

30 PAGES LUXURY BATHROOM DESIGN

AUSTRALIAN Handyman

GARDEN IDEAS FOR SPRING

FAST EASY DIY
Tile paint update
p34

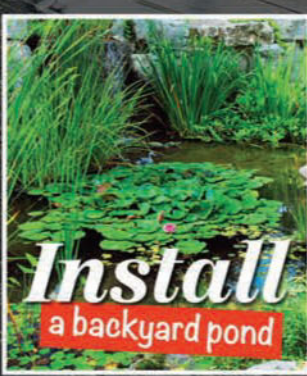
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SEPTEMBER ISSUE



COVER PHOTOGRAPHY
STUART SCOTT

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to *Handyman* p74

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GET THE LOOK

LOVE THE COVER?

To make a coastal cottage pop, pair dark timber floors with crisp white paint

MAIN PICTURE STUART SCOTT

For a bold contrast against the white walls, this timber floor was refinished with a dark stain, giving the room a dramatic, modern look.

Glass doors link the living space with the deck to create an open, flexible area for entertaining, while allowing plenty of natural light inside. Lush tropical plants create a resort-style feel.



Four-year-old Frankie is an English springer spaniel.

Triple Planted 200mm Bangalow Palm, \$20, from Bunnings.

Mimosa Westin Folding Timber Chair, \$70, from Bunnings.

Feast Watson Black Japan Floor Finish, \$92 for 4L. feastwatson.com.au

LSA International 42cm Column Vase, \$126. amara.com

Hume Doors & Timber Joinery Entrance Door, 2040 x 820 x 40mm, \$162. humedoors.com.au

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THIS ISSUE

EDITOR'S LETTER



September heralds the start of spring, so we're gearing up to get busy in the garden.

This issue of *Handyman* features what to plant to attract honey bees, as these beneficial insects are essential to human food sources, on page 126.

We also suggest flowers and shrubs you can plant to brighten those tricky shady areas of the garden, on page 130.

Bathroom makeovers

One of the most important rooms in the house, and one that can seal the deal when selling, is the bathroom.

When choosing what you're going to do to update it, there are factors to consider, including the budget and amount of DIY you want to participate in, plus deciding if it should be a quick facelift or a full-on renovation.

We show you how to paint tiles for instant impact and how to give the whole bathroom a cosmetic makeover. It is amazing what difference a new towel rail, taps and handles can do to revamp this space, on page 34.

There's also a bathroom overhaul done by tradies where the budget was less of a concern, on page 30.

Investment property secrets

Dipping your toe into the investment property market can be scary, and good planning is important. Find out how to maximise your return by avoiding five common mistakes, on page 60.

Deciding what to spend money on when renovating depends on the area, so it's best to get local advice first.

But there are lots of ways to make a place appealing to potential tenants. On page 52, we feature a before and after makeover I've just completed and show just what can be achieved in 10 days with \$12,500.

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR
LEE DASHIELL



ABOVE Bees love species roses, such as *Rosa rugosa*, see page 126.

BELOW A freestanding bathtub takes centrestage, see page 22.



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

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SENIOR EDITOR **DANIEL BUTKOVICH**
SENIOR SUBEDITOR **NICK BANKS**
GRAPHIC DESIGNER **CONNIE LEUNG**
EDITORIAL COORDINATOR **ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT**
DIAGRAMS **STEPHEN POLLITT**

ADVERTISING

GROUP ADVERTISING DIRECTOR **SHERON WHITE** T: 61 2 9018 6280
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER **KRISTINA FROHLICH** T: 61 3 8844 5542
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MARKETING

MAGAZINE MARKETING MANAGER **GALA MECHKAUSKAYTE**
WEBSITE MANAGER **BRONWYN POVOLNY**

PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION MANAGER **BALAJI PARTHSARATHY** T: 61 2 9018 6115

PUBLISHING

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PUBLISHER, MANAGING DIRECTOR **WALTER BEYLEVELDT**
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AUSTRALIAN HANDYMAN MAGAZINE

GPO BOX 4353, SYDNEY NSW 2001
E: handyman@readersdigest.com
www.handyman.net.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ENQUIRIES

T: 1300 300 030
E: customerservice.au@readersdigest.com

Reader's
digest
AUSTRALIA

Published by Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd
(ABN 81000565471) 80 Bay St, Ultimo, NSW 2007
©2015 Reader's Digest (Australia) Pty Ltd
Prepress by Sinnott Bros
Unit 7, 108-120 Silverwater Road, Silverwater NSW 2128
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd,
16 Tuas Ave 5, Singapore 639340
Distributed by NDD Distribution Pty Ltd



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lifeliveitup.com.au



Table tournament

Battle it out with friends to be the best on the XD Design Gol Tabletop Soccer Game, \$150 (optocoonline.com). Featuring a 3-3 line set-up, it measures a compact 55 x 52 x 12.9cm in size, so it's easy to move about.

Caps off

Open a cold one and cool off after the final play with a Bottlepops Bottle Opener, \$15. Just push down to pop a lid and hear up to 25 unique sound files.

bottlepops.com.au



GRAND FINAL GUIDE

Cheer your team to victory in style and comfort with these sporty finds

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



Hawthorn beat the Swans to the title last year. Can they do it again?



War paint

Get your game face on with the six water-based, non-toxic colours in the Boyle Industries Crafty Faces Face & Body Paint Kit, \$15. They're quick to dry or rinse off (boyleindustries.com.au).



Suit up

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The Rabbitohs tackled their way to the top of the league ladder last year.

2015

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Listen in

Don't miss a moment of finals footy with the moisture-resistant AEG 18V Compact Radio, \$79. Tune into AM or FM stations or listen in on your phone via an AUX input jack. Designed for tough environments, this radio has a six-year warranty.

aegpowertools.com.au



Pitch position

Watch the play by play from a Primus King Aluminium Highback Chair, \$85. It's lightweight and has a removable headrest, a cushioned seat, an insulated drink holder, a magazine holder and a carry bag. The alloy frame can hold 130kg.

companionbrands.com.au



Kick-off cuisine

Pack some protein into players post game with the BeefEater Bugg Portable BBQ with stand, \$359. It features two powerful independently controlled stainless steel burners and the high hood ensures even heat distribution.

beefeaterbbq.com

Power pack

Set up a sideline support crew to cheer on your team with the Ryobi Parallel Capable Digital Inverter Generator, \$899 (ryobi.com.au). Two generators can be connected and the four-stroke engine runs for five hours with an auto idle function for fuel economy.



Try-line tracker

Keep the ref in check with the XD Design Everest Binoculars, \$50 (optocoonline.com). With eight times magnification and lenses with a 21mm diameter, you'll see every mistake, knock-on and try up close and personal. Pick from three bright colour options. ➤





Game-day grub

Bring your A-game into the kitchen to serve a feast to friends with delicious recipes from *Food + Beer* by Ross Dobson, \$45. It features over 80 recipes designed around your favourite brews and a history on matching beer with food.

murdochbooks.com.au

Fuel up fans

Keep the crowd keen with some quality coffee kept warm in an XD Design Bopp Hot Thermos, \$50 (optocoonline.com). The 600ml flask has a double wall and a cup with a handle that doubles as the lid.



Team tucker

Set out a spread in the stands with the Sataro Luxury Four-person Picnic Backpack, \$79. Kitted out with cutlery, plates, napkins and plastic cups for four, it also has a cheese-cutting board and salt and pepper shakers.

satara.com.au

Tackle hunger

Ace court-side crudités with the Easy Store Eight-piece Food Storage Container Set, \$17. BPA free, the clear, stackable vessels are microwave, freezer and dishwasher safe for a fuss-free finish to the Grand Slam.

bunnings.com.au

Sideline sipper

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BUYER'S GUIDE

PENDANT LIGHTS



Grand design

Add a touch of elegance to a room with the Mercator Dolce 40W Brushed Chrome Five-light Pendant, \$125.



Industrial chic

Make a statement in your home with the sleek lines of the Brilliant Lighting 47cm Hugo Charcoal Pendant, \$104.



Sheer shade

The geometric steel shade of the Brilliant Lighting 38.5cm Matrix Pendant, \$145, gives any area a modern edge.



Exotic charm

Like an oriental look? Install a Rouge Living 40cm Shanghai Bamboo Pendant, \$110, with a chrome canopy.

Let every room shine bright with your signature style by choosing from this new range of pendants

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

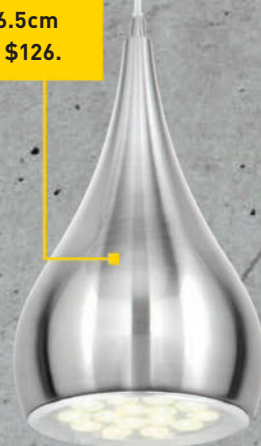
Modern matt

Update a space with the black and gold Verve Hana 36cm Pendant, \$70, with a 1.5m suspension cord.



Budget beam

Cut lighting costs by installing the super-efficient Brilliant Lighting 16.5cm Clyde LED Pendant, \$126.



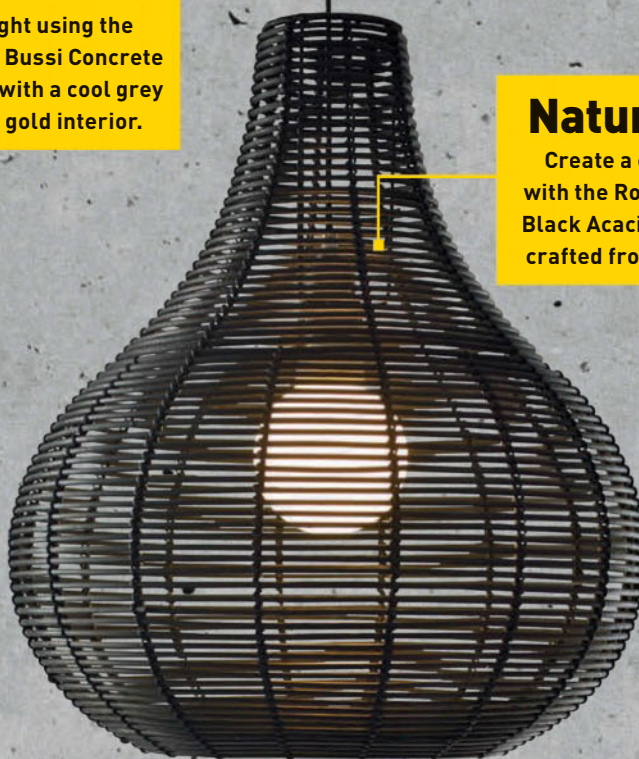
Stone stunner

Light the night using the contemporary Bussi Concrete Pendant, \$59, with a cool grey exterior and gold interior.



Natural glow

Create a cosy ambience with the Rouge Living 44cm Black Acacia Pendant, \$149, crafted from woven rattan.



DREAM BATHROOM

Boost luxury when renovating the bathroom using high-quality fixtures and surfaces

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

Caroma Cupid Above Counter Basin, from \$579.
caroma.com.au

BUDGET TIP

Add affordable luxury by updating the most visible and frequently used parts of the bathroom, like tapware and lighting.



His and hers sinks are a simple bathroom addition and can transform the space by adding instant wow factor. Plus, they're invaluable during morning peak hour.



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High-end bathrooms are one of the most sought after features in a modern home, and it's easy to see why. A relaxing, comfortable haven makes a house more liveable and increases value.

When creating a new bathroom from scratch, devote as much space to it as possible. Large layouts allow for inclusions like a bathtub, dual basins and extra storage.

If space is at a premium, focus on high-quality additions. ➤



A bathroom haven needs to be tidy, spacious and streamlined



The definition of opulence has to be a designer bathtub. Position it in the centre of the room to show off its shapely curves or in front of a window to take in the view.

Caroma Cupid Freestanding Bath, \$2089.



A concealed cistern toilet is a must-have for a minimalist bathroom. Have the cistern installed in the ceiling or wall and tuck the loo away in a nook to keep the room tidy.

Caroma Urbane Invisi Series II Toilet Suite, \$1074.



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IXL Neo Tastic 3-in-1 Fan, Heater and Light, \$815.
ixlappliances.com.au

DESIGN TIP

Install a frameless glass shower screen and a large mirror to increase the sense of space in a bathroom.



Matt black bathroom fixtures are a hot design trend at the moment, and this look works especially well when paired with timber or white surfaces.



A luxury bathroom needs to be warm and inviting, and a combination light, heater and fan achieves this while providing ventilation in the the one compact appliance.



Timber softens a modern monochrome colour scheme and the organic texture adds warmth to the room. Choose a duckboard mat for hygiene and style.

Use designer surfaces

High-quality tiles and benchtops make a big impact in a bathroom. Select premium surfaces like marble for feature walls and contrast this with modern flooring for a designer look.

Black is back when it comes to bathrooms, with classic monochrome getting a contemporary update.

Matt black fixtures catch the eye while hexagonal tiles add interest by creating a striking geometric pattern. ➤

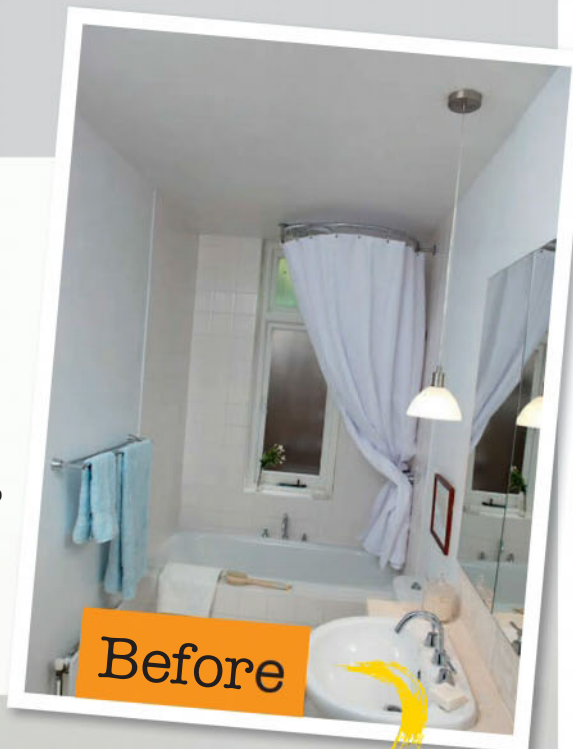


Boost the light

Skylights increase the light levels in a room, but it's not always possible to install a standard type, especially on the ground floor of a two-storey home.

The Illume Solar Shaftless Skylight System, from \$195, uses a solar panel and LEDs to replicate natural light indoors (kimprod.com.au).

Sensors adjust the brightness of the skylight to match the light levels outside.



Before



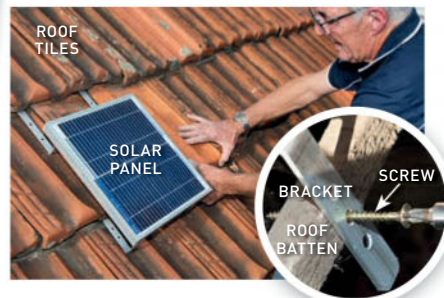
Skylights and windows can brighten up a bathroom by flooding it with natural light. Install a shaftless system in rooms where a traditional skylight isn't possible.



After

The skylight instantly brightens up this dimly lit bathroom.

1 2 3



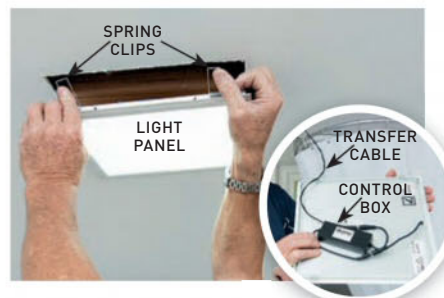
1 Attach the solar panel

Measure the length of the tile pitch and adjust the solar panel brackets to match. Remove tiles to expose battens, then attach the brackets to the battens using the supplied screws. Feed the transfer cable under the ridge cap into the roof space, then replace the tiles.



2 Cut the ceiling hole

Secure the panel template to the ceiling with thumb tacks, checking that it's square with the wall. Mark the cut-out on the ceiling with a pencil, then cut along the lines using a jab saw. Pull the transfer cable through the hole in the ceiling.



3 Install the light panel

Plug the transfer cable into the control box, then plug the light panel into the other side and check the panel turns on. Attach the spring clips to the panel, pull them back and insert the panel into the hole, ensuring there is no insulation on the top of the panel. ➤

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Seal the gaps

When installing new bathtubs or vanities, there will always be a tiny gap between the edge of the fixture and the tiles. If water gets into this gap, it can cause damage.

Silicone should be used to seal all new fixtures to prevent water penetration from causing damage in a new bathroom.

Waterproofing must be done professionally, but you can seal DIY.

Sikasil-CAP Off White Silicone Sealant, about \$10 for 300ml. aus.sika.com



A good bathtub can create a spa experience at home

1 2 3



1 Protect the surfaces

Apply strips of masking tape to either side of the gap, about 4mm apart. Cut the nozzle from the silicone at 45°, keeping the hole smaller than the gap for greater control.

TIP Cut the nozzle neatly, as jagged edges create furrows in the bead.



2 Lay an even bead

Start at one end and continue to the other. Pull the trigger slowly and steadily, pushing the caulking gun away from you and adjusting the rate to match variations in flow speed.

TIP Lift the gun and release the trigger once you reach the end of the gap.



3 Smooth the bead

Using a finger dipped in soapy water, run along the bead continuously from one end to the other, applying enough pressure to create a smooth, even surface. Remove the masking tape and excess silicone immediately, then allow to dry for 24 hours.

DIY TIP

To avoid cracks in the silicone, fill the bathtub three-quarters full before sealing, then leave for 24 hours while it dries.



Naleon Self Adhesive Toilet Roll Refill Holder, \$24. naleon.com.au

Everloc Xpressions Double Corner Basket, \$64. everloc.com.au

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BATHROOM MAKEOVER

A sharp eye for style and a bit of imagination are key to a quick and successful renovation

WORDS SITA SIMONS PICTURES DYLAN FALECKI

This old semi in Sydney's inner west had seen a mix of updates and DIY projects over the years. The toilet, as was often the way until the '50s, was out in the backyard.

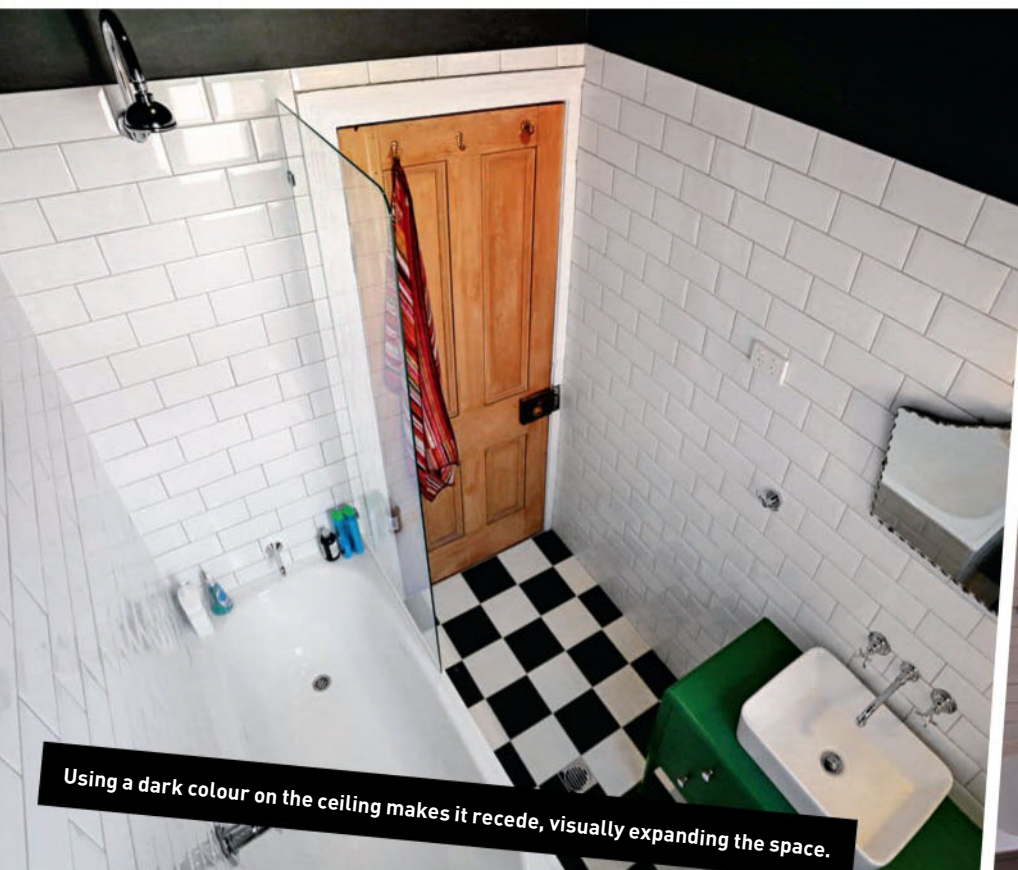
With a baby on the way, the owners had a three-month window to bring the toilet inside and create a functional, stylish space on a tiny footprint of 2 x 2m.

They called on the expertise of builder Dylan Falecki from Network Ten's *The Living Room*. After a trip to Bunnings, everything for the reno was on the back of Dylan's ute.

With the addition of a few items the couple already owned, and one standout feature of an unusual black toilet, the renovation totalled \$25,000, including the cost of the tradesmen, and was completed in a week.

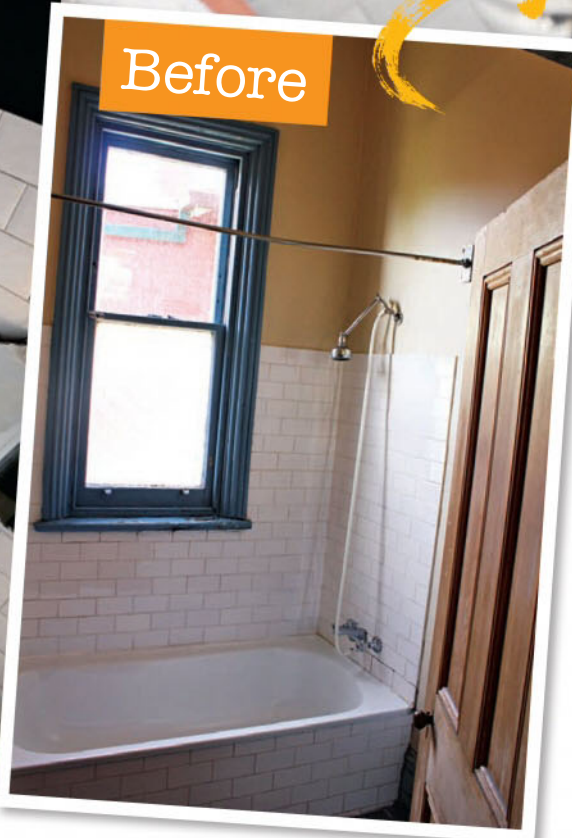
After

The striking black and white colour scheme flows from floor to ceiling.



Using a dark colour on the ceiling makes it recede, visually expanding the space.

Before





BUDGET TIP

Choose ceramic washers for the tapware, as they don't need replacing, which will save you money in the long term.

Quirky charm

The creative couple were not in the market for a traditional bathroom.

Black and white floor tiles and the subway tiling on the walls is a nod to the era of the house, but the other elements are about personality and doing things a bit differently.

While the black and white colour scheme is striking, the brief was mostly about traditional texture.

'They didn't want any polished, refined finishes. The sanded and

waxed old oak door, matt floor, and the ceiling colour all reflect the feel of the period,' says Dylan.

There was a bit of remedial work that had to be dealt with first.

'The old waterproofing had failed and had to be redone. That led to water issues causing rot, and a number of the floor joists had to be replaced.

'Compressed fibro flooring was laid, then we built the bath hub, put in the bath, started tiling, and it went from go to whoa in about a week.' ➤



EXPERT SECRETS

Always fit a bath twice so it will never move. Sit it on the sand and cement bed and fill it with water overnight.

Remove and refit it after applying silicone sheets to the mould.

Dylan Falecki, builder



DESIGN TIP

Stick to a simple palette of three colours, using two primary and one complementary accent shade.

Cutting costs

The price of materials and fittings is often based on decorative details, and the cost of an acrylic bath can range from \$700 to more than \$2000.

'Decide what you need to spend money on by looking closely at these differences,' says Dylan.

'Tiles vary massively in price and usually the main difference is not the quality, but that the cheaper one can vary in size by half a millimetre.

'A good tiler will allow for this, but it may take them a bit longer. Weigh up the cost of their time against the cost of the tiles, then decide,' he says.

Spend money on the items you touch the most often, such as tapware, handles and light switches.

A toilet is another item worth researching to get the right one. The black toilet from Kohler was the luxury splurge here.

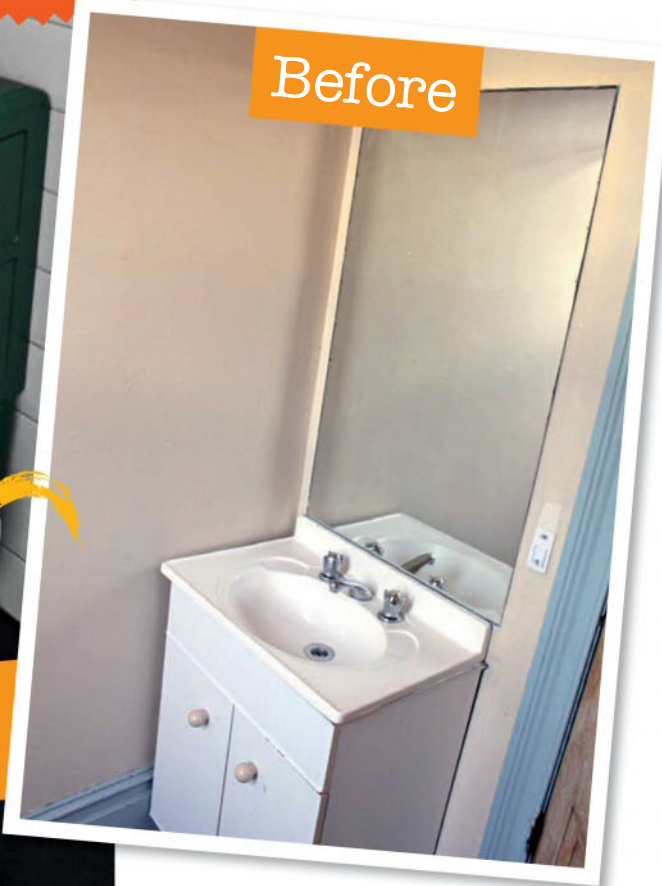
The vanity is an upcycled dressing table, which saved money and added personality. 🍋

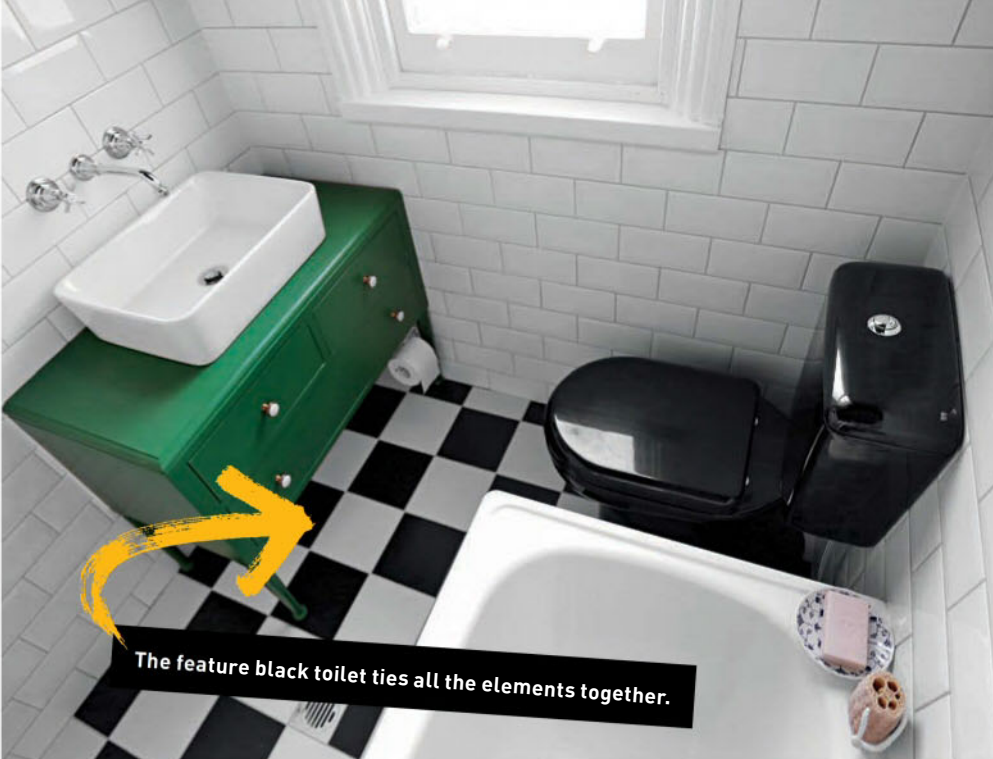


After

The vintage sconce and decorative mirror team perfectly with the upcycled cabinet.

Before





The feature black toilet ties all the elements together.



The statement vanity was an old dressing table, sanded back, painted and sealed, with just a few cuts in the back to accommodate the plumbing

GET THE LOOK

GREEN PAW PAW

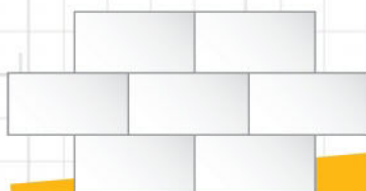
Dulux Aquanamel Deep Base Semi Gloss Enamel Paint, \$51 for 1L. dulux.com.au



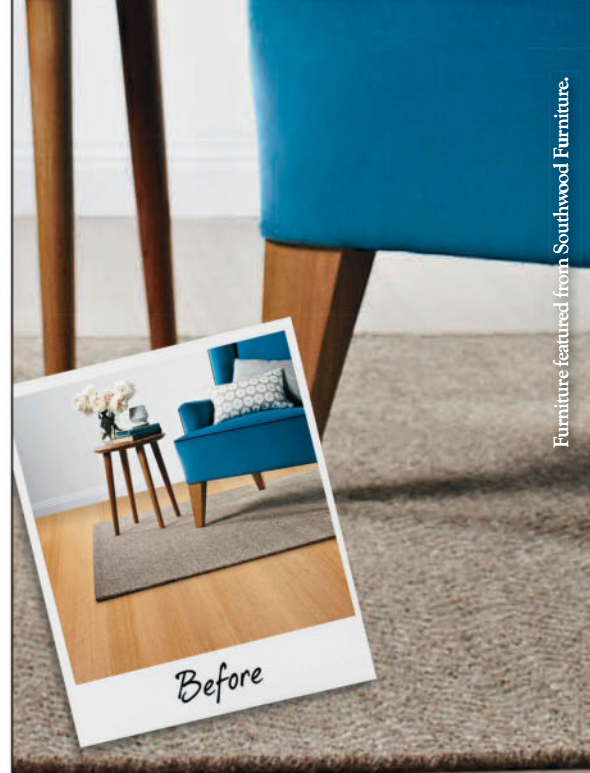
Everhard Virtue Square Semi-recessed Vitreous China Basin, \$193. everhard.com.au



Philips Wall Spot Chrome Round Aquafit Vanity Light, \$22. philips.com.au



Johnson Tiles 200 x 100mm Waringa White Ceramic Wall Tile, 60c each. johnsontiles.com.au



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VANITY REVAMP

Painting the tiles and installing new fittings rejuvenated this bathroom

WORDS LEE DASHIELL MAIN PICTURE GEOFF BECK

Bathroom makeovers can be costly, particularly if you start ripping out floor and wall tiles.

Doing it this way will most likely mean hiring tilers and specialised tradies to complete the work, which will have a big effect on the cost.

This bathroom renovation had a tight DIY budget, so the floor and wall tiles were left intact and surface treatments were applied instead.

The overall look of this bathroom was tired and dated, but the surfaces were all in excellent condition, so it was inexpensive and easy to totally transform it in a weekend.

Before starting work, a plumber replaced the old sink with a modern square-edged basin and shiny taps.



Painting surfaces that are in good condition is a much more budget-friendly alternative than replacing them

White laminate paint was applied to the vanity doors, which were given sleek chrome handles to tie in with the modern new look of the room.

The tiles were then thoroughly cleaned, sanded and painted using a tile cleaner, primer and paint. ➤

DIY TIP

To get a smooth, professional finish and avoid brush marks, use a mini roller to apply paint to tiles.

After

Resurfacing and adding a modern basin have refreshed this room.



Before



PICTURE (BEFORE) LEE DASHIELL



WHAT YOU NEED



Paint Partner 10-piece Mini Roller Kit, about \$6, from Bunnings.



White Knight White Tile Paint, about \$46 for 1L. whiteknightpaints.com.au



Bondall Tileguard Tile & Grout Cleaner, \$15 for 750ml. bondall.com.au

PAINT THE TILES



1 Clean the tiles

Scrub the tiles and grout with a mix of one part bleach to 10 parts water to remove mould, then leave to dry. Spray with tile cleaner, then leave for 30 seconds to give the cleaner time to work on the surface of the tiles. Wipe off the cleaner with a wet sponge to remove soap scum and oil.



2 Sand the tiles

Give the tiles a light sand all over using 240 grit wet/dry abrasive paper and a sanding block to create a rough matt surface. This will help the paint adhere better to the tiles. Wash and rinse off the tiles using a wet sponge and clean water, then leave to dry completely.



3 Mask the edges

Use painter's tape to mask off the walls at the floor and ceiling and any other edges. Press firmly on the edge of the tape along the area that is to be painted to give a clean finish. Fill any cracks with grout or gap filler and leave to dry. Position drop sheets on the floor to avoid paint splashes.



4 Apply the primer

Stir the primer well, then pour into a roller tray. Paint small areas of the tiles at a time, using a microfibre mini roller and a brush to cut in the edges and around tricky areas such as taps. Roll on the primer in a zigzag pattern, then smooth out, working from the top to the base. Allow to dry.



5 Paint the first coat

Lightly sand the tiles with 240 grit paper and wipe down. Apply the first coat with the roller, cutting in with a brush. Paint a small area at a time in a zigzag pattern, then roll smooth. When the paint is spread and only a little is left on the roller, go over the area in one direction from top to base.



6 Finish the painting

Store the brush and roller in water until the first coat of paint is dry, then squeeze out the water. Lightly sand the tiles with 600 grit paper, then wipe off the dust. Apply the top coat using the same technique as for the first coat. Allow to dry for a day, then wait a week until fully cured. ➤



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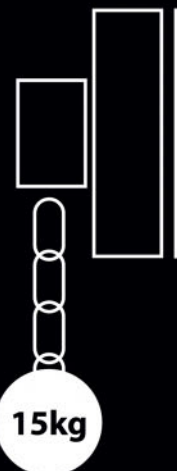


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BUDGET TIP

Keep a colour theme going in small ways, such as with towels, to create a cohesive look without spending big.

Trade secrets

Renovation expert Cherie Barber uses tile and laminate paint on many of her budget makeovers for an instant impact at little cost.

Across Australia, she has overseen many dramatic bathroom makeovers.

Here she shares some of her recent transformations.



Before

Chaotic to classy

In true '70s style, the old bathroom was a riot of colour and wallpaper, and felt cramped and disorganised.

Painting the walls and tiles and installing a new shower screen and mirror reinvigorated the room.

A replacement vanity provided the utility and storage needed.



Before



Drab to fab

Everything in this bathroom was functional, so we just revamped it.

The vanity top was refinished and the doors painted, while the bathtub was resurfaced.

White tile paint, a clear glass shower screen and venetians completed the transformation.





Lacklustre to lively

A deep clean was first on the agenda in this bathroom, followed by painting the wall tiles.

Simply scrubbing clean the aluminium edging on the shower screen worked wonders.

Colourful accessories and venetians completed the look. 🌟

Before



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Black Diamond



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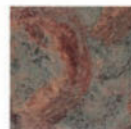
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BUDGET TIP

Make a big impact on a tiny budget by keeping the layout the same but painting the surfaces and updating the fittings.

After

A simple cosmetic makeover has given this old bathroom a new lease of life.



Before

FROM DAGGY TO DAZZLING

New surfaces and modern fittings refresh this dated bathroom on a modest budget

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERIE BARBER



If there was ever a magic wand of the renovating world, it'd have to be resurfacing products.

Tile, laminate and bathtub paints allow you transform a room without having to replace any surfaces.

Without them, your only option for a dingy old bathroom like this would be to gut it and start from scratch. And that, without question, would be an expensive task.

The reno plan

I'd put the era of this bathroom around the 1960s, which probably means asbestos and dubious old plumbing.

We'll leave that can of worms unopened and break out the paint cans instead!

The main thing this bathroom needs is a coat of paint for the tiles, vanity and bathtub, plus new flooring.

Add a frameless glass shower screen, plus new handles and taps, and you have a budget reno that will modernise this small space without costing a small fortune.

I reckon you could do this revamp for about \$500, and the best part is, you won't need a plumber. ➤

FREE VIRTUAL MAKEOVER

Cherie Barber is the owner of Renovating For Profit, a company dedicated to teaching people how to add value to their property through smart renovation.

She is also a public speaker and TV renovator on the popular Network Ten show *The Living Room*.

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

Send us a photo and description of an area in your home that needs work for the chance to get a free makeover.

To upload your photos, go to handyman.net.au/virtual-makeover.

SIX STEPS TO SUCCESS

1 CLEAN THE SURFACES

The crucial thing with any resurfacing product is to start with a completely smooth, clean and dust-free surface.

Otherwise, all your hard work will be wasted when the new surface peels away because it hasn't adhered.



Glitz Domestic Cleaner, \$5 for 1.25L.
cleanwithglitz.com.au

2 APPLY THE PRIMER

With a clean, dry surface and all the vanity handles removed, it's time to lay on the primer, also known as undercoat.

It needs to go on all the tiles that are to be painted, as well as on the retro vanity and the storage cupboard.



White Knight Tile & Laminate Primer, \$45 for 1L.
whiteknightpaints.com.au

4 RESURFACE THE TUB

That green bathtub is in good condition for its age, which makes it a perfect candidate for resurfacing in fresh white.

It's labour intensive but, for under \$100, it's worth the effort and will make the tub look like new.



White Knight Tub & Basin Paint, \$80 for 500ml.
whiteknightpaints.com.au

3 PAINT THE SURFACES

We'll paint the benchtop in a dark colour and contrast it with off-white for the vanity.

A clear top coat will help protect the surface for years of use.

Crisp white paint will also transform the tiles and walls.



White Knight White Laminate Paint, \$47 for 1L.
whiteknightpaints.com.au

5 ADD A SCREEN

Glass panels have come down a lot in price, so our lean budget will stretch to replacing the shower curtain and rod.

You can pick one up off the shelf for under \$200, but it may cost more if it needs to be custom made.

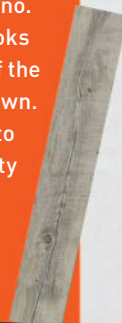


Highgrove 2000 x 600 x 10mm Glass Shower Panel Kit, \$196.
highgroveglass.com.au

6 LAY VINYL FLOORING

My favourite timber-look vinyl flooring, Gerflor, can go straight over that lino. It's waterproof and looks fantastic. Just peel off the backing and stick it down.

The final touch is to cover the grim security mesh with a micro venetian blind to let in the light but block out the eyesore.



Gerflor Senso Rustic Pecan Self Adhesive Vinyl Plank, about \$60 for 16. gerflor.com.au



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SAVE ON YOUR RENO

Plan ahead when replacing your bathroom so you can stick to an affordable budget

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

As one of the busiest rooms in the home, the bathroom can also be the most expensive when it comes to renovating.

Replacing a bathroom will cost on average \$16,000, so knowing what you can DIY and when you need to call a tradie is important.

It means you can build your dream bathroom without overspending. ➤

DESIGN TIP

Think about future lifestyle changes, such as having children, to avoid remodelling again in a few years.

HEY, BIG SPENDER

To keep within budget, create a complete plan for the makeover, including quotes from the pros, before beginning construction.

Decide which big-ticket items you can afford to splash out on and areas where you can compromise.

Major expenses can include professional tiling, relocating the plumbing and choosing luxury fixtures like a freestanding tub.

Select the best products you can afford so your new bathroom will stand the test of time.

Hire a professional

No matter how handy you are, it's inevitable that you'll need to call in a tradie for certain elements of bathroom renovation because of regulations set by the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards.

Waterproofing is vital to prevent structural damage and damp, with government standards requiring a pro to complete the job in your home.

Electrical jobs must be done by a licensed electrician, who will do the wiring, as well as installing exhaust fans, heaters and power outlets.

For plumbing work, you'll need a plumber to disconnect and reconnect the pipes, as well as waste outlets.

Check out free services like Hipages (hipages.com.au) to find the most suitable tradie in your area for the job.



If you live in a strata property, make sure you have approval before starting work on your renovation



Get a tradie to waterproof your bathroom.



Let an electrician handle any wiring work.



A plumber will disconnect and reconnect pipes.

BUDGET CHEAT SHEET

Can't afford a full reno but sick of staring at your old bathroom?

Just changing a few elements can give it a fast facelift without cleaning out your bank account.

Installing a new shower screen and skylight, painting tiles, and resurfacing the bath or basin will have a huge impact on the look of the room. 🍷



Rust-Oleum Aspen White Tile Coating System, \$100.
rustoleum.com.au



VINTAGE DENIM

British Paints Clean & Protect Matt Interior Paint, \$144 for 10L.
britishpaints.com.au



Caroma Liano Nexus Single Towel Rail, \$143.
caroma.com.au



Dorf WELS 3 Star 9L/min Tempus Chrome Rail Shower, \$165.
dorf.com.au



Acol 300mm Round EzyLite Skylight Kit, \$99.
acolskylights.com.au



Highgrove 875mm Frameless Glass Shower Panel Kit, \$261.
highgroveglass.com.au



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CREATE YOUR OWN RETREAT

Design a resort-style bathroom sanctuary using large-format tiles and a smart, modern layout

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH



An opulent bathroom sanctuary is easy to create by designing the entire space as a wet room.

The transition to the shower and bath area is seamless in a wet room. This approach to bathroom design utilises the floorplan well, allowing for high-end inclusions like dual showers and a tub. ➤

A symmetrical double shower with a bathtub centrepiece oozes luxury.

Install patterned tiles in the bathroom to get the look of stone without the high price tag

DESIGN TIP

When laying large-format tiles, use a grout of the same colour to maximise the visual impact of the tile design.

Add instant elegance

Large-format stone-look tiles give the feel of a luxury hotel, and using them on the floor then taking them up the walls makes a room seem bigger.

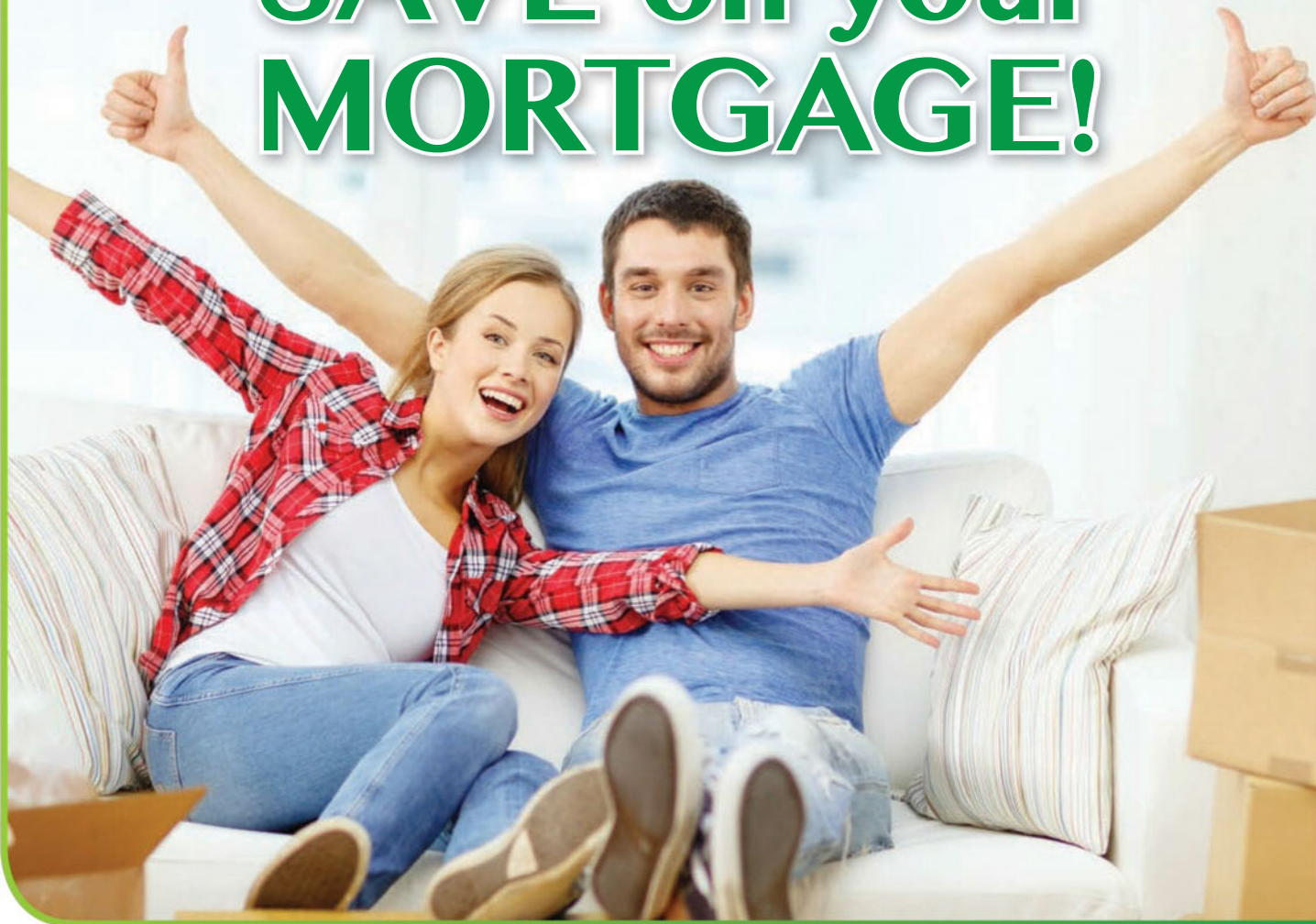
A simple ledge creates a defined zone for the bath without affecting the flow of the room. Frameless glass shower screens are almost invisible and let in plenty of natural light.

A bathroom haven needs plenty of unobtrusive storage to keep it streamlined and a wall-mounted vanity creates the illusion of space.

For the ultimate in bathroom indulgence, install a combination rain shower and handheld mixer, and add an elegant freestanding tub to create a bathroom that you'll never want to leave. 🌟



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10 DAY RENO

Easy DIY revamps costing just \$12,500 made this 1980s house ready to rent

PROJECTS LEE DASHIELL PICTURES GEOFF BECK

The state of the economy of a particular decade is often reflected in the interior design.

This house summed up what was hot in the '80s, featuring thick curtains with gold tasselled tie-backs, pelmets, sculptured carpet, vertical blinds and peach-coloured tones throughout. But today, this is not the look people want.

Handyman managing editor Lee Dashiell bought this house as a rental investment property, then had to decide what changes could be

LEE'S PLAN

- ✦ **REMOVE** curtains, pelmets, tasselled tie backs, vertical blinds, sheer lace curtains, oval sinks, plastic-tank toilets, plastic taps, decorative ceiling lights and door handles.
- ✦ **INSTALL** modern taps, basins, toilets, ceiling lights, door and cabinet handles, and blinds.
- ✦ **PAINT** all the walls, ceilings, architraves, skirting boards, bathroom, laundry and kitchen tiles, and kitchen cabinets.



Front door refresh

Many renters, and buyers, drive by a property to check it out before making an appointment with the agent, so first impressions really count.

The door, surround and screen were painted gloss black to unify the entrance and a new stainless steel handle, doormat and plants complete the look.

After

The entrance is much more inviting with the door, frame and screen painted black.

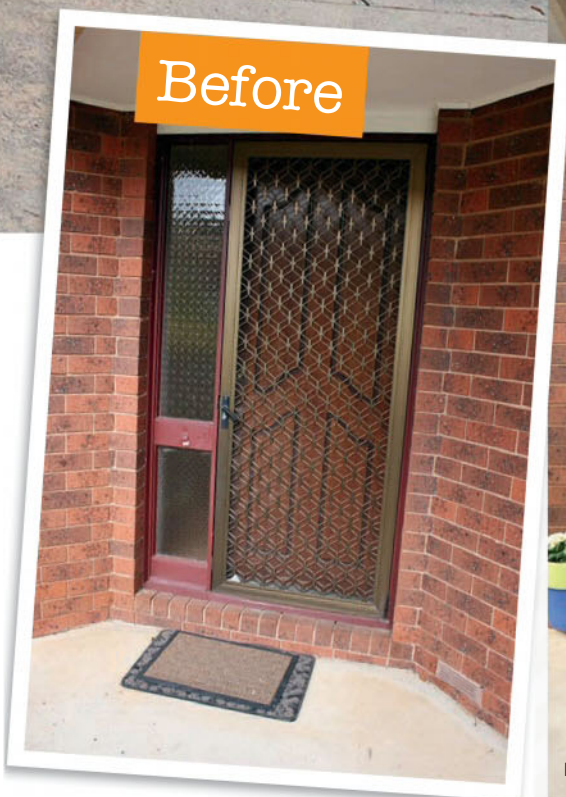
Before

made on a very tight budget to achieve the maximum rental return.

There were obvious, inexpensive facelifts such as painting, changing light fittings, replacing taps and changing window treatments.

The initial plan included replacing the carpet with laminate flooring, adding halogen lights and installing French doors leading out to a new deck.

But after consulting with a real estate agent, it was decided to keep things as streamlined as possible. ➤



BUDGET TIP

If the kitchen cabinets and benches are in good shape, resurface don't replace for a fresh look without spending big.

After

Painting the walls, window frames, tiles and cabinets transformed the kitchen.



Kitchen update

The cabinets and tiles were resurfaced using laminate and tile paint, which instantly made them appear more modern.

Replacing the old plastic cabinet handles with modern chrome versions, removing the dated pelmet and painting the window frames white brightened up the whole room. >

Ask the experts

To check if he was on the right track, Lee asked the real estate agent to visit the house and scope out the plans.

The advice was not to go ahead with the bigger renovations, as the rental yield wouldn't increase with the additional spend.

When it comes to your own home, you tend to splurge on things that are important to you like a new kitchen or a swimming pool. But these elements may not be the most savvy additions when renovating to rent.

Also consider the tax implications on where and when you spend. Talk to your accountant about ways to reap the best tax benefits in your situation.

Before



PICTURE (BEFORE) LEE DASHIELL

GET THE LOOK

Lemaar Calida Satin Chrome Passage Set, \$38. lemaar.com.au

Cafe Lighting 40cm Satin Astra Ceiling Oyster Light, \$25. cafelighting.com.au

Mondella 600mm Concerto Double Towel Bar, \$74, from Bunnings.

Prestige 96mm Brushed Stainless Steel Square Bar Handle, \$15. itwproline.com.au



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



White Knight White Laminate Paint, \$47 for 1L. whiteknightpaints.com.au



When renovating to rent, bear in mind that splurging on expensive items may not increase the rental yield

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DIY TIP

Take photos of each room before leasing your property so you have a record of its original condition.



Living room overhaul

The heavy curtains were removed and the timber skirtings and architraves painted white to give a clean, fresh look.

Painting the walls the same colour throughout has given the house an overall consistency.

After

Adding a garden bed outside provides a pleasant outlook.

Why use an agent?

You may consider agent's fees costly and think you should DIY to save money. But while you could find a tenant easily enough, you might not be prepared if problems arise.

Agents have the knowledge of tenancy and property legislation and the experience to sort out any issues. They deal with repairs, chase overdue rent and arrange inspections to ensure the property is being cared for.

They are also good negotiators and put your best interests first, plus their fees are also tax deductible.

But even if you use an agent, take out landlord insurance for protection from any unforeseen circumstances that may arise and incur costs.

Before



PICTURE (BEFORE) LEE DASHIELL



Before

Expert advice

Lee took part in Cherie Barber's Renovating for Profit workshop, where she showed the best ways to make the maximum impact on a tight budget.

She advises attendees to look at the renovation as a business, watch the budget and keep personal taste out of it.

Cherie also demonstrates how to make a property appealing to as many people as possible by keeping surface colours neutral, fittings modern and creating as much light as possible.

Lee used many of her strategies when renovating this property. ➤



After

With the mismatching soft furnishings removed, the room is flooded with light.



Dining room revamp

All four window treatments in this room, including lace curtains, a pelmet, vertical blinds and drapes, had to go.

Removing these opened up the house to the view out the back and let in more light.

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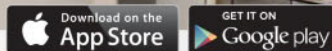
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DESIGN TIP

Colours date fast, so go for bright white in bathrooms to create a space that looks clean, fresh and modern.



Bathroom makeover

The dated decorative wall tiles were smooth, so they were easy to coat with tile paint.

While the benchtops and floor tiles would have looked better if replaced, the extra cost would not have been justified.

Replacing the sinks and taps with modern designs has improved and rejuvenated the room. 🛠️

After

Resurfacing the tiles and adding new taps brings the bathroom up to date.

Before

RENOVATION COSTS

Sinks, toilets and taps	\$1254
Doorknobs	\$1213
Curtains and blinds	\$278
Plants	\$325
Laminate and tile paint	\$542
Painter	\$6246
Plumber	\$760
Electrician	\$1550
Handyman	\$275

TOTAL \$12,443

For a guide to painting tiles, turn to p34.

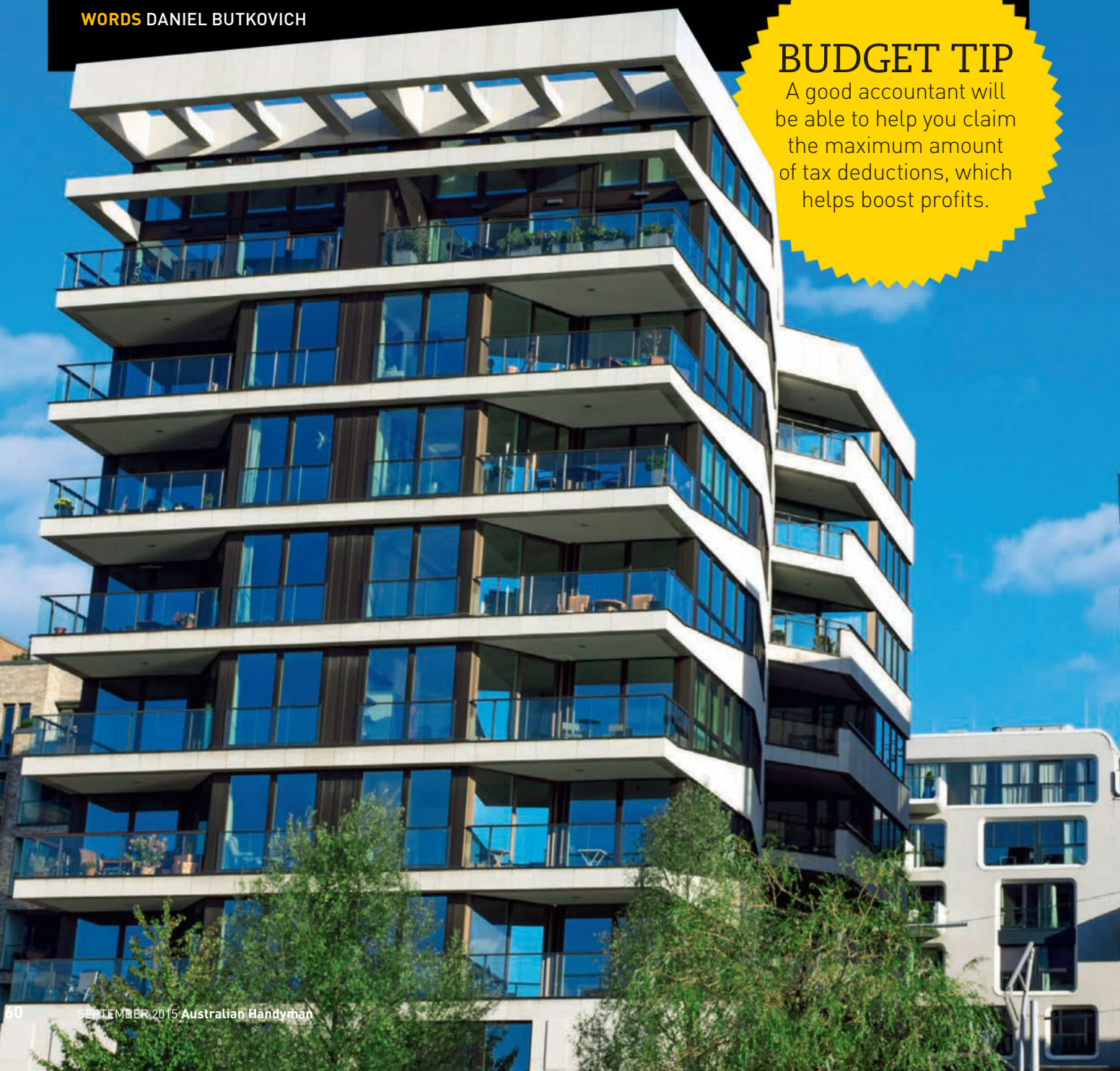
5 INVESTMENT NIGHTMARES

Maximise your profit and minimise your risk by avoiding these common property mistakes

WORDS DANIEL BUTKOVICH

BUDGET TIP

A good accountant will be able to help you claim the maximum amount of tax deductions, which helps boost profits.

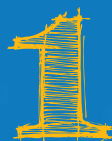


Property investment is arguably the number one way Australians build their wealth. Nearly two million Australians earn a rental income from property, while others are planning to make a fortune from the housing boom.

But owning property can be risky, and without proper planning, it's easy to run into trouble. Many investors lose thousands when they are forced to sell their properties after bad decisions.

Property guru Zaki Ameer has built a portfolio of 10 properties and is the founder of Dream Design Property (ddpproperty.com.au).

From reno disasters to legal battles, Zaki has seen it all and explains how you can avoid an investment nightmare.



Off-the-plan dramas

It's easy to get excited about a brand-new property but, sometimes, buying a dwelling that hasn't been built yet can cause problems.

'This type of investment may seem enticing at first, but there is no guarantee of the quality or the final value,' says Zaki.

Additionally, many properties can be overvalued by the developer, meaning the home could be worth a lot less than the purchase price once it has been built.

SOLUTION Buy an existing dwelling that you can inspect in person before committing.



Nasty exit fees

With historically low interest rates, fixed rate bank loans are appealing to more investors than ever. The catch is the fees that are charged if you need to make an early exit.

'A friend of mine went through a traumatic divorce and was forced to sell his investment property during the fixed rate period and paid thousands of dollars in exit fees,' says Zaki.

SOLUTION Keep careful records of the properties purchased so you are aware of any penalties that may apply for breaking fixed rate agreements. ➤



Smart investment decisions can result in fantastic profits, but bad ones can be costly





3 Dodgy builders

Renovating is a great way to add value, but it can cause financial pain if corners are cut or disreputable builders are used.

Poor workmanship, accidents and the resulting legal fees can completely erode any potential profits.

'I've seen appalling renovations by builders where roofs have leaked and caved in soon after completion, costing the owners \$250,000 in legal fees and repairs,' say Zaki.

SOLUTION Check builders' credentials and inspect their recent work before commissioning them for your reno.



4 Terrible tenants

Good tenants that pay rent on time and keep the property in good order are a godsend, but bad tenants are unfortunately too common.

Reliable renters can suddenly turn into property-wrecking nightmares, as one of Zaki's clients found out.

'They deserted the house in the middle of the night, leaving it in a terrible condition and, not having landlord insurance, she had to fork out \$20,000 to pay for repairs.'

SOLUTION Always invest in landlord insurance.

5 No safety net

Losing your job or being unable to work due to injury or illness can cause major problems when it comes to repayments, and applying for loan extensions may cost thousands of dollars in fees.

To avoid running into trouble, put aside money to use as a safety net in case the unthinkable happens.

'It's better to have this cash for emergencies than to use it to pay extra loan repayments,' says Zaki.

SOLUTION Set aside three months of repayments per property.



EXPERT ADVICE

If you find yourself in a difficult situation, selling your property early should only be the last resort.

Zaki Ameer, Dream Design Property

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DESIGN TIP

The deep reveals of the windows and doors create interest on the boxy facade of the home.



Constructed of concrete, this holiday home is both light and airy.

ALL SQUARE

This dream holiday house blends modernity and home comforts in a grand architectural vision

WORDS SITA SIMONS

Set into a wooded hillside, it was a case of pushing the limits when it came to designing this seaside villa. The luxury holiday home cleverly combines elements of modernism with residential warmth.

In high season, when the crowds arrive, it is the ideal private escape for

a large family, with each of the nine bedrooms offering a private ensuite and terrace overlooking the ocean.

The whitewashed concrete and natural limestone exterior of the house takes on cubic forms, with a parapet roof lending to the clean lines and angular symmetry. ➤



A modern, single-story house with a light-colored, textured facade. The house features large glass windows and doors that open up to a spacious outdoor lounge area. In the foreground, a large, rectangular swimming pool with a wet edge flows outwards. The pool is surrounded by a light-colored stone or concrete deck. On the deck, there are two brown wicker lounge chairs and a hammock strung between two points. The background shows lush greenery, including palm trees and other tropical plants. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

The palette inside and out is neutral and colour is found in the oversized artworks, the shimmering blue of the pool and the lush greenery.

★
The wet edge pool on this side of the house flows out towards the ocean, adding to the resort-style feel

DESIGN TIP

For an open feel and to let in light, try the architect's trick of creating shadow lines instead of using cornices.

The furnishings are chosen to reflect the contours of the home but allow for the practical need of providing enough seating.

On the level

There are two swimming pools, one on either side of the living area, and walls of sliding glass doors open the home to the outdoors with no change in floor level, linking the spaces.

'Every detail, angle and element has been carefully thought through and designed, and this extends to the interiors,' says Cameron Frazer, general manager of Archicentre.

'Bringing it all together with furnishings while still personalising to suit tastes and preferences is a delicate balance that needs to be done with a subtle hand to work well.' ➤

Natural materials enhance the connection between the exterior and interior.

DESIGN TIP

To create a plinth to display artwork and break up the expanse of wall, the sliding window recesses have been built as a feature.

An indoor minimalist garden bed lights up at night.



Planting up the stair void blurs the boundaries.



The suspended staircase demonstrates how modern materials can be used to create a structure that appears to be floating

To one side of this spacious property lies the ocean and to the other there are luscious private gardens.

The oversized windows bring in a wall of vibrant green, framing the natural views to provide pleasure and tranquillity in the home.

While the windows are a strong feature, the walls above head height are also used to maximum effect.

'Dramatic wall panels painted flat white serve as a canvas for the owners' art collection,' says Cameron.

'But it would work just as well if used to display children's artwork or just left blank to allow the play of light as the sun moves across the sky.'

The suspended staircase is an element that manages to both stand out and disappear into the space.

'This staircase is a classic exercise in form and function combining to create a striking design feature in the living area,' says Cameron.

'It's a complex and self-supporting design that acts like a beam, and the stringer is incorporated into the stair. While it is reinforced with steel, it still looks light and simple.'

The use of reinforced concrete brings another material into the room, adding to the formality and making it an architectural element to be viewed beyond function. ➤



Treat small ensuites to luxurious touches with feature tiles and interesting sinks.



Each of the nine bedrooms has a private ensuite and, while they are all different, black is a unifying theme.

Gold mosaic tiles pop against the large-format black tiles.

DESIGN TIP

When buying stone tiles for a bathroom floor, they should be selected for non-slip characteristics when wet for safety.

Black beauties

There has been a move away from all-white bathrooms, and black is having its moment.

If the room has lots of natural light, black can be warm and luxurious, actually opening up small spaces rather than closing them in.

'The use of dark stone and dark tones in the bathrooms serves to create a sense of intimacy and enclosure, and also sets these spaces apart from the stark minimalism of the otherwise all-white interiors,' says Cameron.

Ensuites get the same treatment, with points of difference such as the gold mosaic tiles on the walls. 🌿



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WORDS AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

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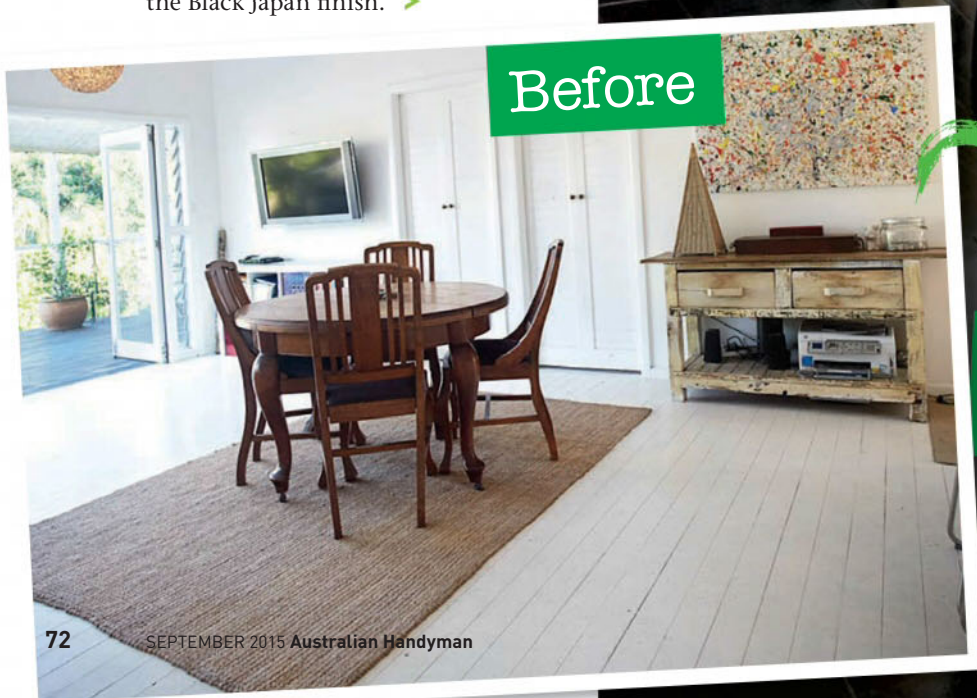
After a recent reno, the new colour scheme in this beach cottage left the white painted floor looking scratched and dull, so it was time for an update.

We hired a drum sander and edge sander for the floor, using two each of the 40, 80 and 120 grit sanding belts and one sanding disc of each grit.

Once this was done, we applied the Black Japan finish. ➤



Before



After

A gleaming black finish adds a luxurious feel and enhances the flow through to the deck.

DESIGN TIP

To check the strength of the finish, test the depth of colour on an offcut or a small part of the flooring before starting.



Stuart

EXPERT SECRETS

To keep a little of the grain and colour of your boards, use only one coat of Black Japan with two coats of a clear floor finish.

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REVAMP THE FLOORBOARDS



1 Prepare the space

Measure the width and length of the space to calculate the amount of stain needed. Clear everything from the area you're going to work in, tape up sockets and switches and cover doors and windows with drop sheets.



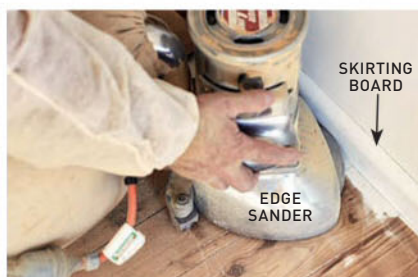
2 Smooth the surface

Check the floorboards for protruding nails and punch them 2-3mm below the surface. Remove any staples and dispose of anything else that could clog or rip the sandpaper. Fill any cracks or holes with appropriate filler.



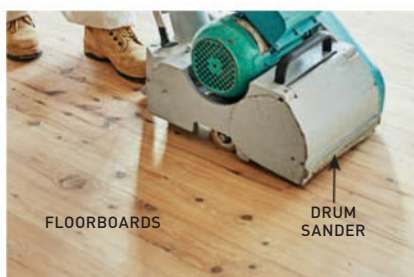
3 Do a rough sand

Use a drum sander and 40 grit belts to do a rough sand to remove any old paint and level any variations in the boards. Ease the machine down while it's in motion and lift it before stopping to avoid gouging the boards.



4 Sand the edges

Use an edge sander and a 40 grit disc to sand areas near the skirting boards, easing the machine onto the floor to avoid gouging. Use a multi-tool or scraper and sanding sponge to get into corners. Vacuum away any dust.



5 Do a second sand

Punch any nail heads that may have been turned up in the initial sanding, and fill any cracks. Give the floor a sand with both the drum sander and edge sander using 80 grit belts and a disc to give a smooth finish.



6 Finish the sanding

For a silky-smooth finish, use 120 grit sanding belts and a disc, blending the work of the edge and drum sanders to ensure an even result. Thoroughly clean up any remaining dust and remove the drop sheets and tape.



7 Apply the first coat

Tape up skirting boards and doorways. Stir the Black Japan well, then apply using an applicator or short nap roller, working the full length of 3-4 boards at a time and maintaining a wet edge. Use a small brush for awkward areas.



8 Vacuum the floor

Allow the first coat to dry for up to 12 hours. When dry, give the floor a light sand, then vacuum thoroughly to remove the remaining dust.

TIP Wrap up applicators, rollers and brushes in plastic wrap between coats.



9 Apply the final coats

If satisfied with the strength of the stain, apply two coats of a clear floor finish, using a clean applicator sock.

TIP For a darker look, apply two coats of Black Japan and one of clear, or three coats of the stain only. ➤

DIY TIP

Grab extra sanding belts and discs so you won't run out, and just return the unused ones with the hire equipment.

WHAT YOU NEED



Feast Watson Black Japan Floor Finish, \$92 for 4L, and Gloss Floorclear, about \$94 for 4L. feastwatson.com.au



Feast Watson Floor Finish Applicator Sock, \$17.



Bear 48mm Trade Painters Masking Tape, \$9, from Bunnings.



Polyfilla Timber Filler, \$13 for 330ml. poly.com.au



Diggers Mineral Turpentine, \$3 for 1L. recochem.com.au



Ryobi One+ Buffer and Polisher, \$75. ryobi.com.au

Materials

Drum sander hire	\$65
Edge sander hire	\$41
Sanding belts	\$57
Sanding discs	\$14
Timber stain	\$92
Varnish	\$94
Applicator and spare sock	\$32
Timber filler	\$13
Sanding sponge	\$8
Masking tape	\$9
Mineral turpentine	\$3
TOTAL	\$428

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DINING ROOM REDESIGN

An eight-piece timber setting gets a sophisticated update for a fraction of the cost of buying a new one

WORDS AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR

DIY blogger Melissa Darr was keen to make over her dining room. But when she looked at the cost of a new setting in the French provincial style she loves, she decided to update her existing one instead.

'The price tag was about \$2500 for an eight-seater dining setting like ours. I didn't want to pay that much, so I decided to paint the one we had.'

Melissa had the idea to paint the table legs and chair backs and legs white and leave the stained timber top and seats as they were.

She added a chalkboard, clock and ornate chandelier to complete the look.

PREP AND PAINT

Melissa gave the table legs and frame a quick sand, then primed and painted them, finishing in an afternoon.

Pleased with how the table looked, Melissa was eager to get on with the chairs. But they turned out to be an entirely different matter.

'I had to sand, undercoat and paint each chair twice, and there were lots of nooks and crannies to get into,' she says.

'I found out halfway through that a paintbrush wasn't the best thing to use on the chairs, as it left brush marks. A small roller gave a more even finish.'

Once all the chairs were painted, the setting was exactly as she'd imagined.

'I am really happy with the overall look of the dining setting and how it has completely changed the feel of the whole room,' says Melissa.

Before

DESIGN TIP

Add a colourful centrepiece to a large dining table, such as this arrangement of pink and yellow roses.



Melissa



EXPERT SECRETS

Avoid painting in the heat of the day as the paint will dry too quickly, leaving obvious brush marks.

A decorative five-light pendant complements the setting.

After

A contrasting white and timber finish transforms the style of the room.

Get more DIY from Melissa
Follow her blog thewhimsicalwife.com

DESIGN HACKS

Here's how to decorate one cabinet three ways to get style on a budget

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS PROJECTS GEMA BENEITEZ PICTURES SUE FERRIS

A table or cabinet near the front door is a very useful item of furniture, adding a decorative element and providing much-needed storage for keys, mail, mobiles and more.

But while there are homes that have a hallway, others open directly onto a living space, so there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to entry furniture.

Finding a piece to fit your space isn't hard if you look for something in the right size and customise it to suit your interior decorating style.

Flatpack furniture is ideal for this purpose, and kitchen cabinets or storage pieces are very adaptable.

This white melamine bedside table was painted and given new legs for three different designer treatments.

For the first look, the door was covered in easy-to-use vinyl wallpaper in a geometric pattern and a square metal handle added for a retro effect.

TIP Always use a primer for laminated surfaces before painting melamine. ➤



EXPERT SECRETS

Giving new flatpack furniture a makeover is much faster than revamping a vintage piece, as there's no stripping, sanding or repair work involved.



Choose a small design when going geometric so the pattern is completed or repeated enough to be visually understood



1 Paint the cabinet

Remove the door handle, then apply primer to the cabinet using a brush and small roller. Apply two coats of low sheen acrylic paint, letting it dry and sanding lightly in between coats. Paint four timber furniture legs in the same colour as the cabinet.



2 Cover the door

Measure the cabinet door and transfer the measurements to the back of a piece of wallpaper. Cut out the wallpaper using scissors or a utility knife, then apply spray adhesive on the back and attach it to the door. Smooth any air bubbles by hand.



3 Attach the legs

Mark and pre-drill the cabinet door for the new handle. Turn the cabinet upside down and mark the furniture leg locations, pre-drilling holes. Install the legs on the base, turn the cabinet right side up and attach the door handle using the supplied screws.

RETRO LOOK

DIY TIP

Remove the door to make it easier to attach the wallpaper to the front. Rehang it after the paint has dried on the cabinet.



A simple geometric pattern in blue, grey and yellow gives a retro look a modern hook.

INDUSTRIAL INFLUENCE



A hot trend in interior decorating, industrial furniture tends to come with a designer price tag.

But if you DIY, you can get the look for less using metal piping from the hardware store.

This cabinet base is made from 19mm copper pipe, \$16 for 1.5m, while the door handle is a copper and brass basin tee, \$6.

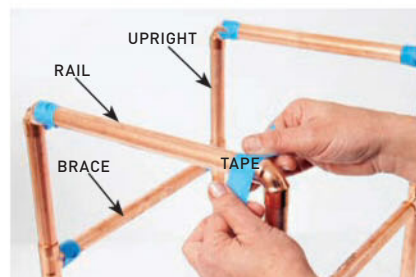
The pipes are slotted into elbow and tee joiners to make the cabinet base, with liquid sealant used at every joint. ➤

1 2 3



1 Paint the cabinet

Apply primer and then two coats of low sheen acrylic using a brush and small roller, sanding lightly in between coats. Cut 19mm copper piping to length for the base using a pipe cutter. Cut four 300mm uprights, four 200mm rails and two 250mm braces.



2 Join the pipes

Slide a tee fitting onto each upright to the midpoint, attach elbows to the ends and insert the rails to make two leg frames. Insert the braces in the tee fittings to join the leg frames. Apply liquid sealant to each pipe end as you go, taping the assembly until dry.



3 Attach the base

Attach end caps to the basin tee for the door handle. Cut dowel to fit in the basin tee and drill a pilot hole, securing the handle from inside the door with a screw. Turn the cabinet upside down and secure the base frame using saddle clips and screws.

DESIGN TIP

Shiny copper and matt black are a great variation on the usual raw timber and dull steel of the industrial look.



To build a metal cabinet base without welding, use DIY-friendly copper piping.

VINTAGE STYLE



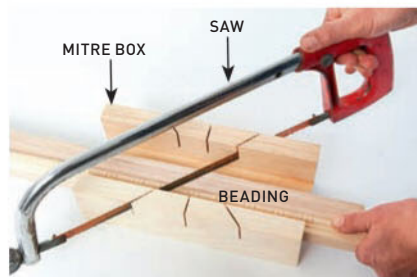
Gold details and soft tones are essential to a vintage scheme.

1 2 3



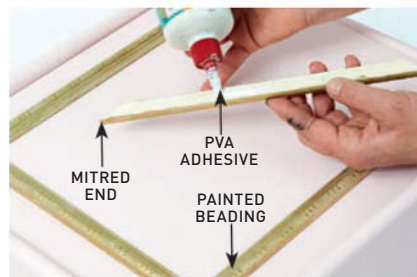
1 Paint the cabinet

Apply primer and then two coats of low sheen acrylic paint to the cabinet using a brush and small roller, letting it dry and sanding lightly in between coats. Paint four timber furniture legs in the same colour as the cabinet and use a small brush to add gold detail.



2 Prepare the beading

Measure the cabinet door to calculate the lengths of timber beading needed for a panel box. Cut the beading to length with mitred ends using a mitre box and saw. Apply primer and two coats of gold acrylic paint to the beading using a brush, leave to dry.



3 Finish the cabinet

Turn the cabinet upside down and mark the furniture leg locations, pre-drilling holes. Install the legs on the base, then lay the cabinet face up. Position the beading to mark the door, then apply PVA adhesive to the back of each length and attach to the door.

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BUDGET TIP

Vintage pieces in good nick are expensive, so copy the style on budget pieces for furniture that doesn't wobble or stick.



When it comes to vintage furniture most of us think of shapely silhouettes, soft tones and ornate embellishments.

To create a pared-back version of this classic style, timber beading in a decorative profile was used to give the illusion of a panel on the cabinet door.

Paint the beading gold and use the same colour on the coves of tapered colonial-style timber legs to mimic the look of gilt-edged furniture.

For the cabinet, keep to a soft colour in a low sheen not a gloss finish. Instead of a door handle, a push-to-open latch was installed. 🌱



Wallpaper is the ideal backdrop for vintage pieces, and modern paste-the-wall products are affordable, quick to DIY and easy to remove

SHOWCASE SHELVING

Turn a blank wall into a visual feast with built-in floor-to-ceiling shelves

WORDS FRANK GARDNER

There aren't many DIY projects that will give you as much bang for your buck as this plasterboard shelving.

It's just a frame made from 140 x 35mm timber covered with 10mm plasterboard. You can build shelving like ours, or design it to fit the space you have available.

For this project, the shelving is 3600mm wide and 2700mm high, and the 450mm deep shelves are designed to accommodate home entertainment equipment, including a central recess for a 150cm (60") TV.

This arrangement also looks great even if your ceilings are only 2400mm high. And you don't have to build

your shelves wall to wall. You can leave one or both ends exposed and finish them with plasterboard.

We used graph paper to sketch out the design, but you can just map it directly onto the wall.

First add about 125mm to the width and height of the TV, then centre this rectangle on the wall.

When happy with the dimensions of the TV recess, mark the vertical and horizontal frame locations and flick chalklines to see how it will look.

We left a 10mm gap between the frame and the floor, walls and ceiling to allow the frames to be pre-built and positioned without having to fit the shelving exactly to the room. ➤



You can build the shelves from standard pine, but termite-proof blue T2 pine is a safer and more cost-effective option

FRANK'S PICKS



Trojan 200mm Broad Taping Knife, \$7. trojantools.com.au



Nelson 12V Brushed Chrome Twist Lock Downlight, about \$7, from Bunnings.

DIY TIP

Avoid mess and damage by building the parts in your garage or backyard, then assembling them indoors when ready.

FRAME IT

These shelves are assembled using simple box frames. Made from rails and crosspieces, the butt joints are secured with nails.

Set up a stop on a mitresaw to cut the crosspieces, then cut the rails to make the frames using a mitresaw or circular saw.

Build a full-length base and top, four stud frames, and the centre and side shelves.

The crosspieces are used in the frames as braces and noggins.

They are also used to make the stud boxes at each shelf location, to provide backing for the plasterboard on both sides.

Materials

T2 pine	\$533
Plasterboard	\$94
Corner bead	\$39
Galvanised nails	\$20
Timber screws	\$14
Plasterboard screws	\$15
Plasterboard nails	\$12
Top coat	\$35
Base Coat 45	\$86
48mm paper tape	\$8
TOTAL	\$856

TOOLS
CIRCULAR SAW,
MITRESAW, DRILL

**4
DAYS**

**\$856
COST**



The shelves offer space to house vital large items like a TV, as well as ornamental pieces.

BUILD THE SHELVES



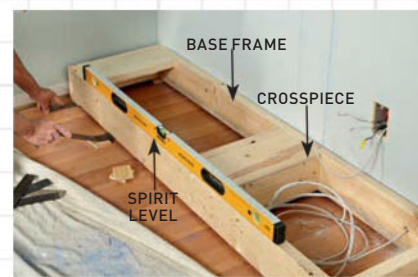
1 Set out the framing

Transfer the frame layout to the wall, snapping chalklines for the vertical and horizontal frames. Check the lines are level and plumb with a 10mm gap all around the frame to make it possible to fit it in the space.



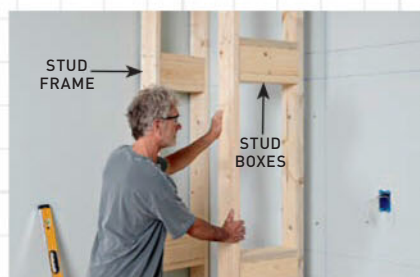
2 Build the frames

Make the top, base, stud and shelf frames, securing with nails. On the top and base frames, mark the stud frame locations on the rails, then attach the top and base crosspieces. Mark the shelf locations on the stud sides.



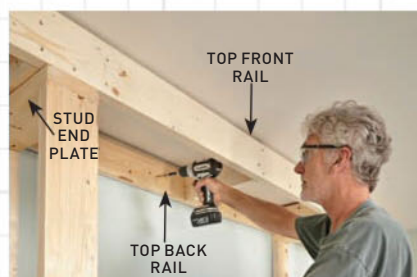
3 Level the base frame

Position the base frame on 10mm scraps of plywood at each corner and under each crosspiece. Use a spirit level to level the base frame from side to side and from front to back, then secure to the wall using screws.



4 Set the stud frames

Position the outer stud frames, securing to the base frame with screws. Check for plumb, then drill two clearance holes through the back studs, securing to the wall with toggle bolts or screws. Repeat with the remaining stud frames.



5 Secure the top frame

Position the top frame on the stud frames, checking the centre and side shelves fit. Make any adjustments, then secure the stud end plates to the top frame with screws. Secure the back rail of the top frame to the wall.



6 Add the shelves

Cut plywood to use as spacers for installing the shelves. Starting with the centre shelves, rest each one on the spacers and secure the shelf ends to the stud boxes with screws, lining them up precisely. Secure the side shelves.



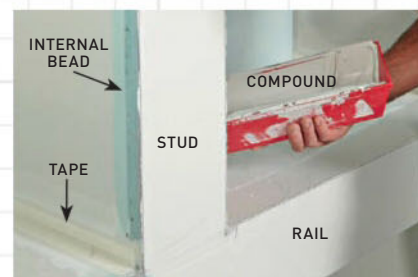
7 Attach the plasterboard

Cut the plasterboard to fit and attach with screws, fitting it tightly at the wall if caulking the back edges. Shave any overhanging edges, securing metal or plastic corner bead with nails or staples. Cover the bead with mesh tape.



8 Prepare the corners

Spread a layer of joint compound on both sides of all internal corners. Fold the tape in half and press in using your fingers, embedding in the compound with a taping knife. Spread a thin layer of compound over the tape and bead.



9 Plaster the joints

Spread a thick layer of joint compound on the studs and front rails, smoothing with a 200mm taping knife, then cover all interior bead and taped joints. Apply a second coat, then a finishing coat, sanding lightly in between. ➤

before & after in 48 hours



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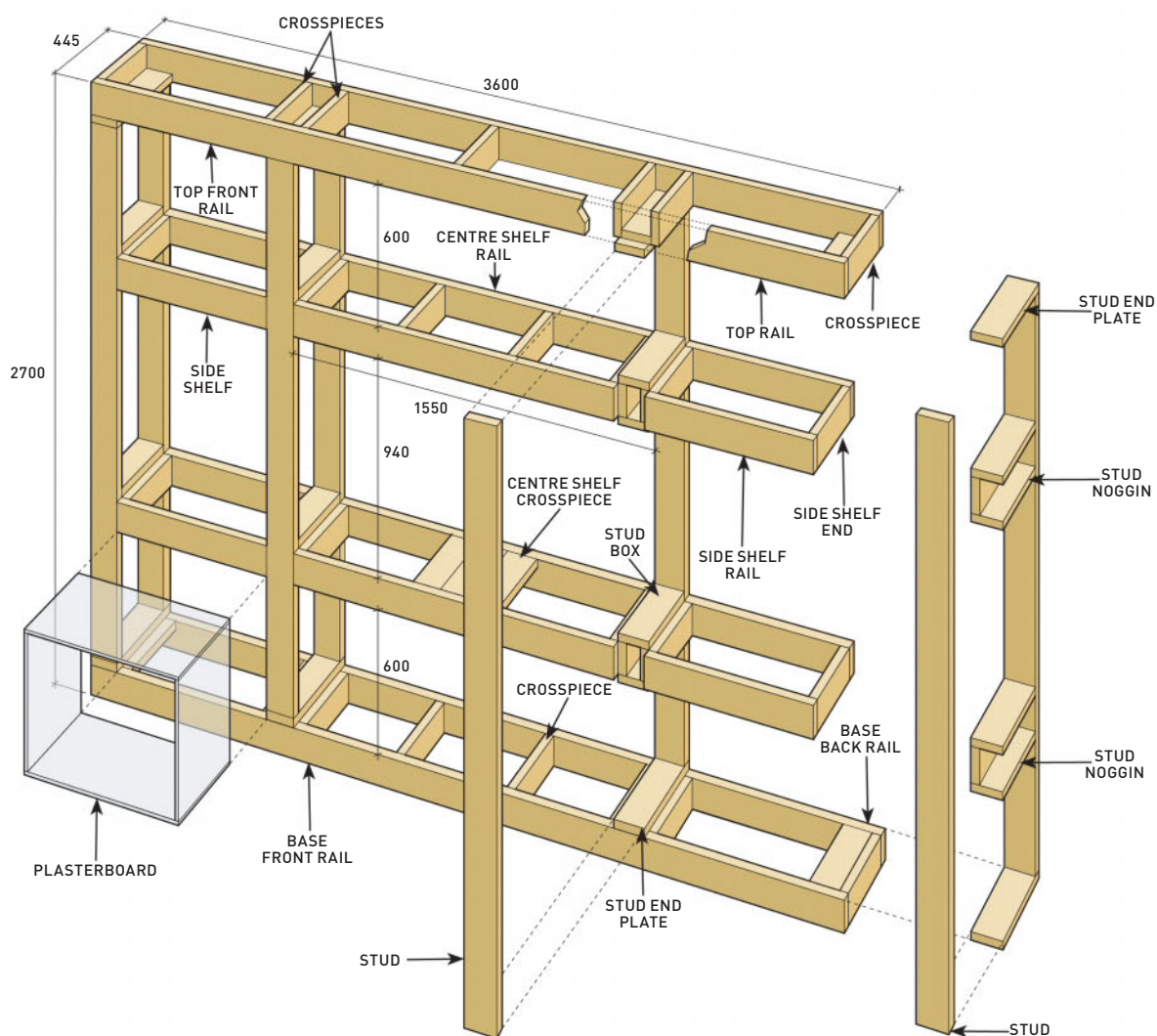
*easygroove 300 wall panelling featured

For more ideas visit easycraft.com.au

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WALL SHELVING

measurements in mm



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO
T2 PINE		
Studs	2350 x 140 x 35	8
Stud end plates	445 x 140 x 35	8
Stud noggins	375 x 140 x 35	12
Stud boxes	375 x 140 x 35	16
Top/base rails	3600 x 140 x 35	4
Top/base crosspieces	375 x 140 x 35	23
Side shelf rails	745 x 140 x 35	8
Side shelf ends	375 x 140 x 35	8
Centre shelf rails	1550 x 140 x 35	4
Centre shelf crosspieces	375 x 140 x 35	9

FASTENERS

TYPE	USE
Timber screws, 75mm x 10g	Frames
Timber screws, 50mm x 8g	Shelves
Galvanised nails, 75 x 3.75mm	Frame assembly
Plasterboard screws, 30mm x 8g	Plasterboard
Plasterboard nails, 30 x 2.0mm	Corner bead

You'll need an electrician to install recessed lighting.



FINISHING TOUCHES

Once the frame is fully clad in plasterboard, three coats of compound are applied to the taped corners and corner bead.

To avoid a lot of tricky taping, caulk the back corners. Apply a neat bead of caulk along the joints and smooth with a finger.

Let the compound dry, then sand with 120 grit paper, using a fine sponge with an angled edge to sand the interior corners.

Vacuum the dust, fill any imperfections and sand the filler, then prime and paint.

Finally, get the electrician back to finish any wiring for the TV and lighting. ●

DESIGN TIP

Get the most from your shelves by using the downlights to highlight your favourite display pieces.

Install recessed lighting

When the framing is complete, you'll need a sparkie to run the cabling for any recessed lighting, switches, powerpoints and TV connections.

This must be done before the framing is covered with plasterboard to make it easy for the tradie.



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ACCESSORISE THE KITCHEN

Retrofit your kitchen with user-friendly inclusions for a functional space designed for modern living

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

As the busiest room in the house, an unorganised and dated kitchen can be a nightmare to use everyday.

Installing a new kitchen can take up to several weeks, which could make mealtimes a challenge.

But updating a clunky kitchen is as simple as adding easy-to-install extras in as little as an hour.

Replace handles

Cabinet and drawer handles are a key element in a kitchen, contributing to the overall look and feel of the space.

Trading in your old handles can easily freshen up a kitchen and also determine the style of the room. It's a small fix but a very affordable way to update on a tight budget.



ABOVE Kaboodle 600mm Side Mount 2 x 27L Pullout Bin, \$147.
RIGHT Kaboodle Mushroom Knob Matt Black Handle, \$3.80.
BELOW Kaboodle 96mm Round Bar Handle, \$6.70.

Hide the bins

Exposed rubbish is both a health risk and an eyesore, and bins can crowd much-needed bench or floorspace. Adding bins in base cabinets is a compact solution.

Make life easy by organising and categorising your rubbish into two bins concealed in a cupboard, with one for general waste and the other for recyclables.



BELOW Kaboodle 600mm Pullout Basket Soft Close, \$84.

DESIGN TIP

Add extra storage space for bulky appliances and cookbooks with open shelving positioned above the benchtops.



Install wireware

Maximise the functionality and efficiency of a kitchen by including wireware storage solutions.

Easy to manoeuvre, slide-out baskets allow access in the hard-to-reach corners of cabinets.

They can be installed quickly in the pantry, as well as in base and blind corner cabinets, to store everything from crockery and cans to condiments.



Switching handles each year is a cheap and easy way to keep your kitchen on trend

Remove hazards and keep the floor clear by concealing the bins.

Find it at Bunnings

DIY WALL TILING

Lay tiles to create a splashback in between benchtops and cabinets

A new kitchen will find its way onto the reno wishlist of every homeowner at some point, as it is the heart of the home.

Installing a new kitchen is a big project, but there are affordable, small jobs that can easily be completed in a day or weekend, to personalise it.

The splashback in this new kitchen was tiled DIY before the stove was installed. To allow for the gap between benchtops, a piece of timber was temporarily secured to the wall to support the first row of tiles.

TIP Before tiling a wall, make sure the surface is clean and dry, then lay drop sheets over the benchtops and floor.

After

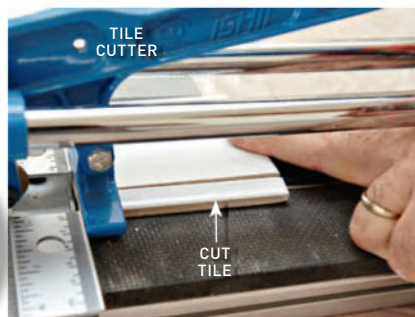
The bare wall above the benchtops was tiled then the stove installed.

Before



1 Lay the first row

Use an 8mm notch trowel to apply tile mastic to the wall. Lay the first tile about 1mm above the benchtop but flush with the end. Keep laying tiles using yellow spacers for uniform gaps. Every half a dozen tiles, check for level.



2 Cut tiles to fit

To cut a tile to fit into the corner, lay it face down to mark the width needed, including gaps either side. Put in a tile cutter, check it's square and run the blade along the tile, applying pressure. Lay with the cut edge in the corner.



3 Lay the tiles

Apply more mastic and lay tiles in rows, using spacers and checking they are straight and level. When the mastic has set, after about 12 hours, remove the spacers. Clean between the tiles with a paint scraper to remove excess mastic.



4 Apply the grout

Mix water and grout powder in a bucket to the consistency of toothpaste. Use a rubber trowel to apply the grout to the tiles at a 45° angle so it fills the gaps, removing excess grout as you go. Tape the benchtop at the base of the tiles.



5 Clean the tiles

Let the grout dry for 30 minutes, then dip a sponge into a bucket of clean water and wring it out thoroughly. Wipe the tiles at a 45° angle, regularly rinsing the sponge. Run a finger over the grout, checking it's evenly applied.



6 Seal the gaps

Remove the tape and timber, scraping any mastic off the tiles. Apply silicone at a 45° angle in the gaps between the tiles, walls and benchtop, and where the timber was. Spray water and run a stick along the silicone to remove excess.

COMPACT DESIGNS

Forget the rules and apply big principles to a small space to enjoy a garden packed with charm

WORDS SITA SIMONS

PICTURES AUSTRAL

Landscaper Jarret Clynick believes the one thing to remember when designing a new space is that there really are no hard and fast rules.

This principle is evident in the landscaping of the small and stark backyard of this townhouse.

The aim was to create the feel of an expansive garden, and not to be restricted by the yard's size when deciding how it would look.

'Taking into account the climate, aspect and soil type, you can make any style work with the right selection of plants and hard elements,' he says.

'There's no rule that says you can't have stone edging or zoned areas even in a limited space like this one. It's just about scale and proportion.' ➤



Italian lavender has a distinctive winged tip.



Zone areas with borders of plants and flowers.



Use a sculptural feature to break up a bare boundary wall.

Soften the boundaries

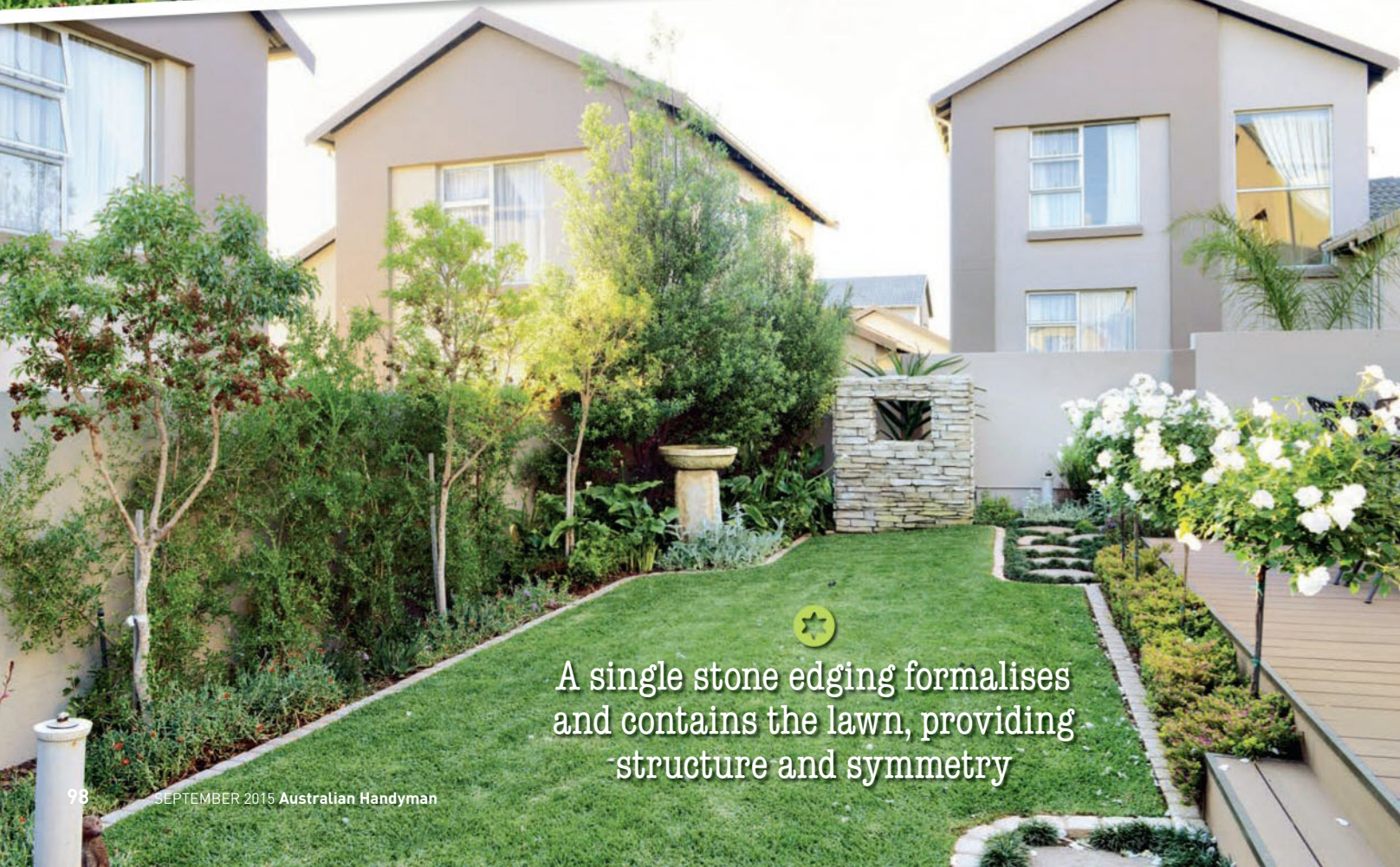
Boundary walls and fences, as well as the sides of neighbouring houses, can make a small space feel cramped and hemmed in, especially when they are stark and bare.

Choose plants with small leaves to act as screens and, if the budget allows, buy mature plants and trees.

'You can buy advanced trees, as they are called, like ash trees, from many growers across Australia, and buying bigger really works to establish the garden very quickly,' says Jarret.

Sculptural stone features are a nod to grand formal gardens, and also work to break up boundary lines.

'Stacked stone cladding is a great and inexpensive way to introduce this material into the garden, and it is also light and easy for DIYers to work with,' he says.



A single stone edging formalises and contains the lawn, providing structure and symmetry



OUTDOOR

Find a sunny spot to grow all types of roses.



Growing roses

All roses, including climbing varieties, need lots of direct sunlight year-round, so pick the right spot. If they don't get enough sun, they'll be spindly and won't flower well.

Ensure the soil is free draining and well fertilised, and don't be too heavy-handed when cutting back so there's plenty of green coverage over the trellis. ➤

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WA Bunbury, Cannington, Wanneroo. **ACT** Mitchell.

Photographs may show overseas models or illustrate non-standard equipment. *1.2 tonne payload for Single Cab 2WD Genio with standard light truck tyres at 60psi. Max GVM 2980 kgs for all models. *Pricing valid until 30th September 2015 or while stocks last. All prices are GST inclusive. Please check your operators manual prior to operation. See your dealer for details. DMMS3714.

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Rise.

For best growth, avoid buying pots that are too big for the plants.



Using potted plants

On hard surfaces, pots rule. Think about the space you have and stick to two or three for visual coherence, especially in a small area. The trickiest part can be choosing the right size.

‘Buy too big and the risk is the rootball will become unstable in the soil, with too much space to expand in the pot,’ says Jarret.

‘Save your plant, and potting mix, by filling the pot two-thirds full with polystyrene balls and a layer of porous cloth, then top up with soil. This allows the plant to grow into the pot.’



Succulents work particularly well in groups and are ideal for small arrangements



Pot plants are a must for a backyard deck or terrace.

Adding climbers

It may not always be appropriate to establish climbers on common walls, but this is no reason to avoid them.

A simple trellis can be built in an upright position rather than against a wall by using just two treated pine posts and a lattice panel.

'A small garden needs features like any garden, but be careful they are not overwhelming,' says Jarret.

'Planting arrangements in layers of varying heights for visual impact is simple and effective.' 🌱



Seaside daisy



Jasmine



Peace lily

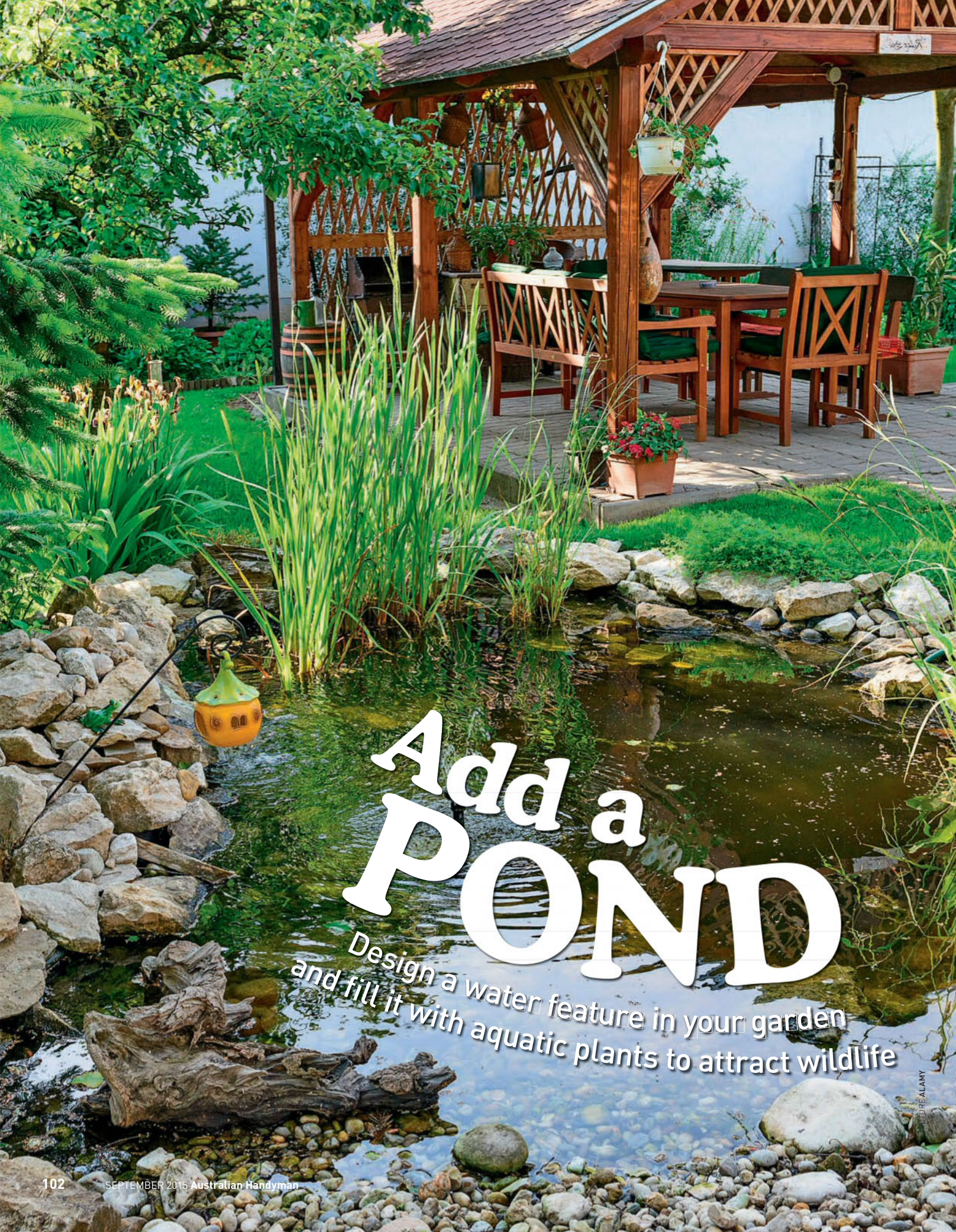


STEAL THIS STYLE

Grow climbers over freestanding trellises and use potted plants to create depth in a small garden.

Jarret Clynick,
JC Landscapes

Add texture and colour with ornamental carex grasses.

A lush garden scene featuring a pond with a small waterfall. The pond is bordered by large, light-colored rocks and filled with green aquatic plants. A small, yellow, lantern-like light hangs over the water. In the background, a wooden gazebo with a lattice roof and sides is visible, containing a wooden table and chairs. The gazebo is surrounded by more greenery, including a large evergreen tree on the left. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and well-maintained.

Add a POND

Design a water feature in your garden
and fill it with aquatic plants to attract wildlife

DESIGN TIP

Vary the pond edging using logs and rocks to give a natural effect and provide hiding places for frogs and other wildlife.

A garden pond provides a safe haven for wildlife, and the bigger it is, the easier it is to maintain the ecological balance.

Check with the council before installing a pond as, in many areas, a maximum depth of just 300mm is allowed before fencing is required.

Include a gentle slope to the water using sand, gravel or pebbles, plus an underwater shelf around the edge for plants and to help wildlife get out. ➤



Dense poolside plantings offer shelter for wildlife to safely approach the water

SELECT THE SITE

There are several factors to consider when choosing a location for a pond.

➤ **AVOID** shady areas, choosing a site that receives sun for most of the day.

➤ **PICK** a spot that is sheltered from cold winds so the water temperature is less likely to fluctuate.

➤ **POSITION** the pond in the open, away from overhanging trees or big shrubs. Fallen foliage can pollute the water, and the leaves of certain evergreens such as yew and laurel are toxic.

➤ **MEASURE** the area, as the pond should be a minimum of 2 x 2.5m.

➤ **CHECK** for pipes and underground utilities before excavating by using Dial Before You Dig. Call 1100, or go online to make an enquiry or to download the free iPhone app (1100.com.au).



Make your fish famous!
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INSTALL THE POND

Liners are available in two forms, flexible or rigid.

Flexible liner

Available in varying widths, these are easy to install and come in a range of materials from PVC to rubber.

- ① **MARK** the pond outline with rope or a garden hose, then dig out the shelves, which should be about 200mm wide and 250mm deep, sloping inwards.
- ② **DIG** out the rest of the pond, making sure the top is even and level. Position an underlay, such as old carpet or a 50mm layer of sand, in the base to protect the liner from sharp objects.
- ③ **DRAPE** the pond liner over the top and anchor it with bricks or rocks. Fill with water and leave overnight. Trim off the excess liner and finish by edging with stones or rocks.



Aquapro 0.5mm x 4m
PVC Pond Liner, \$40.
aquatecequipment.com



Aquapro 185L
Argyle Preformed
Poly Pond, \$165.

Preformed shell

These are available in different shapes, sizes and depths, and some include a shelf for water plants. They're easy to install and very durable.

- ① **POSITION** the shell where you want to locate the pond, then mark the outline with a garden hose or rope. Excavate the hole 50mm wider and deeper than the pond dimensions.
- ② **LINE** the hole with about 50mm of damp sand. Using a spirit level, check the layer of sand covering the base is level, then place the shell in the hole.
- ③ **FILL** the pond with water and, at the same time, fill in the gaps between the pond and the hole with sand and topsoil, ensuring the pond stays level. Allow to settle for a week before placing rocks around the edge.



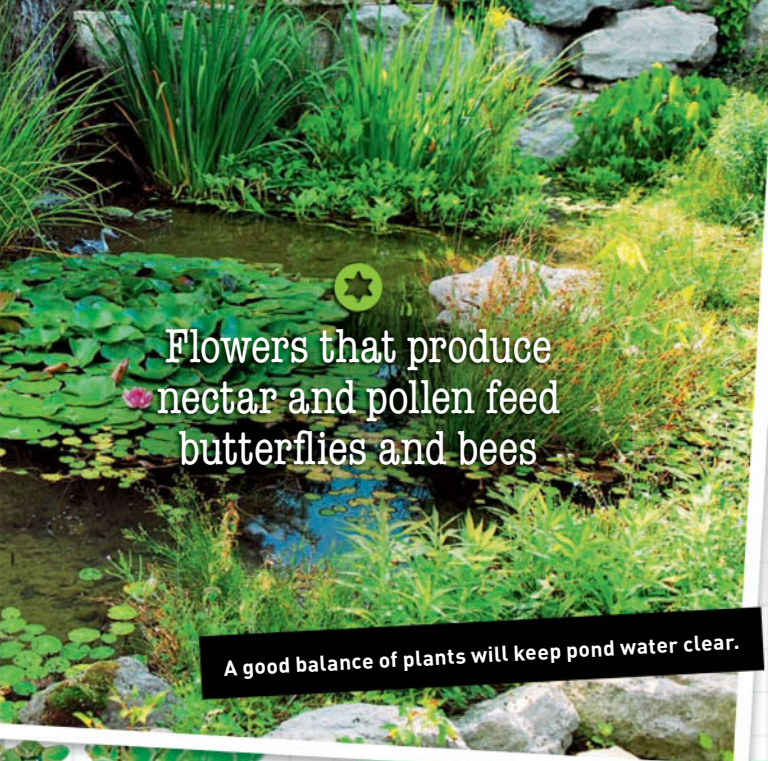
Lotus

Japanese sweet flag



Native bladderwort





Flowers that produce nectar and pollen feed butterflies and bees

A good balance of plants will keep pond water clear.



Fairy moss

Elephant's ears

ADD PLANTS

Many plants contribute to pond health, reducing erosion and stabilising water temperature.

Plants also provide breeding sites, vital shelter and feeding grounds for aquatic animals.

To grow pond plants, use plastic baskets and a specially formulated aquatic potting mix, positioning them in deep water and on the underwater shelf.

☀ **IN DEEP WATER** Grow lotus flowers or waterlilies. These need a depth of 450-600mm.

☀ **ON THE SHELF** Add plants that need a depth of 200-400mm, such as water snowflakes or poppies and ribbon grass.

☀ **AT THE EDGE** Plant bog varieties like Japanese sweet flag, water buttons and elephant's ears.

☀ **ON THE SURFACE** Use floating plants like native bladderwort and fairy moss to stop a build-up of algae and blanket weed. 🍂



PICTURES: ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

ANSWERS FOR YOUR WATERGARDEN MADE EASY

DISCOVER | CREATE | ENJOY

Something to ponder.

There's no denying that the soothing sight and sound of a water feature can create a beautiful backdrop to your outdoor entertaining area.

We all would love a water feature that is a delight to look at and a breeze to maintain, well with a little help from us you can.



Images © Adam Woodhams
www.theyardace.com



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POT UP A POND

A pond is a wonderful feature in any landscape, but it's not always possible to have one in small outdoor spaces.

The solution is to turn a pot into a pond. With just waterproofing paint and epoxy putty, you can convert almost any container into a water feature. All you need is a pot that matches the style of your landscape.

Clean the inside thoroughly, following the surface preparation instructions for the waterproofing paint, then fill any drainage holes with the putty and seal the interior.

Fill the pot with clean water, leave for two days to remove all surface impurities, then empty and refill.

To add waterlilies, check the depth required for the variety and position potted plants in the base of the pot or elevated on bricks.



1 2 3



1 Clean the pot

Scrub the pot using a suitable outdoor cleaner and a stiff-bristled brush or broom. Rinse thoroughly, then leave to dry completely.

TIP We used 30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner to wash the pot interior.



2 Fill the holes

Seal the drainage holes with epoxy putty by kneading a small piece until blended to a consistent colour. Push the putty firmly into the drainage holes, leaving an overlap on the inside of the pot. Allow it to cure.



3 Seal the interior

Apply waterproofing paint to the interior with a roller, allowing it to cure in between coats. Position the pot in its final location, then use a spirit level to check for level from side to side and back to front.

The BEST CARE

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CHOOSE A MOWER

Get the lawn into great shape with a grass cutter suited to your needs

WORDS ADAM WOODHAM

Spring always arrives in a big green rush and before you know it, it's time to whip the lawn into shape.

If your trusty old mower has spent the winter in the shed, you may have a few problems starting it up again.

No doubt you'll spend half an hour or more wrestling with it until it splutters into life, before it dies again soon after. Sound familiar? Then maybe it's time for a new model.

Your local hardware store will have an aisle of choices, so here's our guide to making mower selection simple.



Pick a mower that allows you to adjust the height of the cut.

SELECTION TIPS

1 Size matters

The surface area of your grass can determine which fuel source you choose, and the mower's cutting or deck width.

Lawns of more than 300sqm in size need a longer run time and a wider cut, so think about a petrol model. More than 800sqm of lawn will require a ride-on mower.

2 Easy access

How wide are your gates? Will you need to lift and carry the mower about?

Consider the weight and bulk of the machine if you have to lift it any distance to access your lawn.

3 Storage space

Make sure your new mower will actually fit in the shed or the back of the garage. Models with handles that easily fold down can be real space savers.

4 Tough terrain

If you have a lot of uphill mowing to do, then take a look at self-propelled models. Available in two- or four-wheel drive, these are a great option.

And, if you have lots of bumps in your lawn, select a mower with a larger range of cutting height adjustments to give you clearance and avoid scalped spots.

5 Fine finish

Mow and mulch? Cut and catch? To get the finish you want all year round, use a mower that can be switched from catch to mulch as the need demands.

Mulching models multi-cut the grass clippings and blow them back into the lawn thatch, giving your lawn a constant supply of organic nutrients. ➤

GET READY FOR SPRING

WITH THE NEW OZITO
18V POWER X CHANGE
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POWER X CHANGE



THE POWER TO CHOOSE



CHOOSE A TOOL



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*Chargers and batteries come with a 3 year replacement warranty.

SELECT THE POWER SOURCE

Battery-powered and corded electric mowers are ideal for small spaces, as they are quieter and less polluting, while the old-fashioned push mower is the most environmentally friendly.

Petrol power is still the best option for large surface areas of lawn.

Here is a selection of some of the best mowers currently on the market.

PETROL



The Ryobi Four-stroke 190cc Mower, \$469, has a powerful Subaru engine, generous 460mm cutting width, with plenty of torque to tackle dense grass (ryobi.com.au).



A modern masterpiece, the Victa Limited Edition Classic Mower, \$399, uses a quiet and efficient four-stroke engine and clever EasyStart technology (victa.com.au).



A two-stroke engine requires a fuel-oil mix, while the quieter and more powerful four-stroke engine uses straight petrol



For a large lawn, check out the McCulloch Mowcart 66 190cc Ride-on Mower, \$1499. This model has a wide 66cm cut and an ergonomic design (mcculloch.com/au). >

MANUAL



With fully adjustable height and a 40cm cutting width, the Flymo H40 Push Mower, \$129, may be old-fashioned, but it is ideal for small lawns (flymo.com.au).

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SET THE CURRENT
TIME

02

STOP ALL WATERING
FUNCTIONS

01

BEGIN AUTO
WATERING - DISPLAYS
NEXT START TIME

04

SET THE WATERING
CYCLE START TIME

05

SET THE
WATERING CYCLE
DURATION

06

SET HOW OFTEN
THE WATERING
CYCLE WILL RUN

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AND ALLOW THE
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BATTERY



The Victa V-Force+ Mower Kit with 40V Lithium-Ion Battery, \$699, is ideal for serious mowing as it has the capacity to cut a huge 360sqm lawn (victa.com.au).



This Ozito Cordless 18V Lithium-Ion Lawn Mower Kit, \$379, is great for small to medium lawns and comes with two batteries and quick chargers (ozito.com.au).



ELECTRIC



Cleaner and greener, battery-powered mowers are great for suburban spaces, but only the more advanced models have the run time to tackle large lawn areas



The Ryobi 36V Mower Kit, \$499, comes with a 4.0Ah Lithium-Ion Battery, offering impressive run time and 40cm cutting width to handle big lawns (ryobi.com.au).



For clean, green power, the Ozito EcoMow ELM-1400, \$169, is the electric model to go for. A quiet motor and a large 35L catcher makes it great for small yards.



MAINTAIN A MOWER

A good-quality mower lasts years, but a bit of TLC at least twice a year will keep it running smoother for longer.

➤ **SPARK PLUG** Remove the insulated lead and replace if cracked or not well sealed. Check the spark plug is free from build-up, replacing it annually.

➤ **BLADES** To replace dull or nicked blades, remove them and take to the hardware store to match up correctly.

➤ **AIR FILTER** Many can be cleaned but replacement is a better option, especially if you mow in dusty conditions.

➤ **OIL AND FUEL** Catch the waste oil in a container, remove the filler plug and roll over the mower with it pointing down.

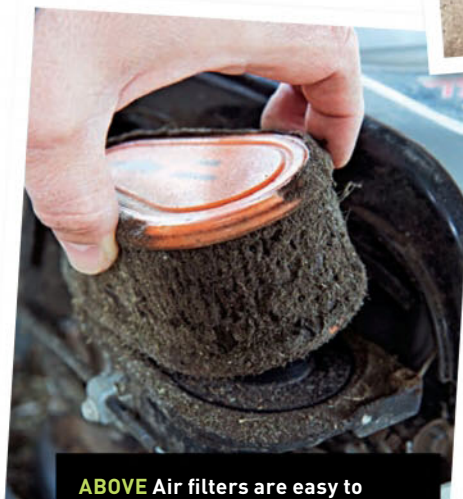
Drain the sump completely, then stand the mower upright and fill with the correct oil.



Before

After

Specialist products get the mower sparkling without elbow grease.



ABOVE Air filters are easy to remove, inspect and replace.

BELOW Check oil levels regularly in four-stroke lawnmowers and top up as required.

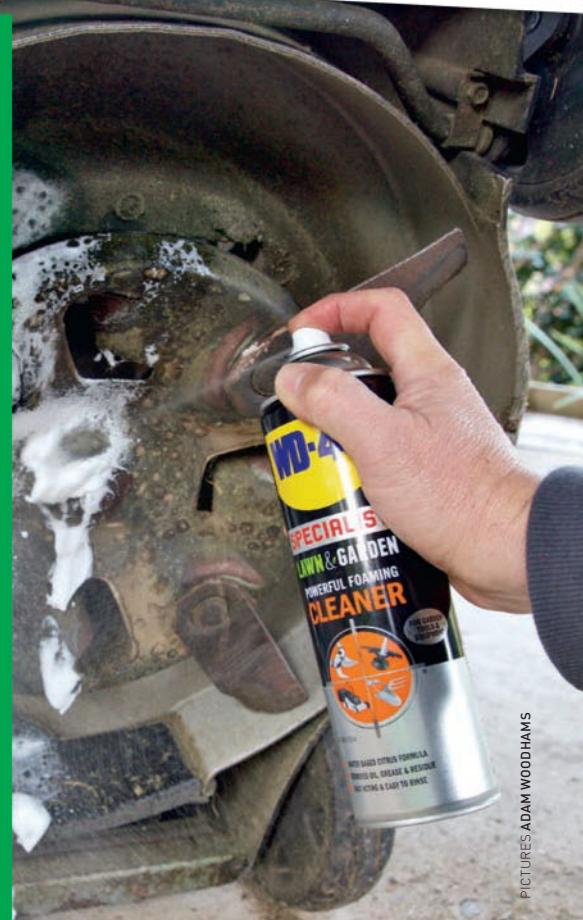


Quick clean-up

A mower has many moving parts, so it needs to be kept clean and well lubricated. And the WD40 Specialist Lawn & Garden range, from \$5 to \$9, has everything you need for the job (wd40.com.au).

Blast grime and lawn clippings from under the deck and on top using the foaming cleaner.

Apply silicone spray to repel wet grass and keep the top clean, then lubricate the wheels and levers so they run smoothly. ⚡



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DIY TIP

Scrub surfaces with sugar soap and sand lightly before applying a coat of new paint for a perfect finish.

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- 3 LED Bayonet Bulb Kit, \$179.95.
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- 6 LED Screw Bulb Kit, \$179.95.



Drive home screws with a Ryobi 18V Brushless Drill Driver Kit, \$269.



Refresh and protect walls with the new range of Dulux Wash & Wear Paints.

- 1 Plus Kitchen & Bathroom, \$85.90 for 4L.
- 2 Plus Anti-Bacterial, \$79.90 for 4L.
- 3 Plus Super Hide, \$89.90 for 4L.
- 4 Matt, \$71.90 for 4L.
- 5 Low Sheen, \$71.90 for 4L.



Get organised with the Tactix Storage Clipboard with Power Bank, \$69, to charge devices on the go.



Step up your safety and turn on your tunes while working using the Tactix Earmuffs with Bluetooth, \$69.



Add storage space to the shower with the CFlex 420 x 360 x 90mm Shower Wall Recess, \$84.90.



Sweep outdoor surfaces clean in minutes with the Karcher Push Sweeper S500, \$169.

GARDEN CARE

Create potted displays with a recyclable self-watering Neo Plastic Pot, from \$19.98.

Sow seeds in lightweight plastic pots from the Villa range, from \$2.95 each.

Get junior green thumbs started with Mr Fothergill's Little Gardeners Kits, \$5.98 each.

Create a crop in cramped spaces with Windowsill Greenhouse Kits, \$8.98 each.

Improve outdoor areas with a Pour In Place Rubber Surfacing Kit, \$69.90 for 1.5sqm.

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- 5 Nature's Way Vegie & Herb Natrasoap, \$13.48 for 750ml.

Grow fresh food using Scotts Pure Organic Premium Potting & Planting Mix, \$13 for 25L.

Green up grass this spring with Hortico Lawn Fertiliser All Lawns, \$9.98 for 2.5kg.

Give plants the nutrients they need using the PowerFeed Plant Food for the variety.

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- 3 Organic, \$19.93 for 2L.
- 4 For Flowers & Fruit, \$19.93 for 2L.
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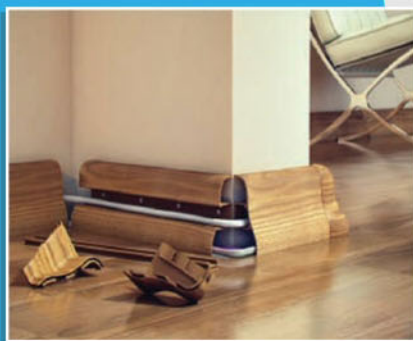
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Do now

- **PLANT** flowers bees like and attract pollinators to your yard, page 126.
- **DESIGN** a lush and leafy landscape in a shady garden, page 130.
- **CREATE** new plants for free with easy propagation tips, page 137.

This month

Early spring is prime time to plant and tidy up in the garden for the warm months ahead

Flowers to sow

Get these in the ground now for blooms in just 6-10 weeks.

- CALIFORNIAN POPPY
- NASTURTIUM
- PORTULACA
- ALYSSUM
- PHLOX

phlox

Vegies to grow

Start planting to harvest vegies and greens from late spring.

- BEETROOT
- POTATO
- RADISH
- SILVERBEET
- TOMATO

Tomato

WHAT'S IN COLOUR

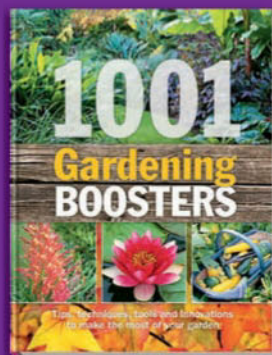
With their scented flowers and long vase life, it's easy to see why carnations are a florist's favourite. But this hardy perennial is also easy to grow at home.

To brighten outdoor areas or for cut flowers during the warm months, add Carnation Oscar to beds or pots. It comes in eight colours and blooms from early spring to late summer.

This compact variety features short stems covered in large double flowers and has a mounded habit, growing to 25cm high and 30cm wide.

Give it a position in full sun or part shade in fertile, well-drained, slightly alkaline soil with a pH of 6.75. Deadhead for more blooms and don't overwater or mulch close to the base.

BOOK CLUB



Transform your garden with this must-have guide. Learn the secrets to long-lasting flowers, productive fruit trees, bumper veggie crops and a perfect lawn.

From planting techniques to landscape design, this beautifully illustrated book has the expert know-how to help you reinvigorate any part of the yard, even problem areas.

To order a copy of *1001 Gardening Boosters* (\$50 + \$10 p&h, Reader's Digest), call 1300 300 030 on Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

To-do list

There is a lot of work to be done in the early spring garden.

- ✓ **MULCH** around fruit trees.
- ✓ **TRIM** herbs that look leggy.
- ✓ **SOW** hanging baskets with summer annuals.
- ✓ **REPOT** existing aquatic plants.
- ✓ **PLANT** summer bulbs in cool and warm climate zones.
- ✓ **WATER** and feed spring bulb foliage until it dies back.
- ✓ **FIX** bare patches in lawns. ➤

Carnation Oscar

HOW TO

GROW SPROUTS

For homegrown health food, sprout seeds DIY. Harvest time is 3-10 days, but follow the packet directions. They're at their best at 10-100mm before they develop green leaves. Rinse well to remove any hard unsprouted seeds and coatings, drain, air-dry, then refrigerate in an airtight container for up to a week.

1 2

**1 Soak the seeds**

Pour a thin layer of seeds into a clean glass jar and cover with warm water. Secure a piece of cheesecloth over the mouth of the jar with an elastic band, then leave the seeds to soak for 6-12 hours, depending on the variety.

**2 Rinse the seeds**

Drain the jar through the cloth, then half-fill with warm water. Replace the cloth, swill seeds gently and drain. Put the jar on its side in a warm, light spot out of direct sun. When shoots appear, rinse, then drain morning and night.



Feed now

Give these plants fertiliser in warm climate zones.

- CUSTARD APPLES
- INDOOR PLANTS
- MULBERRIES
- PAWPAWS
- ROSES



Custard apple

Prune now

Tidy up winter frost and storm damage, and shape these plants.

- MANDEVILLAS
- ALLAMANDAS
- POINSETTIAS
- OLEANDERS
- HIBISCUS



Mandevilla

BRUSH UP

When it comes to getting the last autumn leaves off paths and into the compost, or bagged, nothing beats a broom. They're budget friendly and, unlike a leaf blower, don't use any power.

To get the job done fast, choose an outdoor broom with strong bristles for heavy debris and a scraper on the head. ☑

Décor Speed Outdoor
385mm Broom, \$20.
decor.com.au



Harvest now

Bring in crops that were planted in late autumn and winter.

- BROAD BEANS
- LETTUCES
- ONIONS
- LEEKS
- PEAS



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Honey bees were imported to Australia from Europe in the early 1800s.

The buzz on **BEEES**

Create the best habitat for these beneficial insects
by planting their favourite blooms in your garden

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

PICTURE ALAMY

One of the first things that comes to mind when you think of honey bees has to be the sweet, syrupy spread you put on your toast.

But there's much more to these bees than just making honey. They are actually crucial to our survival because they pollinate our crops.

About 65% of our agricultural production depends on pollination by these insects. This includes vegetables, almonds and fruit such as apples, pears and cherries. ➤

Go native

Plant bee-friendly natives in the garden. Good choices include eucalyptus, backhousia, baeckea, banksia, boronia, brachyscome, eriostemon, hakea, everlasting daisy, westringia, native hibiscus, hardenbergia, leptospermum, macadamia, melaleuca, correa and grevillea.

Rosa rugosa

Herb appeal

Bees love the flowers of herbs such as basil, chives, coriander, mint, parsley, thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano and marjoram. Apple blossom, buddleia, bedding begonias, citrus flowers, lavender, salvia, species roses, zinnia, and plants in the daisy family (*Asteraceae*) also appeal.



It's estimated that one in three mouthfuls of food we eat comes to us with the aid of pollination by honey bees, according to the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council

Everlasting daisy

TOP 10 PLANTS BEES LOVE

Calendula



3 Rosmarinus officinalis
Covered with masses of blue flowers, this herb thrives in a hot, dry, sunny position in well-drained soil. It likes alkaline soil, so add dolomite before planting.

It can be trimmed as a hedge and prostrate cultivars can be grown as groundcovers or used in hanging baskets.

Rosemary



2 Calendula officinalis

This edible flower is also known as pot marigold and the yellowish-orange petals can be used in salads or as a garnish.

It likes moist, well-drained soil, full sun and cooler temperatures, and will reseed to provide years of beauty and nectar in the garden.

Foxglove



6 Digitalis purpurea
Spikes of flowers add vertical interest to the late-spring or early-summer garden. This plant is a great option for gardeners with shady spaces and moist, organic soils. While it is a biennial, foxglove reseeds and tends to remain in the garden for years.

Catmint

1 Nepeta x faassenii
Don't let the common name, catmint, sway you from planting this favourite. You and the bees will be rewarded with blue flowers on silvery foliage all season. Look out for the low-growing 'Walker's Low' or the tall 'Six Hills Giant'. One haircut midseason will keep this plant looking its best.

5 Callistemon spp.
The magnificent spring or summer flowers of these native shrubs or small trees are irresistible to bees.

Most are hardy and will tolerate dry conditions. Prune bottlebrush lightly after flowering and feed with a fertiliser low in phosphorus.

Bottlebrush



8 Eucalyptus spp.
Much of Australia's honey is produced from eucalyptus flowers. Choose one that suits your climate and bees will flock to the flowers.

'Summer Beauty' has soft pink flowers while 'Summer Red' has dark-pink to red flowers, and both grow to about 5m tall.

Gum



Borage



9 Borago officinalis
The blue star-shaped flowers of borage are standout and you can eat the cucumber-flavoured leaves raw, steamed or sautéed.

This annual self-seeds, so it will be a long-lasting member of the garden. Once established, it is drought tolerant.

Sedum

4

Sedum

Planting summer and autumn blooming varieties will appeal to more bees and you'll get season-long flowers.

There are many options from groundcovers to upright types for perennial and mixed borders. For best results, grow these heat- and drought-tolerant plants in full sun.

7

Lavandula angustifolia

This fragrant plant likes full sun and well-drained soil, and grows well in pots. It comes in pink, purple, white and mauve cultivars.

Sydney-bred 'Sidonie' thrives in humid climates and French lavender (*Lavandula dentata*) flowers almost all year if deadheaded regularly.

Lavender

Heliotrope

10

Heliotropium arborescens

Vanilla-scented

flowers appear on this small shrub from spring to late summer.

It likes a warm climate, well-drained soil and a sunny spot. Prune in early spring to promote bushiness. It is easily grown from spring cuttings.

PICTURES ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

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EXPERT SECRETS

Check out the indoor plants in nurseries if you live in a warm, frost-free area, as the majority will grow in shady areas outdoors.

MADE FOR THE SHADE

Brighten up dark parts of the backyard by picking plants that thrive in sun-challenged places

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS

There's no denying that shade is a fact of gardening life, and growing plants successfully in areas with little or no sunlight is not always an easy task.

But there are plenty of beautiful and interesting specimens in the plant world waiting to transform these darker spaces, whether they're located under trees, along narrow passageways or in parts of your courtyard.

Grow plants in pots so they can be moved about to catch the sunlight.

Removing tree limbs will change the type of shade cast.

SHADE SAVVY

Look closely at the kind of shade being cast through the seasons. Certain areas may get morning sun in summer but none in winter, others may be in full shade all year. There are three main types of shade.

➤ **FULL SHADE** is permanent and not relieved by direct light. Dense and solid, it occurs in south-facing yards and passageways with tall walls.

➤ **FILTERED SHADE** is found under trees that don't have branches close to the ground and allow rays of sunlight to pass through.

➤ **PART SHADE** is defined as full sun for part of the day and shade at other times. There may be only morning or afternoon sun, and this is usually the case on the western and eastern sides of walls, buildings and trees.

Part shade can also be cast by tall plants, shrubs and hedges. This type of shade needs to be considered when planting out garden beds and as plants develop. ➤

Thin out trees

Dense shade caused by foliage is easy to change by thinning the heads of trees.

Remove the lower limbs so light from the sides can reach the plants. Select the bough, then stand back before cutting and imagine what the tree will look like with it gone.

Once trees are thinned, full shade can become filtered or part shade.

Take into account that the sun is much lower in the sky in winter, so you may find that a south-facing spot with sun in January is in full shade in July

Prep before planting

When soil is in full shade and gets no sun, it will often be damp. When it is under eaves or shaded by buildings and receives little or no water, it can become lifeless and dry.

A little preparation before planting, followed by regular maintenance, will provide better conditions for growing plants in any type of shade.

Dig in compost or well-rotted manure, then mulch with lucerne hay.

Regularly apply organic materials while the previous application is rotting to keep plants healthy.

Don't allow soil or mulch to impinge on tree trunks.

WHAT TO PLANT

FULL SHADE

- + **ASPIDISTRA ELATIOR** has leathery strap-like foliage that looks good all year, but watch out for slugs and snails.
- + **AUCUBA JAPONICA** cultivars such as 'Gold Dust' and 'Variegata' like morning sun.
- + **BUXUS** grows well in dry shade.
- + **CHAMAEDOREA ELEGANS** thrives in frost-free climates.
- + **CLIVIA MINIATA** likes dry shade.
- + **CTENANTHE** has striking leaves and is suited to frost-free climates.
- + **DRACAENA** is hardy and suited to frost-free warm climates.
- + **FATSIA JAPONICA** has glossy leaves that look good year-long.
- + **FERNS** are great for a moist, shaded garden and most will grow in a spot with only morning sun.
- + **PLECTRANTHUS** will grow in shade and *Plectranthus saccatus* with jacaranda-blue flowers is ideal for dry shade.

Hydrangea

Crinum moorei

Cyclamen

Helleborus

Bromeliad

Clivia miniata

Ferns

Ctenanthe

Blue ginger

FILTERED & PART SHADE

- ✦ **AJUGA** is a great groundcover with spikes of blue flowers.
- ✦ **ASPLENIUM** or bird's nest fern is suited to dry, semi-shaded areas and can be grown in a pot.
- ✦ **BROMELIADS** come in a huge variety of leaf colours to brighten up part- or full-shade situations.
- ✦ **CAMELLIA** cultivars that prefer some shade are available.
- ✦ **CRINUM MOOREI** will tolerate frost and dry soil.
- ✦ **CYCLAMENS** will grow under trees in filtered shade.
- ✦ **DAPHNE** likes morning sun.
- ✦ **HELLEBORES** make ideal under-storey plants.
- ✦ **HYDRANGEAS** like morning sun, and the oak leaf hydrangea can tolerate more shade.
- ✦ **ORNAMENTAL GINGERS** like shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*) and blue ginger (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*) are ideal choices. ➤

Dracaena

Fatsia japonica

Plectranthus

PICTURES (BOTTOM) ALAMY



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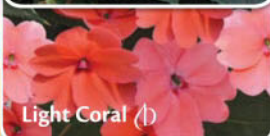
Flowers that Flourish

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Blush Pink



Light Coral (L)



Deep Rose



Electric Orange



Lilac (L)



Hot Coral



Orange (L)



Royal Magenta



Red



White

10 colours all
ready to make
an impact

TOP TRICKS

Try these smart ways to make a shady spot appear brighter.

- ✦ **PAINT** walls in passageways or dark courtyards a pale colour to reflect the available light.
- ✦ **FILL** a large lime-washed terracotta pot with a shade-loving plant to brighten up an area.

Add extra charm by growing moss on the pot. Painting it with yoghurt or a mix of cornflour and water will encourage moss.

- ✦ **PLACE** a mirror at the end of a shaded passageway or in a courtyard to reflect light.
- ✦ **CREATE** a cool summer relaxing area with a white table and seats.
- ✦ **MIX** coloured, variegated and green foliage to lighten a shady spot. In warm, frost-free climates, try ctenanthe, caladium, maranta, aglaonema, coleus or calathea.

The white flowers of the Japanese anemone bring light to semi-shaded areas.

Watch the way shade changes in the garden. As plants grow, they can cast shadows on plants that were initially in a sunny spot

Use mondo grass instead of a lawn to liven up a shady landscape.

Go to ground

Plant a shade-loving groundcover, such as *Dichondra repens*, star jasmine, baby's tears, mondo grass or native violet, instead of trying to grow lawn in a shady area.

Large pavers or flat stones interplanted with miniature mondo grass look very effective while decorative gravel can be used as a groundcover.



WHITES

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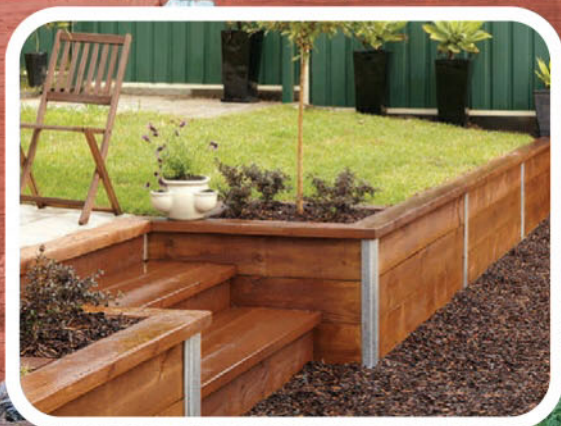
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PERFECT PROPAGATION

Follow our easy guide to creating your own miniature nursery at home

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAM

Fill the garden with plants you have propagated DIY.

Simply put, propagation is the process of creating new plants from seeds, cuttings or division.

Growing plants by propagating them DIY is a real cost saver if you're trying to get a new garden going.

And it's very rewarding to watch the seeds that you have collected or the cuttings you have nurtured grow into full, mature plants.

It's also a great way to teach kids more about how nature works.

Here are a few step-by-step projects and techniques to get you started. ➤



Adam

EXPERT SECRETS

Never take cuttings from stems that are about to bloom, as they'll direct energy to flowering not rooting.

CUTTINGS

When you grow from cuttings, you're effectively cloning, creating a new plant with the same characteristics as the parent. This is ideal when you need an exact replica for a hedge or want to share a favourite plant.

Growing from cuttings also gives you the ability to preserve an ailing plant. If it's past its prime, you can start the life cycle again by growing a new specimen from a cutting. Think of it as new plants from old.

It's worth understanding, too, that certain plants, such as roses and citrus, may be grafted onto more vigorous and disease-resistant rootstock, so a cutting from them may not grow very well.



The key to growing from cuttings is taking them at the right time of year for the type of plant



RAISE NEW SUCCULENTS If you have succulents, keep a tray of propagating mix handy. When you accidentally break leaves off a succulent, just pop them in the tray and in no time you'll have a collection of new plants.



1 Prepare the cuttings

Use clean and sharp secateurs to trim any ragged or torn ends from the broken-off succulent leaf or stem base of a cutting, leaving as much of the leaf or stem intact as possible for planting.



2 Make the planting holes

Fill a pot with seed-raising mix and use a stick to make small holes in the mix. Gently position cuttings in the holes, pressing the mix down around them.

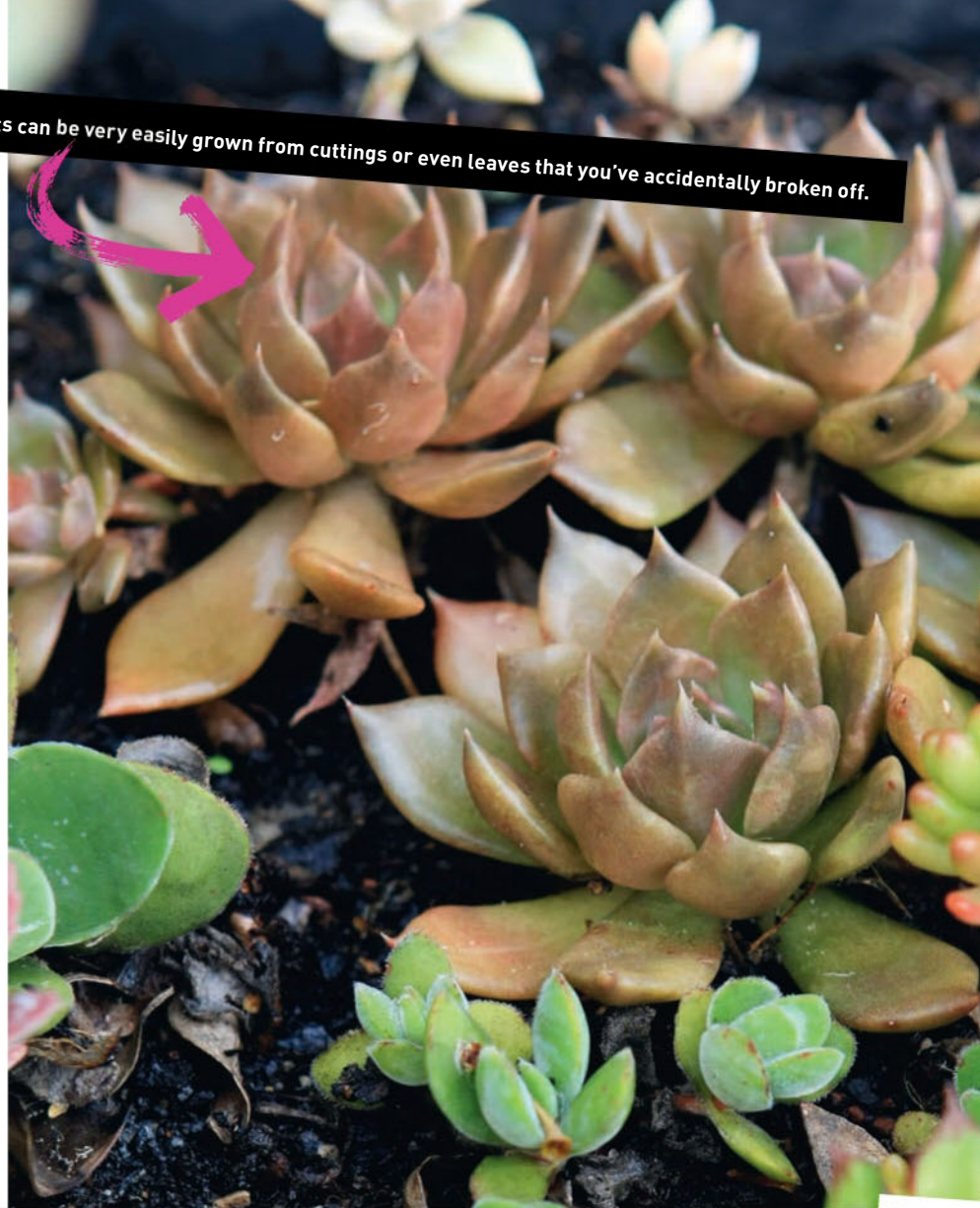
TIP Terracotta pots are ideal for succulents, as they breathe more.



3 Position the pot

Water in well, position the pot in a warm, sunny spot and don't let the mix become or stay too wet. For larger leaves, lean the cuttings against the lip of the pot for support if needed.

Most succulents can be very easily grown from cuttings or even leaves that you've accidentally broken off.



If talking to your plants hasn't worked, talk to us.



Taking cuttings

Semi-hardwood cuttings are firm but flexible shoots that are only a few months old.

✦ **CUT THE SHOOT** to 150mm long and remove leaves from the last 50mm. Cut all other leaves in half.

✦ **FILL A POT** with mix and make planting holes. Gently scrape a bit of bark from the base with your nail. Dip the cutting in honey and plant it, firming down the mix.

✦ **WATER IN WELL** then gently cover the cutting using a plastic bottle with the top cut off. Put in a warm but partially sunny spot. ➤

RIGHT To pot up cuttings, you need propagating mix, natural honey, an empty plastic drink bottle and a pair of sharp, clean secateurs.

BELOW Succulent leaf cuttings throw out pup plants fast.



Why honey?

Honey is effective in helping cuttings strike. It contains antibacterial and antifungal properties that prevent rot and other diseases, and also seems to stimulate root development. For the best results, use natural honey that has not been heat-treated.

At Yates, we believe that if your garden is growing nicely, your love of gardening will follow. So we're here to give you all the support and advice you need.

- informative website, yates.com.au
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- phone line manned by qualified horticulturalists. 8.30am - 4.30pm AEST weekdays. 1300 369 074
- share your gardening experiences on the Yates Facebook page.
- award-winning problem solving app, Yates MyGarden App.



SEEDS

You can buy seeds in packets or collect them directly from your favourite plants. Commercial seeds will grow true-to-form while collected seeds throw genetic variation into the mix.

This means you may get the same form as the parent or something new and totally unique, or the plant may revert closer to its original wild form.

Growing from seed requires both planning and patience. Annuals must be sown in advance and may need protection from the elements at first.

Transform a small corner of your garden into your own productive nursery.

When you collect seeds, check whether they need special treatment to help germination, like storing them in the fridge for a time before sowing.

Many natives produce lots of seeds that are easy to harvest. Some, like the small fleshy seeds of *Hibbertia*, need their skin removed. To do this, drop the seeds in a half-full bottle of water, put the lid on and shake vigorously.

TIP Perennials, shrubs or trees grown from seed can take years before they reach a substantial size or flower.



It's easy and fun to grow from seed.

Sowing seeds

This is a great project for children, and all you need to get going is a bag of seed-raising mix and a seed tray.

When seedlings have a number of leaves, they are ready to plant in beds or pots. Only plant out the stronger seedlings.

➊ **FILL THE TRAY** with mix, gently firm down and level. The surface should be 5mm below the tray lip.

➋ **SOW THE SEEDS** following the packet directions for depth and spacing, then gently water in.

➌ **INSERT PLANT LABELS** then position the tray in a warm, sunny spot and keep moist but not wet as the seeds germinate.

1 2 3

PREPARE THE SEEDS The native plant Kennedia has rock-hard seeds that won't germinate without treatment, called scarification, to break the hard skin.



1 PUT THE SEEDS in a bowl and pour over boiling water, then leave the seeds to stand overnight.

TIP The seeds can also be lightly abraded using sandpaper.



2 CHECK THE SEEDS and select only those that have swollen, then spread them evenly in shallow rows in a tray full of seed-raising mix. Cover lightly with mix and water gently.



3 POSITION THE TRAY in a warm spot and keep moist but not wet. Add labels with the plant name and sowing date. In as little as a few weeks, your native seeds will be well on their way.



Been growing a delicious tomato? Save the seeds for next year.

Scoop out some flesh and put it in a fine sieve, then gently rub under running water until only the seeds remain. Spread them over a square of paper towel and allow the seeds to dry so they stick.

Cover with another square and roll up. Put in an airtight container with a teaspoon of rice to absorb moisture. To sow, cut off squares and lay on moist seed-raising mix seed-side up. Cover with mix. >

Get a Grip

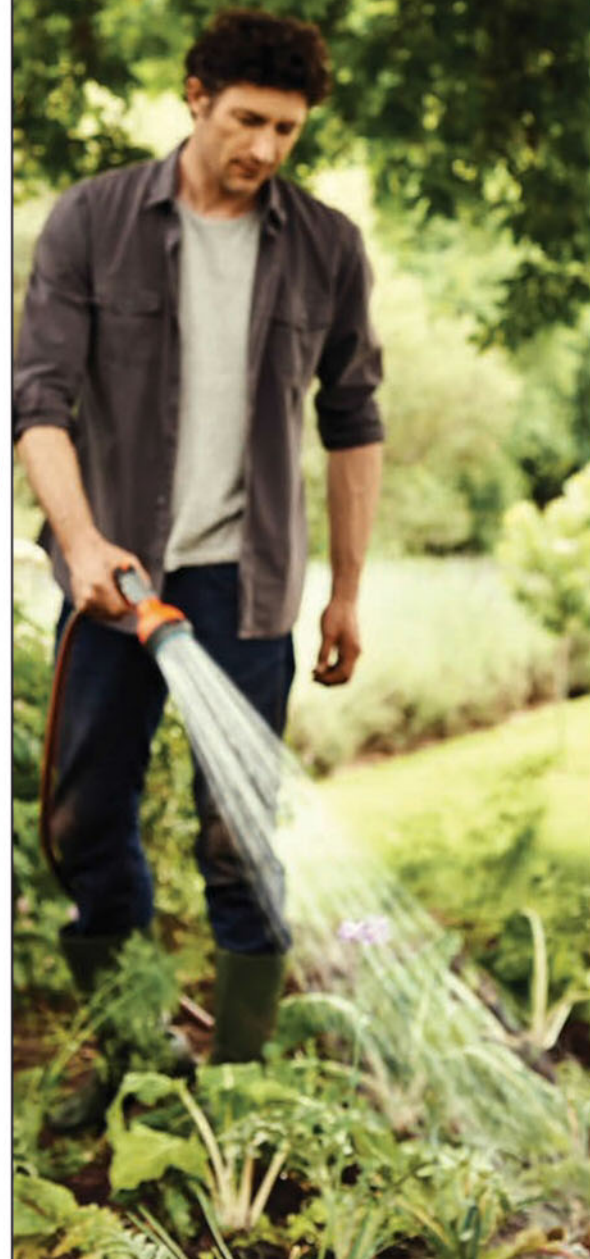
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DIVISION

In many ways, division gets the same results as growing from cuttings, as the new plants are clones of the parent.

A big difference is that divided plants are garden-ready and a good size in a short time or even right away.

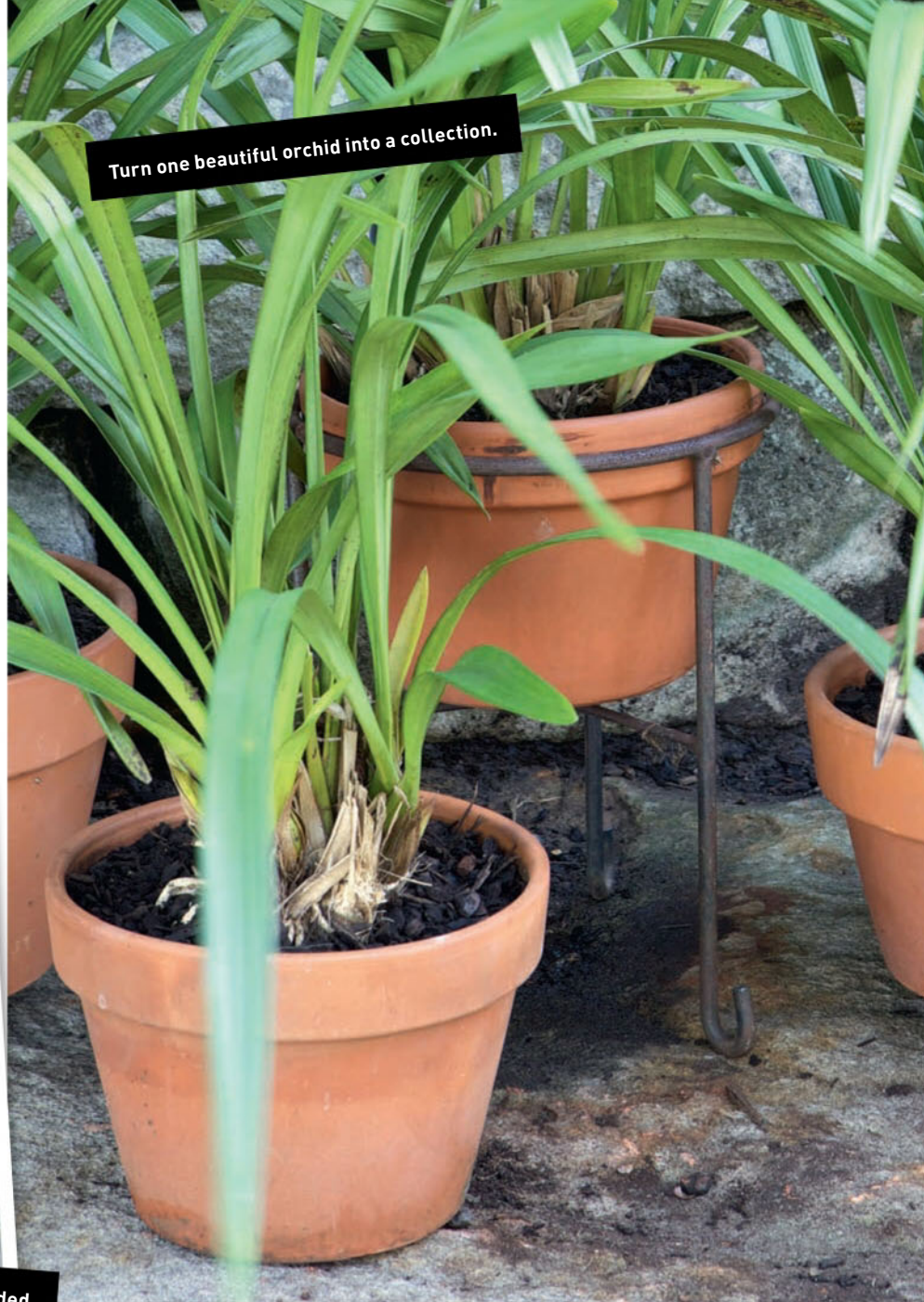
But division is limited to plants that grow in clumps and spread by their root mass expanding, so it's generally only perennials, not shrubs or trees, that are propagated this way.

Re-potting cymbidium orchids after flowering gives you the chance to divide one plant into many, as a large specimen can quickly become half a dozen or more plants.

To divide them, you need a suitable orchid potting mix and a sharp spade. They love terracotta, as it breathes well.



Cymbidium orchids can quickly become overcrowded.



1 REMOVE THE ORCHID from the pot and position on a firm surface. Find a clear section between leaves and bulbs, then divide the clump using a sharp spade or large garden knife.



2 BREAK UP THE CLUMP further using your hands, wearing gloves. Aim to maintain sections that have at least one or two strongly growing lead bulbs and a few firm back bulbs.



3 REMOVE DEAD ROOTS and leaves, and any spongy or dead back bulbs. Make sure any accidental cuts to surviving bulbs are clean and, if not, tidy up with a sharp knife or secateurs.



Here's the ideal home for your newly grown treasures, a freestanding vertical garden.

It's especially suitable for planting out smaller vegies, herbs or annual flowers.

You can also use it to create a tiered succulent garden.

It comes complete with frame, hooks and five planter troughs.



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4 FILL EACH POT with enough orchid mix so the plant sits at the right height. Tie the leaves up to keep them clear, fill around the roots so the bulbs are above the mix and firm down gently.



5 UNTIE THE LEAVES and water in well with a diluted seaweed solution. Position the divided and potted orchids in a shady spot that is also protected from winds. 🌸



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Thyme

Bay

Coriander

Dill

Rosemary

12 essential edibles

Add these herbs to your vegie garden to flavour food and avoid wastage

Growing herbs is a natural extension of growing vegies. They like the same conditions and complement one another as much in the garden as they do in the kitchen.

Herbs bring a wonderful flavour to homegrown vegetables when used during cooking or as a garnish, and are a great addition to salads.

And if a recipe only calls for two sprigs of thyme or a tablespoon of basil, there's no wastage, as you can just pick what you need.

They grow well either in the ground or in containers, and there are perennial varieties that live for years, as well as annual or biennial herbs that need to be re-sown.

Lemongrass

Parsley

Basil

Sage

Oregano

Mint

Tarragon

Pest control

When they're left to flower, herbs like basil, coriander, mint, oregano, parsley, dill and thyme provide an excellent source of food for beneficial insects.

Encouraging these garden guardians, such as hoverflies, wasps and ladybirds, allows nature to take care of many of the insect pests that would otherwise cause problems.

This is biological pest control at its best.

Basil

The unique scent and flavour of this herb has made it an essential ingredient in Italian and Asian cooking.

The most commonly grown is sweet basil. An annual herb, it has large soft leaves and reaches 40cm in height. It is best planted in spring for summer and autumn picking and likes rich, well-drained soil that's kept moist.

While the flowers are edible, they're best removed to encourage leaf growth.

Try the purple-leaved forms or those with lacy dissected foliage to add extra ornamental value to your vegie patch.

Perennial basil will persist through winter in frost-free areas, but the flavour is stronger and not as sweet.

In the kitchen

The main ingredient in pesto, basil is also a perfect partner for tomatoes.

If you are using it in hot dishes, stir it through just before serving to preserve the flavour.

TIP Tear the leaves, as chopping will bruise and discolour them.

Bay

As this Mediterranean plant forms a very large shrub or small tree, it is often grown in a large container to prevent it from getting too big and causing root competition in the vegetable garden.

Bay will grow successfully like this for a long time and respond well to pruning. It also makes an excellent topiary specimen.

Grow it in full sun for the best flavour. ➤

In the kitchen

The glossy dark-green, leathery leaves are used either fresh or dried to give a distinctive taste to soups, stews, sauces and stock.

To add extra flavour to roast vegetables, add a few bay sprigs.

Coriander

Also known as cilantro, this annual herb grows to about 50cm high.

To ensure a plentiful supply, sow the seeds every few weeks in a sunny position in well-drained fertile soil. Remove the flowers to encourage the plant to produce more leaves.

In hot areas, choose slow-bolt varieties that are suited to leaf production and delay flowering.

In the kitchen

All parts of this plant, including the leaves, seeds and roots, can be used to flavour cooked dishes, salads or salsas.

Coriander leaves have a sharp taste and are added to Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern dishes, while the seeds and roots are dried and ground for curries and spice pastes.

Lemongrass

This grass-like herb is a frost-tender perennial and forms a striking clump, adding an architectural element to the garden. The edges of its arching leaves are razor sharp, so position it where it will not cut passersby.

Lemongrass is widely used in South-East Asian cuisines, especially that of Thailand and Vietnam.

In the kitchen

This is used to add a lemon flavour to cooking. Whole stems are bruised and tied together, then added to a dish to infuse while cooking and removed to serve.

The whitish bulb and tender white base of the stem can also be sliced very finely and added directly to cooking.

Parsley

There are two varieties of this herb. Curly parsley, which grows to 30cm high, and the stronger-flavoured flat-leaf, or Italian, parsley which reaches 50cm in height.

It likes a fertile, well-drained soil in sun or partial shade and makes a good border plant. It flowers in its second year and will self-seed.

In the kitchen

The most widely grown culinary herb, parsley is added to cooking or used fresh as an ingredient or a garnish.

A wonderful addition to salads and the main ingredient in tabouli, it can also be teamed with vegetables, fish, eggs, meats, stews and soups.

For the best flavour, add parsley to hot dishes just before serving.



Mint

Popular in Thai and Vietnamese cooking, a use can be found for this versatile herb in any kitchen.

It must be planted wisely in the garden due to its invasive nature. You can grow it in a pot with a saucer or pavers underneath so it can't make direct contact with garden soil and escape.

Mint likes to be kept moist and will thrive in either shaded or semi-shaded positions.

You can choose from many different types, all with different qualities of scent and flavour. Most are low-growing, spreading perennials that reach about 45cm in height.

In the kitchen

Fresh mint leaves can be used with spring vegetables and as a garnish, or added to salads and fruit drinks.

It is used in mint sauce and mint jelly, which is traditionally served with roast lamb.

Fresh or dried leaves also make a refreshing herbal tea.

Oregano

This herb has a distinctive flavour that is at its best when harvested after the small purple flowers start to appear.

It is a hardy perennial that grows to 45cm high and prefers a sunny spot in well-drained soil. It is drought tolerant once established.

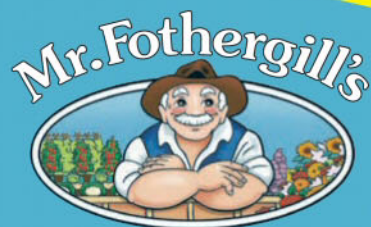
There are golden-leaved ornamental forms of oregano and its cousin, sweet marjoram. They do best with a hard prune at the end of autumn.

In the kitchen

The fresh or dried leaves of oregano have a sweet, mild spicy flavour and are used on herb bread, in seasonings, and in Greek, Italian, Spanish and Mexican dishes, especially those including meat, pasta and tomato.

Sweet marjoram has a milder, sweeter flavour than its cousin and is used in Italian cooking. ➤

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Tarragon

A sun-loving herbaceous perennial herb, French tarragon grows to 60cm high and requires excellent drainage.

It performs best when the old foliage is cut down to ground level at the end of autumn.

In the kitchen

This herb is an essential part of French cooking, and the leaves have a delicate aniseed-like flavour.

Tarragon can be used fresh or dried with fish, poultry, veal, eggs, cheese and salads.

Only a small amount is needed to add a distinct flavour to a dish without overpowering it.

Rosemary

This Mediterranean perennial shrub can reach 2m high, and there are also a number of dwarf and groundcover forms available.

Rosemary needs to be planted in full sun and is very drought tolerant once established.

It can be clipped to form an attractive fragrant hedge around the vegetable patch. Or one of the groundcover varieties can be grown down an embankment or a wall, or used as part of a vertical planting.

Dill

Featuring fine, feathery foliage, this annual herb grows up to 1-2m high. The seeds can be saved for future planting.

It prefers a sunny position in moist soil with good drainage.

In the kitchen

The foliage has a parsley-caraway smell and is used fresh as a classic partner with eggs, soft cheeses, white sauces, vegetables, seafood and chicken dishes.

If adding fresh dill to cooking, do so just before serving as the flavour diminishes with heat.

In the kitchen

Rosemary's pale-blue flowers and aromatic needle-like leaves can be added fresh or dried to dishes.

It is traditionally used to accompany lamb, but it also works well with chicken and other meats.

Sprigs can be sprinkled over vegetables when you roast them to add a lovely flavour.



Thyme

This Mediterranean herb has many different forms, ranging from creeping, flat groundcovers to low, rounded shrubs growing to 30cm high.

The foliage varies in colour and the flowers can be white, pink or purple. They are highly ornamental and make excellent border plants or groundcovers between pavers or stepping stones.

All types are very drought tolerant once established and like a sunny spot.

In the kitchen

The leaves, and the stalks, can be used fresh or dried in soups, stews and poultry, meat and fish dishes.

The varieties all have different flavours, which include lemon, caraway and bitter orange, as well as true or common thyme.

It is best added at the start of cooking, as the taste is quite strong.



Sage

While there are many ornamental types of sage, culinary sage, also called garden or common sage, forms a round shrub that grows to 1m high. It has grey-green foliage and soft blue flowers.

There are several culinary varieties with attractive foliage that can be tinged purple, marbled gold and green, or variegated pink, white and green.

Drought tolerant once established, it likes a sunny spot in well-drained soil.

In the kitchen

The leaves of this herb are used in cooking, often accompanying fatty meats such as duck. Sage is also added to poultry seasonings, casseroles and soups.



PICTURES ALAMY, THINKSTOCK

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What's on this September

Adult D.I.Y. Workshops

Saturday 5 September Kitchen, bathroom and laundry	Saturday 19 September Garden to plate
Sunday 6 September Kitchen, bathroom and laundry	Sunday 20 September Garden to plate
Saturday 12 September Home organisation	Saturday 26 September Spring
Sunday 13 September Home organisation	Sunday 27 September Spring

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 5 September Make a gift for Dad	Saturday 26 September Spring
Sunday 6 September Make a gift for Dad	Sunday 27 September Spring
Saturday 12 September Garden	
Sunday 13 September Garden creatures	
Saturday 19 September Garden to plate	
Sunday 20 September Garden to plate	

For more information on other instore events or to book, call (03) 8831 9777 or visit bunnings.com.au

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5

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Line a dish with foil, fill it with cold water, then add two teaspoons of salt. This creates a reaction in which the aluminium acts as a catalyst.

Soak your tarnished silver for 2-3 minutes, then rinse and dry.

**PET
GUARD**

Can't keep your pet off the new couch? Place a piece of foil on the seat cushions and, after one go at settling down on the noisy surface, your pet won't consider it a comfy place to snooze anymore.

**VEGIE
SAVER**

Keep hungry insects and slugs away from your cucumbers and other vegies by mixing strips of foil with your garden mulch. As a bonus benefit, the foil will reflect light back up onto your plants.

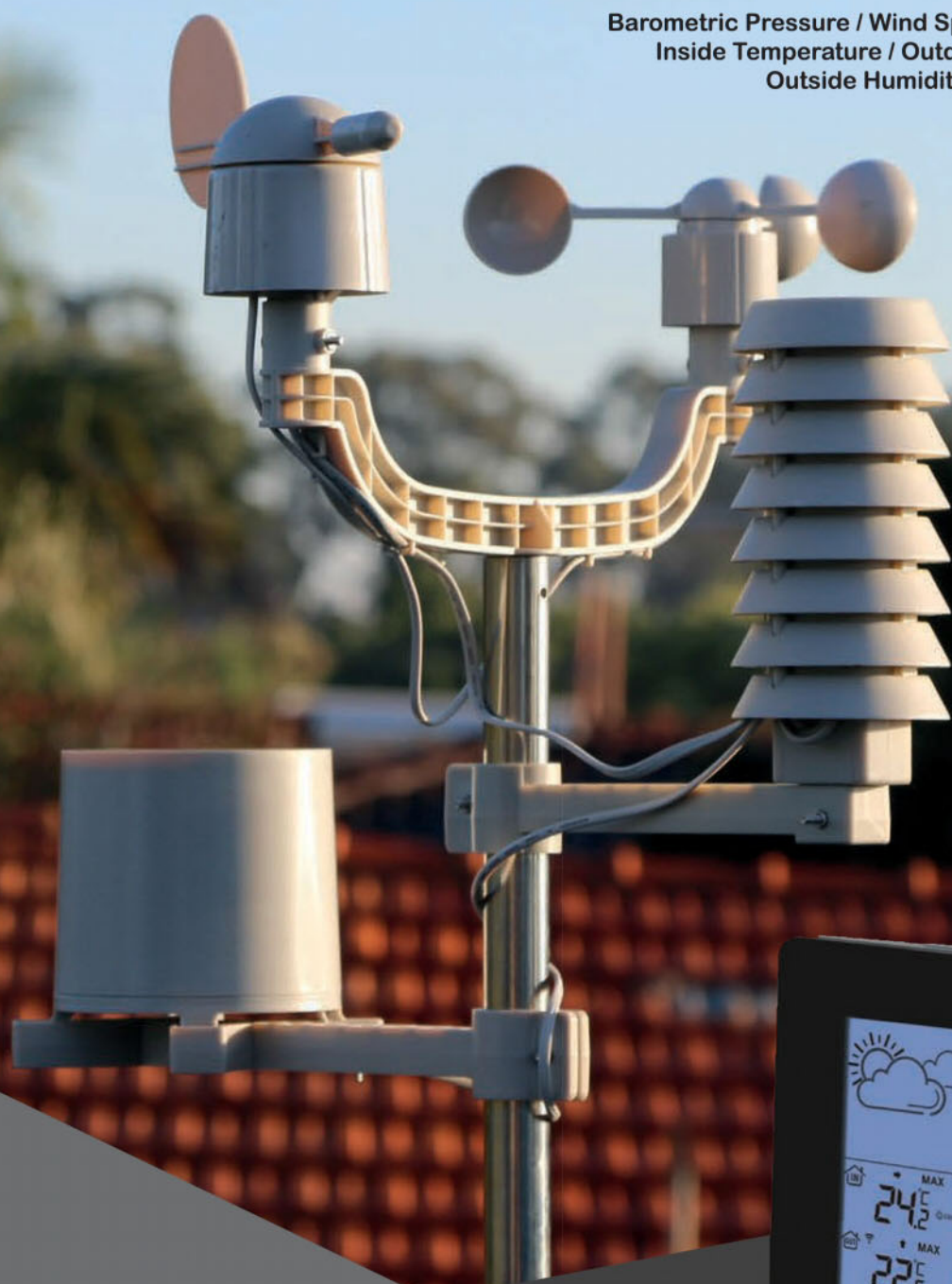
**DRIP
TRAY**

To stop meat dripping on your barbecue coals, make a disposable drip tray out of a couple of layers of foil. Mould it so the tray is slightly larger than the piece of meat you're cooking.

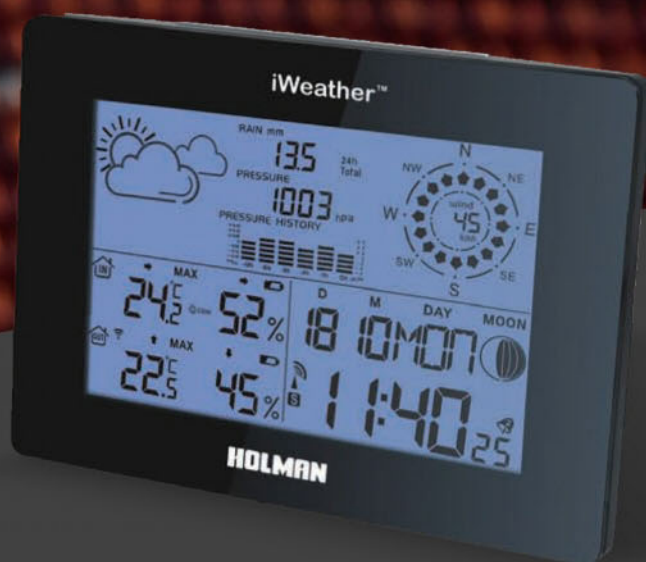
**FLEXIBLE
FUNNEL**

For those times when you can't find a funnel, try doubling up a length of heavy-duty foil and rolling it into the shape of a cone. And, unlike a regular funnel, it can be bent to fit holes in awkward spots.

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