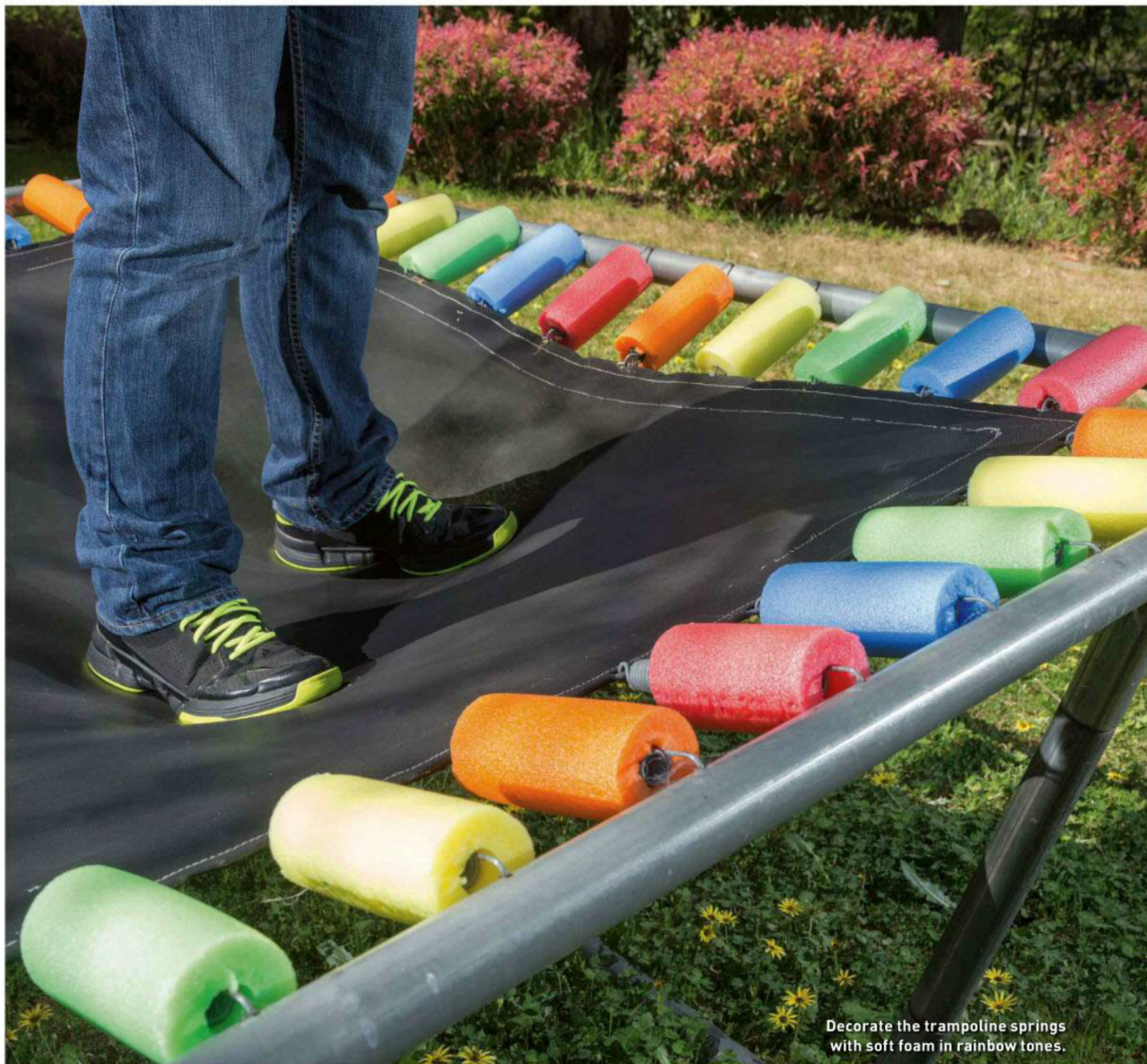
2 Sprinkle the flakes

Pour the sachet of flakes into the paint tin lid. While the clear base coat is still wet, take a small handful of flakes and scatter them over the surface in the desired pattern and density. If applying to a pathway, use a paintbrush to dab the flakes to ensure they lie flat.



3 Seal the surface

Allow the clear base coat and flakes to dry for at least two hours. Once the surface is completely dry, apply a thick top coat of the clear sealer to create a seal over the flakes. It will appear cloudy, but dries clear. For a pathway, don't walk over the area for at least 24 hours.



Decorate the trampoline springs with soft foam in rainbow tones.

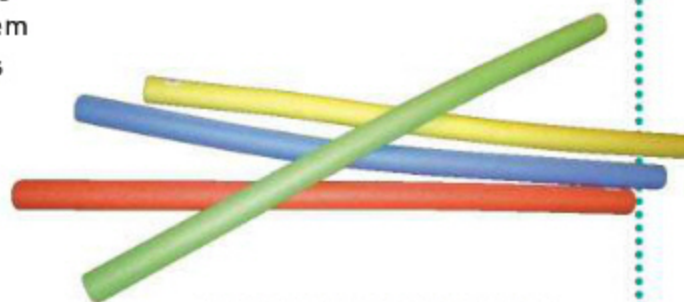


FOAM POOL NOODLE

Trampoline spring protectors

When kids are jumping and playing on the trampoline, it's easy for them to be pinched by the metal springs that surround the mat.

To protect the kids and decorate the trampoline, cover the springs with foam. Simply trim pool noodles to size, then cut along the length with a utility knife, and wrap around the springs.



Hunter Sports Pool Noodles, \$5 each, from Bunnings.

PICTURE: MANI/GEOFF BECK



CUSHION INSERT

Easy waterproofing

Cushions are a must-have for outdoor living, but remembering to bring them indoors whenever it rains can be a chore.

To make cushions waterproof, remove the insert and slip it into a resealable plastic bag, then replace it in the cover.

It may still get wet on the outside, but will dry much faster as the filler will be protected. ➤

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DAR 40x18mm	2.4m	5
DAR 135x18mm	2.4m	1

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Potted gumboots

Turn an old pair of gumboots into fun containers for growing herbs or plants on the kitchen doorstep, a small balcony or in the garden.

Give them two coats of red spray paint, or any other bright colour, choosing a pair with a matt rather than shiny finish for the best results.

For a Christmas feel, plant up the boots with strawberries and write notes to Santa using clip-on labels. The kids will love them.

TIP You can also paint the boots using a paintbrush and an oil-based gloss enamel instead of spray paint.



Rust-Oleum 2X Ultra Cover in Gloss Apple Red, \$11 for 340g. rustoleum.com.au



Put your old gumboots to good use in the garden as festive red planters.



1 Make drainage holes

Drill four holes in the base of each gumboot to create drainage for the plants, positioning the holes on either side in the centre of the sole and drilling from the outside. The size of the holes will depend on the size of the boots. For this large pair a 4.5mm drill bit was used.



2 Spray the boots

Clean the boots, then apply two coats of Rust-Oleum Zinsser Bulls Eye 1-2-3 Primer For All Surfaces. Put a drop sheet on the ground outside or in a well-ventilated area. Hold the can 300mm from the surface and spray each boot all over, then leave to dry. Apply a second coat, if necessary.



3 Pot up the plants

Add scoops of blue metal gravel to each gumboot to fill just the foot section, taking care not to damage the paint. Fill half of the leg of each boot with a quality potting mix, then add the herbs or plants of your choice, filling in with mix around the roots. Water in well.

PROJECT AND PICTURES: TRACY MARYON, AMANDA SHAW

Framed plant

Create a simple decorative outdoor feature with an old tin, a leafy herb and a distressed picture frame.

Take an old timber frame and add decorative trim as a hanger for a potted plant. Use any tin you have or look for a vintage one in op shops.

Choose a tin that's big enough to fit your chosen herb or plant, making sure it has enough room to grow.

To distress the picture frame, apply a base colour, then a top coat in a different shade, sanding it back to reveal a little of the first coat of paint and a bit of the bare timber.

For this project, a raspberry base and bright-red top coat was used.

Hang the potted tin using an S-hook, then mount the frame.

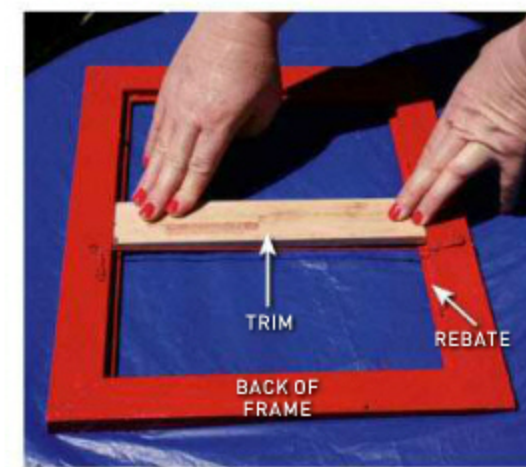
TIP The finished frame and plant is best hung in a protected space, such as a covered verandah or balcony.



White Oak Vine Wall Trim, 2.4m, about \$19. porta.com.au



Turn an old picture frame into a herb hanger to brighten a garden fence.



1 Paint the frame

Apply primer, then a base coat and top coat of exterior acrylic in two colours, then sand back the paint to reveal the base coat and timber. Cut the trim to fit in the rebate at the back of the frame, ensuring it is a tight fit. Apply exterior PVA adhesive to both ends, then insert the trim face down.



2 Make the holes

Decide which part of the tin will face out, then drill a hole for an S-hook 20mm down from the rim on the opposite side. Drill three drainage holes in the base of the tin near the front so water won't drip on the frame. **TIP** A pointed tool like a screwdriver or awl can also be used to make the holes.



3 Hang the tin

Plant up the tin with a herb such as sage. Take a stainless steel S-hook and insert one end into the hanging hole in the top of the tin, then hook the other end over the trim in the frame. Hang the frame on a nail. **TIP** To protect it from the weather, give the trim two coats of polyurethane.

PROJECT AND PICTURES: TRACY MARYON, AMANDA SHAW

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Pendant lights give an outdoor space a subtle glow.

Light up the backyard

Give your outdoor living space a welcoming feel for summer entertaining

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

Alfresco rooms need ample light to illuminate the surrounding areas.

Hot nights mean you'll be spending more time outdoors, and strategic lighting is the best way to give an entertaining space a welcoming atmosphere.

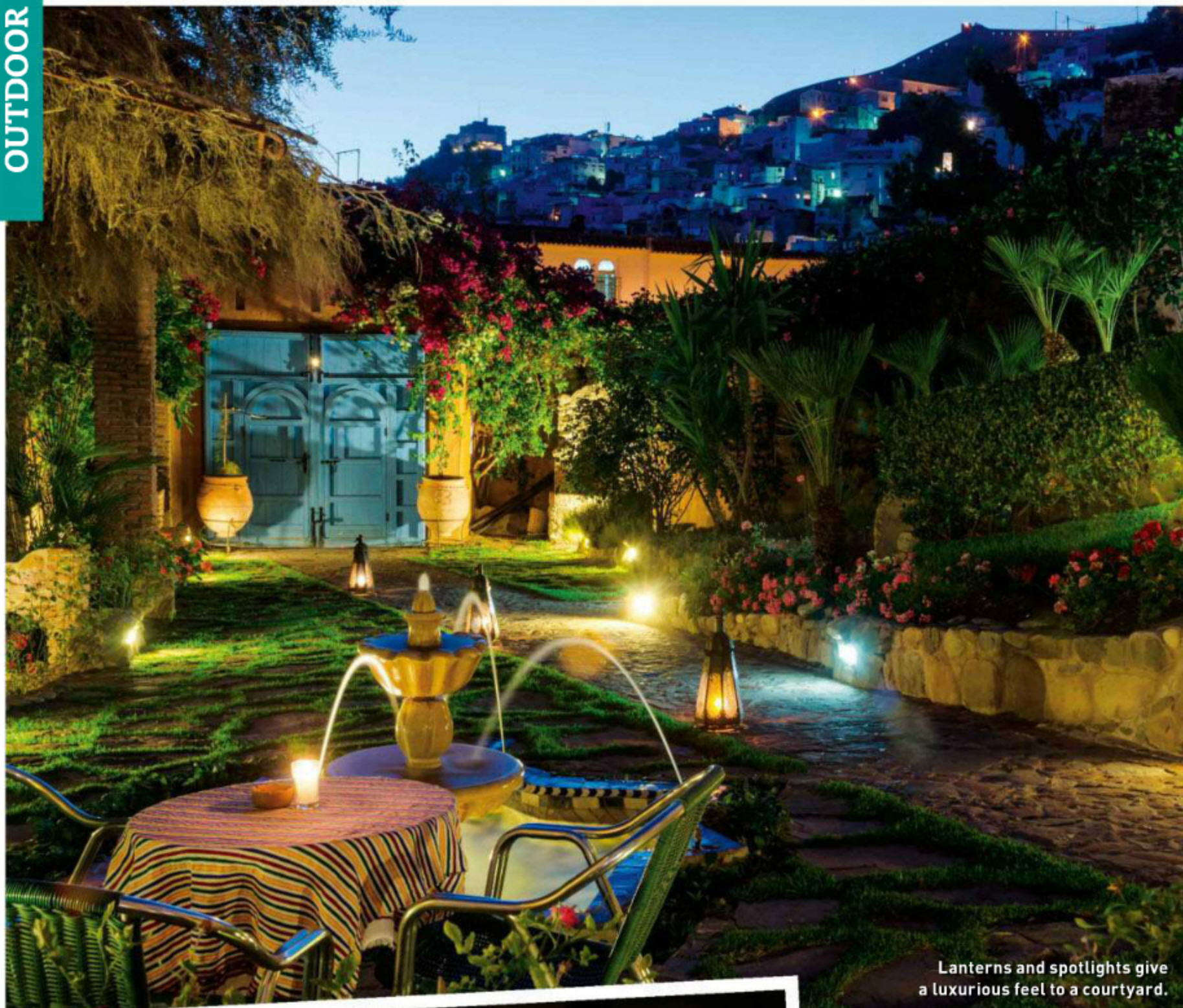
A well-lit backyard, balcony or deck is more likely to be used over summer than a gloomy one, so getting the lighting right is essential to make the most of it.

Recent advances in lighting technology have made it more affordable than ever, with LED and solar options to suit any budget.

Choose a theme

Lighting has a major effect on the mood of any space, with too much feeling harsh and too little being impractical. Strike a balance so that the lighting complements the theme of your outdoor living areas.

Install direct lighting above barbecues and in other places where bright light is needed, illuminating areas for relaxation with softer, indirect lighting or candles. ➤



Lanterns and spotlights give a luxurious feel to a courtyard.



Decorative lanterns are an affordable way to add a striking design element.

Exotic oasis

Create an opulent space in your yard by using lanterns as decorations and drawing attention to ornamental and architectural elements with spotlights.

Moroccan-look lighting often incorporates intricate filigree patterns, and lanterns and candle holders in this style cast beautiful shadows on walls and tables, filling the area with soft diffused light.

This style works especially well in backyards that are landscaped with stone and decorated with colourful furniture and succulent plants reminiscent of a desert oasis.

Spotlights can also be used to highlight garden features like sculptures and fountains.

PICTURES: ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

Setting up spotlights



Reflected light from spotlights is less harsh than direct light.

To illuminate outdoor features, use a 12V lighting system to strategically position lights around the backyard to highlight pot plants and ponds.

Wire 12V lights DIY to a transformer that plugs into an outdoor 240V mains socket.

Hide the cables under plants, pegging them to the ground with stainless steel stakes. If the lights are to remain in a set position, bury them in the ground about 150mm deep.

Special pond lights with weighted bases can also be placed underwater to shine out of a water feature.

To set up the lights, secure the 12V garden cable to the transformer using a screwdriver, then connect the lights to the cable and position them around the garden. Plug the transformer into a socket and switch on. ➤



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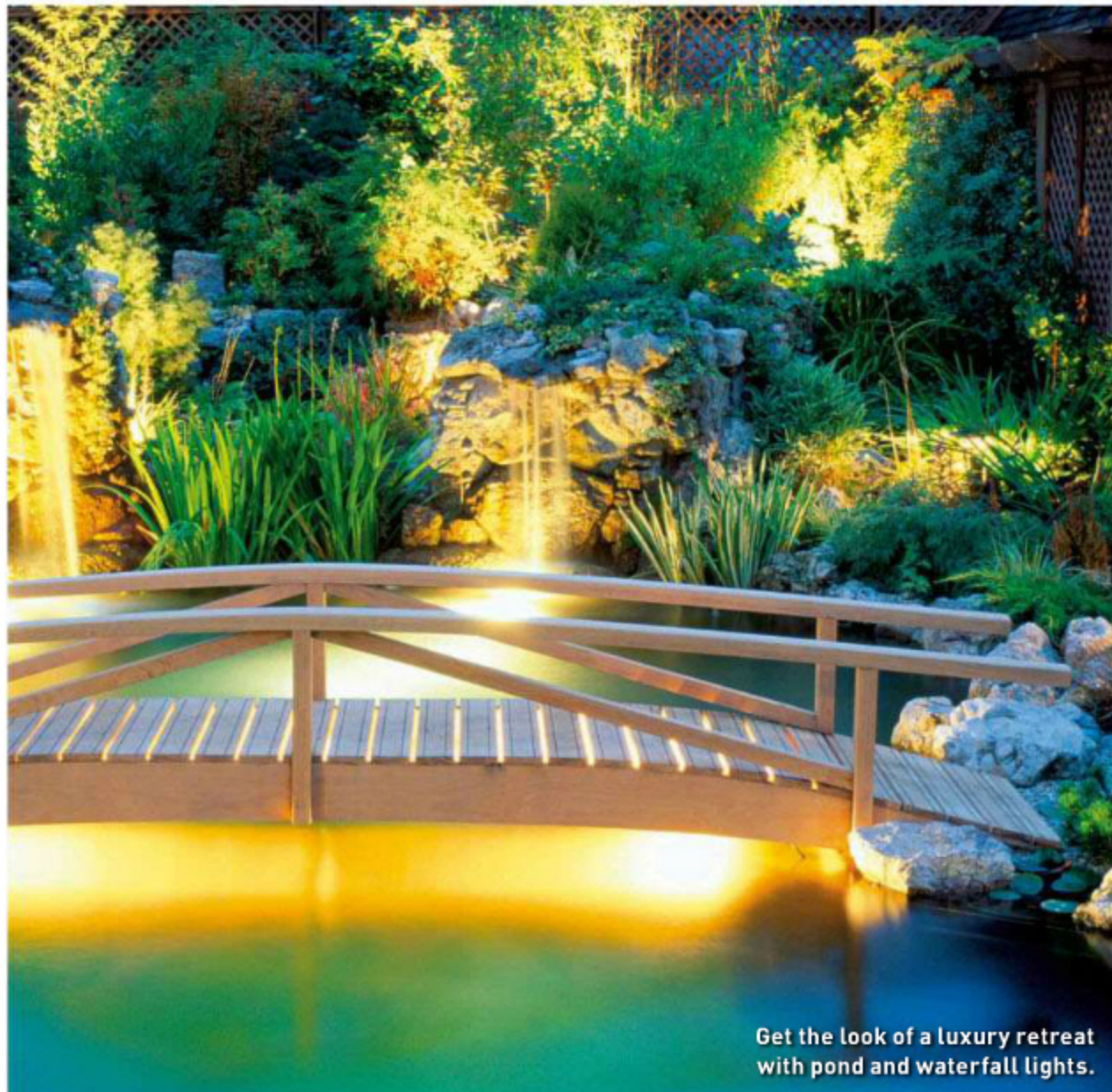


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DISCOVER | CREATE | ENJOY



Get the look of a luxury retreat with pond and waterfall lights.

Tropical hideaway

Strategically positioned lighting creates a calming atmosphere and adds a lush, resort-like feel to a backyard.

A water feature is always an essential inclusion when designing any tropical-style garden, and spotlights can make it appear more dramatic by lighting up the cascade from behind.

Reflect lights off the surface of the water by setting them up under bridges and overhangs.

Conceal lighting behind rocks, plants or structures to give an appealing glow while avoiding the harshness of direct light. Position spotlights at the base of trees to illuminate them from below.

Warm-toned solar lights are ideal for this type of area, especially when used along a pathway. Lanterns and oil-burning torches are also very effective in adding character and warmth.

Brighten up the deck

If your house has a deck, it is the area most likely to be used for entertaining and relaxing, and suitable lighting is necessary so you can enjoy your deck long after the sun has set.

Overhead lighting is useful for tasks like cooking, while spotlights

aimed at a wall will give a more attractive, low-key lighting effect. Candles and lanterns on tables also help provide an idyllic setting.

For a professional-looking lighting system, install the lights underneath railings or in the decking boards.

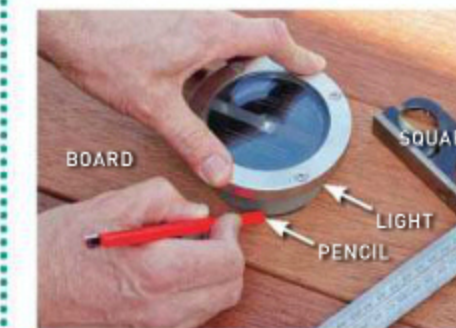


Built-in solar lights provide affordable deck lighting.

Fitting the lights

Like solar spotlights, deck lights are powered by a solar panel, although the panels for deck lights are built in so they receive plenty of direct sunlight.

These lights can be used to create subtle dots of light along the edge of a deck.



1 MARK THE SETOUT by positioning the solar lights along the deck in the centre of the board at equal intervals, then draw around the base of each light.



2 CUT THE HOLE by drilling a starter hole in the deck with an 8mm bit, cutting along the line with a jigsaw. Clean up any rough edges with a half-round file.



3 SWITCH ON THE LIGHTS by pushing the button underneath, then slot them into the holes. The sensor will turn on the lights automatically at night.

Installing solar lights

Garden features can be highlighted subtly using solar lights, which don't require mains power as they feature internal batteries that are charged by a solar panel. This is usually attached to the light itself or positioned nearby.



1 Position the solar panel

Choose a sunny spot in the garden and position the panel by driving the plastic stake into the ground. The lights will operate best if the panel is north-facing and receives sun for most of the day.

2 Attach the leads

Insert the leads into the panel and run them across the lawn or the garden bed out of the way so they're not a trip hazard. Secure the leads by pegging them into the ground every metre using stainless steel pegs.

3 Switch on the lights

Leave the panel in the sun for several days to charge the batteries, then set the switch on the solar panel to automatic. The solar sensor will turn on the lights once the sun has set. If the lights are dim or don't work, reposition the panel.

PICTURES (MAIN) ALAMY (STEPS) ROB REICHENFELD

PICTURES ROB REICHENFELD

Do now

- **DECORATE** for the holidays with seasonal blooms, page 172.
- **PLANT** white climbers to enjoy a fragrant night garden, page 176.
- **RAISE** summer vegetables for homegrown flavour, page 188.

The summer garden

Keep on top of watering and feeding for bumper crops and lush blooms

Flowers to sow

Plan ahead for late summer and early autumn colour.

- **AGERATUM**
- **COLEUS**
- **MALOPE**
- **SUNFLOWER**
- **ZINNIA**



Vegies to grow

Plant these edibles now for crops from eight weeks.

- **CUCUMBERS**
- **DWARF BEANS**
- **LETTUCES**
- **RADISHES**
- **SPRING ONIONS**



PICTURES: THINKSTOCK

Top flower pick

For a strong summer performer in the garden or pots you can't go past *Osteospermum* 'White Lightning'.

Hardy and heat-tolerant, it grows well in any climate and blooms profusely from spring all the way through to autumn.

The cheerful daisy blooms have white petals with yellow undersides and sit on strong upright stems, making them great cut flowers.

Reaching about 45cm high and 50cm wide, its mounded habit means 'White Lightning' is as good in hanging baskets as beds.



OSTEOSPERMUM 'WHITE LIGHTNING'



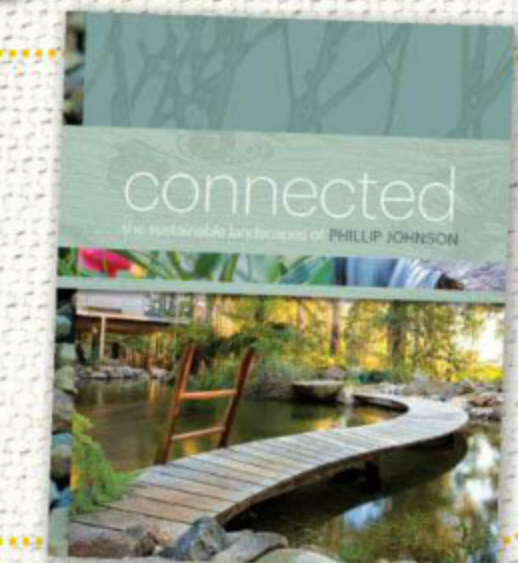
Fill beds with hardy daisies for cheerful blooms all summer long.

Top vegie pick

Brighten up the garden and spice up your recipes with the new Chilli Bite 'Samba' from Floriana.

Use 'Samba' as a feature plant in beds, borders and ornamental pots. Growing to 15cm high, it has lush green foliage and long, slender fruit that matures in shades of green-yellow to vibrant orange and red.

Give it quality potting mix or well-drained soil and a position in full sun, spacing plants 15-20cm apart in beds. Rated medium on the heat scale, pick the chillies regularly for a longer harvest. ➤



Book club

Phillip Johnson created his first garden at the age of five so it's no wonder he went on to become an award-winning landscape designer.

Winner of Best in Show at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show, Phillip is passionate about connecting with nature in a sustainable way and this is evident in his stunning new book.

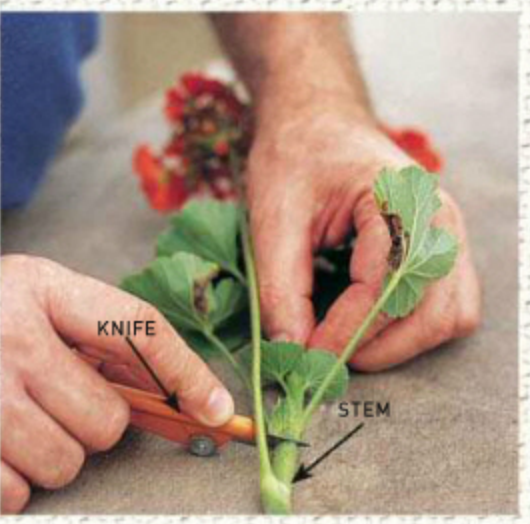
Filled with beautiful photographs and watercolour plans, *Connected* tells the story behind the gardens he has designed, including his own. From suburban backyards to rural spaces, it is 304 pages of inspiration.

Connected: The Sustainable Landscapes of Phillip Johnson, \$60. murdochbooks.com.au

How to

Take soft-tip cuttings

Summer is the time to make more plants by taking a variety of cuttings. Take soft-tip cuttings of tender perennials like pelargoniums in the cool of the morning. Put the cut material straight into a plastic bag or bucket of cold water to prevent it from wilting.



1 Cut the stems
Select strong, non-flowering shoots and use a sharp knife to cut a 100mm length of stem from the top, trimming the base just below a leaf joint.



2 Remove the leaves
Carefully take off the lower shoots and leaves from the cutting by hand.
TIP Cuttings need up to eight weeks to root before being potted up.



3 Pot up the cuttings
Dip the base of each cutting into hormone rooting powder then insert around the edge of a tray filled with seed raising and cutting mix.

Prune now

Trim flowering shoots and keep hedges and standards tidy.

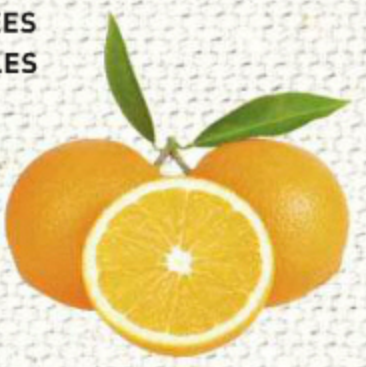
- FLOWERING PEACH
- TOPIARY
- BROOM
- DEUTZIA
- LILAC



Feed now

Give fruiting and flowering plants a nutrient boost.

- FRUIT TREES
- VEGETABLES
- HIBISCUS
- ROSES
- CITRUS



Herb planters

Growing herbs on a sunny windowsill is a great way to have fresh ingredients close at hand.

To keep herbs healthy all summer, use self-watering planters so they never dry out or wilt.

A Décor 750mm Sorrento Self-watering Plantpot, \$30, can keep a plant thriving for up to four weeks between waterings,

depending on the species. It also features a ventilated floor to help aerate the roots (decor.com.au).



PICTURES LEFT: PENTON; JOHN THURKSTOCK

ryobi.com.au



Available at **BUNNINGS warehouse**
bunnings.com.au



Today's power in garden tools is RYOBI's new 36 Volt cordless range with one battery powering over 11 tools.

Gift idea

If you're after a great gift for a green thumb this Christmas, take a look at *The Veggie Box*, \$65 (boxbooks.com.au).

A complete guide to growing your own organic vegetables at home, it was created by Jackie Dargaville, a certified biodynamic farmer from Victoria. She has a long history of supplying produce for her family, farmers' markets and local cafes.

Beautifully presented in a pine box are a handbook, gardener's diary and laminated growing cards. It covers all the basics of sowing, feeding, watering and harvesting, and also goes



into seed saving, crop rotating and resources for raising nutrient-rich, tasty and chemical-free food.

Backyard ponds

Ponds are at their best during the summer months when most aquatic and marginal plants are thriving and in flower, creating a lush landscape.

To set the scene for night-time entertaining in the garden, add underwater lights to the pond.

For extra ambience, use a pond mister to create coloured, flowing mist above the water.

Aquapro Pond Fogger and Mister, \$54.
aquatecequipment.com



Summer roses

Roses like TLC at this time of year. Care varies slightly across the climate zones, but watering and feeding are essentials over summer. Here's what to do in December and January to keep them healthy and in bloom.

- **DEADHEAD** flowers regularly.
- **TRIM** old-fashioned roses lightly.
- **REMOVE** suckers coming from below the graft, cutting them off at the stem.
- **CHECK** for any pests or diseases like aphids, black spot, mildew or rust and treat immediately.
- **FEED** in late-January in all areas except subtropical and tropical zones, to prolong flowering and for a good display of autumn blooms.
- **PLANT** container-grown roses but make sure they are watered well.
- **MULCH** around the base of plants to help the soil retain moisture.
- **TIE** in vigorous new shoots on climbers or ramblers and support standard roses against top weight.



Cut roses for vases in the morning when they are one-quarter open.

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Festive flowers

Deck the halls with vibrant living colour and give bright blooms as holiday gifts

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS

A Christmas classic, poinsettias make great living centrepieces, and the traditional red and green variety is a popular choice.

But this plant also comes in a range of other colours, including white, pink, purple, orange and yellow, which can also make lovely seasonal decorations.

A perennial shrub, poinsettias can grow up to about 4m when they are planted out in the garden.

What look like colourful petals are actually modified leaves, or bracts. The flowers are the tiny white to yellow blooms that are massed together in the centre of each leaf or bract cluster.

Originating from Mexico, the most common poinsettia is the single red variety, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, but some cultivars have double red bracts.

Cuttings from summer and winter prunings can be used to propagate new plants to grow indoors. Take 300mm stem cuttings, dip the ends in water and insert into potting mix. Keep moist for a few weeks until they take root.

Colour indoors

Poinsettias have to be forced into putting on a display of colour out of season in the Southern Hemisphere.

To get the bracts to change colour by Christmas, they are kept in the dark for at least 14 hours a day from mid spring, usually between 5pm and 8am.

Enjoy them as house plants all year round, but give them a sunny north-facing position or bright filtered light in temperatures of about 21°C.

TIP Stand the stems of cut flowers in hot water to thicken the sticky sap. ➤

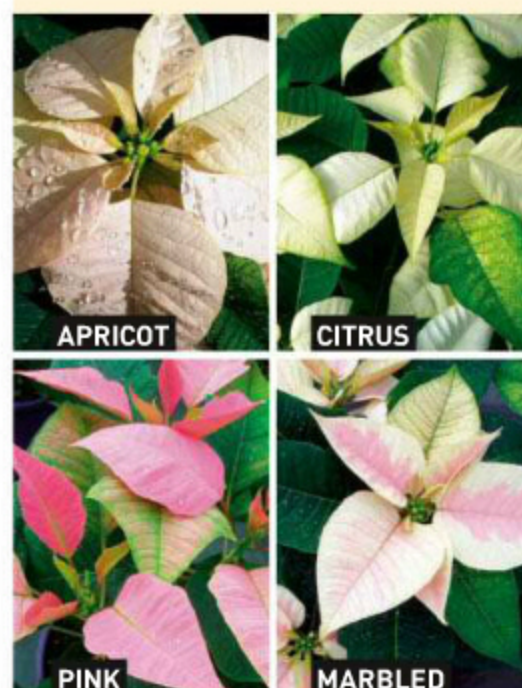


Poinsettia Ice Crystal, 190mm, about \$25, from Bunnings.

Pick a shade ▼

Poinsettias come in a variety of different colours in addition to the traditional red and green.

Choose a cultivar that suits your decorating scheme, \$21 for a 200mm pot, from Bunnings.



APRICOT

CITRUS

PINK

MARBLED



Make it a white Christmas with a living poinsettia table centrepiece.

PICTURE (TOP) THINKSTOCK

Hot plants for a cool summer

...summer solutions and special gifts



1 Dry

Agapanthus 'Baby Pete' ♂



2 Shade

Plectranthus Mona Lavender



3 Pots

Tibouchina 'Groovy Baby' ♂



4 Screen

Syzygium 'Big Red' ♂



5 Colour

Loropetalum 'Plum Gorgeous' ♂



6 Fragrance

Daphne 'Eternal Fragrance' ♂



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How To Grow Sunflowers.

Seasonal flowers also make
striking Christmas decorations.

Classic colour

Bring life to the lunch or dinner table with a centrepiece of summer blooms, or create your own floral arrangements to give as gifts this year.

With their white, trumpet-shaped blooms on long stems, Christmas lilies (*Lilium longiflorum*) make excellent cut flowers at this time of year.

Also known as November lilies, these plants bloom from late spring throughout summer, depending on the climate zone.

As well as the classic white shade, there are hundreds of liliu hybrids available in a range of flower forms and colours that are an effective addition to mixed arrangements.

To make up a Christmas bouquet to use as a table centrepiece or to give as a present, combine liliu with flowers such as orchids, roses, anthuriums and geraniums, with evergreen foliage mixed in.

Liliu can be bought potted during summer and kept in their containers or planted in the garden.

The time to plant the bulbs is late autumn and winter, so plan ahead for next year's display.

They like well-drained soil in a position with morning sun. Water well in summer and feed regularly.



ANTHURIUMS

Making cut flowers last

Prepare them well and cut flowers can last two weeks or more in a vase.

■ **CUT** about 25-50mm off the stems on a 45° angle using clean, sharp scissors or a knife.

■ **ADD** clean water and flower food to the vase, then remove any leaves from the stems that will be below the waterline.

■ **ARRANGE** the flowers in the vase, positioning the taller blooms in the centre and greenery throughout.

■ **POSITION** the vase of flowers out of direct sunlight and change the water at least once a week.

TIP To prevent pollen staining fabric or furniture, snip off the anthers found on the end of lily stamens.



PICTURES (MAIN, RIGHT) ALAMY



Enjoy moonlit evenings in the garden, filled with the sweet fragrance of flowers.



The tall night-scented tobacco plant is covered in big clusters of white flowers.

Night bloomers ▼

These white-flowered plants burst open at dusk, so pot them up around your entertaining area where you can really enjoy them.



BELLE DE NUIT

Ideal for hanging baskets, which are best positioned at nose level in courtyards, this epiphytic cactus with its very fragrant flowers grows in frost-free areas.



MOONFLOWER

With its large, trumpet-shaped white flowers that pop open before your very eyes, this plant looks and smells wonderful, plus it's easy to grow from seed.



QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

This sweet-smelling blooming cactus has flowers that open to the size of dinner plates and a climbing habit up to 3m. It likes a frost-free climate.

Evening stars

Plant up the garden with flowers that show off their good looks and lovely scents when the sun goes down

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS

PICTURES (FAR RIGHT) ALAMY

Summer is a sensual season in the garden, with flowers in full bloom, and the longer days and warm evenings enabling us to spend more time outdoors, enjoying our gardens, not just working in them.

After all, it's pleasant to sit in a courtyard or a secluded spot in the garden at the end of a busy day, enveloped by stillness and warmth.

Your garden is your retreat and as twilight descends, it takes on a very different aspect. It is transformed

into another world in which the predominance of the visual gradually gives way to the colours, scents and sounds of night.

And while you may have adorned the garden with fairy lights and outdoor lighting ready for summer soirees, don't forget the plants.

The plants that offer evening enjoyment are those with white flowers, silvery foliage, fragrant blossoms or varieties that open up when the light fades. ➤



Japanese anemones flower in late summer and autumn.

Bright white

As darkness descends, white flowers can shine in an almost surreal way. Plant them where they can be viewed from your entertaining area, along pathways or in a garden bed that can be seen from indoors.

There is a huge choice of white flowers to suit whatever climate you live in. Choose perfumed plants like white gardenias, dianthus and roses.

The trumpet-shaped flowers of night-scented tobacco are very fragrant through summer and autumn. Easily grown from seed, this large-leafed annual can grow up to 2m high.

Just as evocative is dame's rocket (*Hesperis*). This short-lived perennial will perfume your summer nights and it will grow in shade.

Consider the pure-white flowers of Japanese anemones that appear in late summer and early autumn, white bougainvilleas that glow in the evening light, or magnolias that shine against deep-green foliage.

And don't forget frangipanis, which are always one of summer's delights.

Decorate your courtyard with pots of white petunias, impatiens, begonias or verbenas.



MAGNOLIA

Sprinkling of silver

Plants with silver foliage shine in the moonlight, and while they often have a subtle, even delicate, appearance, most of them are capable of withstanding harsh conditions and dry climates.

Many are found growing naturally in desert and alpine areas as well as on shorelines, and they love a sunny position.

■ **DUSTY MILLER** (*Senecio cineraria*) has felt-like, deeply dissected foliage that glows in the evening. Cut off any spent flower stems to keep it bushy.

■ **SILVER SPURFLOWER** (*Plectranthus argentatus*) is an Australian native shrub that has broad silvery leaves and a velvet-like appearance.

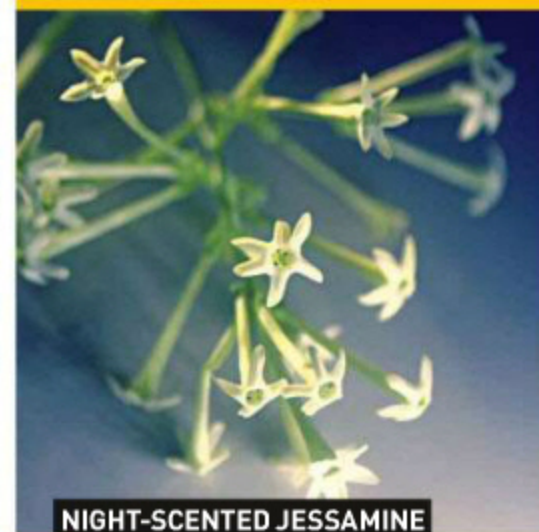
■ **CURRY PLANT** (*Helichrysum italicum*) has leaves that smell strongly of curry, especially after rain. Cut off the spent flower stems to keep it bushy.

■ **LAVENDER COTTON** (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*) is an aromatic plant with bright silver-grey foliage and grows up to about 60cm.



Add a spicy aroma with the curry plant.

Evening-scented shrubs ▼



NIGHT-SCENTED JESSAMINE

The evergreen shrub, night-scented jessamine (*Cestrum nocturnum*) grows 3-4m high and wide. It has greenish-white flowers in summer among bright-green foliage and its perfume is especially intense on humid summer nights. It can be attached manually to a wall or trellis and treated as a small climber.



ANGEL'S TRUMPET

A sun-loving shrub or small tree, this plant will add drama to any backyard. The large flowers of angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia x candida*) can grow up to 30cm in length and are at their perfumed best in the evening. Cultivars come in shades of pink, peach, lemon and gold. Take care with this plant, as it is poisonous. ➤



Sweet-smelling angel's trumpet is a stunning sight.

no-one needs to see just how you keep your garden looking spectacular



The Pope Auto Rewind Hose Reel is discreet yet accessible. The best of both worlds.



Available in 10m, 20m and 30m garden hose lengths - perfect for every size of yard



Perfumed climbers

After nightfall in the garden, the perfume of certain flowers is at its best, and white-flowering climbers are among the most fragrant in the evening.

While all these climbers are scented during the daytime, there is a distinct increase in the perfume levels at dusk as well as on hot, balmy summer nights.

You can use them to drape over courtyard walls or to cover pergolas and arbours, then sit and relax with a glass of wine or a cup of coffee and simply enjoy their intoxicating night-time scent.

■ **HERALD'S TRUMPET** (*Beaumontia grandiflora*) is a tough evergreen vine with large fragrant summer flowers. It needs a sturdy support, sun and a tropical or subtropical climate.

■ **CHILEAN JASMINE** (*Mandevilla laxa*) has delicate trumpet-shaped white flowers, and its perfume is particularly pervasive on a hot summer's night. It likes a warm, frost-free climate and plenty of sun.

■ **MADAGASCAR JASMINE** (*Stephanotis floribunda*) features trusses of flowers with a heavenly perfume. It grows best in partial shade and well-drained soil in a frost-free climate.

■ **POET'S JASMINE** (*Jasminum officinale*) acquired its common name from the references made by Elizabethan poets to its use on arbours. It will grow in sun or semi-shade.

■ **STAR JASMINE** (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) is an evergreen vine that's ideal for covering courtyard walls. It grows in sun or semi-shade.

■ **ARABIAN JASMINE** (*J. sambac*) is a small climber that prefers frost-free regions and a sunny position. It bears its perfumed flowers in spring, summer and autumn.



CHILEAN JASMINE

White climbing roses shine brightly on a courtyard wall after nightfall.

Enjoy.



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BOSCH
Invented for life



A stepped flower garden in full bloom looks striking.

PICTURES THINKSTOCK

Summer colour

Pick the plants that suit the amount of sunlight in your garden for a gorgeous, long-lasting display

The best gardeners have a knack for achieving colour in the garden throughout the year, combining both flowers and foliage.

In summer, flowers are at their peak, so choose the correct plant, position and arrangement to have a bright display of blooms.

Determining whether you have a sunny, mixed or shady garden will help you select the right plants for maximum effect.

The beauty of a flowerbed doesn't rely solely on the number of plants it contains, but on the harmony of their colour and shape, and the balance of textures, heights and flower sizes.

The most successful plantings pair flowers with small shrubs or plants with attractive foliage to give the flowers a lush backdrop so they can display their colour. ➤

Using foliage ▼

When designing a garden, never underestimate the value of foliage. As well as assessing plants on the colour of their flowers, also look for interesting leaves.

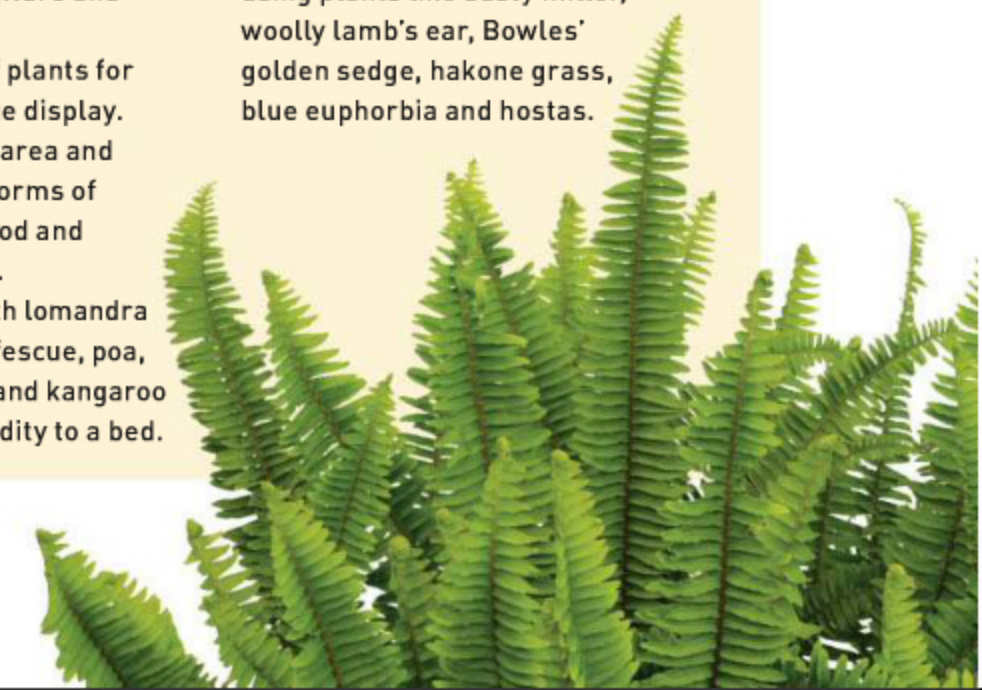
Here is a selection of the best grasses and decorative foliage plants that will add texture and bulk to flowerbeds.

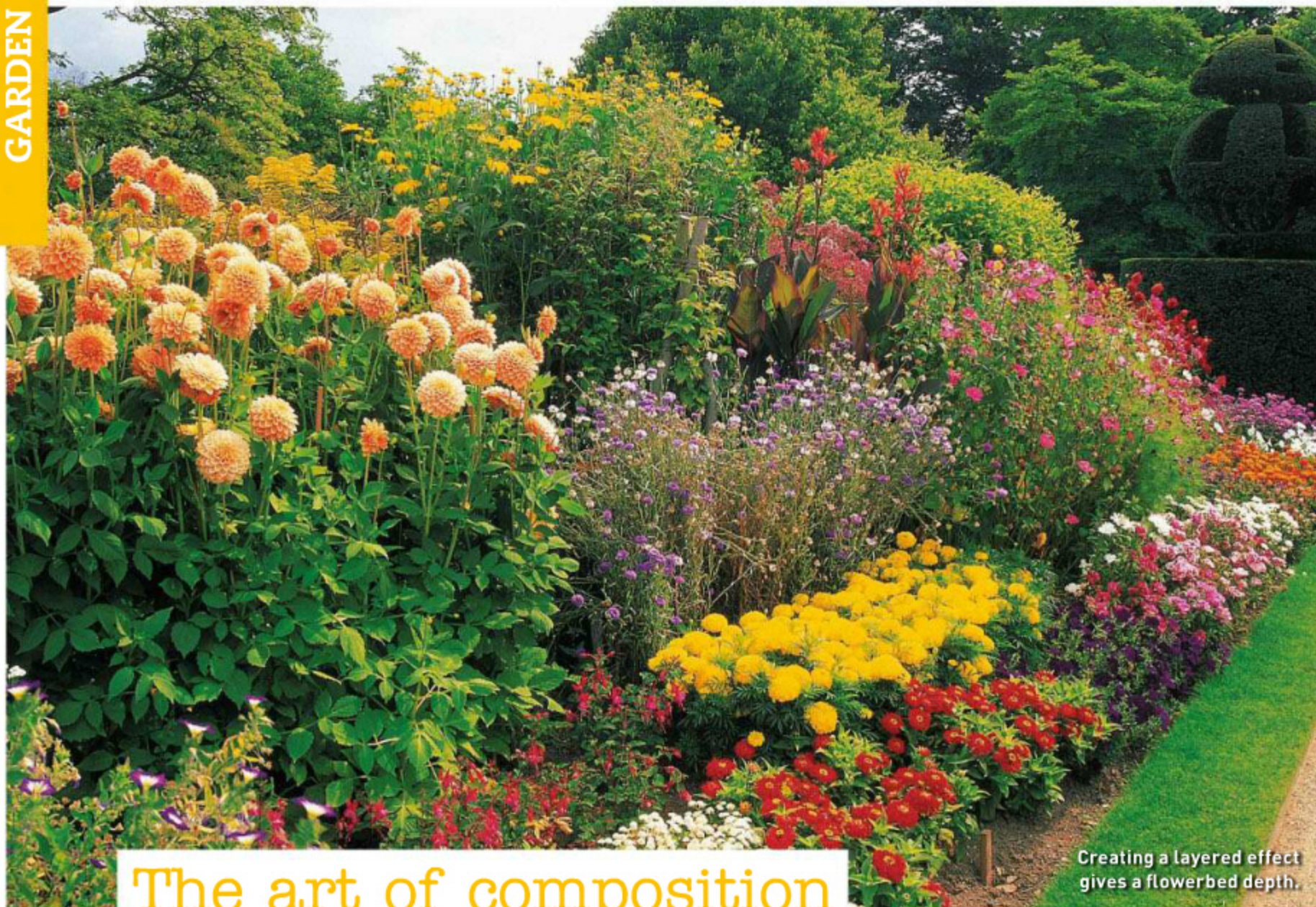
■ **CREATE A GROUP** of plants for an eye-catching foliage display. Use ferns in a shaded area and grow the fine foliage forms of dusty miller, wormwood and fennel in a sunny spot.

■ **ADD MOVEMENT** with lomandra and grasses like blue fescue, poa, fountain, pennisetum and kangaroo to give a feeling of fluidity to a bed.

■ **USE TALL** foliage plants like cordyline, dracaena, New Zealand flax and zebra grass to add height and create the impression of a living fountain in the garden.

■ **TONE DOWN** and soften the colours of bright blooms by using plants like dusty miller, woolly lamb's ear, Bowles' golden sedge, hakone grass, blue euphorbia and hostas.





The art of composition

Creating a layered effect gives a flowerbed depth.

Form a stepped garden bed by mixing plants of three or four different heights to give a border effect, positioning low-growing annuals at the front and taller plants at the back.

Arrange the plants in a series of steps, working from low plants under 20cm at the front of the bed to tall plants over 1m high at the back. The seed packets and plant labels display the plant height.

Shrubs make a great backdrop for a garden bed, as do climbers, such as jasmine and clematis, and tall perennials like cannas.

Climbers have the advantage of occupying little ground space, which makes them useful if your bed is narrow or your garden is small.

For a natural look, establish your flowerbed as an extension of an existing feature in your garden.

Merge it into another group of plants such as a bed of shrubs or a hedge. Or you can back it onto hard landscaping like a pathway, low wall, pergola, patio or steps.

Get off to a good start

Although it is tempting, do not buy young stalky plants in flower. Choose healthy, compact plants with vibrant green leaves and well-branched stems.

The base of the stem should be strongly attached to the root mass, not loose, and the rootball should be damp to the touch. Reject plants with either dry or saturated potting mix.

Care for new plants

Watering the plants regularly is vital, especially immediately after planting and during hot weather.

To avoid disturbing young plants, use a watering can fitted with a fine rose and hold it high above the plants.

If watering with a hose, use a nozzle attachment and point it upwards over the plants so they're not damaged by too much pressure.

Hoe the ground regularly to get rid of weeds that will compete with your plants. Mulching well will also help reduce weeds.

Pinch out for strength

Encourage the young plants to develop into sturdy, bushy specimens by pinching out the tips of shoots.

Grasp the tip between your thumb and index finger, just above a leaf or pair of leaves.

This light pruning slightly delays flowering, but it will be more abundant when it starts. Pinch out heliotrope, cosmos, and petunia regularly.

The fragile stems of campanula, aster and rudbeckia are vulnerable in wind. Pinching out the tips will restrict their height and help them to remain upright.

Protect from the sun

As summer warms up, certain plants will suffer if they are still positioned in full sun.

To give plants spring sun and summer shade, plant ferns, fuchsias, hostas and euphorbias under the shelter of small deciduous trees such as crepe myrtle, frangipani, Japanese maple or tulip tree. ➤

Shade lovers

These perennials won't just survive in full shade, they'll thrive and have gorgeous blooms and foliage.



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PICTURES: ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

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Create a stepped flowerbed ▼

Mix three or four plants of different heights to give a stepped effect, using low-growing annuals up to 20cm at the front of the bed and gradually working up to tall plants 1m or over at the back of the bed.

FIRST ROW (10-20cm)



SECOND ROW (20-50cm)



THIRD ROW (50cm-1m)



FOURTH ROW (OVER 1m)



A paper bag is an easy way to save your seeds for replanting.

Collecting seeds

Gather seeds before deadheading spent flowers and store them ready to replant next year.

- **PUT A PAPER BAG** over the flowers that have finished blooming, then secure it around the stem of the plant with string. When the stems have dried out, cut just below the tie, turn the bag upside down and shake the plant so the seeds fall into it.
- **MAKE A CONE** out of newspaper to gather seeds from dried flowerheads. Roll up two sheets from a large newspaper to make a cone with a wide opening at the top. Fold and secure the cone at the base to stop the seeds escaping, shake the seed-laden plant over the cone, then fold over the newspaper at the top.
- **USE AN OLD SIEVE** to collect small seeds from plants like snapdragons and petunias. Put the ripe, dry flowerheads into an old kitchen sieve, rub gently over the mesh and the seeds will fall through.
- **AIR-DRY SEEDS** thoroughly on newspaper to reduce the risk of mould, before storing them.
- **STORE THE SEEDS** in old pill bottles, which are ideal as the drying agent in the cap protects them from damp. Or keep them in film canisters or in envelopes or paper bags, then peg them to a line in a dry, well-aired space. Collect the bags of absorbent silica gel that come with electrical equipment or in vitamin bottles, then drop them into the containers where you store the seeds.

To keep off weevils and rodents, add a mothball to the storage containers.

TIP Never store seeds in a plastic bag, as it won't allow air through and the seeds will rot.



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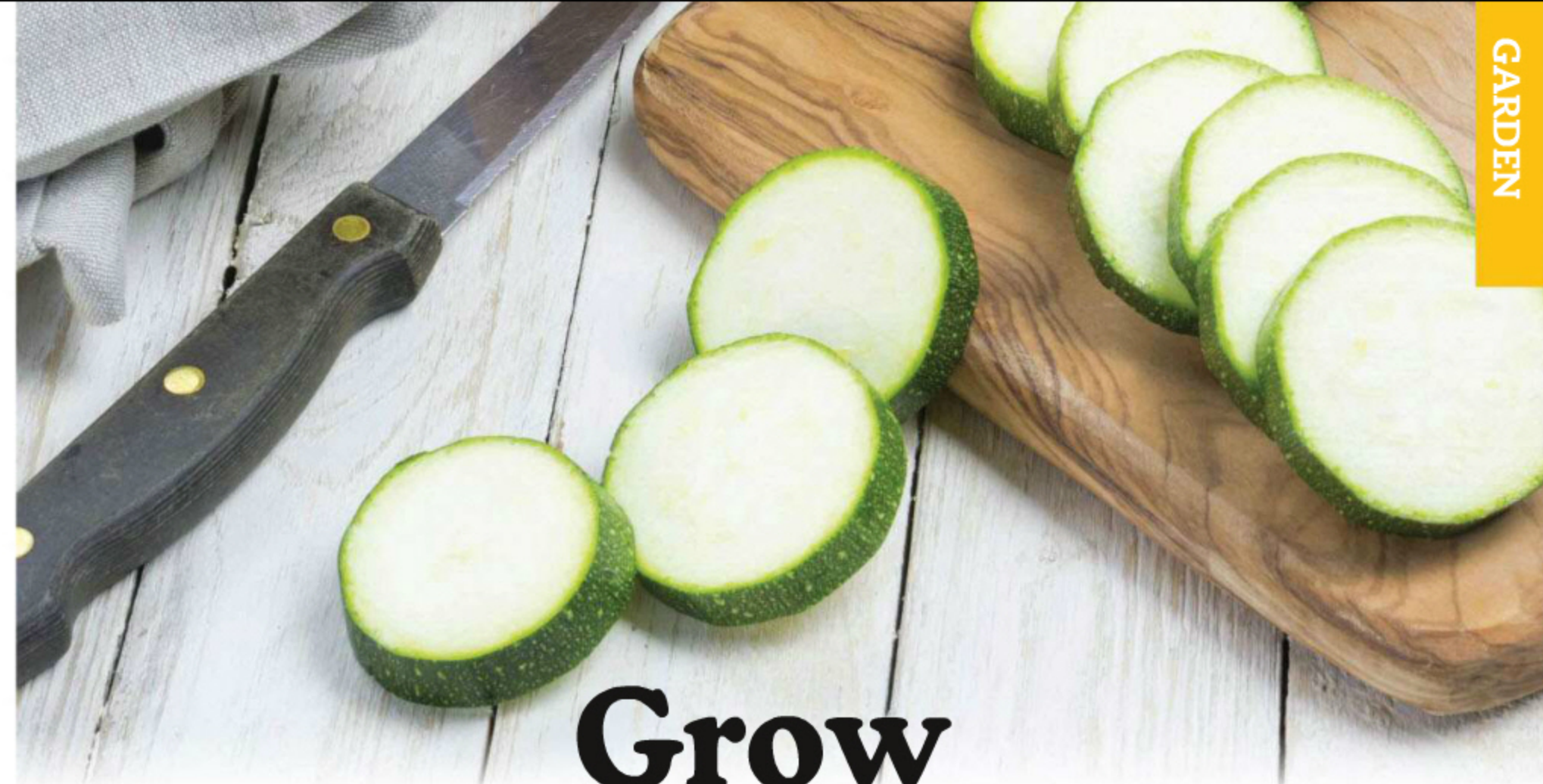
• Blush Pink	• Hot Coral	• Red
• Light Coral	• Lilac	• Carmine Red
• Deep Rose	• Magenta	• Corona
• Electric Orange	• Orange	• White

Sunpatiens are available at your local Bunnings Garden Centre



For flavour you can't beat, raise your own vegies in the backyard.

PICTURE THINKSTOCK



Grow organic vegies

Put fresh produce on your table just as nature intended by growing your own vegetables organically

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Nothing tastes better than homegrown ingredients picked fresh from the vegie patch.

And if you garden as organically as possible, your crops will be rich in vitamins and minerals, and free from poisonous chemicals.

The summer holidays are a great time to start a new vegetable garden, so you can get the children involved.

This means they can feel connected with their food and have fun planting seeds and tending the garden. After all, kids are the gardeners of the future.

Before you begin

It's important to decide on how much free time you have to tend your new organic vegetable patch before you get going. If in doubt, start off small because you can always expand.

If your chosen plot is covered with weeds, they must be completely removed using a hoe. Another chemical-free method of killing weeds is to solarise the soil.

Simply position black plastic over the entire area, anchor it with rocks, then leave it for a month. The heat will cook and destroy the weeds.

Once they've been removed, dig the garden bed to the depth of your spade, taking care to remove any rocks.

Dig in compost and cow or chicken manure over the whole garden bed. The more you add, the richer the soil will become, and the healthier your vegetables will be.

Check the level of acidity in the soil with a pH kit, and add dolomite or liquid lime if it is acidic. Vegetables like a pH of about 6.5. ➤

Going chemical-free

To garden organically means you have to become more aware of the environment and also respect the balance of nature.

Using sprays that contain chemicals can alter this balance by killing off beneficial insects, such as ladybirds, parasitic wasps, and hoverflies.

The organic gardener observes the laws of nature and puts plant residues back into the soil through mulching and composting.

This in turn feeds the bacteria, fungi, insects and earthworms that prepare the soil for living plants.

Summer selection

Take your pick from an abundance of easy-to-grow vegetables.

Climbing beans

These can be grown on wire attached to a sunny fence or wall, on a frame made from upright timber posts and covered in chicken wire, or on a teepee in a large pot. Use the same frame for growing peas in the cooler months.

CARE Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow. Fertilise when the flowers appear and water regularly as the pods begin to swell.

TIP Make a cubbyhouse by creating a three-sided teepee. Get the kids to plant seeds at the base and after a few weeks it will be covered in foliage.

Carrots

An adaptable crop, carrots need deep, well-drained soil so the roots expand and grow quickly. It should be free from stones or lumpy organic matter to prevent the roots becoming misshapen. Baby carrots can be grown in pots.

CARE Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow. The seedlings may take 2-3 weeks to emerge and need thinning to 50mm apart.

TIP Carrot seeds are also available in seed tape and the spaced seeds don't need to be thinned out.



Create a living cubbyhouse for the kids with climbing beans.

Capsicums

Also known as peppers, capsiums start out green, then turn red, yellow or purple as they mature. At this time of the year, they're best planted from seedlings so the fruit can mature before the cold weather arrives.

CARE Fertilise with a complete plant food when the flowers appear. Water regularly to prevent blossom end rot.

Beetroot

This vegetable can be grown in garden beds or containers. The roots are full of vitamins and the young leaves are delicious in salads. Beetroot is ready to harvest about 10 weeks from sowing.

Pull alternate roots early and the roots left in the soil will increase in size.

CARE Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow and thin them to 70mm apart. Feed fortnightly with a soluble plant food for quality roots.

Celery

An easy-to-grow vegetable, celery can provide a continuous harvest for 2-3 months if the outside stems are picked like silverbeet. Sow the seeds in punnets and transplant them to the garden when they're 75mm high.

CARE Regular watering is essential as celery is shallow-rooted. Feed every two weeks so the stems don't turn coarse.



Capsicums change colour as they ripen.



Zucchini can be grown in large pots as well as in beds.

Cucumbers

This vegetable comes in different shapes and sizes. Pick telegraph cucumbers when they're 300mm long, apple cucumbers when they're the size of a tennis ball and Lebanese cucumbers at about 100mm in length.

CARE Sow the seeds where the plants are to grow. To save space, tie them to a support so they can climb.

Eggplants

At this time of the year, it's best to plant this vegetable from a seedling to allow the fruit to mature before the cold weather arrives. Their silvery leaves look good in large pots.

CARE Feed with a complete soluble plant food when the flowers first appear. Regular watering is essential.



Eggplants come in all shapes and sizes.

Zucchini

Also known as courgettes, zucchinis are immature marrows. Pick them when they're about 100-150mm long to encourage further crops. They crop quickly, so you'll be harvesting fruit about 8-10 weeks after sowing.

CARE Sow the seeds directly into a slight depression on top of a raised mound, allowing 1m between the plants. In cool areas, plant as seedlings.

Pumpkins

Growing on large running vines, this plant takes up lots of space.

The 'Butternut' variety is smaller and can be trained up a trellis. 'Golden Nugget' is a non-running bush variety that will grow in a garden bed or large container.

CARE Sow the seeds where they are to grow on mounded soil in saucer-shaped troughs to direct water to the roots.

Radishes

One of the quickest and easiest crops to grow, the crispy roots and young leaves of radishes are delicious in salads. The seeds germinate in about 5-8 days and the roots are ready to harvest in 6-8 weeks.

CARE Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow. Pick radishes while they are small to prevent them becoming tough and stringy.

Tomatoes

There are hundreds of varieties of this popular fruit. Sow the seeds or plant seedlings in December for an autumn crop, and for top-quality fruit, pick them when they are red-ripe. Tomatoes can also be grown in large pots.



Deliciously sweet, homegrown corn is a must-have veggie.

CARE Sow the seeds in punnets and transplant them to the garden bed when the seedlings are 75mm high. To get a bumper crop, water and fertilise tomatoes regularly.

Sweetcorn

While sweetcorn takes up a fair amount of space, it's well worth it as homegrown cobs are sweet and tasty.

The cobs are ready to harvest when the silk has turned brown. Pick them with a downward and twisting motion. If you are limited with space, sweetcorn can be grown in large containers.

CARE It grows better from seed than a seedling. Plant in a block rather than rows to ensure pollination. ➤



Create a nutrient-rich environment for your vegies with no-dig garden beds.

No-dig vegie patch

If you have lawn and want to turn part of it into a flourishing vegetable bed, try the no-dig method.

A no-dig vegetable garden is constructed on top of the ground and can even be created over existing garden beds or hard ground. It is built up in layers, and it is a bit like making a triple-decker sandwich or a lasagne.

They can be designed in any shape or size to fit the available space, but should be in a sunny position. Follow these steps to make your own.

1 **BUILD** a frame for the vegetable garden using bricks, concrete blocks, straw bales or recycled timber. We used railway sleepers.

2 **COVER** the base of the bed with 10 layers of newspaper, overlapping the pages to prevent grass or weeds growing through. Wet the newspaper thoroughly with a fine hose spray.

3 **SPREAD** a 20mm layer of homemade compost or Scotts Miracle-Gro Organic Choice Garden Compost over the newspaper. Cover with a light layer of Yates Dynamic Lifter or cow manure.

4 **LAY** lucerne hay to a depth of about 100mm, making sure there are no gaps. Water well.

TIP Baled lucerne hay is best.

5 **ADD** more compost and Yates Dynamic Lifter or cow manure and another layer of lucerne hay, then wet the hay. Add as many layers as you like, depending on how high you want the bed to be. Finish with a layer of hay.

6 **MAKE** 150-200mm deep pockets in the mix where you want to plant the seedlings and fill them with compost.

7 **PLANT** the seedlings in the pockets and feed the vegetables fortnightly with a soluble fertiliser such as Powerfeed. After several months, the layers will eventually break down and form a rich humus. You can now add more compost to the bed and plant a second crop. ➤

Powerfeed For Vegies, \$13 for 1L. seasol.com.au



In areas where the soil is poor, this type of bed is a great option.

Dig for health ▼

Researchers at the University College London and the University of Bristol in the UK discovered that the friendly bacterium *Mycobacterium vaccae* commonly found in soil can affect the brain in a similar way to antidepressants.

Evidently, the bacterium activates brain cells to produce the chemical called serotonin, which is involved in mood regulation. No wonder people get addicted to gardening!

PICTURES (TOP) GEOFF BECK (CENTRE) LEE DASHIELL

PICTURE CHERYL MADDOCKS



A happy vegie garden makes for a healthy one.

Six steps to success

Make sure your vegies thrive throughout the summer months by following these pointers.

■ **POSITION** Sun, sun and lots of sun guarantees success when growing most vegetables. Lettuce and rocket are the exceptions, as they like shade from the afternoon summer sun, as well as protection from the wind.

■ **SOIL** Good soil is the essence of organic vegetable gardening and is essential for the best results, as well as a high yield. A healthy soil that is regularly fed with compost and manures is full of beneficial worms and microscopic organisms that provide an excellent start for all vegetables.

■ **DIG** in lots of organic matter like compost, poultry manure or cow manure before planting, and do this on a seasonal basis before planting a new crop.

Organic matter adds structure to the soil, helps to retain water and slowly releases nutrients.

■ **FERTILISING** Even though you've already added manure or compost to your garden bed, your vegetables need extra fertiliser as they mature.

The faster vegetables grow, the more tender and sweet they'll be, especially leafy greens. Feed them at least monthly with an organic complete soluble plant food, watering the soil before and after adding fertiliser.

TIP Container-grown vegetables and leafy greens need feeding on a fortnightly basis.

■ **MULCH** Lucerne hay, straw or pea straw are ideal mulches for vegetable beds and pots. Mulch conserves moisture in the soil, keeps the soil cool and helps your vegetables grow steadily.

■ **WATER** Vegetables need to be watered regularly to keep them succulent and tasty, which often means daily in the summer. How often you water depends on the weather, but don't let the soil dry out. Water in the morning at ground level to prevent fungal diseases. ➤

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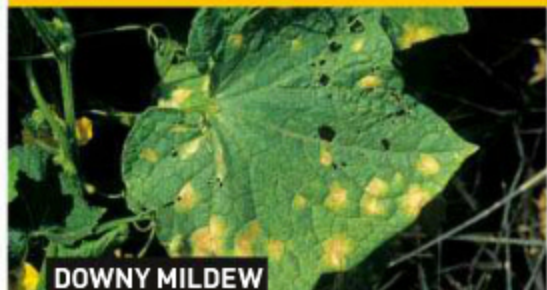
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Organic pest solutions ▼



DOWNY MILDEW

This fungus is found on zucchini, cucumber and pumpkin leaves.

SPOT IT Look for yellow spots on the top and furry growth underneath.

FIX IT Use an organic fungicide or make your own with one part full-cream milk to nine parts water.

TIP Spray vulnerable plants with a seaweed mix as a preventative.



SNAILS AND SLUGS

These molluscs will munch on most vegetables in the garden.

SPOT IT Chewed leaves, shiny streaks on foliage and slime trails are signs.

FIX IT Sprinkle used coffee grounds or broken eggshells around plants or place copper tape around garden beds and pots. Multiguard Snail and Slug pellets are environmentally friendly.



APHIDS AND THRIPS

Among the most destructive insect pests, these attack most vegetables.

SPOT IT Aphids and thrips suck sap and distort new growth. Older leaves have a silvery grey appearance.

FIX IT Hippo Enhanced Eco-Oil will kill aphids and thrips, and also contains compounds that attract beneficial insects to the garden.



CATERPILLARS

These insects, especially the larvae of the cabbage white butterfly, will enjoy any vegetable.

SPOT IT Check for chewed leaves. Small seedlings may also be eaten.

FIX IT Try Yates Nature's Way Caterpillar Killer, which contains a natural bacterium that will kill most larvae once ingested.



GREEN VEGETABLE BUG

Mostly active in hot weather, this bug attacks pumpkins, capsicums, beans, spinach, potatoes and tomatoes.

SPOT IT It sucks sap from the leaves and juice from the fruit, turning the leaves blotchy and the fruit mottled.

FIX IT Hand-pick them from the plants, then destroy them. Use a pyrethrum-based insect spray.



VERTICILLIUM WILT

A soil-borne fungus, this can affect tomatoes, strawberries and members of the potato family.

SPOT IT Check for yellowing or shrivelling of the lower leaves.

FIX IT Remove and destroy infected plants and rotate your crops yearly, especially plants belonging to the potato (Solanaceae) family.



FRUIT FLY

This pest can attack tomatoes, capsicums and eggplants.

SPOT IT Look for holes in fruit, as they lay eggs under the skin and the larvae chew their way to the centre.

FIX IT Use a fruit fly bait early in the season. Seal any infected fruit in a plastic bag, cook it in the sun, then bin it. Don't add it to compost.



BLOSSOM END ROT

A relatively common problem, this can affect tomatoes and capsicums.

SPOT IT The end of the fruit develops a circular black patch, which grows in size and becomes sunken.

FIX IT It is caused by a lack of calcium in the soil and irregular watering. Add liquid lime to the soil and water regularly and deeply.



ASSASSIN BUG

Attract beneficial insects like parasitic wasps, hoverflies, lacewings, assassin bugs and ladybirds to your garden, as they will feast on certain predators.

Grow flowering plants from the mint (Lamiaceae), carrot (Apiaceae), and daisy (Asteraceae) families, as they provide excellent sources of pollen and nectar. ➤

PICTURES: ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

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Rotate your crops

A helpful practice to control pests and diseases and maximise your yield when growing vegetables is to rotate your crops annually.

Put simply, when you plant tomatoes in one spot in your garden one year, follow it with a crop from a different family the next year.

When you rotate your crops, it means that all the nutrients available in the soil can be used logically, if plants that have different feeding requirements are planted after one another.

A good example is to follow your leaf crops, which require

plenty of nitrogen, by root crops, which don't need it.

Crop rotation is also an effective way to avoid a build-up of soil-dwelling pests and pathogens such as pest nematodes and potato scab.

When different plants grow on the same site each year, pest and disease populations are unable to build up to damaging levels.

With small vegetable gardens, it's not difficult to remember what was planted where each year.

But if you have a large vegetable patch, it can be harder to keep track, so make a written rotation plan.



Plant root vegies one year and leafy crops the next in the same site.

What to rotate ▼

■ **CABBAGE FAMILY** Members of the cabbage family are susceptible to club root, which can live in the soil for a couple of years. The family includes cabbage, broccoli, rocket, radish, mustard, Brussels sprouts, turnip, kale and kohlrabi.



■ **POTATO FAMILY** Eggplant, capsicum, tomato and chilli.



■ **ONION FAMILY** Leek, garlic and shallot.



■ **BEET FAMILY** Beetroot, silverbeet and spinach.



■ **SQUASH FAMILY** Cucumber, pumpkin and zucchini.



PICTURES THINKSTOCK

Raising vegies in pots

If you have a small balcony rather than a garden, you don't have to go without homegrown vegetables, as they can also be grown in pots.

Troughs are ideal for growing salad greens, baby carrots, spring onions, perpetual spinach, radishes, basil and other herbs.

But tomatoes, capsicums, chilli, zucchinis and eggplants need large pots that are at least 250mm wide to produce a good harvest.

Vegetables that are grown in pots also need to be watered more often, sometimes daily during the summer. Feed them fortnightly with an organic soluble complete fertiliser.

And apart from growing vegetables in large pots and troughs, there are containers known as modular vegetable

beds that are designed specifically for growing vegetables.

These modular vegie beds work well in small spaces. They are made from Colorbond steel or timber and are available in lots of different shapes and sizes.

They're ideal if you're renting, as you can just pick up the bed and take it with you when you move.

You can also buy small vertical gardens for growing salad greens and herbs, which look great on walls and also save on space.

Freestanding vertical gardens can be easily moved to catch the sun throughout the different seasons.

Containers should be filled with a good-quality potting mix that has the Australian Standards label. Yates Potting Mix With Dynamic Lifter is perfect for vegetables.



Whites Garden Up Freestanding Vertical Garden, \$120. whitesgroup.com.au

PICTURE CHERYL MADDOCKS

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Painted pots

It's easy to make over your outdoor pots to add a dash of colour to your deck

Find it at Bunnings

Terracotta pots are very versatile as they come in various sizes and shapes. Add wow factor to the garden by painting them in your favourite colour following these simple steps.

1 **SEAL THE POTS** with terracotta pot sealant both inside and out before painting, or water will penetrate the pot and the paint will flake off.

2 **PAINT THE RIM** first, applying two coats and allowing it to dry for up to a full day.

3 **APPLY THE PAINT** to the rest of the pot in a contrasting colour and leave to dry for 24-48 hours, then fill with potting mix and plants.

TIP Use exterior acrylic paint to withstand the elements and for easy clean-up.



What you need

- Terracotta pots
 - Terracotta pot sealant
 - Exterior acrylic paint
 - Paintbrushes
- All available at Bunnings, or visit bunnings.com.au for more info.



Northcote 33cm Terracotta Italian Pot, \$22.98, from Bunnings.



Add a burst of colour to update your pot plants.

PICTURE: GEOF BECK

What's on this Dec/Jan

D.I.Y. workshops

Saturday 6 December Preparing for the holidays	Sunday 7 December Preparing for the holidays
Saturday 13 December Preparing for the holidays	Sunday 14 December Preparing for the holidays
Saturday 20 December Christmas product demonstrations	Sunday 21 December Preparing for the holidays
Saturday 27 December Basic D.I.Y.	Sunday 28 December Basic D.I.Y.
Saturday 3 January D.I.Y. project	Sunday 4 January D.I.Y. project
Saturday 10 January Storage solutions	Sunday 11 January Storage solutions
Saturday 17 January Quick refresh, repair & maintenance	Sunday 18 January Quick refresh, repair & maintenance

Our workshops are held every weekend at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. For specific topics, ask instore or go to bunnings.com.au. If you live in South Australia, speak to a team member or visit bunnings.com.au for details about our great one-on-one D.I.Y. workshops. These workshops run from 10am to 4pm each Saturday and Sunday.

Kids' D.I.Y. workshops

Saturday 6 December Santa's little helper	Sunday 7 December Santa's little helper
Saturday 13 December Santa's little helper	Sunday 14 December Santa's little helper
Saturday 20 December Santa's little helper	Sunday 21 December Santa's little helper
Saturday 27 December Holiday fun	Sunday 28 December Holiday fun
Saturday 3 January D.I.Y. project	Sunday 4 January D.I.Y. project
Saturday 10 January Water saving	Sunday 11 January Nature
Saturday 17 January Back to school	Sunday 18 January Back to school

For more information on other instore events or to book, call (03) 8831 9777 or visit bunnings.com.au



6 festive natives

Although pines are the traditional Christmas tree, they can cause an allergic reaction for many people.

Instead, grow your state's native Christmas tree or bush to get bright and cheerful blooms in summer.

Victoria

Prostanthera lasianthos can be either a shrub or small tree, growing from 2-10m tall. It has white, pink or mauve blooms and grows in heavy shade or full sun.



New South Wales

Ceratopetalum gummiferum is a shrub that grows to 5m high and 1m wide. It features white star-like spring blooms and red calyxes in summer. It prefers full sun in well-drained soil.



Tasmania

Blandfordia punicea, known as Christmas bells, produces 10mm long red, bell-shaped flowers with yellow tips. The flower stalks grow to 1m high, and it prefers full sun in sandy soil.



Queensland

Calanthe triplicata is known as Christmas orchid, and is an evergreen that's ideal for pots. It grows in heavy shade in moist soil, producing white flowers on 1.5m long spikes in summer.



West Australia

Nuytsia floribunda is a tree that grows to 10m tall, producing bright-orange summer blooms. It's frost-resistant, likes sun and is semi-parasitic, so it needs grass as a host.



South Australia

Bursaria spinosa is a hardy shrub or small tree growing from 3-10m tall. It produces masses of white flowers in late spring and summer, and thrives in light shade in well-drained soil.



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