

AUSTRALIAN

15 SMART HEATING SOLUTIONS

Handyman

SCREEN OUT

THE NEIGHBOURS
FOR MORE PRIVACY

SPRUCE UP

LIVING SPACES WITH
NEW LIGHTS & PAINT

BUILD THIS

FIRE PIT

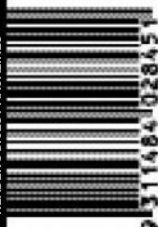
in your yard

page 20

Make this bench
in 3 easy steps

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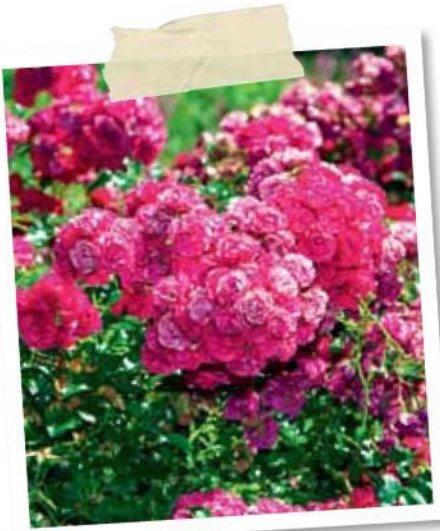
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STUART SCOTT

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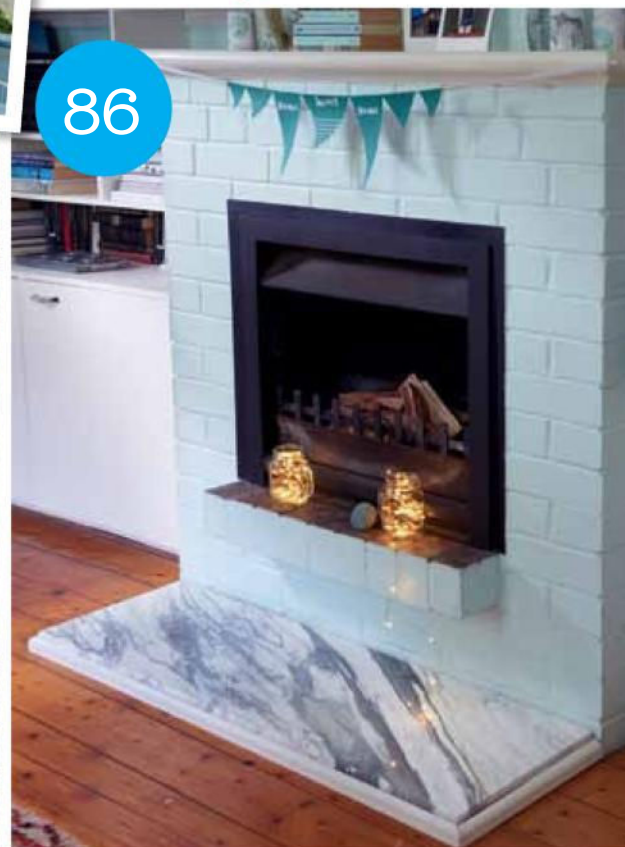
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Renovate

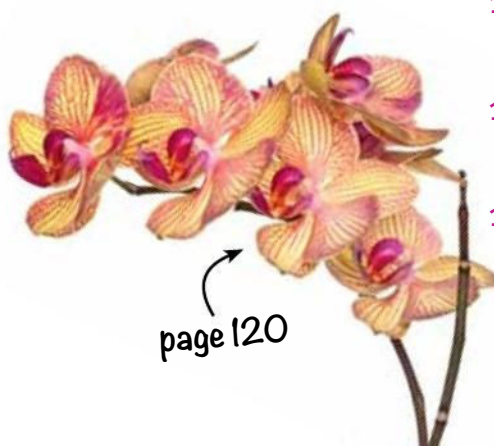
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ALFRESCO LIVING

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Dear Reader,
It's barbecue season, so to get you ready for alfresco cooking, watch our two-minute video on giving an old barbie a good clean then try our BBQ prawn recipe. To help you create the perfect space for outdoor living, we have top design tips from an expert. And start growing tomatoes now, if you haven't already, with our foolproof guide. Plus don't miss out on our fantastic \$15 deal for 5 issues of Handyman magazine. Hurry, the offer ends soon.
Happy DIYing!

How to create the perfect outdoor room

Barbecue prawns with spicy dipping sauce

2-minute video: Clean an old BBQ

The best way to grow tomatoes

FREE WIN A VIRTUAL MAKEOVER WITH TV RENOVATOR **Cherie Barber**

After **Before**

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THIS ISSUE

HANDY HINT OF THE MONTH



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EDITOR'S LETTER



This issue of *Handyman* has lots of projects to help you get your house and garden in tiptop shape, and they can easily be done DIY to revamp and transform your home.

Our home is our castle, as they say, and if the neighbour can look straight into the backyard, it's not the private sanctuary we all desire.

Creating privacy can be a challenge in high-density areas. But with all the great screening designs available, you can modernise your place while turning it into a retreat with a designer touch.

Check out our gallery of impressive solutions to this problem, on page 28.

Winter warmer

What is it about an open fire that draws us to it? We get close to it to warm up and feel cosy. So why not install a fire pit in your backyard as a central entertainment area?

It creates an inviting outdoor space for bonding and laughing, and even telling ghost stories!

On the cover, we feature a fire pit we've built and give step-by-step instructions on how you can create it at your place, on page 20.

Surface makeovers

The easiest way to make the house look like new on a budget is to revamp the surfaces. We focus on bathrooms, page 67, and show how easy it is to repaint and refinish surfaces, and replace dated accessories DIY, in a weekend.

If it's your living spaces you want to refresh, check out the room makeover on page 52. The plasterboard walls were replaced, new LED lights installed, and the walls and ceiling repainted.

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR
LEE DASHIELL



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Sikaflex, the popular multipurpose polyurethane sealant and adhesive from Sika, is now available in a new transparent formulation.

Sikaflex Crystal Clear is ideal for use on jobs that require an invisible finish, such as resealing glass pool fences and shower screens, as it dries completely transparent.

Designed to bond virtually any materials internally and externally, Sikaflex Crystal Clear can be used on plasterboard, timber, painted enamel, polyester and plastic. It can even be used underwater.

It provides a strong, flexible bond with minimal shrinkage during curing, and has strong UV resistance to ensure long-lasting adhesion.

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Sikaflex Crystal Clear, \$20.

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Colour inspiration

10

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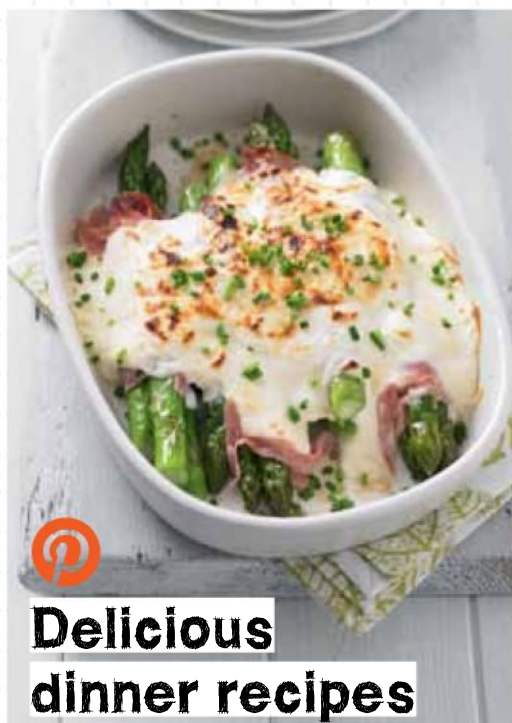
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HANDY STUFF

WINTER WARMERS

Keep the cold at bay this chilly season with these heating solutions

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



Retro radiator

Raise the temperature inside with a retro-style Moretti Tempo Fin 2400W Oil Column Heater, \$129. It has three heat settings, overheat protection and a family friendly tip-over safety switch.

bunnings.com.au



Coffee cosy

Forever letting your drinks go cold when you're busy? Keep it at 60°C and never waste a cup again with a Hot Cookie USB Coffee Cup Warmer, \$30.

yellowoctopus.com.au



Foodie fire

Warm the house and cook dinner on a Scandia Heat 'n' Cook Radiant Heater, \$1699. It has an oven, heater, cooktop and water heater.

scandiastoves.com.au



Toasty toes

Leave frozen feet behind with Heat Feet Microwavable Slippers, \$38. Removable silicone warming bags can easily be popped in the microwave before returning them to their pouches to spread their heat through the slippers.

yellowoctopus.com.au

Warm wrap

No heater? No problem when you have a plush Ovela Heated Electric Throw, \$59. It has detachable wires, nine heat settings, and automatically turns off after 10 hours.

kogan.com.au



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Party pleaser

Turn a patio into a winter outdoor entertaining area with a Heatstrip Classic Radiant Electric Heater, from \$498 each, which can be mounted on the ceiling or on a wall.
heatstrip.com.au



Garden grill

Cook and warm up around a Chapala Inca BBQ Chimenea, \$229. Measuring 550 x 830mm and hand-crafted from Mexican clay, it has a steel base and griller.
chapala.com.au



Backyard blaze

Centre a dinner party around a Glow Cement Grey and Black Petra Fire Pit, \$359. Crafted from durable glass reinforced concrete and powdercoated steel, the inner fire bowl can be removed for quick and easy cleaning.
northcotepottery.com.au

Cold cure

Put a Gasmate Graphite Patio Heater, \$319, in your pergola for a warm winter. Portable and weather-resistant, it can operate for nine hours with a 9kg gas cylinder and features a built-in safety valve in case of a fall.
gasmate.com.au



Breeze barrier

Create a cosy outdoor room around your deck with Smart Home Products 240 x 120cm PVC Outdoor Bistro Blinds, about \$90. The heavy-duty PVC joins together with zips to block breezes and keep out wet weather.
smarthomeproducts.com.au





Snuggle suit

Camp all through the cooler months with a Selk'bag Classic, \$199. It features a hood, side-leg venting system and pant-style legs. selkbag.com.au



Thrifty thermal

Make an eco-friendly purchase this winter with an Innsbruck Coffee Fibre Down Jacket, \$130. It combines ethically sourced duck down with recycled coffee fibres for a breathable windproof and water-resistant jacket.

mountaindesigns.com

Mighty mitts

Skip fingerless gloves and wear functional Kathmandu Advection Touchscreen Compatible V2 Gloves, \$80. They feature a breathable mesh palm with a silicone grip, windproof fabric backs, stretch fleece cuffs and a touchscreen compatible fingertip.

kathmandu.com.au



Frosty fix

Find relief from cold feet with Thunderbolt Electric Heated Socks for Chronically Cold Feet, \$145. They provide continuous heat by connecting to an AC wall outlet instead of a battery.

thunderboltsocks.com



Cool cover-up

Use a Battery Heated Scarf, \$25, to warm your neck. Easy to clean, it has a removable, battery-powered heating pad. Made of micro fleece, it also has pockets for your hands.

innovations.com.au

HELLO WEEKEND!



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*3.5 tonne braked towing capacity on 4x4 and 4x2 High-Ride models when fitted with an optional genuine Isuzu UTE tow bar kit. 5 star ANCAP safety rating applies to D-MAX 4x4 Crew Cab variants built from November 2013, 4x2 High-Ride Crew Cab variants built from November 2014. *5 years/130,000km whichever occurs first, for eligible customers. Excludes trays and accessories. >The Capped Price Servicing Program applies to eligible Isuzu UTE vehicles with a warranty start date after 1 January 2015 at Participating Isuzu UTE Dealers only. The program covers the first 6 scheduled services in line with the scheduled service intervals. Program price subject to change. For full terms & conditions and current pricing visit isuzuute.com.au/service-plus.



BUYER'S GUIDE

HOUSE PLANTS

Easy evergreen

Native to the damp tropical forests of South America and Indonesia, the peace lily, from \$10, is ideal for a dark room. Keep this perennial moist and re-pot every spring.



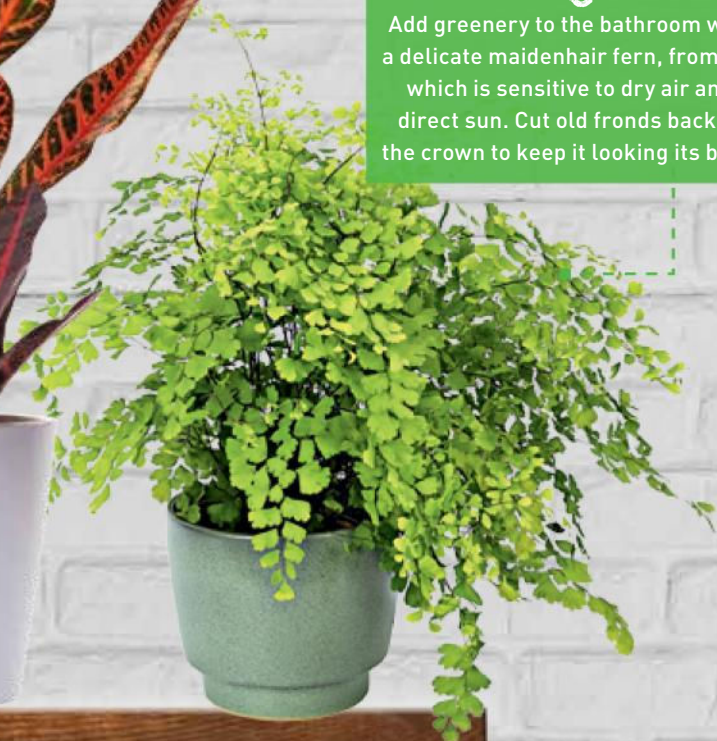
Cool colour

Liven up a room with the vibrant blooms of a cyclamen, from \$7. Dormant over summer, this plant flowers in pink, red, purple or white and likes bright, indirect light.



Graceful greenery

Add greenery to the bathroom with a delicate maidenhair fern, from \$5, which is sensitive to dry air and direct sun. Cut old fronds back to the crown to keep it looking its best.



Flashy foliage

Bring the bright leaves of a croton, from \$19, into your office for all-year colour. It grows to about 1m and likes a warm room over 15°C to prevent leaf drop and fading.



Improve the air quality and brighten your home or office with a few easy-care indoor plants

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

Holey housemate

Developing slit leaves as it matures, *Monstera deliciosa*, or Swiss cheese plant, from \$8, is a hardy house plant. It thrives in bright light and needs support once it reaches 3m tall.

Fresh fronds

Purify stale office air of common toxins with a weeping fig, from \$8. Characterised by glossy leaves, this small evergreen shrub is slow growing and low maintenance.

Stuffy solution

Tolerant of a wide range of conditions, the spider plant, from \$8, has the capacity to remove carbon monoxide from a room. Keep out of direct sun to avoid leaf damage.



Lush leaves

Grown for its boldly variegated and purple-suffused foliage, calathea, from \$8, likes a humid environment. It's a good option for a poorly lit room, as direct sunlight will burn its leaves.

BUILD A FIRE PIT

Lay bricks DIY to create a winter entertaining area in the backyard

PROJECT ADAM WOODHAMS PICTURES STUART SCOTT

DESIGN TIP

If you're renting or prefer a portable option, go for a metal or clay fire bowl on a stand instead of a built-in fire pit.

A well-designed outdoor space has a dedicated hub for dining and entertaining, usually a patio or deck with a barbecue or outdoor kitchen.

To give this garden another spot for outdoor living during winter, we installed a fire pit and added seating.

It looks very impressive, but you only need basic DIY skills to create this winter entertaining area, and the best way is to approach it as a three-in-one project.

The fire pit is built on concrete, and the most important part of the job is to measure and set out the slab and the pit correctly.

Once the concrete has cured, take your time laying the brickwork and you'll get a professional result.

We installed a weather-resistant, rust-coloured corten steel fire bowl in our pit for a rustic effect.

To complete the fire pit, we gave it a timber frame and a built-in bench made from treated pine sleepers. ➤

Materials

20mm aggregate	\$50
Sand	\$80
Cement	\$38
Quick-set concrete	\$36
Wire mesh	\$49
Bar chairs	\$10
Treated pine sleepers	\$68
Timber stakes	\$20
Bricks	\$51
Brick cleaning acid and sponge	\$35
Decorative gravel	\$20
Bugle head screws	\$53
Decking oil	\$37
TOTAL	\$547



Adam

EXPERT SECRETS

Laying brickwork in a radial pattern means you won't need to cut any bricks, saving time and effort.

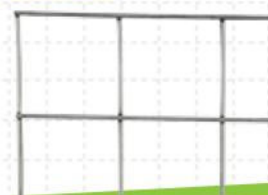
ADAM'S PICKS



Bastion Quick Set Hi-Strength Concrete, \$9 for 20kg.
bunnings.com.au



Northcote Pottery Glow Sienna Rust Fire Bowl, 740 x 740mm, \$59.
northcotepottery.com



Whites Wires Mesh Panel, 1800 x 1200 x 100mm, \$49.
whitesgroup.com.au

2
DAYS

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COST



A fire pit takes outdoor entertaining to a new level during winter.



SAFETY TIP

Never burn treated timber in a backyard fire pit, as it will release smoke filled with toxins into the atmosphere.



Fire check

Before building a fire pit in the yard, make sure you check the state government regulations and any extra local restrictions on lighting fires in the garden.

Most of these restrictions are related to smoke pollution and bushfires, which are a cause for concern in urban and rural areas.

Check with the local council for the guidelines on where you

live, as there are varying limitations regarding housing density and the proximity to neighbours.

When lighting a fire in the yard, you should always minimise any smoke pollution by controlling the fire as much as possible.

To do this, consider the weather conditions, the direction of the wind and the length of time of the burn. And make sure you only burn dry wood rather than wet.

LAY THE SLAB



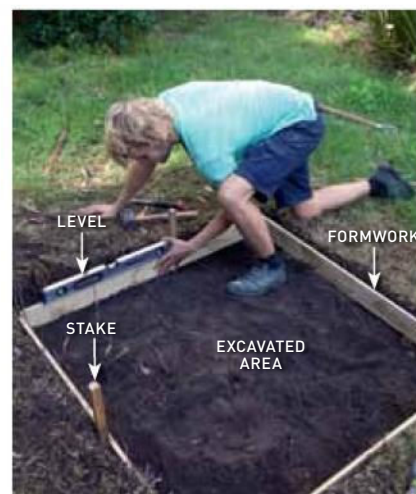
1 Mark the pit

Calculate the size of the fire-pit well from the width of the fire bowl less its supporting lip, plus the length of two bricks. Position a peg to mark the fire pit centre, then loop a stringline over the peg. Use line-marking paint to spray a circle on the ground at half the width of the pit.



2 Mark the slab

Position a straightedge and mark one of the slab sides to the required length. Use a builder's square to mark the next line at a right angle. Repeat this for the other two lines to create a square. Dig the area to a minimum depth of 100mm, using a spirit level to check the area is level.



3 Create the formwork

Measure and cut timber for the formwork. Position the formwork around the excavated area and hammer in timber stakes halfway along each side on the outside. Check the formwork is level on all sides using a spirit level, then secure to the stakes using screws.



4 Install the mesh

Measure and cut the reinforcing mesh to size so that it will sit about 30mm in from the formwork edges. Position the mesh in the excavated area with bar chairs underneath spaced at regular intervals, using enough to support the mesh so it won't sag in any spot once the concrete is poured.



5 Pour the concrete

Dry-mix cement, sand and aggregate in a ratio of 1:2:3 in a wheelbarrow. Mix until well blended, then add water and continue to mix. Keep mixing and adding water until the cement is just pourable, then pour it into the formwork, working it down with a shovel and filling it to the top.



6 Scream the surface

Use a straightedge to screed the surface level and remove any excess concrete. Allow the concrete to dry a little, then use a float to finish the surface. Cover with builder's plastic for at least 24 hours, then allow the cement to cure for at least a week before building the fire pit. ➤

BUILD THE FIRE PIT



1 Mark the slab

Using a long straightedge, mark from corner to corner both ways to find the centre point of the slab. Position the fire bowl upside down on the slab and use a tape measure to position it exactly in the centre by measuring in from all four sides. Draw a line around the lip of the bowl.



2 Position the bricks

Lay the base course of bricks in position around the bowl line with their inside faces about 20mm over the line. Check the measurement by positioning the bowl on top of the bricks. Remove the bowl and mark a line on the slab around the inside edge of the bricks before removing the bricks.



3 Lay the bedding course

Make up a batch of mortar with cement and brickie's sand at a ratio of 1:4. Blend the dry mix, then add water slowly, blending continuously. Using the inside line as a guide, lay the bedding course of mortar. Add the bricks, aligning them with the edge of the slab and levelling them as you go.



4 Finish the bricklaying

Pack the large wedge-shaped joints in the base course of bricks using mortar, shaving and shaping the front edges with a trowel. Layer a bed of mortar on top of the base course, then lay the second and third courses, staggering not stacking the bricks and mortar wedges.



5 Clean the brickwork

Trim off any excess mortar and pack extra into the gaps, then allow it to dry. Mix brick-cleaning acid in a bucket. Wear safety equipment and follow all safety directions. Using a brick-cleaning sponge, gently rub down the bricks and mortar to clean the brickwork and smooth the mortar.



6 Make the slab frame

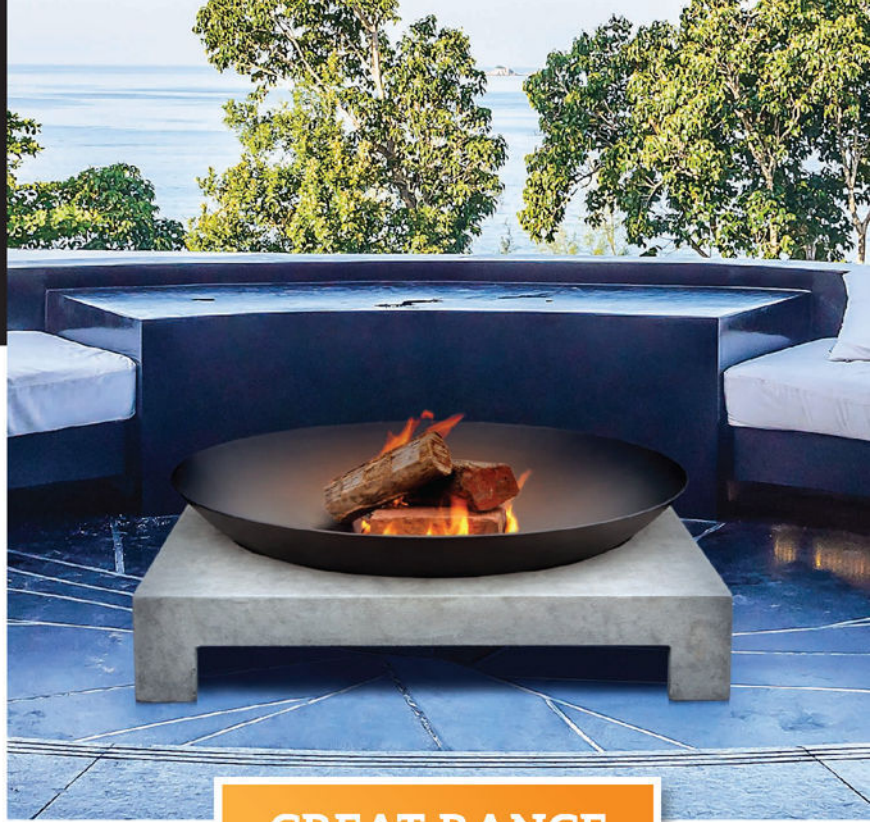
Cut timber for the frame, leaving it about 30mm proud of the slab when positioning. Check for level on each side, then secure the butt joints with screws. Fill between the frame and the fire pit with decorative gravel.

TIP Our frame is cut snug around the slab but make it larger if required. ➤



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The bench provides a seat for winter nights around the fire.

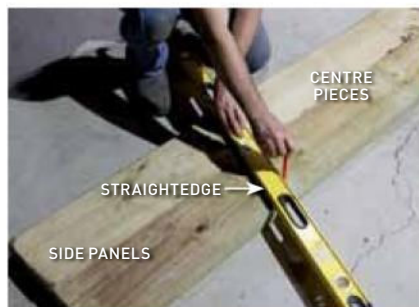


Build the bench

The bench is made from 2.4m treated pine sleepers and concreted into position. Once it is installed, chamfer off all of the edges with a block plane.

Sand the top and any rough areas, then apply two coats of natural water-based timber oil or use a stain to change the colour.

1 2 3



1 Cut the sleepers

Lay two 200 x 50mm sleepers next to each other, marking at 800mm and 1600mm. Using a sliding bevel, draw a straight line at a 20° angle across the sleepers, then cut to create the bench seat with 40° angles. Bevel the ends of the seat blocks to 45°.



2 Build the bench

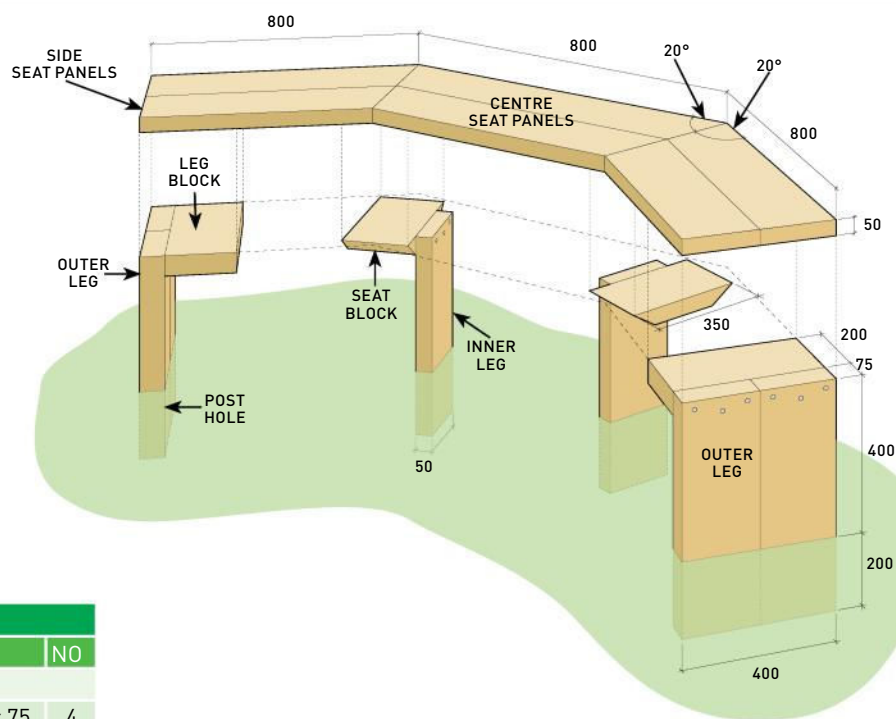
Lay the seat panels upside down with the seat blocks over the centre and side panel joints. Secure with four screws, then attach the inner legs. Secure the leg blocks 75mm in from the side panel ends. Attach the outer legs with screws. **TIP** We used 150mm bugle head screws.



3 Secure the legs

Position the bench, marking around the legs. Remove the bench, then dig post holes to about 300mm deep and twice the width of the legs. Add aggregate to each hole. Position the legs in the holes, check for level, and add quick-set concrete.

BENCH SEAT



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO
Treated pine sleepers		
Outer legs	600 x 200 x 75	4
Inner legs	600 x 200 x 50	2
Leg blocks	400 x 200 x 75	2
Seat blocks	350 x 200 x 75	2
Seat panels	800 x 200 x 50	6

GET THE LOOK



Haven 250mm Coastal Chic Coastguard Lantern, \$20.
haveninspired.com.au



Classic 20cm Pillar Candle, \$14.
bunnings.com.au



Hot Shots Firewood, \$15 for 20kg.
hotshotsfuel.com.au



Cabot's Aquadeck Natural Exterior Decking Oil, about \$37 for 1L. cabots.com.au



Tuscan Path Western White Landscape Stones, \$10 for 20kg.
tuscanpath.com.au



SCREENING SOLUTIONS

Turn your place into a private sanctuary using foliage, metal and timber screens

WORDS SITA SIMONS

PICTURE URBAN ANGLES



With the outdoor room confirmed as a fixture in Australian homes, spending is up on the backyard, according to research by home design and renovation site houzz.com.au.

The survey of more than 5000 respondents also highlighted that privacy and screening is the most common challenge homeowners face in their backyards.

Jenny Drew, the Australian editor of Houzz, says that of the respondents,

50% of those taking part in urban and suburban areas and 41% in rural areas have completed or are working on projects to address this issue.

'Homeowners want practical fencing and screening solutions to hide their backyard, pool and front garden from neighbours, and are exploring new ways with plants to create natural seclusion,' says Jenny.

But whatever your screening needs, there are ways to get the right result for your space and budget. ➤

A large, dense clump of bamboo with long, thin leaves and vertical stalks. A green arrow points from the 'GROW TIP' box to the bamboo. In the background, there's a white wall and a tree. In the foreground, there's a paved area with two black metal chairs and a swimming pool.

Bamboo will always chase the sun, so give it a spot with plenty.

GROW TIP

Use a clumping rather than a running variety, which is not suited to domestic situations and can wreak havoc even when planted in a pot.

Get the best from bamboo

For a screen, you need an easy-care plant that grows fast and looks great.

'Bamboo is the one that springs to mind for many people, and for good reason. It gets tall quickly, with some varieties reaching 1.5m in a year,' says Jarret Clynnick of JC Landscapes.

Bamboo likes free-draining soil and at least 5-6 hours of sunlight a day. To ensure the plant is dense and ideal for screening, tip-prune at the end of the growth season, especially when young.

'You see spindly growth if there's not enough sun in the spot you've chosen. They don't need much feeding, but an occasional dose of Seasol is good. And remember, any plant will only ever be as good as the soil it's in.

'My best tip is to dig the hole twice as big as you need for the plant, then backfill with a mix of half soil and half high-quality organic compost.

'This gives the plant a nutritious foundation that will help ensure the best and fastest growth,' says Jarret.

Plant a living screen

There are lots of hedging plants that make highly effective green screens.

Lilly pillly 'Goodbye Neighbours' is a fast grower, averaging 2m a year and reaching up to 10m, so it's an excellent choice for a two-storey building. This native needs to be watered and pruned while young to get good growth.

Viburnum 'Emerald Lustre' is a dense hedge that reaches 3-4m in height with lots of lateral growth.

'I use this variety a lot, as it's very economical. You can buy a 200mm pot with a 60cm tall plant that can double in a year,' says landscaper Jarret Clynick.

'Be aggressive with pruning and take a third off, cutting above a node for tight new growth.' ➤

Choose a hedging plant that grows to the required height.

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Timber screens provide privacy while still letting in light.

Use metal and timber screens

Installing metal or timber screening is another option to planting. They may not provide the same level of privacy or sound insulation, but they can be used to zone areas while letting in light.

Slatted timber and lattice screens are easy to install DIY and you can paint or stain them to suit the space.

Traditional laser-cut screens are expensive and have to be custom-made, but you can buy lightweight panels off-the-shelf that are easy to install.

‘Laser-cut metal screens are not DIY friendly, but you can now get 3D ply screens with the same finish,’ says landscaper Jarret Clynick.

‘This is the type of thing you want when you’re not after total block-out.’

The feeling of a private sanctuary by using screening overhead or in tall panels is emphasised by the shadow lines that can be created.

This transforms the garden into an active space to be engaged with rather than a passive environment. ➤



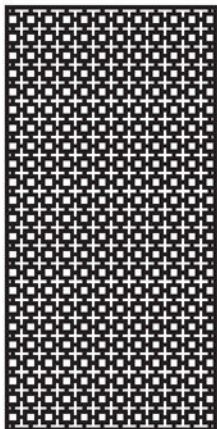
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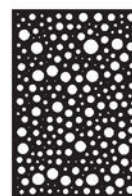
1800mm x 1200mm screens



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Outdoor overhaul

Backyard renovations are far from the last priority these days, with people spending more money and time on getting exactly the space they want.

This home in Moonee Ponds, Victoria, had a large outdoor area, but it was dark, dingy and under-utilised.

Landscape designer Georgia Harper of GHLD (ghld.com.au) took the existing plans to install a pool and came up with a clever solution to improve the entire space.

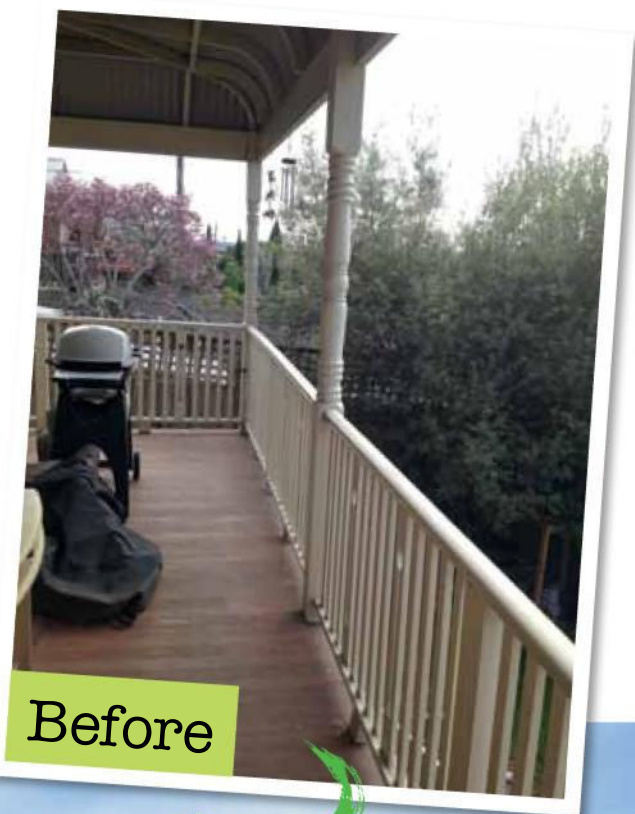
'The block sloped front to back, so the backyard was plunged into eternal darkness. It was a bit like being at the bottom of a well,' says Georgia.

'The kids didn't want to play there and the owners wanted to address why they weren't using a third of the block.'

'I determined that by elevating the area for the pool by 600mm we'd get a lot more sun, the pool would be easier to install as it wouldn't have to be dug as deep, and the line of sight from the house to the pool would be clearer.'



By altering the levels in the backyard, there is a better connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces



Before



After

With glass screening, the pool area is more visible from the house.

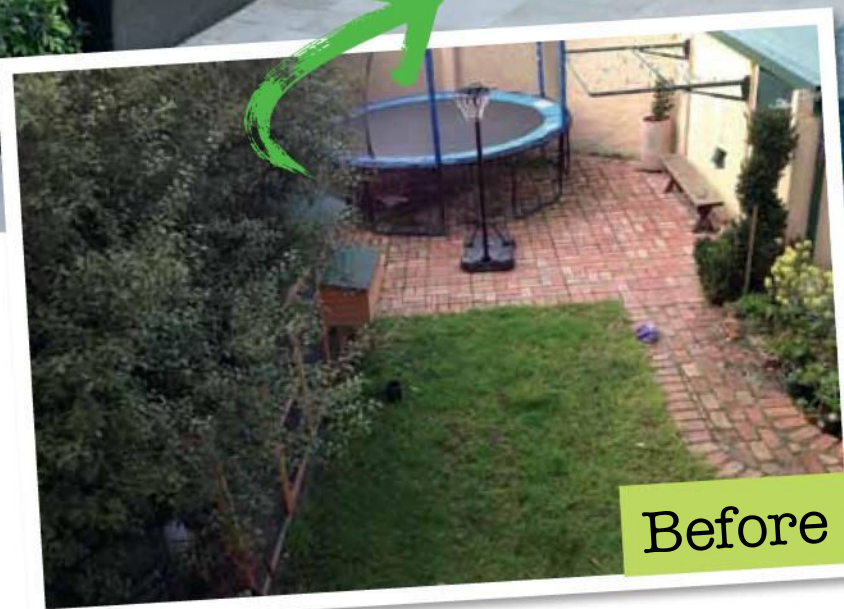
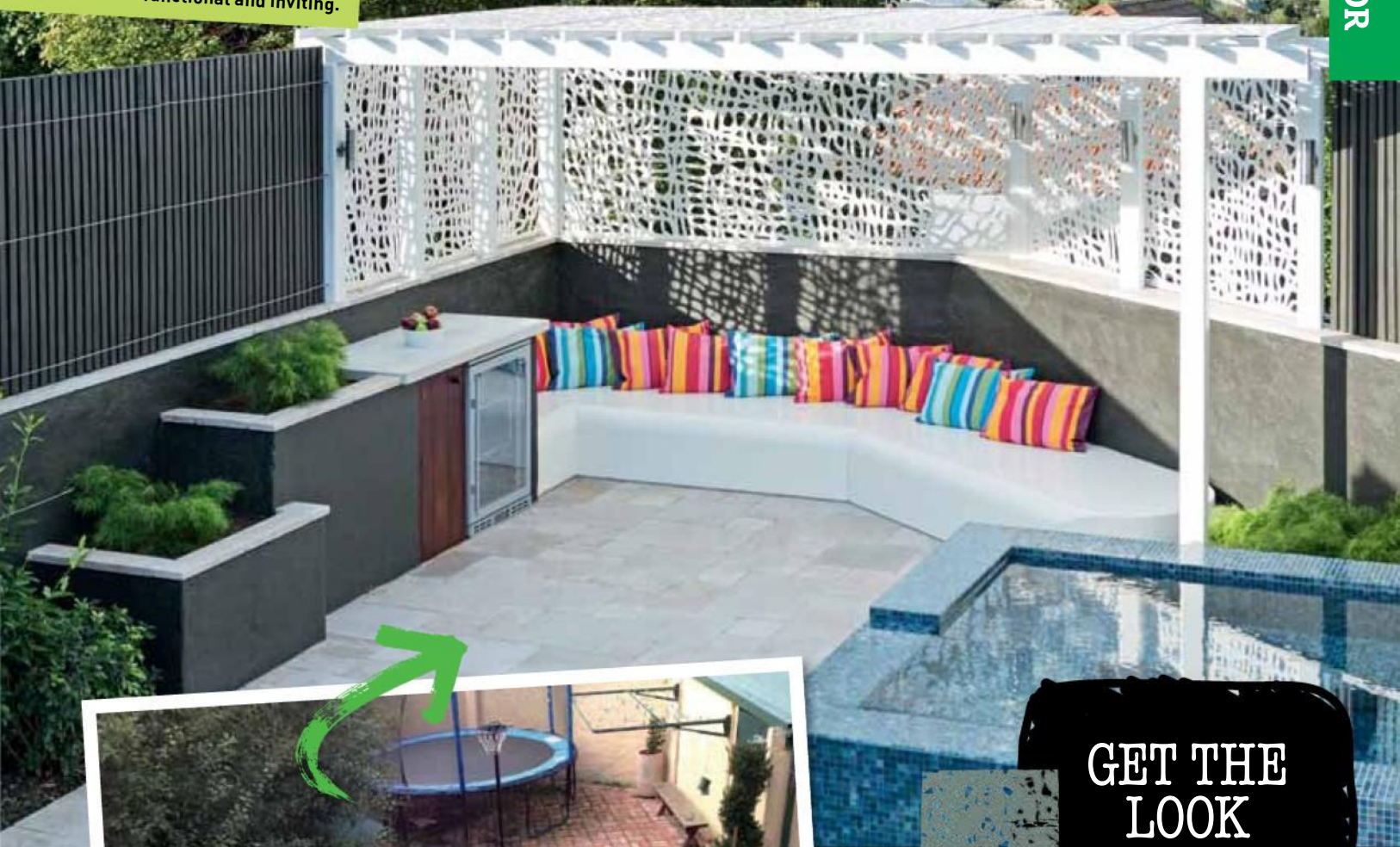


Visit houzz.com.au for more inspiration and information.

PICTURES PATRICK REDMOND

After

The backyard is now more functional and inviting.



Before

GET THE
LOOK

Matrix Rivergum Coolabah Décor
Screen Panel, 2410 x 1205 x 7mm,
\$159. designflow.com.au

Whites Outdoor Galaxy
Screen, 1800 x 900mm,
\$145. whitesgroup.com.au

Protector Aluminium Palm
Screen Panel, 1840 x 940mm,
\$159. protectoraluminium.com.au

The one downside of the new design was overlooking the neighbours and being overlooked.

'As all the houses face the same way, we installed a tall slatted fence on each side of the block. They're not totally solid, but the neighbours can't see through,' says Georgia.

'At the back of the plot, there are some nice trees in the laneway, so

we made a white powdercoated screen. This makes the homeowners feel more private but doesn't block out the trees.'

The screen leads the eye through to the foliage beyond and the expanse of white bounces light back into the garden, providing a point of interest.

'The yard is now a series of levels, so the space is both more functional and appealing to be in,' says Georgia. 🌿



Before

After

The new retaining wall turns this sloping backyard into a multi-level landscape.



LANDSCAPE WITH TIMBER

Build a low retaining wall to define outdoor zones in a sloping backyard

PROJECT AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

An old paved patio off the back of this home had recently been replaced with a new deck as part of a plan to overhaul the yard.

To turn the deck into a year-round outdoor living and entertaining space, a pergola was installed and roofed with corrugated polycarbonate sheets to let in the maximum amount of light.

Garden beds were built around the deck using ACQ treated pine sleepers, which are safe to use for everything from vegie patches to playgrounds.

The same 2.4m long sleepers were used to build a new retaining wall beyond the garden beds. It was designed to provide more structure to the sloping site and mark a clear division between the deck and lawn.

Materials

Treated pine ACQ	
2.4m sleepers	\$115
Quick-set concrete	\$48
Geotextile fabric	\$34
Socked ag pipe	\$40
Premium soil mix	\$60
Pine bark mulch	\$54
Aggregate	\$42
Cuphead bolts,	
washers and nuts	\$120
Galvanised batten	
screws	\$18
TOTAL	\$531

Stuart



EXPERT SECRETS

Pine treated to H5 level is a suitable option for almost all non-structural applications.

DIY TIP

Use Dial Before You Dig (1100.com.au) to find out the location of underground pipes and cables before doing any excavations. ➤

**1
DAY****\$531
COST****STUART'S
PICKS**

Grunt 1 x 10m Non-woven Geotextile Membrane, \$34. usegrunt.com



Ryobi One+ 18V Cordless Compact Drill Driver, \$89 skin only. ryobi.com.au



Suntuf 6m Opal Greca Polycarbonate Roofing, about \$71. palram.com.au



Ironwood Microshades Sleepers, \$23 each. chhwoodproducts.com.au

BUILD THE WALL



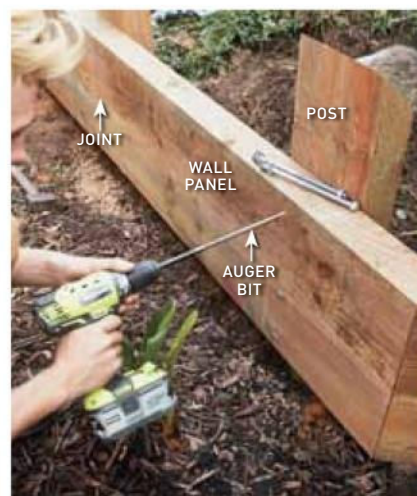
1 Excavate the post holes

Mark out the retaining wall with landscape pegs. Run a stringline in between and mark the post positions, with the centres a maximum 1200mm apart. Excavate a level area behind the wall, then dig 300 x 300mm holes to 600mm deep for each post, using a post-hole digger.



2 Sink the posts

Cut 2.4m sleepers into 1200mm long posts using a compound mitresaw. Seal the cut ends with a timber preservative and position in the holes. Check the posts for plumb, then fill each hole to about one-third with water and add quickset concrete to ground level, mixing thoroughly.



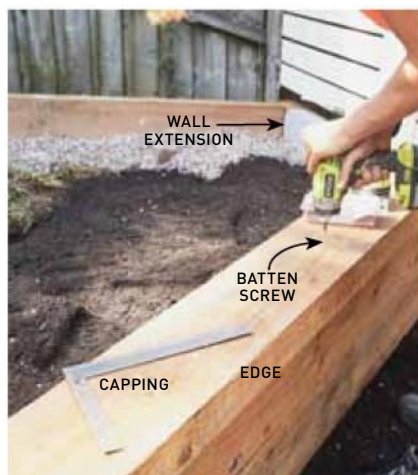
3 Secure the wall panels

Attach a full-length sleeper as the base panel of the wall. Level, clamp and secure to each post with two cuphead bolts, set 30mm from the edges. Repeat for the top course with two half-sleepers, centring the joint on the post. Pre-drill through the wall panels and posts with a 10.5mm auger bit.



4 Add the drainage

Cover the wall and area behind with geotextile fabric. Add aggregate and position ag pipe on top, ensuring good fall to the outlet end. Cover the pipe with aggregate and cut the excess fabric. **TIP** As the wall was on an angle to the fence, two half-sleepers were added to retain the backfill in the whole area.



5 Install the capping

Cut the posts flush with the top of the wall, then position a full-length sleeper as the capping. Pre-drill to secure the capping with two batten screws over each post and a single screw 75mm from the front edge between each post. **TIP** The wall and extension capping were skew-screwed through the edge.



6 Landscape the wall

Backfill behind the retaining wall with a premium soil mix and aggregate. Firm the soil down gently as you go and make sure the backfill is mostly aggregate. Finish off the top with a layer of soil, then add a 50mm deep layer of an organic mulch such as bark chips.



GROW TIP

To plant up garden beds under a pergola, check how much shade the area gets and choose species suited to the light levels.



Creating drainage

To prevent water being trapped behind the retaining wall, drainage was created.

The back of the wall was lined with geotextile fabric and a length of 100mm socked agricultural pipe was positioned on a bed of aggregate.

More aggregate and soil was added on top and finished with mulch. The fabric keeps the backfill in position.

It's best to connect these pipes to an existing stormwater system or run them to well-drained areas of the garden and, if necessary, create rubble dispersion pits. ➤



Add timber or stone retaining walls and raised planter beds to transform a sloping backyard into a terraced garden

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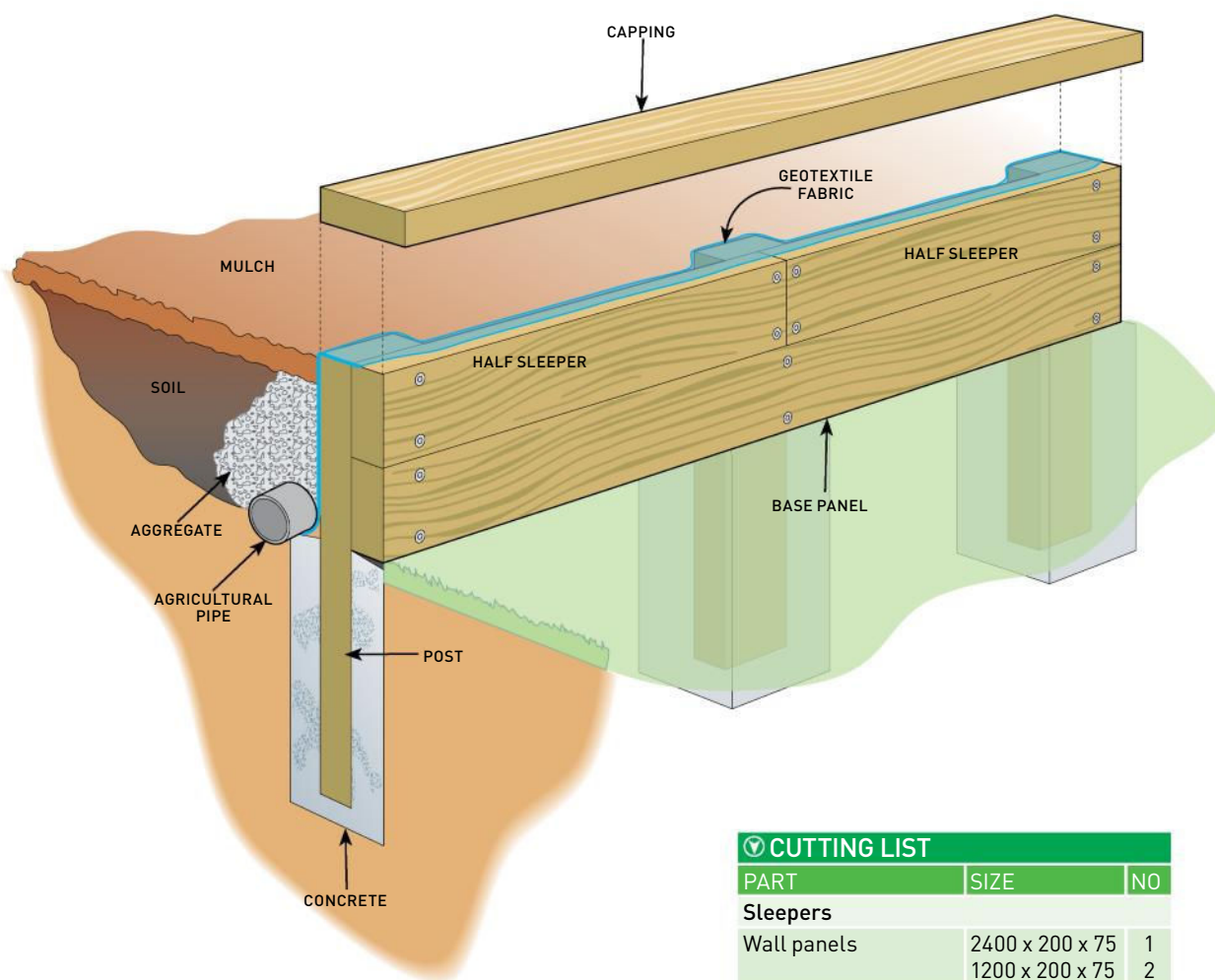
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RETAINING WALL

measurements in mm



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO
Sleepers		
Wall panels	2400 x 200 x 75	1
	1200 x 200 x 75	2
Posts	1200 x 200 x 75	3
Capping	2400 x 200 x 75	1

FASTENERS

TYPE	USE
G10 x 200mm cuphead bolts, washers and nuts	Wall panels
14g x 150mm galvanised batten screws	Capping

Watch the DIY video online
 Visit handyman.net.au/retaining-wall



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Josh and Jenna

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ADD A BALUSTRADE

Finish a new deck, verandah or balcony with powdercoated aluminium panels you can install DIY on a budget

PROJECT FRANK GARDNER PICTURES SUE FERRIS STYLING ARTEMIS GOUROS



A simple black balustrade completes the verandah.

As part of a major renovation and extension to this Sydney home, an open-plan living space and 7.8 x 2.1m elevated covered verandah were added.

To meet safety regulations, it was necessary to install a balustrade, as the new verandah stood 1000mm above ground. Plus there was a small child living in the house and young next-door neighbours.

The balustrade panels had to be secured to the masonry columns supporting the roof, one house wall and the tiled concrete verandah floor.

Rendering the brick extension to this house added a lot to the final renovation bill, so any task that didn't legally have to be done by pros, such as installing the balustrade, was done DIY to save costs. ➤





DIY TIP

Powdercoated aluminium balustrade panels can be secured to a variety of surfaces including brick, tile and timber.



Order the balustrade

The options for deck and balcony balustrades include glass, timber and powdercoated aluminium.

For this site, a black balustrade from Protector Aluminium was chosen to give the verandah a streamlined, modern look. There are various designs available, including the double top rail style of fence panels used here.

Standard 2000 x 1010mm panels and posts are available off the shelf, but for this project, specific sizes were required to fit between the columns and for raking down the steps.

To order custom sizes, visit the website (protectoraluminium.com.au) and select your preferred design. Then submit the panel sizes you'll require at a Bunnings Special Orders desk.

You'll need to measure the height of the landing, and the dimensions of the steps, so you can fill out the calculation sheet for raked balustrades.

Once the paperwork is done, you'll receive a quote and detailed drawings for each panel. You'll have to sign off on the drawings after checking their accuracy and pay for the product before it can be manufactured.



Seating the posts

The method of securing the post bases depends on the substrate. If securing to concrete, drill 10mm diameter holes and secure using 50 x 10mm stainless steel Dynabolts, or use Chemset and 10mm threaded rod.

On a timber deck, secure the base plates to the joists using 50 x 10mm coachscrews or attach blocking between the joists and secure with coachscrews or bolts, nuts and washers.

GET THE LOOK



Impatiens, about \$9 for a 125mm pot, from nurseries.



Greenbo 29 x 30cm Planter, \$46. urbanbalcony.com.au



Eden 29 x 56cm Rattan Look Charcoal Self-Watering Planter, \$90. eden.com.au



Go for bright plants and accessories on a verandah with neutral-toned surfaces



Strawberry Plants, about \$4 for a 95mm pot, from nurseries.



Outdoor 38cm Chair Cushions in Multi, \$9 each. kmart.com.au



Romak QiQ-Tidy 14L Galvanised Bucket, \$24. romak.com.au



One Tier 26 x 36cm Metal Plant Stand, \$6. kmart.com.au

Secure the post bases to a tiled floor with bolts.

Anchoring the rails

These metal balustrade panels can be installed between and secured to solid masonry structures such as columns and walls, timber posts, or metal posts manufactured to match the panels.

➤ **MASONRY** Slide the panel brackets over the rails. Use a hammer drill with a masonry bit to bore 8mm holes, then tap blue wall plugs into the masonry. Secure the brackets using 30mm x 12g hex head timber screws.

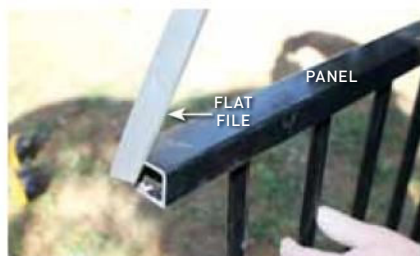
➤ **TIMBER** Use panel brackets over the rail ends, drill 3.5mm pilot holes and secure brackets to the posts using 65mm x 12g hex head timber screws.

➤ **METAL** For off-the-shelf posts, slide the sleeves fitted to the top of the posts into the top rail of the panel.

Secure the panel brackets over the lower rail ends using 20mm x 12g self-drilling metal Tek screws or 4.8mm aluminium rivets.



Keep it simple
with streamlined
balustrading that
goes with any style
of outdoor area



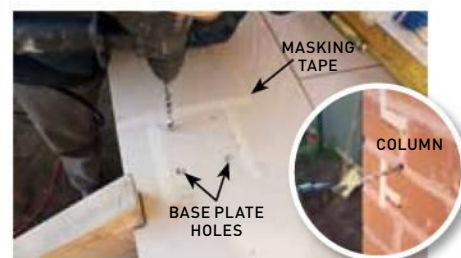
1 Cut the panels

Measure the openings and cut the balustrade panels to length, allowing 10mm of clearance so they're not a tight fit. Wrap masking tape around the rails to mark the cut lines. Use a hacksaw to trim away the excess, then remove the burrs using a flat file.



2 Mark the screw holes

Prop the balustrade panels in position and clamp to keep them aligned. Mark the outline of the rail brackets using masking tape on the masonry columns, then mark each screw location through the panel rail brackets using a permanent marker.

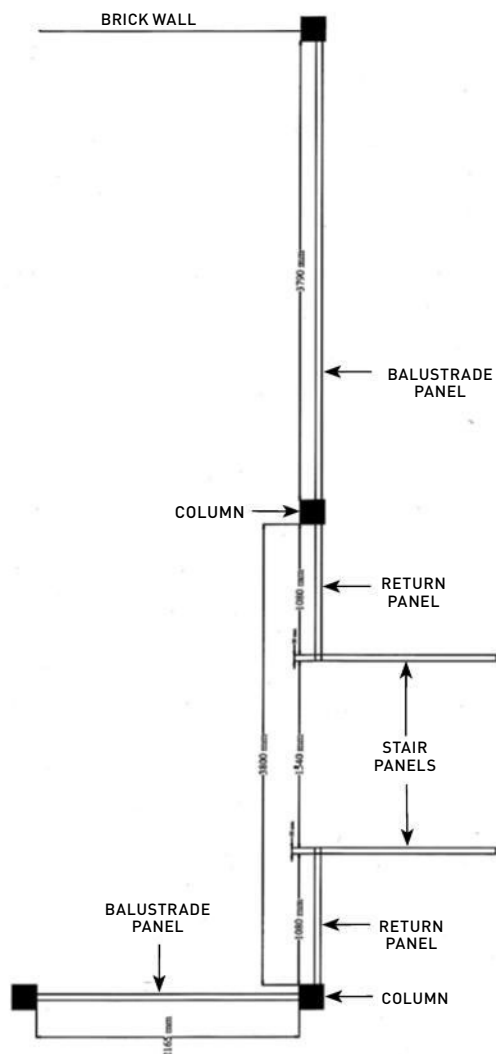


3 Drill the holes

Mark the base plates using tape, then mark the four bolt holes with the marker. Remove the balustrade panels. Use a 10mm diamond core bit to drill through the tiles. Bore 8mm diameter holes 60mm into the slab and the columns with a hammer drill.



VERANDAH BALUSTRADE



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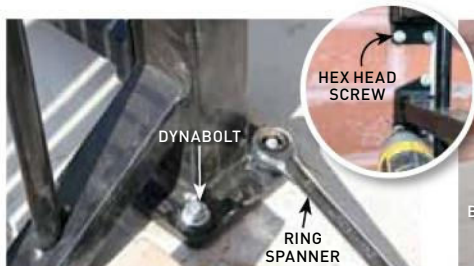
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4 Secure the posts

Replace the balustrade panels, checking for level and plumb with a spirit level, then clamp in position. Use stainless steel Dynabolts to secure the base plates to the tiled floor, tightening them slowly so the flange grabs the concrete slab underneath.



5 Secure the rails

Use screws and plastic plugs to secure the panel rail brackets to the columns. Secure the rails to the brackets with 16mm x 8g self-drilling Tek screws. **TIP** Drill a pilot hole through the top of each bracket and rail with a 3mm twist bit, to make them easier to join. 🌱

DIY TIP

Install a lawn-irrigation system and connect it to a rainwater tank to keep new grass looking green, even during the hot summer months.

After

The new lawn has turned the untidy yard into a suburban paradise.



Before

FROM SIMPLE TO STUNNING

A revamped garden and modernised surfaces boost the kerb appeal of this suburban house

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERIE BARBER



A humble brick home like this one can be found in almost any Australian suburb, sitting quietly without demanding too much attention.

Unfortunately, the messy front yard is hurting this home's kerb appeal. The overgrown garden prevents light from entering the house, and there is gravel where a lawn should be.

The reno plan

To give this house serious street cred, I'll need the transforming power of paint.

A modern colour scheme will have a big impact, making the dated home look like it has just been built.

Replacing the jungle with low-maintenance greenery will tidy up the garden beds, while a lush lawn is a big improvement over parched, bare dirt.

Modern lighting and timber features are the finishing touches that will bring it all together. >

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 RENDER THE WALLS

A basic brick home won't stand out from others on the street, so I'll start by rendering the walls.

It's not a cheap fix, but when you want to completely modernise a dated facade, the transformation is always worth the investment.



Dunlop Multipurpose Acrylic Render, \$13 for 20kg. dunlopdry.com

4 INSTALL NEW LIGHTS

Never underestimate the impact of lighting when it comes to renovating.

Two pairs of bunker lights on either side of the front windows cast a gentle wash of light at night and also provide much-needed symmetry.



Brilliant Aluminium Andros Bunker Light, about \$31. brilliantlighting.com.au

2 PAINT THE SURFACES

For the paint, I've chosen Dulux Dune for the main house and Woodland Grey for the roof, fence, garage door and paved areas.

I'll contrast the grey with crisp white for the window trim and eaves, creating a clean, modern look.

WOODLAND GREY

DUNE



Dulux Weathershield Gloss White Exterior Paint, \$57 for 2L. dulux.com.au

5 LAY GARDEN EDGING

Continuing the timber theme, I'll remove the untidy white pebbles and replace them with a streamlined garden bed made from merbau slats.

It's a simple, but neat and effective, solution that will improve just about any front yard.



ITI Solid Merbau 190 x 42mm DAR, \$39 per linear metre. itiaustralia.com.au

3 ADD TIMBER ACCENTS

The contemporary new facade now needs modern trimmings. A timber door adds warmth to the grey, with frosted glass panels letting light into the foyer.

The matching timber mailbox is a perfect accompaniment and also defines the entry.



Hume 2040 x 820 x 40mm Savoy Entrance Door with Frosted Glass, \$295. humedoors.com.au

6 REVAMP THE GARDEN

There's little of the unruly garden that I'll retain, as it currently dominates the front of the house and blocks natural light.

Low-lying plants provide greenery to offset the grey walls without obstructing the windows.

All that's left is to roll out some bright green turf and we're done. ☺

Cordyline fruticosa, 200mm, \$22, from Bunnings.

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1 Replace the plasterboard

3 DAY ROOM REFRESH

Transform a living space with plasterboard, lights and paint

PROJECT DARREN BRADFORD PICTURES GEOFF BECK

After being used as a kids' entertainment area for a number of years, this second living room had seen better days.

Featuring a TV, ping-pong table, gaming area, piano and dartboard, it had always been a great space to use when friends came to visit.

But wear and tear had started to make the room look shabby, so it was time to update the surfaces.

We replaced damaged plasterboard on one wall with new sheets, swapped the halogen downlights for LEDs, then painted the walls and ceiling.

Looking lighter and brighter, it's now a functional family room. ➤

2 Install new
downlights

3 Repaint the
walls and ceiling

DESIGN TIP

Decorate a neutral space with bright rugs, pot plants and a mix of old and new items to provide plenty of visual interest.

1 Replace the plasterboard

To help protect the plasterboard wall from stray darts, cork tiles had been installed behind and around the dartboard as an extra surface.

But the wall around the tiles had been punctured too many times for a simple repair after a lot of wayward throws, so the damaged plasterboard behind the tiles had to be replaced.

New plasterboard sheets were hung DIY to create a smooth new wall.



Remove the old sheets

Take down the plasterboard wall, then cut new sheets to fit. Hang the new sheets on the wall studs, using adhesive and screws.



Finish the new wall

Tape and set the seams between the sheets with compound, then sand to a clean finish ready to be coated with fresh paint. ➤

DIY TIP

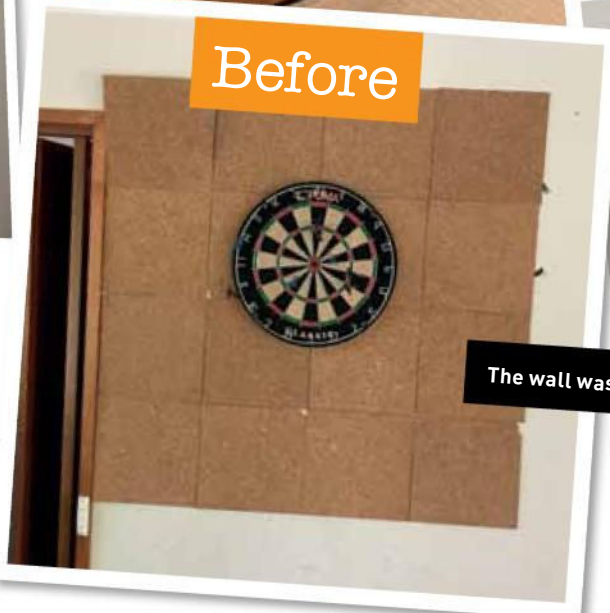
When spreading the compound to seal the plasterboard, use just enough to fill the joints. Top up with a second application if needed.



After

New plasterboard takes the wall from scruffy to smooth.

Before



The wall was full of small holes from stray darts.

GYPROCK®

Everything else is just plasterboard



Did you know...

- An adult's breath and perspiration creates around 1.25 litres of moisture per day
- 35% of Australian households surveyed have experienced mould
- Australians spend 90% of their time indoors
- The air in homes contains a range of pollutants – often much more concentrated than outside air
- 2.3 million Australians suffer from asthma and one in three from allergies

GYPROCK Sensitive is a revolutionary hypoallergenic plasterboard that is the first and only residential plasterboard to be approved by the National Asthma Council Australia's Sensitive Choice® program. This premium plasterboard is highly moisture and mould resistant and provides substantial benefits for you and your family at a very reasonable upgrade cost.

To find out more visit gyprock.com.au/sensitive

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New LED downlights give the space a brighter feel.

2 Change the downlights

Of the seven halogen downlights in the room only four were working, so to create a brighter and lighter room, we replaced them with LEDs.

These efficient LED downlights use about 80% less energy than halogens, which will reduce energy costs.

An electrician had to change the downlights from halogens to LEDs, but the bulb units were changed DIY following these three easy steps.



2 ALLOW the downlight to drop out and into your hand.



3 UNPLUG the downlight IEC plug and replace it with the new LED.

LIGHT THE WAY

Offering fascia covers in multiple colours, including black, chrome, purple, red, green and orange, Viewlight LEDs, from \$49, are so versatile they will suit any room (viewlight.com.au).

They also come in round and square shapes to help get the styling in your space spot on. ➤



Viewlight 70mm Red Plug and Play Dimmable Round Downlight, \$59.



Viewlight 70mm Blue Plug and Play Dimmable Square Downlight, \$63.



Viewlight 90mm Chrome Plug and Play Dimmable Round Downlight, \$65.

TRANSFORM YOUR HOME THE WAY YOU WANT, WHENEVER YOU WANT.



With Viewlight LED downlights, you can create the perfect ambience, inside and out, in all rooms of your home - including bathrooms and outside under eaves.

Your Viewlight LED downlights can be customised to complement your home, whenever you want. Simply choose from 10 fascia colours, 70 or 90mm, warm or cool, round or square for a lighting solution that matches your style.



3 Repaint the surfaces

Painting is an inexpensive and fast way to instantly revamp a room to make it seem larger and more open.

To prepare the room for painting, the few holes in the walls and ceiling were filled, sanded and cleaned.

Fresh paint is the easiest way to update a drab room.



▶ Watch the DIY video online
Visit handyman.net.au/plasterboard



Paint the ceiling

Use a brush to paint the trim and cut in, then apply two coats to the ceiling with a roller. Roll the first coat in one direction and the second at a 90° angle for a streak-free finish.



Prime the plasterboard

Seal the new plasterboard wall with primer. Cut in the wall and around any light switches and electrical outlets with a brush, then use a roller to coat the wall.



Paint the walls

After the primer has fully dried, apply two coats of interior low-sheen paint to the wall. Touch up the other walls or clean with sugar soap, if needed. 🍯

DARREN'S PICKS



Dulux Wash & Wear Low Sheen Paint in Vivid White, \$80 for 6L.



Dulux Ceiling White, about \$46 for 4L. dulux.com.au



Taubmans 3 in 1 Sealer, Primer, Undercoat, \$28 for 500ml. taubmans.com.au



Light is connection

Precious moments with OSRAM

For perfect bedroom lighting choose from OSRAM's NEW LED SUPERSTAR downlights or the dimmable range of MR16 and PAR16 LED lamps. For a more dynamic lighting solution take a look at OSRAM's LIGHTIFY™ — smart, connected lighting controlled via your smart device. Find out more at www.osram.com.au/lightify.

Control
via your
smart
device



LED SUPERSTAR
DOWNLIGHT



LED SUPERSTAR PAR16
& MR16 advanced lamps

OSRAM LIGHTIFY™



Tunable White
PAR16



Gateway



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bunnings.com.au

Find it at Bunnings

Let there be lights

Add a designer touch to living areas with these lighting ideas



- 1 **BRILLIANT** Timber Axiom Pendant, \$416.
- 2 **ROUGE** Flora Pendant Light, \$199.

Getting the lighting right in your home makes all the difference when it comes to setting the mood. Use lights to add warmth, brighten up dark corners or bring a space up to date.

Designer pendant lights in dining rooms and floor lamps in living spaces are both practical and decorative.

These lights also work well in other rooms, such as using pendants in the kitchen to eradicate shadows or adding a feature lamp in the bedroom.



Install dimmer switches so you can go from light and bright to moody and cosy as needed

HOME DESIGN

- 1 **CONICO** 54cm Table Lamp, \$39.
- 2 **TIMBER** Grove Pendant, \$119.
- 3 **TIMBER** Mesen Pendant, \$149.





HOME DESIGN

- 1 AMBRA TOZZO 25cm Pendant Light, \$110.
- 2 AMBRA TONDO 20cm Pendant Light, \$95.
- 3 AMBRA CICLO 18cm Pendant Light, \$95.



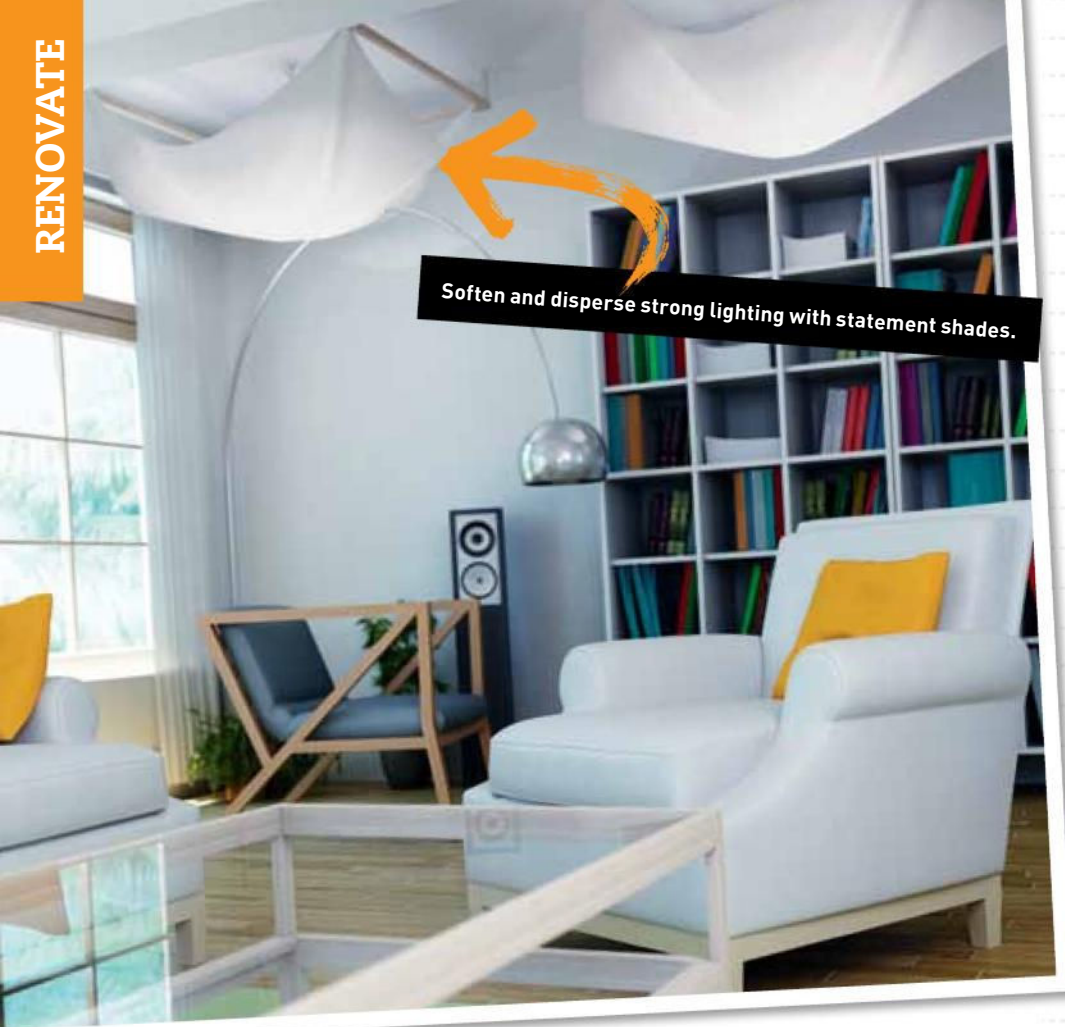
ABOVE HOME DESIGN Concrete Pendant Lights, \$59 each.
LEFT HOME DESIGN Marmo Marble Pendant Lights, \$149 each.



Floor lamps

Bringing an element of depth to a room, floor lamps are most effective for creating mood lighting in the home. They are often the ideal lights for living areas and bedrooms.

- 1 VERVE DESIGN Ciara, \$140.
- 2 ARLEC Harrison, \$129.
- 3 VERVE DESIGN Sian, \$199.
- 4 ARLEC New York, \$29.
- 5 HOME DESIGN Conico, \$59.
- 6 CAFE LIGHTING Masco, \$139.



Soften and disperse strong lighting with statement shades.



Rouge Living 16.5cm Rattan Habitat Light Batten Fix in Walnut, \$50. rougeliving.com.au



Philips 100W Square Framed Fluorescent Ceiling Light, \$30. lighting.philips.com.au



Mercator 22cm Opal Vetro Square Batten Fix Light, \$26. mercator.com.au



Brilliant White Nora Three-light Spotlight, \$60. brilliantlighting.com.au



HPM DLI 90mm Cut-out Downlight, \$30. hpm.com.au

LIGHT UP THE ROOM

Select a unique lighting solution to change the tone of your home

The central ceiling fixture is the main source of light in a room, while lamps provide mood or task lighting, and replacing it can completely transform a space.

A statement light fixture acts as a decorative focal point and the type

of shade or covering dictates how the light is dispersed.

Spotlights can be angled in different directions while downlights give more even coverage. Domed covers diffuse the light while textured shades can cast patterns.



Choose light fittings to complement the style of decorating for harmonious interiors



Replace MR16 Halogen
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Easy and reliable upgrade to LED lighting

When replacing halogen MR16 lamps with LEDs, have you experienced problems such as flickering, flashing or simply the LEDs failing to work?

Upgrade now with ease your old halogen downlights with the new **HPM MR16 Retrofit LED downlight** to enjoy maximum brightness, a contemporary sleek design and up to 70% energy savings.

Safely install it yourself in 2 easy steps:
unplug the existing halogen downlight & plug-in
the new HPM MR16 Retrofit LED downlight.
Enjoy the benefits of LED today!



For more information visit www.hpm.com.au



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INSTALL A NEW CEILING

Replace damaged plasterboard with new sheets DIY to save money

Changing the layout of your home or adding an extension will likely mean you'll need to install a new ceiling.

Although the process is similar to hanging a plasterboard wall, working overhead can be a little trickier.

If you are adding insulation, position the batts in the roof space before attaching the plasterboard.



Bridge joints and fill holes with tape and compound, then prime and paint

Materials

- Plasterboard
- Acrylic stud adhesive
- Plaster knife
- Utility knife
- Measuring tape
- Cordless drill
- 25mm plasterboard screws
- Pencil
- Ladder
- Spirit level
- Hand saw
- Safety equipment
- Joint compound and tape



1 Check trusses for level

Before starting, have an electrician cap all live wires to ensure there are no electrical hazards where you are working. Use a spirit level to check that the trusses the plasterboard will be attached to are level.



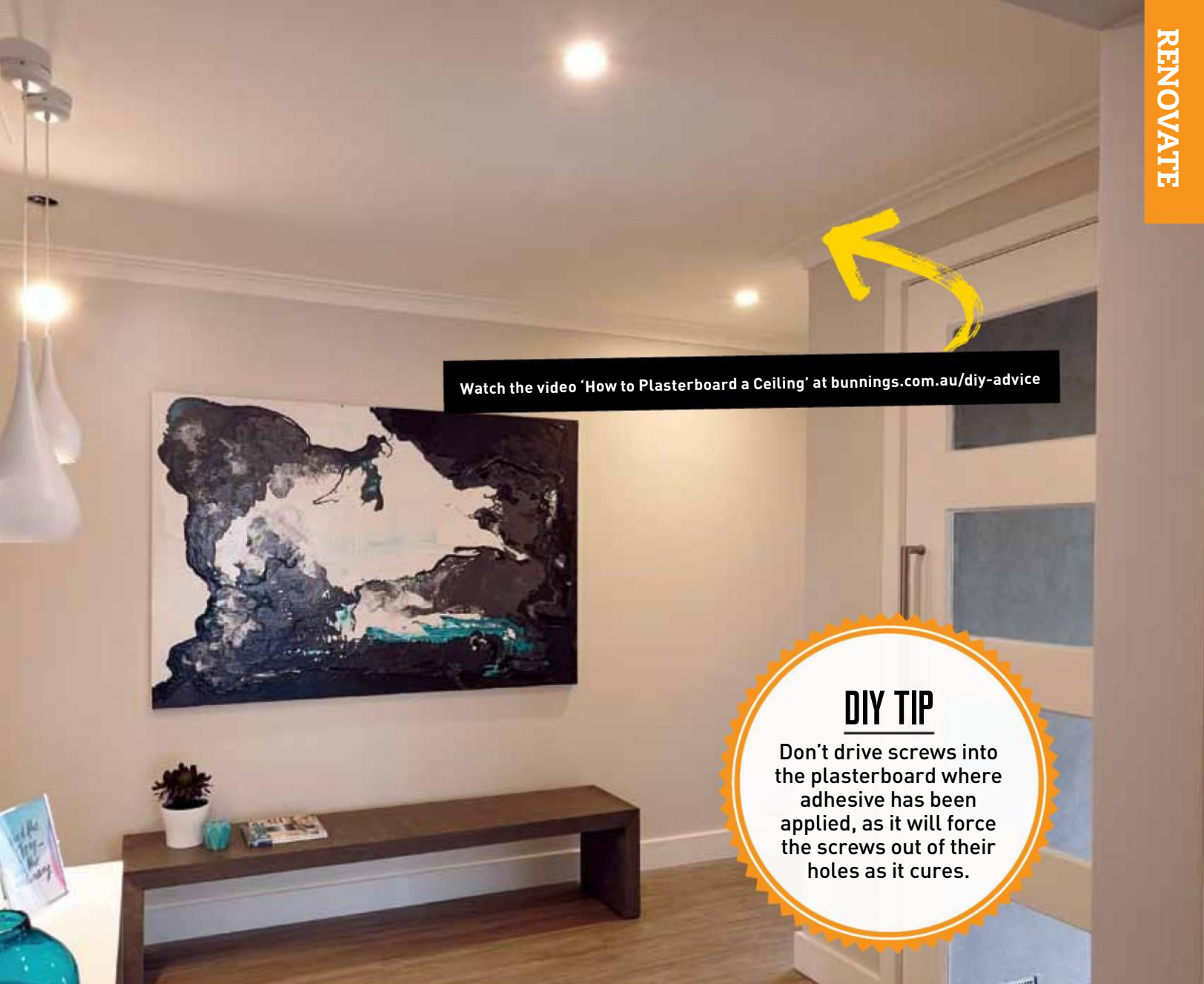
2 Measure the ceiling

Use a tape measure to determine the length and width of the ceiling and calculate the number of plasterboard sheets required to cover it. Mark any sheets of plasterboard that will need to be cut to fit.



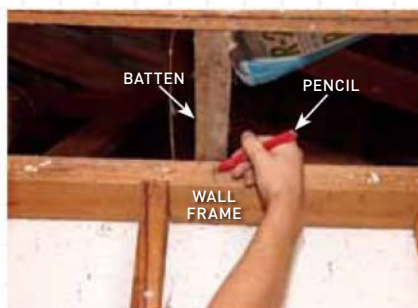
3 Cut the plasterboard

Attach a tape measure to a utility knife to create a finger gauge. Set the tape measure to the correct length, then score along the sheet while holding the tape taut at the edge. Snap the sheet and cut the paper on the other side.



DIY TIP

Don't drive screws into the plasterboard where adhesive has been applied, as it will force the screws out of their holes as it cures.



4 Mark the batten positions

Using a pencil, make a mark on the top of the wall frame at the centre of each ceiling batten. These marks will be used to determine the position of the ceiling battens once they have been covered with the plasterboard sheets.



5 Apply the adhesive

Use a plaster knife to apply dabs of acrylic stud adhesive to the timber ceiling battens. The adhesive should be applied thickly and at regular intervals. Each dab should be about the size of a large walnut.



6 Secure the plasterboard

Have a second person help you lift the plasterboard into position and press each sheet against the adhesive. Using the wall marks as a guide, drive screws into the battens 200mm apart so the heads are just below the surface.



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- Four heavy duty rivets ensure durability for accurate measurements

DURABILITY

- Powder coated finish

PRODUCTIVITY

- 1196mm long to facilitate marking on 1200mm standard dry-wall sheets, without overhang
- Features bold white numbers and graduations on a high-contrast background to offer easy and quick readings

SAFETY

- Finger guard to protect against accidental blade jumps

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FAST FACELIFT

Update surfaces on a budget to transform a dated bathroom

A modern bathroom is a sought-after feature in any home, but a reno can easily cost over \$10,000, especially with tradie fees for plumbing and electricity.

But if a bathroom has good bones, it's possible to transform the room entirely on a budget.

There are specialty paints for tiles, cabinets and benchtops, so if the colour scheme is dated, you can create a modern look for only a few hundred dollars.

Replacing damaged wall and floor tiles, and grouting, can be done DIY to give a bathroom a fresh new look for less. ➤



Before



BUDGET BATHROOM MAKEOVER

This suburban home was bought as an investment property, but the bathroom was stuck in the 1980s. Featuring pastel colours, dated patterned tiles and basic tapware, it was crying out for a makeover.

Fortunately, the layout was user-friendly and with a minor cosmetic makeover, the bathroom could be modernised for a fraction

of the price of a full reno, allowing it to be quickly put back on the market for a higher rental yield.

As the wall and floor tiles were in good condition, the old-fashioned designs were simply covered with crisp white tile paint rather than being removed and replaced.

This shortcut took just a weekend and saved thousands on the cost of

laying new tiles. The cabinets were also sound, so new handles brought them into the 21st century.

A new above-bench sink and modern streamlined tapware completed the vanity revamp.

Finally, the pastel yellow walls were painted in a more pleasing neutral tone, completing the renovation for less than \$500. ➤

GET THE LOOK



Caroma Carboni II Above Counter Basin, \$202.
caroma.com.au



Prestige 128mm Brushed Nickel Round T Handle, about \$7. itwproline.com.au



White Knight Tile Paint in White, \$50 for 1L.
whiteknightpaints.com.au



White Knight Tile & Laminate Primer, about \$48 for 1L.

After

Tile and laminate paint transformed this bathroom, saving plenty of cash.



Paint over old tiles

Visit handyman.net.au/tile-paint

Before

REGROUT WALL TILES

DIY TIP

Fractures in grout and stains that won't wash out may indicate spots where water is working its way behind the tiles.

Over time grout can degrade, with small chips eventually worsening and flaking off entirely. Without grout, water can penetrate beneath tiles and cause more serious damage.

While tiles can last a lifetime, grout needs to be replaced as soon as it starts to crack or peel away. It can be done DIY for a modest outlay and completed in a weekend.

A handheld grout saw can be used to remove old grout in small areas, but to regROUT a whole bathroom, it's quicker to use an oscillating tool with a grout blade.

After grouting, seal all movement joints to prevent water penetration and extend the life of the grout.



Remove the silicone

Before regROUTing tiles, lay drop cloths, then use a utility knife to slice along the vertical and horizontal movement joints around the bathtub, in corners and along the floor.

Pull out the old silicone by hand and clean the tile edges.

Refresh the bathroom by replacing old grout DIY.

1 2 3



1 Scrape out old grout

Use a grout saw to remove at least 3mm of grout from all horizontal and vertical joint lines. Clean out the dust and loose debris using a utility knife, then vacuum. Mix grout and water to the consistency of toothpaste using a bucket, drill and paint mixing screw.



2 Grout the tiles

Spread grout at an angle to the lines with a grout float, working back and forth until the joints are full. Scrape off the excess grout, then sponge the tiles clean as soon as the grout has set, using two buckets to keep the rinse water clean.



3 Seal the joints

Buff the haze off the tiles with an old towel, then mask off either side of all movement joints with tape. Use a caulking gun to fill the joints with a bead of wet-area silicone coloured to match the grout, smooth with a wet finger and remove the tape. ➤



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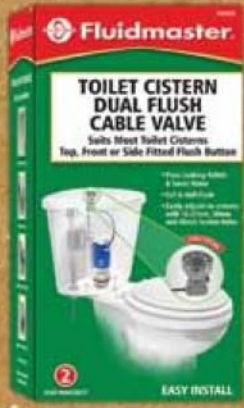
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REPLACE A WALL TILE

Ceramic wall tiles are extremely durable but can become cracked due to impact. And in old bathrooms, the adhesive can fail, causing tiles to become dislodged from the wall.

If only a few tiles are damaged, replace them individually and save the cost of retiling the whole wall.

Remove the grout and the tile, scrape away the old adhesive, then attach the new tile and regROUT.



If you can't match the tiles, create a design feature with different ones of the same size

Single wall tiles are easily replaced and regROUT.

1 2 3



1 Remove the old tile

Remove the old grout from around the damaged tile using a grout saw, being careful not to scratch the surface of surrounding tiles. Crack and ease out the tile using a hammer and cold chisel. Wear gloves and rest your hand on the wall as a brace for the chisel.



2 Apply tile adhesive

Remove the old tile adhesive from the wall using a stiff-bladed scraper. Apply tile adhesive to the back of the new tile, then position and press firmly, squeezing out excess adhesive and leaving it to dry overnight. **TIP** Use tile spacers for even grout lines.



3 RegROUT the new tile

Work the grout in with a grout float held at an angle, removing the excess and cleaning the tiles with a sponge when the grout has set. Apply a grout sealer to help prevent mould and mildew growth, and to make cleaning easier. ➤



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REPLACE A FLOOR TILE

Replace tiles to keep the bathroom floor crack-free.

Floor tiles can crack if heavy items are dropped on them, but often the cause of cracks lies beneath the surface.

If bathroom tiles are laid over a timber subfloor, cracking could be a sign of excess movement of the subfloor. As the timber flexes, the tile remains rigid, causing stress that can lead to cracks.

On a concrete subfloor, tile cracks could be the result of the substrate cracking over time, causing the tile above to break. If tiles are laid over control joints in a concrete slab, this can also cause damage.

When removing a cracked tile, inspect the subfloor underneath to ensure it is in good condition before laying the new tile.

1 2 3



1 Break up the tile

Make holes in the damaged tile in an X shape using an impact drill with a masonry bit. Use a cold chisel to remove the damaged tile from the centre out, then scrape away the old adhesive on the floor underneath using a putty knife.



2 Lay the new tile

Apply tile adhesive to the floor and tile using a square notch trowel, pressing the tile into position with a twisting motion. Position tile spacers, level the surface using a spirit level and tap with a rubber mallet, leaving it to set for 12 hours.



3 Apply the grout

Mix the grout until it's the consistency of toothpaste, matching the colour to the existing grout. Use a grout float to spread the grout, forcing it into the joints. Remove the excess and when the grout has set, clean the tile surface with a damp sponge.

WHAT YOU NEED



Spear & Jackson Pointed Nose Grouting Float, \$16.
spearandjackson.com.au



DTA Australia Grout Remover + Tile Cutter,
\$16. dta-aus.com.au



Long Life Grout Cleaner, \$10 for 750ml,
from Bunnings.



Sika Sikasil Multipurpose Kitchen & Bathroom Sealant, about \$10
for 300ml. sikaretail.com.au



Tileguard Bondall Tile & Grout Sealer, \$45 for 4L.
tileguard.com.au



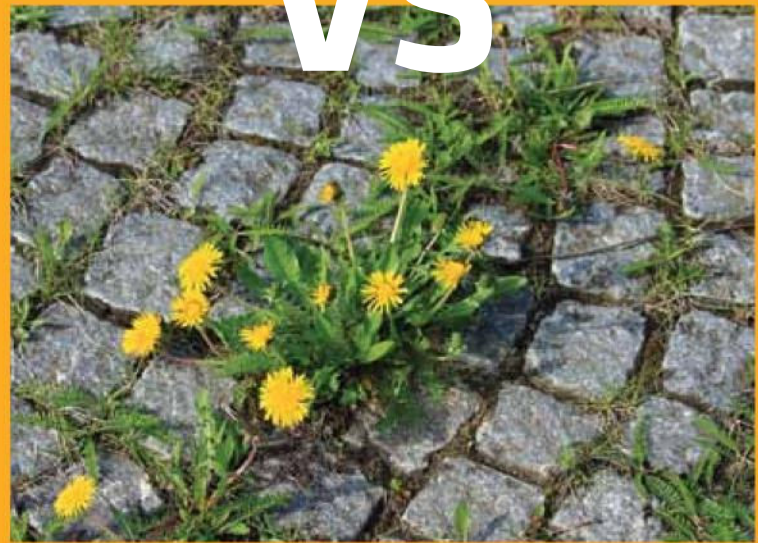
Dunlop Tile-All Plus Premixed Tile Adhesive, \$22 for 310ml.
dunlopdij.com



Davco Sanitized Superfine White Grout, about \$7 for 1.5kg.
parexdavco.com.au



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PAINT OVER OLD TILES

Watch the video 'How to Paint Tiles' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

Materials

Tile cleaner and cloth
Tile primer
Tile paint and stirrer
Paintbrush, roller and tray
240 grit sandpaper
Masking tape
Gloves

Tile paint is a cost-effective way to refresh a kitchen or bathroom, as it creates a new look for a fraction of the price of retiling the whole area.

Designed for use on glass, porcelain and ceramic tiles, specialist tile paint won't flake off over time and is ideal for a quick cosmetic makeover.

1 2 3



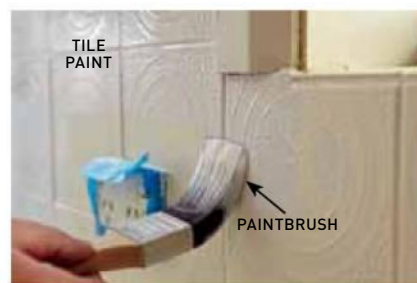
1 Prepare the surface

Clean the tiles thoroughly and allow to dry, then sand the tiles lightly to score the surface. This helps take the glaze off the surface and allows the paint to bond better to the tiles. Once the surface is sanded, wipe the dust away using a soft cloth.



2 Apply the primer

Mask off the edges with tape, then start applying primer by cutting in at the edges with a paintbrush and using a roller for the rest of the tiles. Check the instructions for the drying time. Once the primer has cured, sand the surface lightly and wipe clean.



3 Paint the tiles

Stir the paint thoroughly, then start applying the tile paint in the top corner using a paintbrush. Work your way across the tiles, maintaining a wet edge as you go to avoid overlapping brush marks. Allow to dry, then apply a second coat if necessary.



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... PLUS Passage Mode

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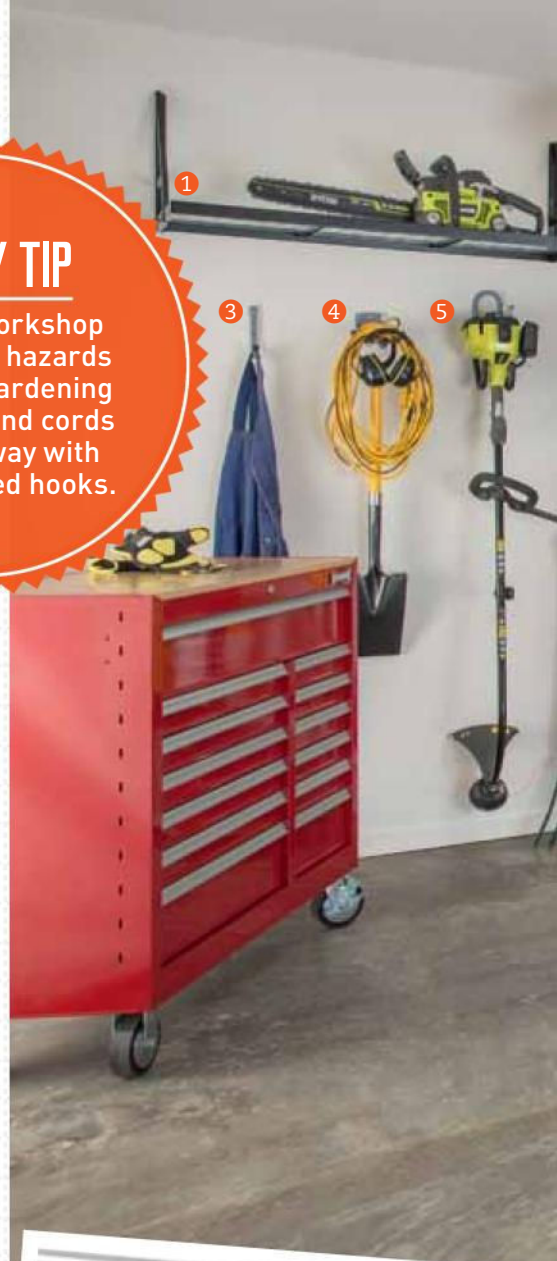
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It's a good idea to change the locks if you've recently moved house.

CHANGE THE LOCKS

Improve security without breaking the bank by changing lock cylinders DIY

WORDS AND PICTURES GUN ARVIDSSEN

After buying a house, changing the locks is always a wise move, preferably before you move in.

Most often, you will only need to replace the cylinder, which is the part that accepts the key and releases the locking mechanism when it's turned.

Fortunately, most cylinders can be easily replaced DIY, and it is often possible to source new ones that are keyed alike for greater convenience.

We replaced the cylinders from the locksets on a back door and sliding doors, and the deadbolt on a front door.

Lockset cylinders

This back door was fitted with a lever set with twin oval cylinders that can be locked from both sides.

When changing cylinders DIY, consider whether you want them to be keyed alike with any other doors and what type of finish you want.

You will also need to specify the cam type of your existing cylinders. This is often embossed on the cam.

GUN'S PICKS



Gainsborough LocRight Double-cylinder Deadlatch, \$95. gainsboroughhardware.com.au



Lemaar Round Deadbolt in Satin Chrome, \$44. lemaar.com.au



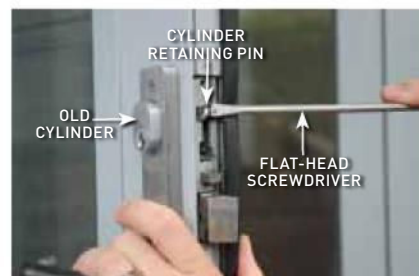
Lane Deadbolt Slimline Square Lock in Brushed Satin Chrome, \$50. itwproline.com.au



Corinthian Doors Interblind Entrance Door, 2040 x 820 x 40mm, \$464. corinthian.com.au



Ozito Power X Change 18V Brushless Drill Driver, \$99 skin only. ozito.com.au



1 Remove the old cylinders

Use a cordless drill with a Phillips drive bit to remove the screws from the door edge plate. Prise out the cylinder retaining pin slightly using a flat-head screwdriver, removing the pin the rest of the way with pliers. Remove the cylinder and repeat on the other side.



2 Install the replacements

Check that the cam on the new cylinder is in the same orientation as the one that was removed, turning it using the key if necessary. Slot the cylinder into position and replace the retaining pin. Insert the new cylinder on the other side of the door.



3 Secure the edge plate

Apply a thread locker to the edge-plate screws and inside the screw holes. Replace the edge plate, then use a manual screwdriver when winding the machine screws back in to avoid over-tightening, which may cause them to cam out. ➤

DIY TIP

Make sure the tailpiece of any replacement cylinder is compatible with the openings in your existing bolt mechanisms.

Patio doors can usually be locked from both inside and out.

Sliding-door lock

Sliding doors are a popular option in renovations and new home designs.

Replacing the cylinders in their locksets isn't any harder than doing the same with standard doors.

But bear in mind when buying your replacement that there are several different cylinder formats available, and they are not all compatible with one another.



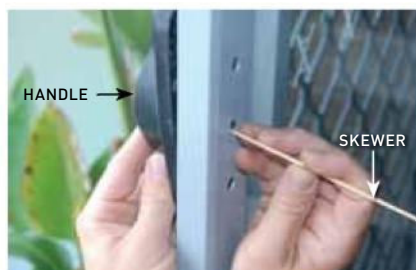
Locking systems in patio doors are typically secured through the frame, meaning it isn't necessary to drill through the glass pane of the door.

1 2 3



1 Disassemble the lockset

Use a cordless drill with a Phillips drive bit to remove the screws, securing the handle casing to the lockset on the door interior. Remove the machine screws, separating the two halves of the lock from either side of the door, and extract the old cylinders.



2 Install the outer cylinder

Use compound pliers or side cutters to trim the new tailpiece to the same length as the original and insert the cylinder into the exterior part of the lock. Feed the tailpiece through the door, using a skewer to prevent it from catching on the edge of the hole.



3 Reattach the interior side

Align the interior half of the lock assembly and replace the machine screws to secure the two halves to the frame. Position the interior-side cylinder in the handle assembly and align the slot with the tailpiece, then reattach the handle with screws. ➤

1.



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Double-cylinder deadbolt

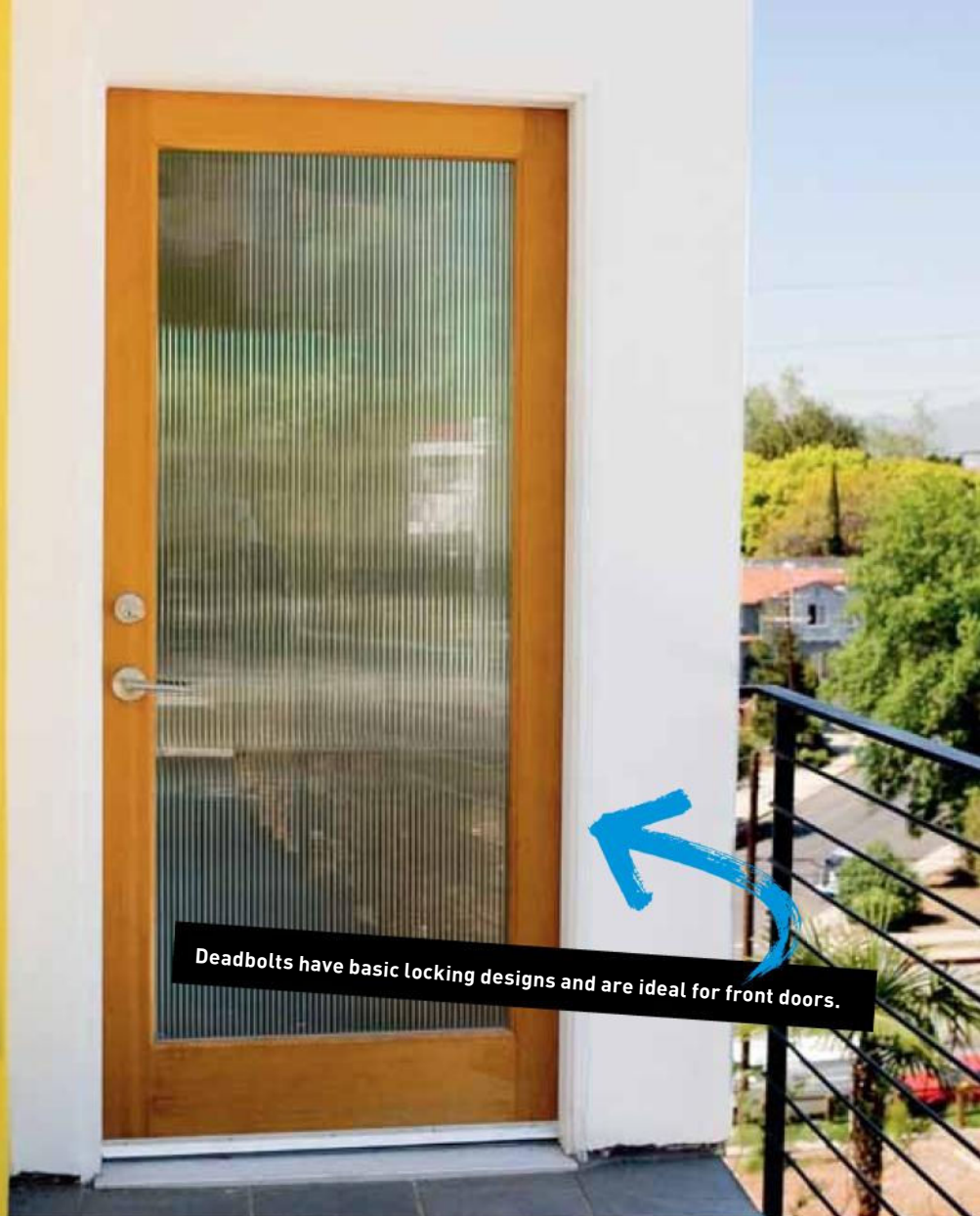
A deadbolt typically comprises little more than the cylinder itself and the bolt it throws, plus a mount or rosette to hold it in position on the door.

Because of its basic design, there's often not much of a price difference in replacing the cylinder alone, so with this door, we installed a whole new deadbolt assembly.

This lock's forked tailpiece matched the existing bolt, so it did not need to be replaced, meaning a fresh new look for minimal effort.



In this deadbolt, the two cylinders are joined by a forked tailpiece that interlocks through a cross-shaped opening in the bolt mechanism.



Deadbolts have basic locking designs and are ideal for front doors.

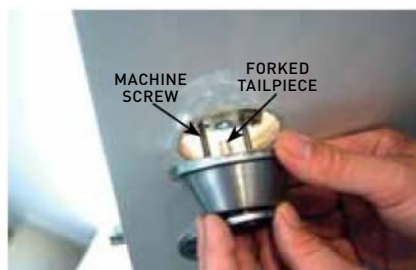
1 2 3



1 Replacing a deadbolt

Use a cordless drill with a suitable drive bit to remove the machine screws holding the two cylinders together from the inside of the door.

TIP If the screws are covered or capped, remove using an old utility knife blade, or drill through the covers for access.



2 Reassemble the lock

Remove the old cylinders and align the new ones with the openings in the bolt mechanism. If the cylinders have forked tailpieces, ensure each side is in the correct orientation, either vertical or horizontal. Wind in the screws just enough to hold the assembly together.



3 Tighten the screws

Use the supplied Allen key to tighten the machine screws and secure the two cylinder mounts on either side of the door. Test that the key throws the bolt smoothly, then push the supplied cover studs into the holes over the hex socket screws for a flush finish.

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Marble hearth

Update the fireplace DIY in a day by installing a new stone slab

PROJECT AND PICTURES SUE FERRIS



The original hearthstone for the fireplace in the home of *Handyman* photographer Sue Ferris had been replaced with slate.

While the tiles were in good shape, they didn't suit the period cottage and Sue wanted a stone slab for the hearth. Hearthstones are usually slate, granite, limestone or marble, but not all are suitable for a wood-burning fire.

Sue chose marble, which is the most costly option but has excellent heat resistance and can be used with gas, electric or wood fires.

Replacing a hearthstone is a DIY job. Here, the slate tiles were removed using a hammer and chisel to reveal the floorboards. Timber and FC sheet were cut for a base frame and quad moulding used to trim the stone slab.

What you need

19mm OAR pine
Fibre cement sheet
10 and 15mm timber nails
Selleys Allfix Adhesive
Sikaflex-Pro
Multipurpose Sealant
15mm Tasmanian oak quad

1 2 3



1 Build the frame

Mark the area for the new stone, then cut pine to length with mitred ends for the frame. Paint the frame, then nail in position. Cut more pieces of pine for the framework, securing with nails. Punch all nail heads flush with the surface.



2 Lay the base

Cut fibre cement sheet to the size of the stone using an angle grinder and diamond blade. Apply a high-strength adhesive to the underside, turn over and predrill holes to secure with screws, ensuring they're flush with the surface.



3 Install the stone

Cut quad to length with mitred ends for trim. Apply adhesive to the stone, position on the fibre cement and press firmly. Predrill the trim and secure with adhesive and nails. Fill the gap between the trim and stone using sealant.

After

Polished marble gives the fireplace a sleek new look.



BUDGET TIP

Granite costs less and is harder than marble, comes in lots of colours and can be left rough or polished to a smooth sheen.

OFFICE OVERHAUL

Create a work space on a budget using easy upcycling techniques

PROJECTS AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR



The home office of DIY blogger Melissa Darr was badly in need of a makeover. Most of the space was taken up by a bulky 80s-style desk, which was the first thing to go.

Melissa wanted to incorporate her photography studio into the room, leaving only a corner for the office, so she needed a desk small enough for the space but big enough to work at.

'I wanted something with character that wasn't run of the mill,' she says.

To create a compact work space with vintage chic, she refinished an old desk and shelf with paint and stain.

She then revamped a metal filing cabinet and turned it into living room furniture, and made a mesh memo board to use with a modern desk or side table for decorative display.



Melissa

EXPERT SECRETS

Look for furniture hardware on eBay as you can find really good deals on interesting pieces.

Treat the home office as part of the decorating story of your home, not a separate space

1 2 3



1 Sand the timber

To remove layers of paint quickly and effectively, use a belt sander on the desktop. Take it back to raw timber and give it a smooth finish to prepare for painting. Sand the smaller surfaces with a detail sander. Use a soft-bristled brush to remove all dust.



2 Stain the desktop

Apply 2-3 coats of stain to the desktop until the desired depth of colour is achieved, then leave to dry. Undercoat the rest of the timber with a stain blocking primer and leave to dry. **TIP** Cabot's Water Based Stain in Brazilian Roast was used.



3 Apply the paint

Use a roller on large surfaces and a brush for fiddly areas to apply two coats of paint to the primed timber. Let it dry overnight, then sand back for a distressed finish, concentrating on corners and edges. Seal the top with a clear gloss polyurethane.

After

The desk is transformed from retro trash into vintage chic.



Melissa picked up this desk at her local op-shop for \$15. It was small enough to go in the corner of the room but would fit the computer with room left over.

'It had a faux-pine stain that gave it an orange glow. The good thing about ugly pieces is that you can pick them up for next to nothing,' she says.

She gave the desk a rich stained top and coloured base, then added a floating shelf with a distressed finish. A vintage chair completed the look. ➤



STAINED SHELF

This shelf was originally located in Melissa's laundry, which she recently renovated, and it had been sitting under her house ever since.

'I knew we'd use it for something one day. It started its life as a plain piece of pine board with bronze-look brackets holding it in place. It looks much different now,' she says.

Melissa painted the shelf white and sanded it back for the rustic look. She then experimented with creating her own timber stain using vinegar.

To wall-mount the shelf, she used the brackets to hang it from the top rather than underneath.

TIP The type of vinegar used will affect the colour of the timber stain.

1 2



1 Prepare the brackets

Remove any grime and flaking paint on the brackets using a wire brush, then spray with a couple of coats of matt black primer and paint in one, allowing it to dry completely in between coats. Sand the shelf lightly and apply two coats of white paint.



2 Sand the timber

To give the timber a distressed look, use an orbital sander with 120 grit paper, concentrating on the edges. Smooth off any rough areas using 180 grit paper. Apply a timber stain, let dry, then secure the brackets using screws. Mount the shelf on the wall.



All you need to make a timber stain DIY is a lidded glass jar, two types of vinegar and steel wool.



Create a timber stain

Melissa created a homemade stain to use on her shelf.

- + **CUT** three 10cm pieces of super fine steel wool and put in a glass jar.
- + **ADD** 1½ cups white vinegar and ½ cup balsamic vinegar, making sure the steel wool is covered.
- + **PUT** the lid on the jar and store in a cool place for 5-7 days. The longer it brews, the richer the stain colour.
- + **WIPE** a piece of steel wool over the timber in the direction of the grain. Dip and wipe until done.
- + **LET** the stain dry for 1-2 hours, adding more for a deeper finish. ➤



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RENOVATE

Paint the exterior to give your home a new lease of life.
PLUS Install a new garden gate DIY.

GARDEN

Grow indoor plants in DIY designer pots.
PLUS Learn clever ways to save money in the garden.

OUTDOOR

Make your winter lawn the greenest and healthiest on the block.
PLUS How to plant, grow and trim hedges.

CABINET COVER-UP

When home office furniture starts to overflow into your living space, the solution is simpler than you think.

'Most office furniture is functional but not always attractive, so if you have an old filing cabinet sitting in a corner of your home like I did, give it a much-needed makeover with a few simple modifications,' says Melissa.

'This is a great project for the novice DIYer, as only a handful of materials and a free weekend are needed to give a metal filing cabinet a spectacular new look.'



Make office furniture do double duty as a decorative piece to maximise storage

Before



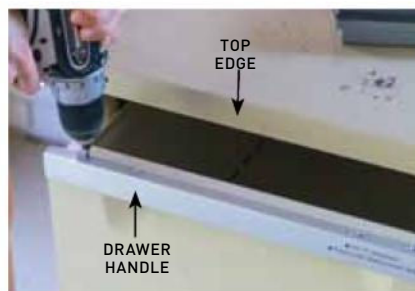
After

The refinished filing cabinet looks at home in the living room.



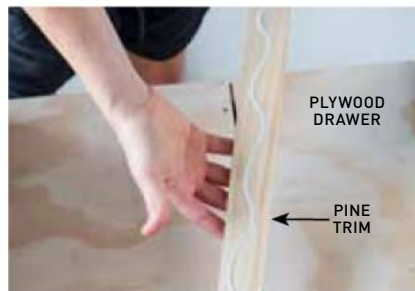
DESIGN TIP

Timber trim gives the cabinet front a new profile, but for a pattern paint a stencilled design or for texture, use a special-effect paint.



1 Cut the plywood

Remove any hardware from the filing cabinet, such as the lock and drawer handles. Measure and cut plywood to fit the front top edge and base, and cut pieces to cover each drawer face. Sand the front and sides of each plywood piece using 120 grit paper.



3 Add the trim

Measure and cut pine to fit around the edges of the drawer fronts. Lightly sand the timber with 120 grit paper to smooth the edges. Apply adhesive to the back of the trim and press firmly into position on the drawer fronts. Allow to dry overnight.



5 Paint the cabinet

Using a spray gun or a small foam roller, apply two coats of paint to the cabinet, leaving it to dry for at least 1-2 hours in between and for at least four hours after the second coat.

TIP The paint used for this cabinet was Reckless Green by British Paints.



2 Secure the plywood

Lay the cabinet on its back, position the plywood pieces on the drawers and predrill the ply and drawers at all four corners. Apply adhesive to the cabinet drawers and the top edge and base. Attach the plywood pieces to cabinet, using screws on the drawers.



4 Prep the metal

Brush the cabinet to remove any dust. Use a paintbrush to apply an even coat of a surface preparation product to the metal on the top and sides of the cabinet, wiping off the excess with a lint-free cloth after five minutes. Allow to dry for at least 90 minutes.



6 Attach the handles

Measure and calculate the position for the handles on each drawer front and mark the hole locations. Secure a new decorative handle to each drawer front using screws and a drill.

TIP To make it mobile, attach castors to the base after painting. ➤

What you need

1200 x 596 x 7mm plywood
Two 40 x 8mm x 1.2m
lengths of pine
120 grit sandpaper
Self-tapping countersunk
sheet metal screws
High-strength adhesive
Surface preparation primer
Sample paint pot
Two drawer handles



MODERN MEMO BOARD

Gone are the days of hanging a tatty corkboard in the home office. The new trend in organisation is a wire mesh memo board that makes showing off your office supplies a work of art.

'Who wouldn't want to artfully display their musings and inspiration on one of these boards?' says Melissa.

It cost her under \$30 to create this display, as all you need to do is spray paint the wire and add hooks.

1 2 3



1 Prepare the panel

Lay the wire mesh on a flat surface, protecting the surrounding area from overspray. Using even strokes, spray the wire mesh in black paint and allow it to dry for about an hour. Turn the panel over and spray the other side, allowing it to dry completely.



2 Paint the hooks

Spray two cable organiser hooks, including the adhesive tab, with the black paint, making sure you get into all the nooks and crannies. Allow to dry completely. Position the mesh panel on the wall and mark the hook locations at the top.



3 Hang the board

Secure each hook to the wall, wait the time specified on the packet, hang the wire panel and close the hooks. Attach papers, pictures, and decorative items to the memo board with clips.

TIP Ensure the hooks are rated to take the weight of the accessorised board. 🍋

MELISSA'S PICKS



Zinsser Smart Prime Water Based Undercoat, \$42 for 1L.
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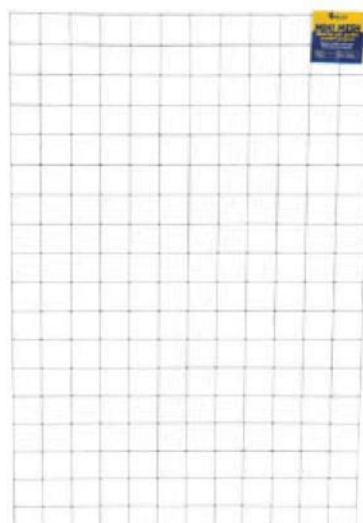
Flood ESP Easy Surface Prep, \$17 for 500ml.
floodaustralia.net



Rust-Oleum 2X Ultra Cover Paint + Primer in Flat Black, \$12 for 340g.



Uni-Pro Grade 0000 Sifa Steelwool Hobby Pack, about \$7 for 50g. unipro.com.au



Whites Wires 900 x 600 x 50mm Wire Mini Mesh Panel, about \$15. whitesgroup.com.au



Selley's Allfix, \$10 for 390g.
selleys.com.au



Wagner W550 Fine Spray Paint Sprayer, \$99.
wagneraustralia.com.au

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✦ **COPROSMA REPENS 'IGNITE'** If you want maximum impact with minimum maintenance, add this versatile new coprosma to the garden.

'Ignite' has very glossy, vibrant leaves and provides year-round foliage colour that is more intense than existing varieties.

Featuring red and purple tones in the cooler months and deep red foliage in summer, this plant will brighten any outdoor area.

Maturing into a compact rounded bush, it reaches 1.5m high and wide, making it great for beds, containers and informal hedging.

Give it a position in full sun to part shade in well-drained soil. This hardy plant is dry tolerant once established and has no special care needs.



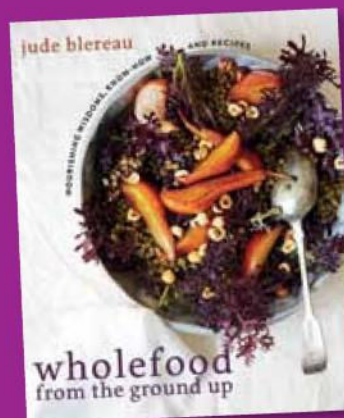
Coprosma 'Ignite'

To-do list

Get stuck into big garden jobs during the cooler weather of winter.

- ✓ **LANDSCAPE** a pond or water garden.
- ✓ **PLANT** deciduous trees and shrubs.
- ✓ **DIG** manure into empty vegetable beds.
- ✓ **RE-POT** herbaceous and shrubby pot plants.
- ✓ **TAKE** cyclamens out of heated rooms at night.
- ✓ **CLEAR** winter garden debris from lawns.
- ✓ **CHECK** roses for fungal diseases, and treat.
- ✓ **DIVIDE** and replant perennials.
- ✓ **SPRAY** weeds on paths, paving and in driveways, working on dry days.

BOOK CLUB

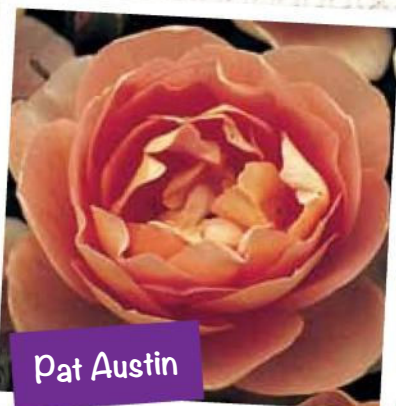


Healthy eating has never been so easy. *Wholefood From The Ground Up* by Jude Blereau (\$40, Murdoch Books) is the ultimate guide to ditching bad food forever.

No matter how time poor you are, this book will show you how to prep and plan, so you can change the way you eat for the better. ➤

PLANT ROSES

Winter is rose-planting season, so if you want to add a beautiful bloomer to your outdoor area, visit Rankins Roses (rankinsroses.com.au). Offering Hybrid Teas and climbers, and the David Austin varieties pictured here, they'll have a rose to suit your space and taste.



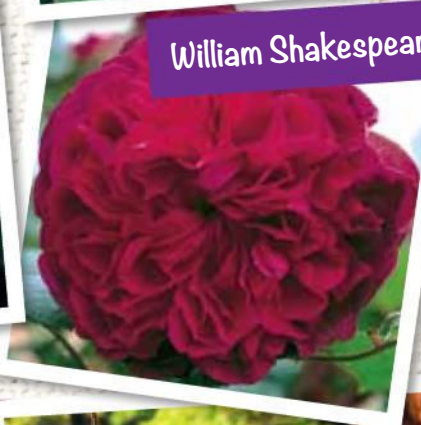
Pat Austin



Grace



Eglantyne



William Shakespeare

National Tree Day

Do your bit to help combat climate change by joining in with your local community for Schools Tree Day, on Friday 29 July, and National Tree Day, on Sunday 31 July.

It's the 20th anniversary of this amazing initiative by Planet Ark, and in the last two decades almost four million people have planted more than 22 million trees and plants.

To find out more, visit treeday.planetark.org.



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Cut back dormant fruit trees, vines and shrubs.

- + CAMELLIA SASANQUA
- + BLACKBERRY
- + ROSES
- + PEAR
- + APPLE



Camellia sasanqua

Feed now

Give these plants an application of fertiliser during winter.

- + FLOWERING CLIMBERS
- + GOOSEBERRY
- + PASSIONFRUIT
- + FRUIT TREES
- + CURRANT



Gooseberry

Harvest now

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- + NAVEL ORANGE
- + MANDARIN
- + KIWIFRUIT
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Garden design fest

Take inspiration from the breathtaking displays at this year's world-famous horticultural show in Melbourne

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAM

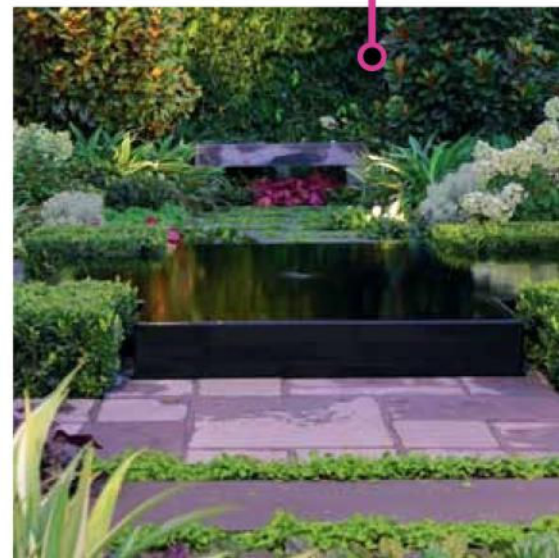
Every autumn, Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens play host to the finest garden and landscape festival in the Southern Hemisphere, the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show.

MIFGS, as it's known to regular visitors, is a huge showcase of all things related to gardening and horticulture. Think new plant varieties, collectable plants, floristry skills, expert talks, and lifestyle gifts and gadgets.

But the real drawcard every year is the display gardens. The best and brightest of designers, from big names to students, all create breathtaking landscapes just for the show.

These display gardens never fail to impress and inspire the festival goers with ideas that may just work in their own outdoor spaces.

Here, we take a look at a few of the amazing gardens that were designed especially for the 2016 show.





The sleek steel-framed pergola is the hub of this garden, yet the sunken design of the entertaining area creates a feeling of it being tucked away.



This entry features a bronze statue of hares. Here, the garden is screened from view by hedges, so you walk up the steps, turn the corner and it opens in front of you.

The Greenery Garden Centre

Occasionally you encounter a show garden that totally transports you to some place else, leaving you breathless.

The Greenery Garden Centre, designed by Vivid Design and constructed by Semken Landscaping, is one of those rare gems.

The judges clearly felt the same, with the garden being presented with no fewer than four awards.

It picked up the City of Melbourne Award of Excellence for Best in Show, a Gold Show Garden Award, The Mark Bence Construction Award and the Horticultural Media Association Award for Best Use of Plant Life. ➤



Partially obscured when approached from certain angles is a beautiful formal pond. With its low design and black stone border, it adds a real wow element.



The height of plantings is used carefully, with hedges providing privacy and plants allowing glimpses into other areas while still creating distinct garden rooms.

Seeing is believing

The most incredible thing about the display gardens is that they're temporary.

Planning can begin well over a year in advance but construction starts only about a week before the opening, and the gardens are then removed in even less time.

When you are viewing a garden that looks for all the world like it's been there for years, it's hard to believe it is so ephemeral.

A YOUNG FAMILY

This little garden picked up third place in the Landscaping Victoria Boutique Garden Awards.

Designed by InStyle Gardens, it's a great example of how well a small space can be used to cater for the whole family.

The hedging would provide excellent screening for a small garden in suburbia without wasting valuable space. Amazingly, it manages to very effectively pack in a comfy seating area, fire pit, water feature and even a special space for the kids.

Down along the winding timber boardwalk is a spot that definitely screams 'kids only', complete with a super-cute and colourful toadstool table and matching chairs.



Ohana

This cool landscape is dominated by a one-storey high glass mosaic of a 60s Hawaiian surfer, Leilani.

Designed by Georgia Harper Landscape Design and constructed by The Garden Company, this winner of a Silver Show Garden Award manages to be both very retro and very now.

The multi-levelled paved areas create visual interest and show how you can work with a sloping space without having to excavate.





Reflection

This lovely garden won a Gold Show Garden Award. Designed by Ian Barker, it flows flawlessly with the natural contours of the existing landscape.

It is an interesting fusion of romantic cottage garden, a dash of 70s influence and a smidgen of Scandinavian style.

The name, Reflection, is expressed in a number of ways. It is shown to great effect by the pond, with the ever-changing reflections giving the garden a new look and feel at different times of the day.

There are also multiple seating areas that create spots to sit for, you guessed it, reflection.

FIND YOUR BALANCE

Designed by Christian Jenkins and presented by Beyond Blue as a reminder to keep our balance of physical and mental wellbeing in check, this Bronze Show Garden Award winner may not be overly practical, but it is quirky.

The underlying message of balance is expressed superbly through the perfectly centred, symmetrical 'comfort pod', which is suspended within the design. This is further enhanced by the reflections from the water feature.

Right of Way

This Silver Show Garden Award winner designed by Daniel Tyrrell Landscapes is an exploration of the possible. It's all about reclaiming lost spaces.

Just about any resident or visitor to Melbourne would know about its bluestone back lanes.

Daniel's idea is that these neglected areas can be converted into beautiful green spaces, providing much-needed softening of the city's byways. ➤





A Garden Called Frank

If the Jetsons had a Scandinavian retreat, then their outdoor chill-out zone would probably look a lot like this Gold Show Garden Award winner, designed and constructed by Peta Donaldson from BLAC.

Subtle yet effective combinations of muted greys, off-whites and natural stone in overlapping, strongly geometric structures create echoes of a Frank Lloyd Wright design.

The plants very cleverly manage to organically extend from these hard surfaces, creating textural buffers.

The structures over the pool seem to float on impossibly thin stilts. Cladding the underneath with honey-hued sandstone gives them visual warmth and texture.

Designer Q & A

Peta Donaldson shares what being an exhibitor at MIFGS involves.

Q How far out from the show do you have to start planning?

A Ideas can begin flowing years in advance. Even when complete, the design can be tweaked just weeks before. It all boils down to 11 days of construction and five of show time.

Q What are some of the difficulties unique to creating a show garden?

A No other event I've been involved in has generated such huge emotion, energy, stress and joy. It's consuming, often to the detriment of all else.

As it's a heritage-listed site, we're not allowed to penetrate the ground and all the structures have to be approved by council.



Q Is there anything huge, heavy or logistically hard you've ever included?

A Usually concrete is incorporated, which is difficult to manoeuvre. But these components are moved into place with precision using machinery.

Q What are the main reasons for investing so much time and energy in creating gardens at events like this?

A A show garden allows us to speak to the public through our work, which is a form of art within the landscape. It lets designers make a statement, to spur a new way of thinking.

Revelling in Levels

This smart design, by Yvonne Green of Melbourne Polytechnic, plays with the levels that can be encountered, even in small spaces, showing how plants can be used to soften landscape transitions.

The very clever wall art is made from a large branch cut into three sections, then framed.

An overturned amphora is the source of a living creek of succulents, planted in a pattern to resemble a water course.

RANCHO RELAXO

Tex-Mex retro whimsy is perhaps the best way to describe this design.

Designed by Vivian Scarpari of Swinburne University of Technology, the garden has been styled on a classic Mexican courtyard and siesta space

with calming blues to aid relaxation, mixed with warm earthy tones for a comforting feel.

Old-school breeze blocks get a new lease of life when well positioned and given a fresh paint job. ➤

Learning curve

Every exhibit in the Avenue of Achievable Gardens section is designed by a student of horticulture, landscape or design. They are given the same-sized space, just a few metres wide by a few metres deep.

All of these gardens represent the reality of what many homeowners have to work with, a small space surrounded by Colorbond fencing.



 See more incredible gardens
Visit pinterest.com/DIYHandyman

REFUGE

Using primarily native plants, and with slick, smart design aesthetics, this garden, designed by Lincoln Flynn of Holmesglen Institute, took out first place in its category.

It has a modern look, but many reclaimed and sustainable materials are used, such as stone, hardwoods and permeable pavers for improved drainage and soil health.

The design is well proportioned while managing to fit in a lot of elements. Gabion benches with timber tops and a matching table are functional and stylish features.

The backdrop of grafted *Acacia cognata* 'Waterfall' standards and *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* 'Vintage Red', with its stunning burgundy foliage, create a dramatic statement and add year-round colour and texture.

The rusty hues of the fire pit connect perfectly with the panels used to hide the Colorbond fencing.

The Golden Afternoon

Inspired by childhood tales such as *Alice in Wonderland*, this fantasy cottage-garden-gone-wild, designed by Jaz Rhodes of the University of Melbourne, won third place in its category.

The use of multiple pathways, marbled backdrops and mirrors creates a feeling of space.

Beautiful echinacea flowers glow in the afternoon sun.



KIDSENSE

This clever and colourful garden was awarded second place in its category. Designed by Fiona Webber of the University of Melbourne as a space for play, exploration and discovery for kids, it accomplishes a lot in a small space.

With everything from a spiral tunnel and pod cubby to a chamomile lawn, this garden is a gorgeous place for living and learning.

The pod cubby is made from woven branches, creating a hideaway filled with texture and dappled light. 🍷



Breakfast in Bed

Productive and pretty, this small garden is also super-sustainable. Designed by Claudine Reynolds of Holmesglen Institute, it won the Momentum Energy Sustainability Award.

Most of the materials used were salvaged and virtually every plant in the garden is edible.

It is a very effective way of demonstrating how even in small spaces, you can have a livable, enjoyable and productive garden.

An old iron bedhead makes the perfect training frame for an espaliered dwarf apple, and an old chest of drawers serves as a multi-level veggie planter box.





Raising irresistible **ROSES**

Plant and prune these favourites
right for a fabulous display each year

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Their superb colour range, flower form and gorgeous fragrance make roses a must-have for many gardeners.

Winter is the time to prune and plant them, but don't be daunted by the prospect of pruning.

Even if you do make a mistake, you're not likely to seriously injure the plant, as roses are tough and hard to kill. The worst outcome will be a reduction in the number of flowers.

PICTURE: ISTOCK

Why you prune

As roses flower on new wood, pruning is essential to reinvigorate the plants to produce a new harvest of blooms.

Pruning keeps your rosebushes healthy because it removes any diseased or pest-infected parts and encourages new, vigorous growth.

Roses need pruning twice a year, with a hard pruning in winter and a lighter prune in late summer.

Once you make a start and know when and how to prune, you will soon become an expert.



To renew a neglected rose, prune it hard in spring, then water and fertilise it

WHEN TO PRUNE



Tool up

Good, sharp secateurs and a pruning saw are essential. A plastic bin to pop the prunings in as you go is also helpful.

To help prevent transferring disease, disinfect tools with Dettol or bleach between each pruning.

Wear long gloves and a thick, long-sleeved shirt for protection.



Hybrid Tea



Banksia



David Austin

A rosebush should be left until it is about three years old before being given a major winter pruning.

Younger bushes will still be establishing, and should only be trimmed back lightly in winter.

✦ **REPEAT-FLOWERING SHRUBS** such as Hybrid Teas, Floribundas, Hybrid Musks, Bourbons and David Austins

should be given their main pruning in June or July in temperate climates and during August in cold climates.

✦ **SPECIES ROSES** that bloom only in spring and once-flowering climbers, such as Banksias, are pruned in spring after flowering, not during winter.

✦ **REPEAT-FLOWERING CLIMBERS** are pruned during winter. ➤

Winter pruning

For the winter pruning of shrub roses, half the plant's growth has to be cut off, including dead and old wood.

TIP Old wood has dull-grey rough bark while young and productive wood has smooth red-green bark.



1 Cut off the dead wood

Remove the dead wood with secateurs, then cut back any old, unproductive wood to a strong young branch or, if there isn't one, to the bud union. Remove branches crowding healthy ones and any short or twiggy growth.



2 Prune remaining growth

Cut back the remaining growth by a third to a half. Make the cut about 5mm above a growth bud, angling the cut so it slopes back and away from the bud. Select buds that point away from the centre to avoid overcrowding.

PEST TIP

A sprinkle of sulphate of potash around roses helps them to naturally defend against fungal attack by thickening the cell walls of foliage.

Summer pruning

The summer pruning of shrub roses is not as severe as in winter and is carried out after the flowering has finished.

It encourages new growth and an autumn flush of flowers.

➤ **REMOVE** about one-third of the growth just above a bud.

➤ **FERTILISE** and reapply mulch around the rosebush if necessary.

The right cut

The general idea when pruning a rose is to make the cut just above a bud. The buds on a rose stem are the little bumps from which new shoots emerge.





Climbing roses in the garden provide perfume at nose level.



Water shoots

Don't remove the red new shoots, or water shoots, that start from the crown and soar to the top in one flush of growth. They make up the new framework and need to mature before being cut.

Once the shoot has stopped growing, remove the tip to encourage flowers up the stem.

Don't confuse water shoots with suckers from the understock, which should be removed.

Suckers appear below the graft, where the bush has been grafted onto the understock. ➤



Run hedge clippers or shears over large shrub and groundcover roses, such as those in the Flower Carpet series, to prune.

PICTURE: LEE DASHIELL

Pruning climbing roses

SPECIES ROSES Some climbing roses, such as Banksias, flower only once in spring. These roses need to be pruned after flowering.

- **REMOVE** any dead or diseased wood on the rosebush.
- **CUT** back one or two of the oldest canes entirely or to a point where a strong new cane is appearing and remove any twiggy growth.

REPEAT-FLOWERING ROSES In winter, prune repeat-flowering climbers.

- **CUT** the old and worn-out wood back to a strong young cane.
- **REMOVE** the thin tips of new canes and shorten the strong laterals that bore last year's flowers.
- **TRAIN** the canes of climbers to grow horizontally to encourage flowers along the whole length of the stem.



Discard all rose clippings and leaves after pruning to stop the spread of fungal disease

Plant a rose

Buy bare-rooted roses in winter when they are dormant and wrapped in plastic or hessian.

Shake the roots free of the packing material, then soak in water with a seaweed solution.

- 1 **DIG** a planting hole about 500mm wide, or wider for large plants, and deep enough so the bud union will be 25-50mm above the level of the soil.
- 2 **MAKE** a mound of soil in the centre and position the rose on top. Backfill with soil, making sure the bud union remains at the right height.
- 3 **FIRM** the soil around the rose with your hands. Water in using at least a full 9L watering can. Add more soil if needed and mulch with lucerne hay, keeping it away from the stem.

Wait for new growth to appear before fertilising a newly planted rose.



Transplanting roses

Winter is a good time to transplant a rosebush growing in the wrong position.

- **DRIVE** a spade as deep as you can into the soil, about 350mm from the stem. Work around the rosebush until it lifts easily.
- **CUT** the branches back by about two-thirds, then replant. Water in with a seaweed solution, then water regularly in the first season until it re-establishes. ➤



Garlic, onion chives and society garlic (*Tulbaghia*) make good companions for roses.

To attract beneficial insects to the garden, plant sweet Alice, dill, coriander, gypsophila and lavender around your roses.

Society garlic



Gypsophila



Sweet Alice



Help them thrive

Roses may look delicate, but they are tough plants if given the right care.

➤ **POSITION** in a spot that receives at least six hours of sun a day, with protection from strong winds. Don't plant too close to trees, as the roots will compete for water and nutrients.

➤ **PREPARE** the soil well beforehand by digging in well-rotted compost or cow manure to the existing soil.

➤ **WATER** a newly planted rose every 3-4 days for the first 2-3 weeks to help the feeder roots become established.

Winter roses look like dead sticks, so it may appear as though they're inactive under the soil. But keep the soil moist but not soggy and, once

established, give deep weekly soakings instead of frequent light sprinklings.

Water at ground level or, if watering from overhead, do so early morning to let the foliage dry out and reduce the risk of fungal disease.

➤ **FEED** after winter pruning with a layer of cow manure around the base of the plant. As spring approaches, feed with a complete rose or citrus fertiliser, then every 6-8 weeks in the growing season.

Or, in spring, use a six-month controlled-release fertiliser and sprinkle with pelletised poultry manure after each flush of blooms.

➤ **DEADHEAD** spent flowers.



Add mulch

To keep the roots cool and moist, encourage earthworm activity and suppress weeds, add mulch to roses in beds and pots. It can also help reduce the spread of diseases.

Apply a 50mm layer of lucerne hay, pea straw or sugar cane when planting, keeping it away from the stem. Top up midsummer if necessary. 🌱

GROW TIP

Spray your rosebushes with lime sulphur after they've had their winter pruning to help control diseases such as black spot.

PICTURES ALAMY

CHERYL'S PICKS



Yates Advanced Rose Gun, \$10 for 750ml. yates.com.au



Richgro Black Marvel Premium Rose Food, \$18 for 5kg. richgro.com.au



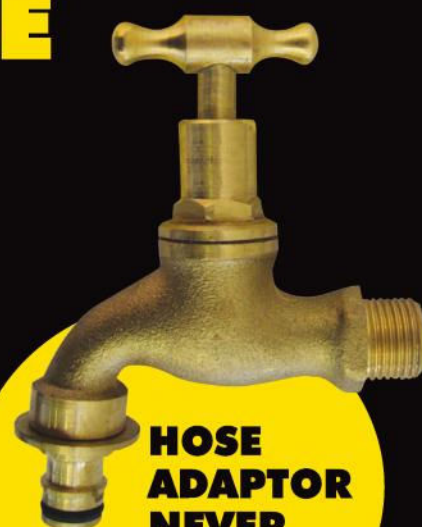
Scotts Osmocote Rose, Gardenia, Azalea & Camellia Mix, \$9 for 25L. scottsaustralia.com.au

PICTURES ALAMY, ISTOCK

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GROWING ORCHIDS

Follow a few basic rules and these fascinating plants will flourish

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

The exotic-looking flowers of orchids are considered to be the most evocative in the world. This could be why so many people become obsessed with them and turn into avid collectors.

Not only are orchids exceptionally beautiful, these ancient plants are also very tough. After all, they have outlived dinosaurs and cleverly

managed to adapt to almost every environment on earth.

Worldwide there are thousands and thousands of species. Australia has about 1300, and the majority of these are not found anywhere else.

While some orchids do require specialist care, *Cymbidium* and *Phalaenopsis* hybrids are renowned for being easy to look after.



GROW TIP

When a cymbidium orchid produces lush green leaves but no flowers, it's a sign that it isn't receiving sufficient light.



Cymbidium

At this time of year, cymbidiums put on a great show, with colours ranging from white and pink to tones of orange, red, brown, yellow, cream and green.

➤ **POSITION** They like lots of light but need protection from the hot summer sun and frost. A position in filtered light under deciduous trees is ideal, or a covered north-facing verandah.

➤ **PLANT** Cymbidiums are epiphytes and grow naturally on rocks or trees, not in soil, so use an orchid potting mix, as good drainage is essential.

➤ **FEED** To produce flowers the next year, feeding is essential. Fertilise in spring with Yates Dynamic Lifter and use a liquid plant food for orchids fortnightly in summer and autumn.

Or you can apply a six-month controlled-release fertiliser in spring and early autumn.

➤ **WATER** Cymbidiums are fairly drought-proof, but they won't flower or perform well if allowed to dry out for long periods. During the summer, water them every second day and once a week during winter.

The cut blooms of cymbidiums will last for 2-4 weeks.



Indoors or out?

While cymbidium orchids are not indoor plants, they can be brought inside once in flower, then put outside as soon as the flowers have finished.

Or better still, cut off the flowerheads after about a month indoors, put them in a vase, then take the plant outdoors. ➤

RE-POTTING AND DIVIDING

Most cymbidiums flower better when pot-bound, but after a few years, they can stop flowering and also multiply.

If this occurs, the outer bulbs will be pushing against the side of the pot, which will contain many bulbs without any leaves, called back bulbs.

The best time to re-pot or divide is straight after the flowering season.

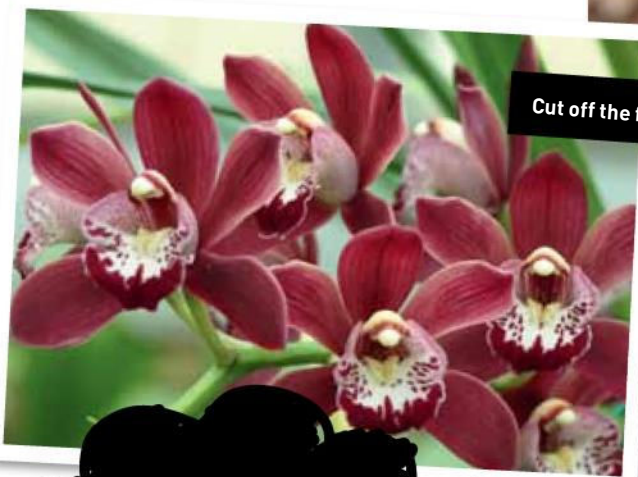
1 REMOVE the orchid from the pot and cut off any dead brown roots from the middle of the rootball. Divide the rootball with secateurs so each division contains 3-4 green bulbs. Remove any back bulbs with a quick twist.

2 RE-POT in the same container or a larger one if needed, using a specially formulated orchid potting mix. Leave a 25mm gap between the edge of the rootball and the edge of the pot.

3 FILL around the divisions with the mix and water in. Keep in a cool, shady spot for a week, then return to the main growing area.



Cut off the flower spikes at the base when the blooms have finished.



PROBLEM SOLVERS

Snails and slugs

- **SPOT IT** These pests can hide under the rims of pots during the day and munch on the flower buds overnight.
- **FIX IT** Make sure you check the pots regularly, or use snail bait.

Mealy bugs

- **SPOT IT** Found in the roots and leaves of moth orchids, the small bodies of mealy bugs are covered with a white, powdery wax.
- **FIX IT** Spray with Eco-oil.

Orchid scale

- **SPOT IT** Often mistaken for mealy bugs, scale can first appear around the sheathing leaves at the base.
- **FIX IT** Spray with Eco-oil and give the plants free air circulation.



Avoid putting moth orchids in direct sunlight as the leaves will burn.

Phalaenopsis

Commonly called moth orchids, these are one of the best types for growing indoors. Their long-lasting large blooms come in a range of colours, including white, pink and bicolours.

➤ **POSITION** Give them a spot near a window, but with no direct sun.

➤ **PLANT** Use sphagnum moss or an orchid potting mix.

➤ **FEED** Use a specialised orchid food or a food formulated for African violets. Feed monthly in winter and fortnightly in summer.

➤ **WATER** Moth orchids are more likely to die from overwatering than underwatering. Water thoroughly and wait until the mix is nearly dry. Avoid getting water in the crown of the plant.

Twice a week in summer and once a week in winter should suffice.

➤ **HUMIDITY** They love humidity, so put the pot on a saucer of gravel and water, so it sits above the water.

Grouping the plants together and mist-spraying them will also help to provide a humid atmosphere.

Did you know?

Moth orchids are epiphytic, so aerial roots will grow out of the pot. This is natural activity, as the orchid uses these roots to grip trees or shrubs.

Aerial roots also help with photosynthesis and they absorb moisture from the air.

Keep them blooming

Don't give up on your moth orchid when it's finished flowering, as you can encourage it to bloom again if you cut back the stem.

➤ **CUT** the flower spike halfway down the stem just above one of the nodes using secateurs.

➤ **SEAL** the cut on the stem using cinnamon powder to prevent a bacterial infection.

If the stem turns brown, remove it at the base. New flowers should appear in 3-4 months. ➤



Caterpillars

➤ **SPOT IT** The larvae will chew on the flower buds.

➤ **FIX IT** Spray regularly using Yates Dipel or sprinkle with Derris Dust.



To stay looking good, moth orchids need re-potting regularly.

CHERYL'S PICKS

CHANGING THE MEDIUM

Moth orchids need regular re-potting to keep them flowering and healthy. Most are potted in sphagnum moss, but you can use an orchid potting mix.

The potting mix will last about two years, but if the plant is growing in sphagnum moss, it will need re-potting every year.

Once mature, you can use the same pot, as these orchids like their roots slightly pot-bound.



Yates Nature's Way Caterpillar Killer Dipel Insecticide, \$19 for 40g. yates.com.au



Eco Organic Garden Eco-oil Concentrate, \$19 for 500ml. ecoorganicgarden.com.au

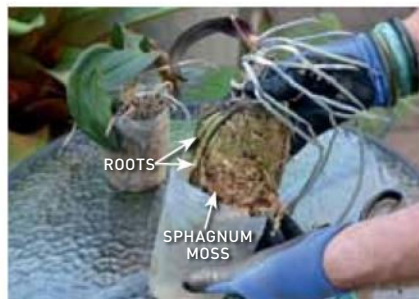


Scotts Osmocote Professional Orchid Mix, \$11 for 25L. scottsaustralia.com.au



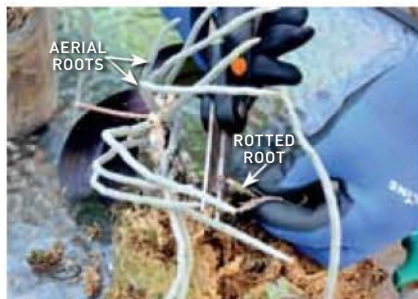
Yates Thrive Orchid Liquid Plant Food Concentrate, about \$9 for 500ml.

1 2 3



1 Remove the plant

Take the orchid out of its pot and carefully remove the old sphagnum moss or potting mix from around the roots, making sure you don't damage any healthy roots. Don't remove or break any of the aerial roots.



2 Trim the roots

Cut off any roots that are brown, mushy and shrivelled using secateurs. If a lot have rotted and need removing, re-pot some of the aerial roots or let them grow out of the pot, as they will absorb moisture from the air.



3 Add new medium

Put a handful of sphagnum moss or orchid mix in the base of the pot, then gently spread the remaining roots on top. Pack the growing medium lightly around the roots so the base leaf of the plant is just above the medium. 🌱

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Retro Veggie patch

Old-school celeriac, parsnips, swedes and turnips are making a kitchen and garden comeback

GROW TIP

To get a head start on your veggie patch, you can grow all these root vegetables from seedlings instead of sowing the seeds.

Instead of just growing run of the mill garden vegies such as potatoes and carrots, think about branching out and including a few old-fashioned root vegetables, such as celeriac, swedes, turnips and parsnips.

They're full of flavour, easy to grow and have lots of health benefits.

Celeriac can be used raw in salads, parsnips are great roasted or mashed, and turnips and swedes are a delicious addition to soups and stews.



CELERIAC

Also known as turnip-rooted celery, celeriac develops a root that looks like a fattened, knobbly turnip and grows to 50cm high, with foliage similar to a short bunch of celery.

The young leaves can be used as a celery substitute in cooking while the root can be peeled, then grated and used raw in salads, or cut up and added to soups and stews.

Celeriac has a subtle celery-like flavour with nutty overtones.



Health benefits

In ancient times, celeriac and its seeds were used in remedies for colds, flu, digestive complaints and water retention. Today, research suggests it has stomach-soothing properties.

It contains polysaccharides, which have been shown to keep the lining of the stomach healthy and may even reduce the risk of stomach cancer.

This vegie may also help with weight loss, as a cup of cooked celeriac has just 175 kilojoules, or 42 calories, and 2g fibre.

Buying & storing

Look for celeriac that is a good weight for its size and has no blemishes or soft spots. Store it unwrapped in the fridge crisper for up to a week.

It is best used all at once, as celeriac discolours once it has been cut or the skin removed. It can be tossed in lemon juice to prevent this.



Troubleshooting

Snails and slugs can feast on the leafy above-ground growth, so check celeriac plants regularly for pests while they're growing.

HOW TO GROW

Celeriac is grown in the same way as celery. Make sure the garden bed is weed-free before sowing to allow the roots to develop properly and prevent root disturbance that may be caused by weeding.

Like all root vegetables, celeriac grows best in well-prepared friable soil with good drainage.

✦ **SOW** the seeds directly where the plants are to grow. Like celery, celeriac prefers a mild to cool climate, but it will grow well in warmer areas in late summer and autumn.

✦ **THIN** seedlings to 200mm apart and remove any side shoots as they grow.

✦ **HARVEST** the roots in 4-5 months when they are 50-75mm across. ➤

PARSNIP

This creamy white, carrot-like vegie is grown for its long white taproots, which have a sweet, nutty flavour.

Parsnips can be grown in all climate zones, but they are easiest to grow as a winter vegetable in cool or temperate areas, where frosts concentrate the sugars in the root.

They are a popular vegetable for roasting and mashing, and using in soups, stews or casseroles.



Buying & storing

Choose parsnips that have bright creamy skin with no brown areas. They won't have tops attached, but check the tips to make sure they look fresh and unwithered.

Keep unwrapped in the fridge crisper for up to five days. Parsnips can be cut, blanched and frozen.



Health benefits

The 17th century English herbalist Nicholas Culpeper recommended wild parsnips to expel 'the wind from the stomach'.

This beneficial action on the intestines is due to the high fibre

content of parsnips, which also makes them a good weight-loss alternative to potatoes, as the fibre helps to fill you up.

Parsnips are a good source of vitamin C and folate, a B vitamin needed to create healthy cells.



HOW TO GROW

Make sure you obtain fresh parsnip seeds, as they lose viability rapidly, and soak them overnight before sowing to help germination.

Parsnips grow in almost any soil but do best in fertile soil with good drainage. Choose an open sunny spot.

In subtropical areas, sow in autumn and winter, and in temperate areas, sow from late winter until autumn. In cooler zones, the time to sow is spring and summer.

✚ **SOW** the seeds thinly directly where the plants are to grow in rows 10-15mm deep and spaced 300-400mm apart.

Cover the seeds with soil or compost, press down firmly and water in gently. Keep the bed damp until the seedlings emerge, in about 3-4 weeks.

✚ **THIN** the seedlings to 100mm apart to allow for root development.

✚ **HARVEST** full-size parsnips after 4-5 months, loosening the roots with a garden fork before lifting.

When they are mature, the foliage dies back. Start pulling up parsnips early to spread the harvest, choosing the larger roots first.

They can be left in the ground over winter and harvested as needed.

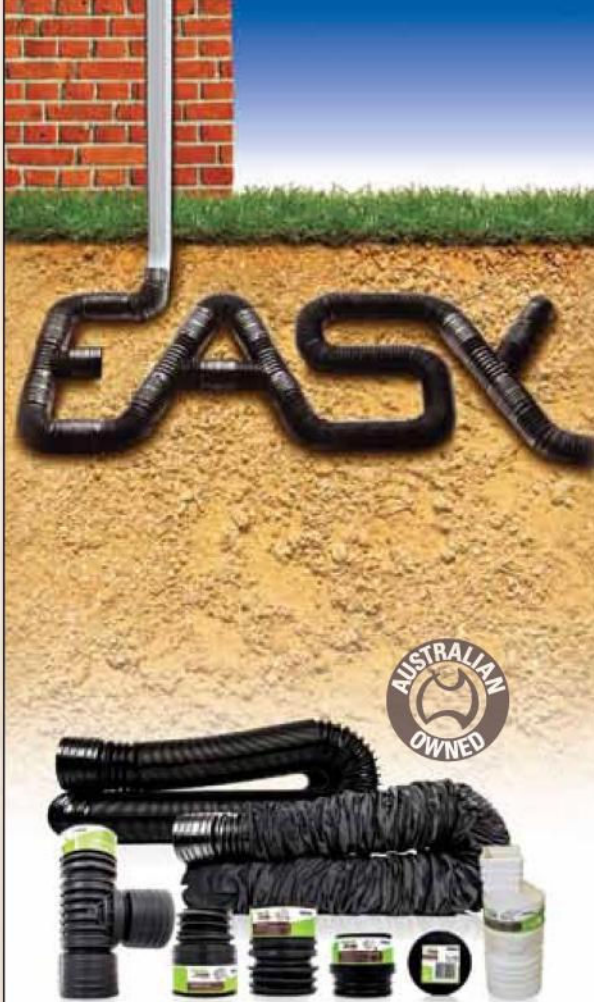


Milk, butter and nutmeg are the perfect flavour partners for sweet and creamy mashed parsnips

Troubleshooting

Late sowing may produce small roots, and the plants may run to seed prematurely.

Rotting parsnips are due to poor drainage and the roots can split as a result of inconsistent watering. Forked and hairy roots are caused by adding manures that have not been aged. ➤



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Troubleshooting

Snails and slugs hide in the foliage and are the main pest problem for swedes and turnips. Others are grey cabbage aphids and cabbage moth caterpillars.

Certain soil-borne diseases can affect these root vegies, but good crop rotation practices should prevent them.

These round root crops are both quick and easy to grow.

Swedes, also known as rutabagas, are a cross between a turnip and cabbage. They have sweet, juicy yellow to cream roots, milder in flavour than turnips, with purple skin on the top.

Eat the young roots raw, grated into a salad, and roast or puree the older roots for soups and stews.

Turnips are smaller than swedes and the top of the white roots can be white, yellow, green or purple.

When young, turnips are quite sweet. The roots are used in soups and stews and can be roasted or pickled. Use the young foliage as a leafy green and steam, braise or add raw to salads.

Health benefits

Research shows that turnips contain glucosinolates, which help the body neutralise and get rid of harmful toxins and hormones that could raise the risk of cancer.

A cup of cooked turnips provides a healthy dose of potassium and vitamin C, which help protect cells from damage and can boost immunity.

Swedes contain potassium and magnesium, which help maintain healthy blood pressure levels, as well as glucosinolates.



PICTURE (TOP) READER'S DIGEST (BOTTOM) ISTOCK



Sow a few seeds monthly for a constant supply, as turnips grow fast and are best picked young

Buying & storing

The roots of swedes should be plump, with smooth, unblemished skin.

Turnip tops should look fresh and reasonably unwilted with the leaves green not yellowed, and the skin smooth and almost pearly.

Store both in loosely sealed plastic bags in the fridge crisper.

Keep swedes for up to a week and turnips for two days only.



HOW TO GROW

Turnips and swedes do best in loam but will grow in most well-drained soils in an open sunny position.

➤ **SOW** the seeds thinly 10-20mm deep, directly into rows.

For a winter harvest, sow in late summer and autumn. In cooler climates, they can also be sown in late winter and early spring.

➤ **THIN** turnip seedlings 75-100mm apart and swedes to 150-200mm.

➤ **HARVEST** turnips after 1-2 months, not allowing them to become any bigger than a tennis ball.

For swedes, the roots are ready to lift after 3-6 months.

Use a garden fork to lift them carefully and avoid root damage.

Keep the ground well watered or they may become stringy.

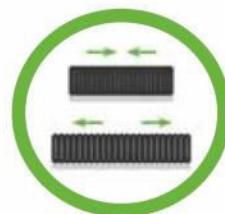
In cold climates both can be stored in the ground over winter. ➤



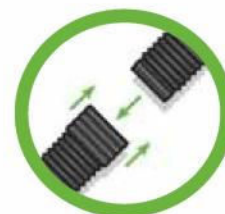
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Roast potatoes & root vegies

Ingredients

4 baking (floury) potatoes, such as King Edward, or all-purpose potatoes, such as pontiac or desiree
 3 carrots
 3 parsnips
 3 small swedes or turnips
 3 beetroot
 Olive oil, for drizzling
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 PREHEAT the oven to 210°C. Wash and scrub all the vegetables, then pat dry with paper towel. Peel the potatoes and cut in half. Top and tail the carrots and parsnips, then peel and halve lengthways. Peel the swedes or turnips and quarter. Leave the beetroot whole, with the skin on.

2 PUT all the vegetables in a large roasting pan, drizzle generously with olive oil and season well.

3 ROAST for 30 minutes, then turn all the vegetables over and roast for a further 15 minutes or until golden and tender. Serve hot.

Serves 6

Pear and parsnip soup

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan. Add 1 finely sliced leek (white part only) and fry for 5 minutes or until soft. Add 800g peeled and chopped parsnips, then cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add 4 cups water or salt-reduced chicken or vegetable stock, reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until the parsnips are softened. Stir in 3 peeled, cored and diced pears.

Puree the soup using a food processor or stick blender, then bring to the boil. Serve immediately, topped with natural yoghurt, parsley leaves and freshly ground black pepper.

Serves 4



Celeriac remoulade

Cut the skin off 1 celeriac (500g). Cut into matchsticks, put in a large bowl and toss in the juice of ½ a lemon.

In a bowl, combine 5 tablespoons mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons crème fraîche or sour cream, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, 2 tablespoons finely

chopped parsley and 1 tablespoon finely chopped mint.

Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then fold into the celeriac. Thin the sauce with extra lemon juice if too thick. Set aside for 30 minutes for the flavours to develop.

Serves 4



CUTTING CELERIAC

Use a sharp knife to top and tail the celeriac and remove the skin, slicing the root end off first to provide a steady base. ✨



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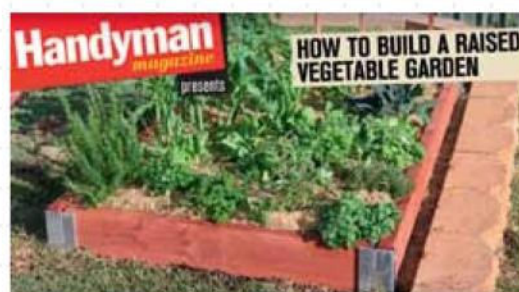
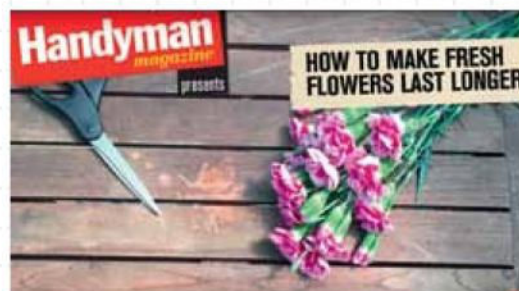
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» Sunday 3 July FUN MOSAICS Learn a new skill and create a beautiful mosaic	» Saturday 23 July NATURE Get creative and make a living masterpiece
» Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 July NAIDOC WEEK Create some cultural artwork	» Sunday 24 July WOODWORK Make something special out of wood
» Saturday 16 July FUN WITH PAINT Have fun with bright-coloured paint	» Saturday 30 July PLANT A TREE Learn how to care for your very own tree

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» Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 July STORAGE SOLUTIONS Organise the garage, bedroom and kitchen
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POP QUIZ!

Name these animals

Everyone is familiar with a kangaroo and koala, but can you identify these more unusual native animals? The answers are at the bottom of the page.

PICTURES (ISTOCK (BACKGROUND) THINKSTOCK

ANSWERS 1 TASMANIAN DEVIL 2 QUOKKA 3 SUGAR GLIDER 4 PYGMY POSSUM 5 TREE KANGAROO 6 NUMBAT 7 BANDICOOT 8 BILBY

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