

WIN AN OZITO TOOL PACK FOR A DIY DAD page 94

AUSTRALIAN

PLUS FATHER'S DAY GIFT IDEAS

# Handyman

**GARDEN**

CLEVER WAYS TO  
SAVE TIME & MONEY

**MAKEOVER**

HOW TO PAINT THE  
OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME

**BUILD**

TAKE A WEEKEND TO  
INSTALL A PERGOLA

Step-by-step  
project  
p78

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*Make*  
a picket gate



*Grow*  
spicy chillies



Easy winter lawn care

page 83



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STUART SCOTT

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## GET THE LOOK

# LOVE THE COVER?

Team a white pergola and dark deck with lush foliage for an inviting outdoor room

MAIN PICTURE STUART SCOTT

**D**esigned for relaxed entertaining, this pergola and deck replaced an old rotting awning and an aged tiled patio for a fresh coastal finish.

The polycarbonate roofing cuts UV while still allowing in natural light. Decorative brackets and tropical-leaved plants soften the profile of the pergola, uniting it with the rest of the garden.



Absco Sheds 3 x 2.92m Classic Double Door Highlander Shed in Cream, \$1399. [abscosheds.com.au](http://abscosheds.com.au)



Monstera Deliciosa 200mm, \$27, from nurseries.



Cornall Treated Pine Corner Bracket, 355 x 355mm, \$43. [cornalls.com.au](http://cornalls.com.au)



Holman 1.8L Galvanised Watering Can, \$8. [holmanindustries.com.au](http://holmanindustries.com.au)



Mimosa Somerset Folding Timber Chair, \$69. [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au)

Frankie the dog loves lounging on the new deck.







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## THIS ISSUE

### HANDY HINT OF THE MONTH

DRIVE NAILS  
WITH A CLAMP



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## EDITOR'S LETTER



**M**aybe it is the end of winter and it's chilly outside, but it's the ideal time to get outdoors and start preparing the backyard for spring and summer.

So we've packed this issue with projects to help motivate you.

Find out how to install new gates, page 26, add decorative toppers to a metal pool fence, page 30, freshen up the exterior of your house with paint, page 62, build a roof over your deck, page 78, and refinish the pizza oven, page 92.

It is amazing what a little time and effort can do to revamp or restore exterior surfaces around the home.

### Happy Father's Day

If you're looking for amazing presents for your dad, look no further. We've found some fun gift ideas as well as practical ones, page 13.

You can also enter the Ozito competition, page 94, for your chance to win a great range of tools.

But perhaps the best present of all would be to give him a gift subscription to *Australian Handyman* to inspire him for a whole year. See page 126.

### In the garden

Chillies are one of the most versatile additions to recipes, and with varying degrees of heat from mild to very hot, they can be used in cuisines such as Italian, Thai, Eastern European, Indian, Mexican and Chinese.

Grow them yourself so you have fresh chillies on tap or preserve them for later use. We show you how and share some fantastic recipes for using your homegrown produce, page 118.

Enjoy the issue,

MANAGING EDITOR  
LEE DASHIELL



## PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The innovative LekkLatch Magnetic is a self-latching gate lock that can be operated from both sides of the fence, making it ideal for privacy and security gates.

Featuring a push-pull action, rekeyable locks and hidden fasteners, the ergonomic latch has a lifetime warranty ([au.ddtechglobal.com](http://au.ddtechglobal.com)).



LekkLatch Magnetic, \$92.





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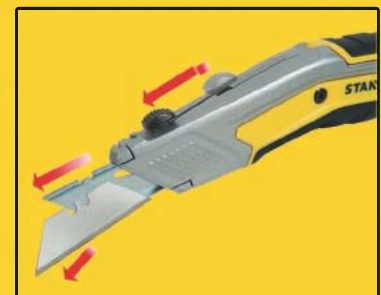
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**15**

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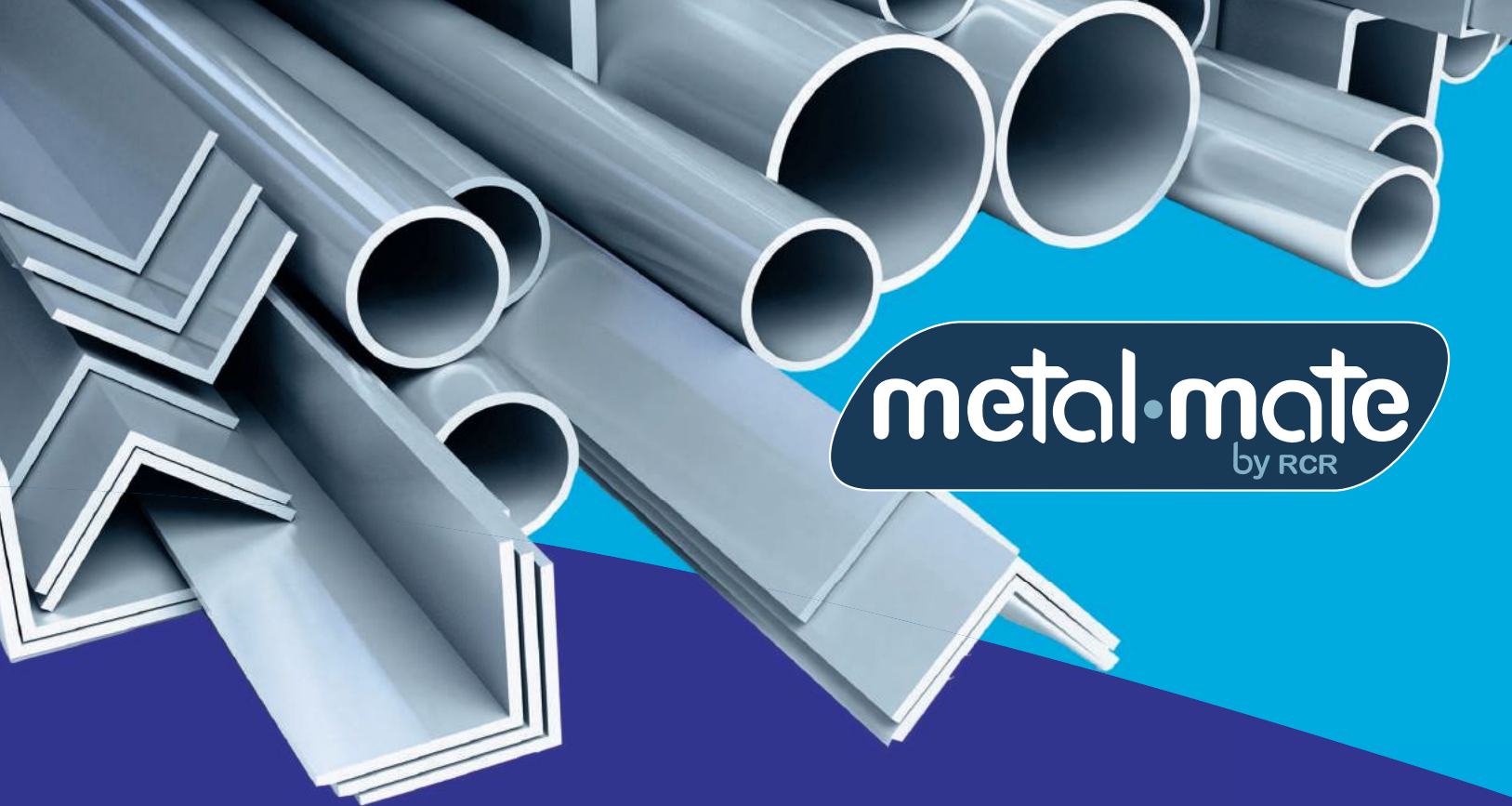


Honey is used as a natural treatment for dandruff, acne and sore throats.

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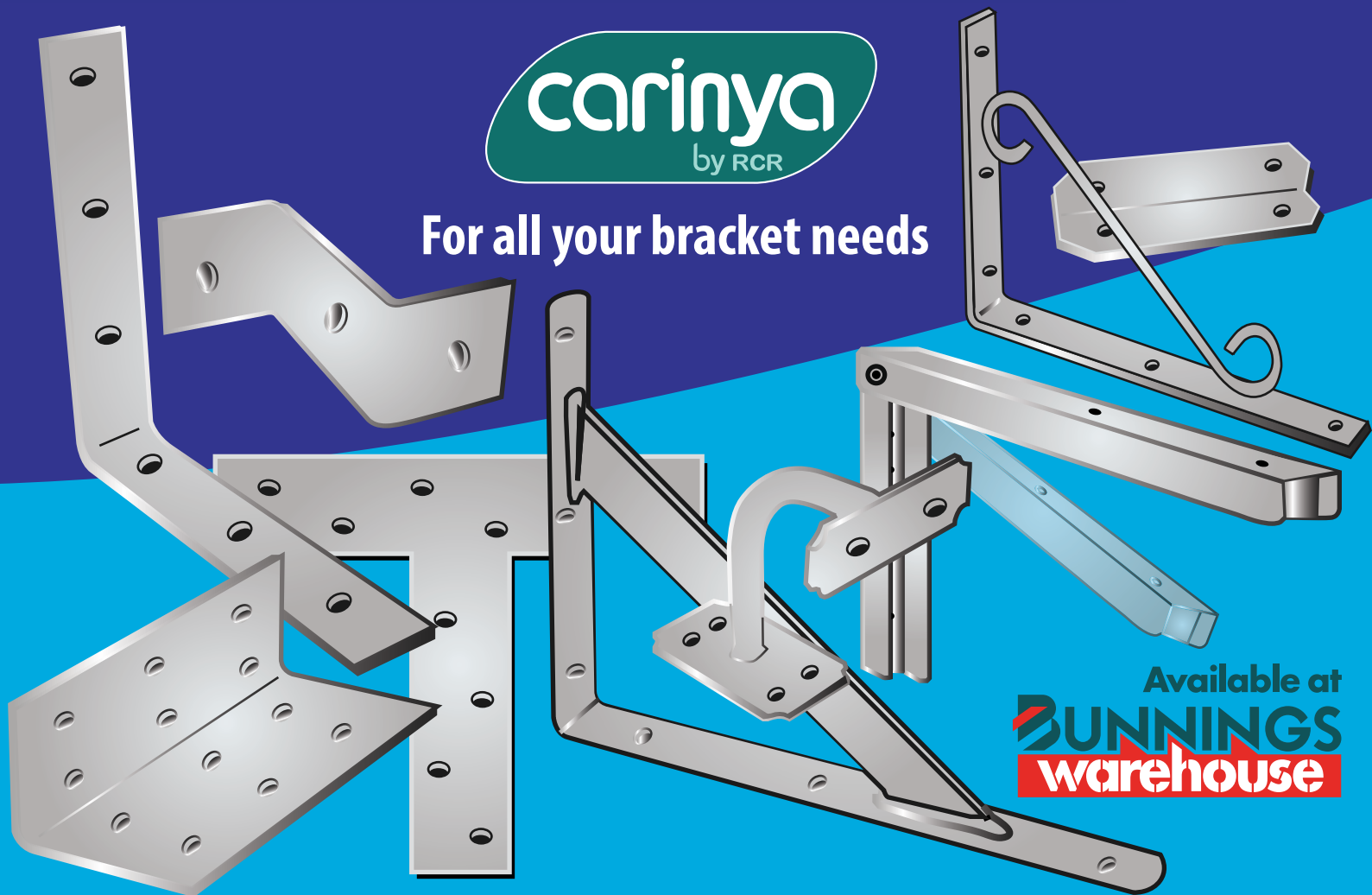
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## HANDY STUFF

# FATHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE

Pick the perfect present for Dad with these ideas to suit any budget

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

### Fit fashion

Kit out Dad with the Fitbit Blaze, \$330. Like older versions, it features a GPS and heart-rate tracker, but the new Fitbit also includes on-screen workouts, a colour touchscreen and longer battery life.

[fitbit.com/au](http://fitbit.com/au)



### Digital drawings

Streamline your old man's workday with the Bamboo Spark with Gadget Pocket, \$249. This smart folio and ballpoint pen allows handwritten content to be saved as an editable digital file.

[buywacom.com.au](http://buywacom.com.au)

### Armed access

Keep tools on hand with the Leatherman Tread, \$306. Adjustable to any wrist size, this wearable multi-tool has 29 tools built into its steel links, including wrenches and screwdrivers.

[leatherman.com.au](http://leatherman.com.au)



### Ring ringer

Save Dad's time with an Orbit Key Finder, \$40. Just pop it on his key ring and call it from a smartphone app when he can't locate his keys. It also works in reverse, ringing his phone with the press of a button.

[whiteandco.com.au](http://whiteandco.com.au)



### Top tunes

Hear clearer with the Bose SoundLink Around-ear Wireless Headphones II, \$379. Crafted from impact-resistant materials, they feature an advanced microphone system for phone calls, Bluetooth switching between devices, and crisp and clear sound.

[bose.com.au](http://bose.com.au)







## Clean cut

Give Dad the Oscar Razors Luxury Gift Box, \$50. The pack includes 12 German-made razor cartridges, a sleek black handle, a 150ml Oscar natural shaving gel and a 30ml Oscar natural shaving oil.  
[oscarrazor.com.au](http://oscarrazor.com.au)



## Home hacks

Full of expert advice to save time, money and effort, as well as professional secrets and quick fixes, *Brilliant Home Tips And Tricks* (Reader's Digest, \$45) is a great book for any DIYer.

[shop.readersdigest.com.au](http://shop.readersdigest.com.au)



## Gourmet grill

Let your dad loose on a Matador Boss Four-burner BBQ, \$890. It has a satin enamel cooking surface, self-cleaning hood and a wok burner. Grillsmart technology channels fat and oils away for fewer flare-ups and easier cleaning.

[matadorbbqs.com.au](http://matadorbbqs.com.au)



## Easy entertainer

Surf channels fast with the help of Siri using Apple TV, from \$269. It has a glass-touch Siri Remote that turns your TV into a touch screen. And the customisable home screen makes accessing entertainment apps easy.  
[apple.com.au](http://apple.com.au)



## Handy highball

Quickly cool Dad's drink without watering it down using The Original Ice Co Ice Ball Maker, \$15. Crafted from high-grade food-safe silicone, it creates an ice sphere 6cm in diameter, and comes in five colour options.

[yellowoctopus.com.au](http://yellowoctopus.com.au)



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For more information visit [trojantools.com.au](http://trojantools.com.au)

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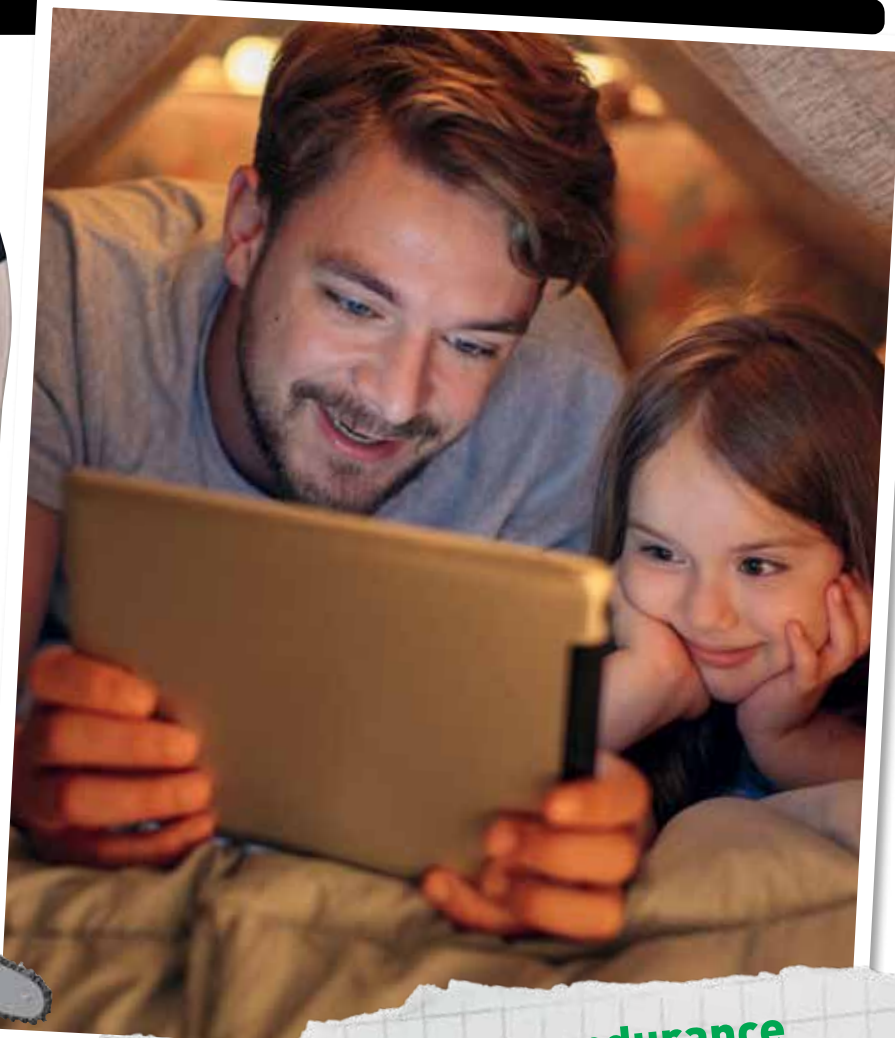
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## Solid sipper

Cure a caffeine lover's DIY dilemma with the Mighty Mug Go Anti-spill Mug, \$30. The triple-wall design will keep their coffee warm as they work, while the Smart Grip Technology on the base prevents workbench spills.

[yellowoctopus.com.au](http://yellowoctopus.com.au)



## Fast feller

Slice through tree branches with the Ozito 1800W 355mm Electric Chainsaw, \$94. A chain brake protects against kickbacks while automatic oiling and bucking spikes ensure a swift, smooth cutting performance.

[ozito.com.au](http://ozito.com.au)



## Portable player

Ideal for the garage, the Ryobi 18V One+ Bluetooth Two-speaker Radio, \$169, can stream from, and charge, devices. Switch between battery or corded mains power.

[ryobi.com.au](http://ryobi.com.au)



## Even endurance

Upgrade Dad's workshop with the Stanley FatMax Carbon Composite Spirit Level, \$149. Made from a carbon-fibre composite, it has a durable box-beam design.

[stanleytools.com.au](http://stanleytools.com.au)



## Metal magic

Finish off a tool collection with the Trojan De-magnetiser, from \$9. Renew or remove the magnetic tip on small tools or screwdrivers with one swipe when working with small or sensitive components.

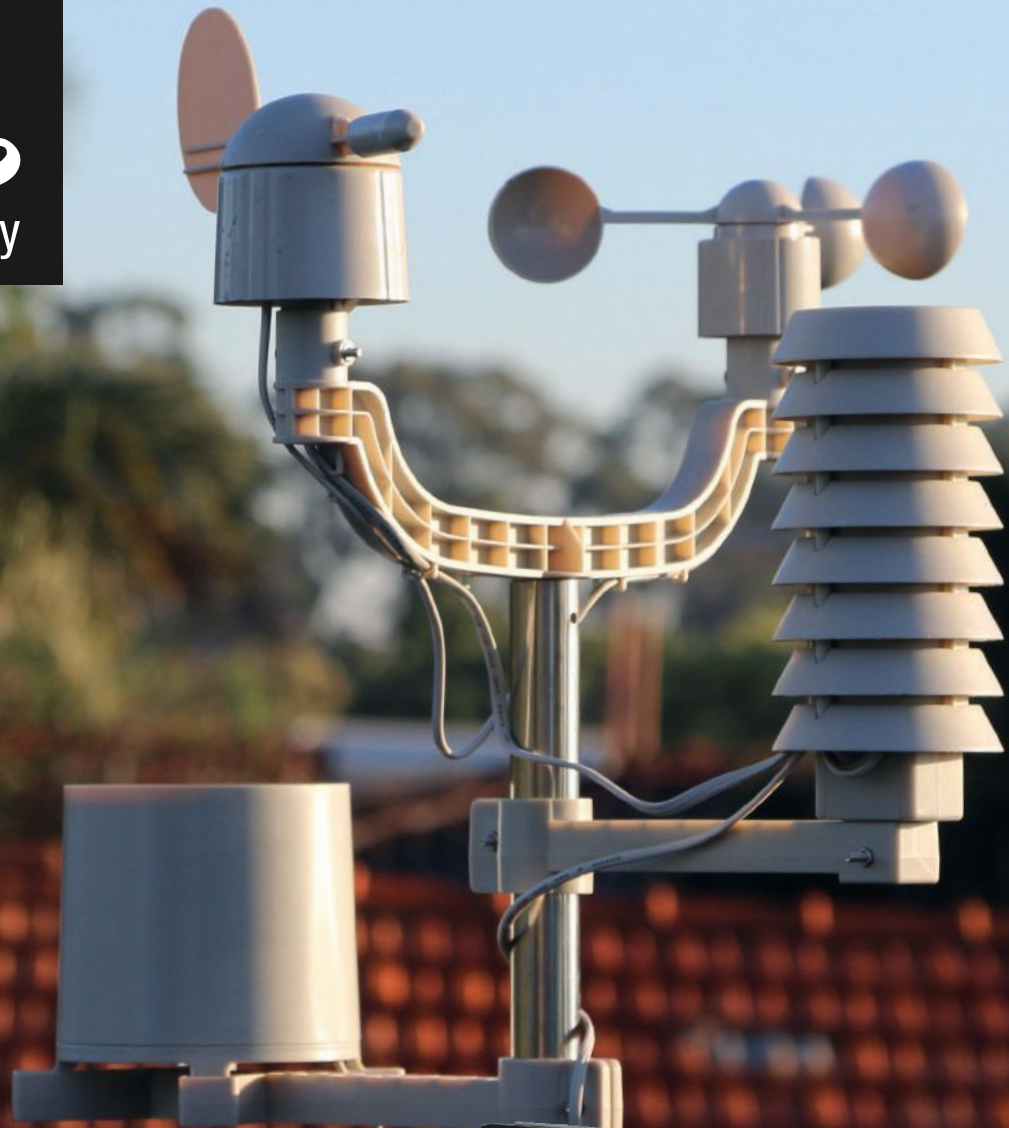
[trojantools.com.au](http://trojantools.com.au)





[www.holmanindustries.com.au](http://www.holmanindustries.com.au)

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## BUYER'S GUIDE

# TOILET SEATS

### Timber throne

Add old-world charm to the main bathroom with the Loo With A View Moulded Brown Oak Timber Two-piece, \$62. Easy to install, it has a non-porous finish.



### Bathroom bouquet

Include feminine flair in your ensuite with the Loo With A View Rose Two-piece Toilet Seat, \$99. It fits 99% of suites and is made of poly resin with zinc alloy hinges.



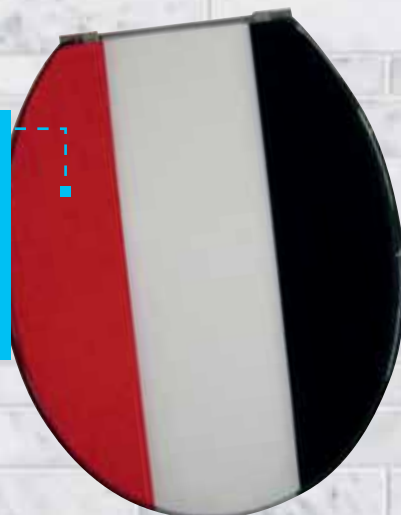
### Flagged flush

Treat your British friends to a taste of home with the Mondella Union Jack Toilet Seat, \$63. It is made of MDF with zinc alloy hinges and has a slow-close feature.



### Proud posterior

Support your AFL team with the Loo With A View Saints Two-piece Toilet Seat, \$99. Not a Saints fan? The range features seven other clubs in the national league.



### Tough toot

Skip the stress and replace a ruined seat with the sturdy Bemis Blue Vandal Resistant Toilet Seat, \$72. It features stainless steel hinges and four stability bumpers.



### Family flexible

Switch a standard seat to suit young and old alike with the Caroma Soft Close Family Toilet Seat, \$99. It features both small and large, quick-release, soft-close seats.





# Swap your standard seat for one of these fun options for a quick and easy bathroom update

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



## Optical option

Multitask in one of the most-used rooms in a home with the Loo With A View Two-piece H2O Toilet Seat, \$99. It features a water-themed optical chart to test your eyes.

## Ocean outhouse

Bring a bit of the beach back to your place with the Loo With A View Tsunami Two-piece Toilet Set, \$99. The poly resin lid features a barrel wave and has adjustable hinges.



## Coastal clean

Set an underwater scene with the Loo With A View Two-piece Bluewash Dolphin Toilet Seat, \$123. Your kids will love its marine theme while you'll like that it's easy to clean.



## Silent seat

Avoid waking up the whole household with the Estilo White Soft Close Toilet Seat, \$20. Designed to fit most suites, it is made of polypropylene.

## Light-up latrine

Sick of stubbing your toe stumbling to the loo in the night? Install a Mondella Resonance LED Light Toilet Seat, \$49, which is activated for 30 seconds by 60 decibel sounds.



## Pretty privy

Introduce a splash of colour to the bathroom with the Mondella Multi Coloured Toilet Seat, \$63. Made of MDF, it has a slow-close feature and chromed hinge.



# GAINING ACCESS

Think outside the square and set the tone with statement gates

WORDS SITA SIMONS

A gate may not be the first thing that springs to mind when renovating or building, but it is functionally necessary and can set the tone for the whole house or give you an opportunity to get creative.

Ergonomic function should be high on the agenda for a front gate that will be used multiple times a day.

It needs to be secure, easy to operate and look good, as well as be suitable for the kind of use it will get.

For a side passage, where rubbish bins most likely need to come in and out once a week, the gate must be wide enough to accommodate this function, with an easy method of securing open.

Be inspired by this selection of gate designs for your home.

## How does it open?

A gate can open inwards, outwards, or slide on tracks behind a wall.

The method you choose must first take into account the site. A gate can't swing up a slope and a level area is required for best function.

Proximity to the house, parked cars, pedestrians and other potential obstacles need to be carefully weighed up so the gate doesn't become a hazard and difficult to use.



### Artistic touch

Instead of installing a solid gate, which can block the architectural and landscaping flow, opt for a creative approach.

This gate offers both security and screening, but also functions as a modern work of art.

It was designed by Anne Miles and made by sculptor Robert Miles for Watershed Design ([watersheddesign.com.au](http://watersheddesign.com.au)).

PICTURE SIMON WHITBREAD





### Double duty

This bespoke gatehouse entry doubles as the front door.

It comes complete with an intercom and a doorbell, so it can be opened from inside the house. Visitors are treated to a beautiful

journey through the tropical garden to the actual house entry door.

Designed by Janine Mendel of Cultivart Landscape Design ([cultivart.com.au](http://cultivart.com.au)), the gate is visible from inside the house, so it forms an integral part of the landscaping. ➤



## Style and materials

A gate works best when it is in keeping with the style of the home, particularly with street-facing gates.

Victorian and Federation houses traditionally have timber picket gates with feature posts.

Inner-city terraces typically have wrought-iron gates, while Art Deco-style houses from the 20s and 30s feature woven wire gates, usually with decorative scrolls.

New modern treatments enhance these designs and pre-fabricated choices are now widely available.

Check council guidelines in your area to be aware of any restrictions before planning new gates and fences.



### Dramatic detail

Set at the top of stairs on a sloping block, this small gate is saved from being heavy and dull by the metal floating frame and laser-cut metalwork.

Designed by Deborah Bauer of Urban Metal ([urbanmetal.com.au](http://urbanmetal.com.au)), it provides contrast to the stone walls. The stainless steel reflects light in a space where all other materials are light-absorbing.



### Set the scene

Inspired by a trip to India, this garden gate was the starting point for the landscaping, so it is the focus of the design.

It was hand-built by Robert Strickland of Melbourne Decking ([melbournedeckingbuilder.com.au](http://melbournedeckingbuilder.com.au)) using recycled railway sleepers and hardwood, and creates a welcoming space that makes you wonder what lies behind it.



PICTURES (MAIN) ROBERT STRICKLAND (INSET) JSC PRESTIGE HOMES





### First impressions

A driveway gate is a large element that can establish the overall impression of the home and garden design.

Taking their inspiration from smaller-scale laser-cut gates,

expansive options like this one, from Entanglements, are made more affordable through new technology ([entanglements.com.au](http://entanglements.com.au)).

The designer look and detailed finishes of this gate complement the modernity of the home. ➤

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## Access and power

Gone are the days of only latched gates, as modern versions come with varying levels of security and tailored solutions.

A gate can be accessed manually via a latch or key, with options being available for child-proofing, if required. Or the gate can be powered by the electricity source in your home.

Remote control gates are popular on driveways so you don't have to get out of the car to gain access. Electronic key, code pad or swipe cards are secure, but you require a separate physical control to activate them.



### Mixed materials

The Dover gate from Cedar West ([cedarwest.com.au](http://cedarwest.com.au))

combines the durability of an aluminium frame with the beauty and warmth of natural timber.

It features solid timber panelling made from Western red cedar with an aluminium surround that is available in a wide range of colours, making it a very versatile gate. ⚡



### Well matched

A well-chosen gate enhances and reinforces the architectural style while providing a practical purpose.

This 9mm AA marine-grade two-ply panel gate from Webb & Brown-Neaves ([wbhomes.com.au](http://wbhomes.com.au)) is oiled for a deep timber sheen.

It works well with the black window frames and the Japanese home and garden design.



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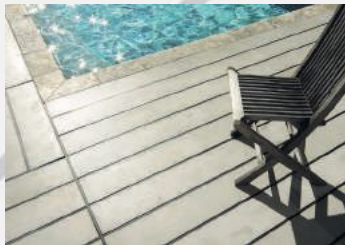
With accessories including wide boards, edge caps, and a wide range of coating choices, **HardieDeck™** prompts creativity with stylish and distinctive layouts.

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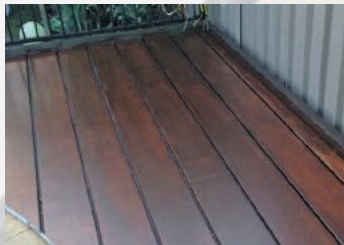
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\* When installed and maintained correctly as set out in the Installation Manual.



# MAKE A GATE

Use off-the-shelf pickets to build this Federation-style landscape solution in just a few hours

If you have an opening that's too big or small for a standard-sized gate, build your own. A picket gate is a simple DIY project and the dimensions can be easily adapted.

Here, 13 cypress pine pickets were used to create a side gate. To build it, all you need is a drill and a mitresaw.

The gothic profile was cut off five of the pickets and they were used for the rails, brace and gate stops.

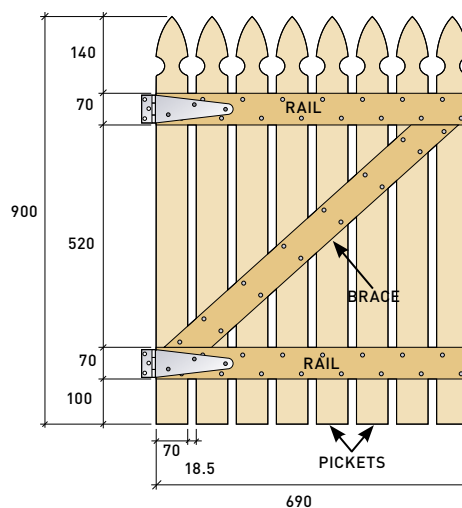
Treated pine posts were secured to the house and a brick fence and the gate was hung using hinges.



Stain or paint a timber gate to protect it from the elements



## GARDEN GATE measurements in mm



### CUTTING LIST

| PART                | SIZE          | NO |
|---------------------|---------------|----|
| <b>Cypress pine</b> |               |    |
| Stops               | 70 x 20 x 800 | 2  |
| Pickets             | 70 x 20 x 900 | 8  |
| Rails               | 70 x 20 x 690 | 2  |
| Brace               | 70 x 20 x 870 | 1  |
| <b>Treated pine</b> |               |    |
| Posts               | 90 x 35 x 800 | 2  |

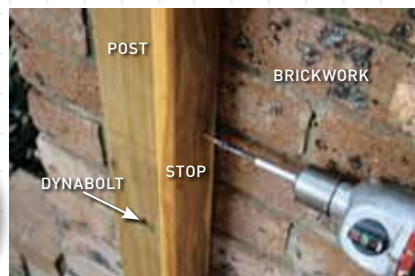
### FASTENERS

| TYPE                                 | USE                         |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8g x 75mm coach screws and Dynabolts | Posts                       |
| 8g x 35mm galvanised timber screws   | Stops, brace, rails, hinges |



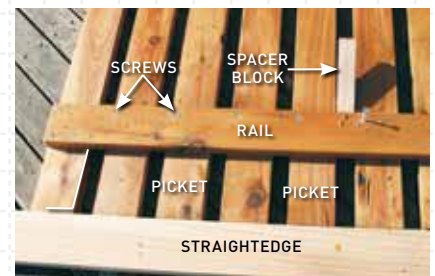
### 1 Secure the posts

Counterbore 10mm-deep holes at the top, middle and base of the posts. Drill clearance holes, securing to the house with coach screws. Drill the second post using a masonry bit, securing to the brickwork with Dynabolts.



### 2 Install the stops

Drill four clearance holes through the gate stops 25mm in from one edge, then position with the holes closest to the wall, flush with the post tops. Secure the stops to the posts with galvanised timber screws.



### 3 Assemble the gate

Position the pickets face down and align with a spacer block and straightedge. Lay the rails 100 and 690mm from the base. Secure the pickets 10mm in from the rail edges with screws, using three on the outer pickets and two on the rest.



A picket gate adds privacy and security to a garden.

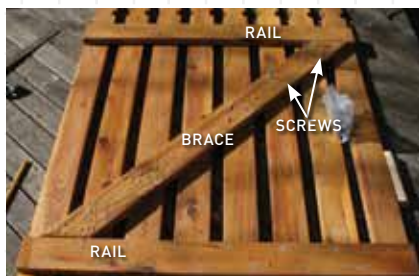


## DIY TIP

To prevent a hinge from squeaking, directly apply a lubricating oil, or remove the hinge pin, then clean, sand and reinstall it.

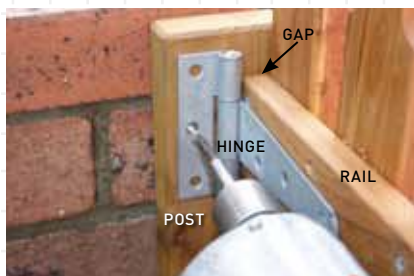
▶ Find out how to refinish a gate

Visit [handyman.net.au/gate](http://handyman.net.au/gate)



### 4 Attach the brace

Check the gate assembly for square, then position the brace diagonally 20mm from the ends of the rails. Mark the angles, remove and cut with a mitresaw. Secure the brace to each picket using two screws.



### 5 Hang the gate

Secure the hinges to the rails with two screws, then position the gate against the stop with a 5mm gap between the rails and post. Attach the hinge plates to the post with screws, securing a pad bolt or latch on the opposite side.



### Brace the gate

Gravity can cause the sides of a gate to sag, but a diagonal compression brace, like the one we've used here, prevents this by moving some of the load to the hinged side.

A compression brace is usually positioned from the base hinge corner of the frame to the top latch corner.

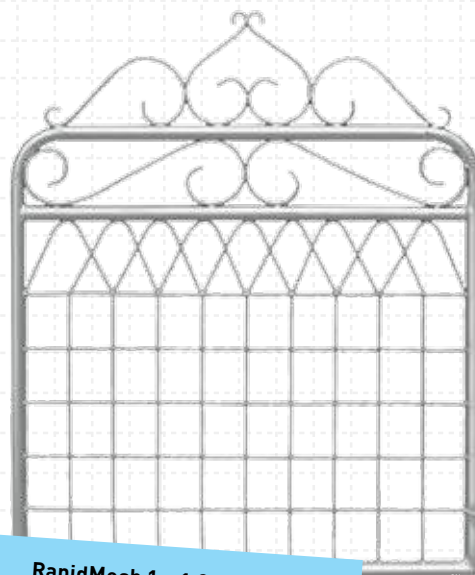
The brace prevents sagging by transferring the downward pressure to the hinge. >



## GATE STYLES

Timber and metal garden gates come ready-made in a range of designs both classic and modern. Whether you want to improve security or keep pets and children contained, there is a gate to suit every style of landscape.

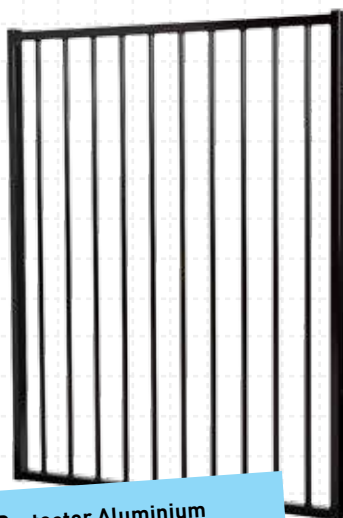
Measure the opening or fence gap, then choose a style, opting for stainless steel or galvanised hardware and locks to help prevent rust and corrosion.



RapidMesh 1 x 1.2m Balmain Galvanised Federation Gate, \$87. [rapidmesh.com.au](http://rapidmesh.com.au)



D & D Technologies KwikFit Self-closing Gate Hinge, about \$10. [au.ddtechglobal.com](http://au.ddtechglobal.com)



Protector Aluminium 975 x 900mm Flat-top Gate, \$49. [protectoraluminium.com.au](http://protectoraluminium.com.au)



Romak Gothic 175mm Ring Gate Latch, \$25. [romak.com.au](http://romak.com.au)



Stanley Maxlatch Stainless Steel Gate Latch, \$17. [stanleytools.com.au](http://stanleytools.com.au)



Sandleford 95 x 47mm Brass Sign, \$9. [sandleford.com.au](http://sandleford.com.au)



Bae Corporation 1500 x 900mm Cypress Open Round Picket Gate, \$83. [plwtimber.com.au](http://plwtimber.com.au)



Specrite 1833 x 900mm Horizontal Slat Merbau Gate, \$99. [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au)



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### SAFETY TIP

Pool fences must be at least 1200mm high with the latches secured on the pool side. Ensure there are no climbable objects close by.

### After

Embellished panel toppers give character to the metal fence.

### Before





# Spruce up a plain fence

Add decorative metal panels DIY to create a new designer look

WORDS LEE DASHIELL MAIN PICTURE GEOFF BECK

The most common option used for the majority of metal boundary and pool fences is a simple design with vertical rungs.

While this understated design suits most house and garden styles, it has little distinctive personality.

Other metal fence designs feature embellishments such as rings, loops,

spears and crosses. If you'd like to give your existing plain fence a designer look and feel, use metal toppers.

Protector Aluminium has a range of styles to choose from, which can be slotted directly on top of the fence.

An easy DIY job, the panels can be secured using adhesive or screws, and come in standard 2400mm widths.

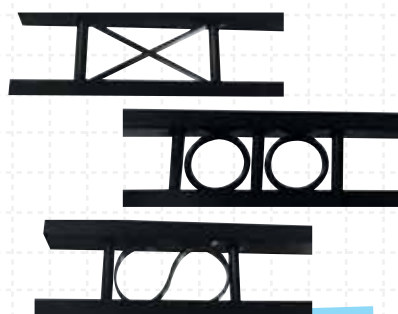


It's easy to install toppers with adhesive or screws.

TOP PICKS



Selleys Liquid Nails High Strength Fast Construction Adhesive, about \$5 for 420g. [selleys.com.au](http://selleys.com.au)



Protector Aluminium 2400mm Fence Toppers, \$35 each. [protectoraluminium.com.au](http://protectoraluminium.com.au)

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# CLUTTER BUSTERS

Sort out the garage to create a tidy workspace and efficient storage area

Fitting out the garage with storage for tools, gardening gear and sporting equipment is the best way to keep the area organised.

Without customised storage, the garage can quickly become cluttered, making it hard to park the car.

Installing sturdy cabinets and shelves maximises storage capacity and creates workshop space.

Lockable cabinets keep power tools safe and chemicals out of reach, while adjustable shelving can be reconfigured to suit a range of items. ➤

Set up your garage with a range of smart storage options to create a tidy workshop.

- 1 Romak Wall-mounted Shelf, \$59.
- 2 Romak Large Tool Holder, \$5.
- 3 Romak Universal Hook, \$5.
- 4 Romak Five-tier Shelf, \$99.
- 5 Romak Extra-large J Hook, \$5.
- 6 Romak Metal Cabinet, \$349.
- 7 Romak Four-drawer Mobile Storage Unit, \$310.
- 8 Romak Four-piece Pegboard Bracket Set, \$185.
- 9 Romak Two-door Mobile Storage Unit, \$215.
- 10 Romak Garage Workbench, \$279.

## DIY TIP

Pegboards provide flexible storage and take advantage of vertical space, keeping tools accessible and easy to find.



Sidchrome 13-drawer Tool Trolley, \$1094.





### Vertical solutions

The garage needs to act as a parking space, workshop, and storage area, which means there isn't much floorspace left over.

To maximise storage, make use of vertical space by mounting shelves and hooks on the wall.

Modular wall panel systems feature removable hooks that allow a range of items such as bikes and cables to be hung, and the arrangement can be altered as storage needs change. ➤

Store a range of gear using hooks and baskets.



Tidy up a compact garage with these clever storage ideas.

- ❶ Storease 1200 x 150mm Wall Panel, \$24.98.
- ❷ Storease Bike Hook \$11.69.
- ❸ Storease J Hook, \$14.69.
- ❹ Romak 1830 x 910 x 410mm Five-tier Shelf, \$89.
- ❺ Romak Workbench, \$89.98.
- ❻ Romak 1800 x 780 x 465 Metal Cabinet, \$349.

### DESIGN TIP

Paint garage walls white to reflect light into dark corners of a windowless space, increasing visibility for DIY projects.



Supatool Nine-drawer Tool Chest, \$150.



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# Father's Day gift guide

Head instore to pick up the best present for a handy dad this year



Kick kinks to the kerb with the Gardena Portable Classic 15m Hose Box Set, \$139.



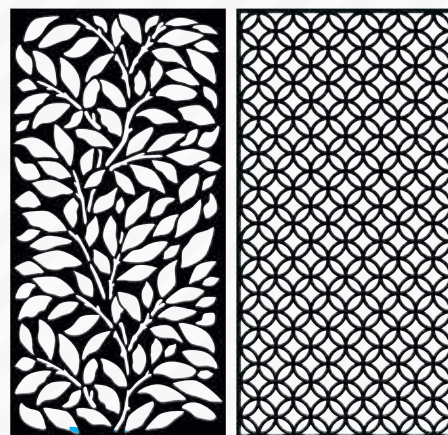
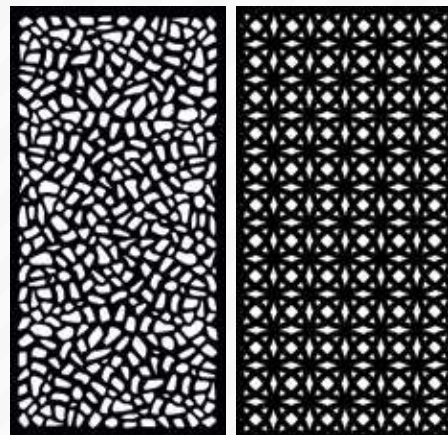
Connect and control several accessories separately with the Gardena Four-way Water Distributor, \$34.99.



Keep Dad's garden green using the Gardena Master Control Water Computer, \$200.



Reach every corner of the garden with the Gardena Classic Spray Lance, \$29.99.



Screen out neighbours with one of the durable Matrix Screen Panels, \$99 each.



### GROW TIP

Only water the lawn in the morning during winter to avoid water sitting overnight, which can create fungal growth problems.







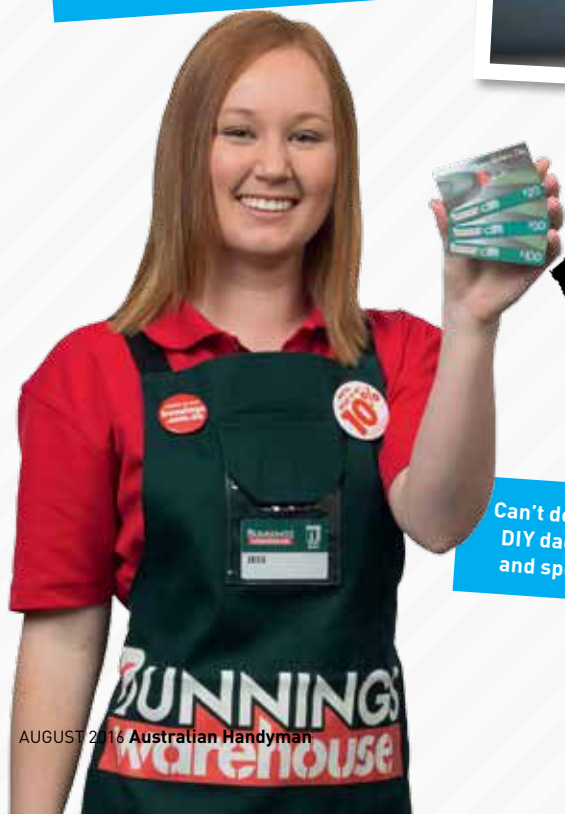
Dad will love the Ryobi 68-piece Drill Bit Set, \$29.99, with 52 driving bits, stubby screw guide, nut drivers and socket adaptors.



Treat Dad to the Ozito 18V Power X Change Twin Kit, \$149, featuring a drill driver and impact driver.



Add to Dad's DIY kit with the Redline Circular Saw Blade Six-pack for wood cutting, \$39.98.



Can't decide on the perfect gift for your DIY dad? Pick up a Bunnings Gift Card and spend the day shopping with him.



Blast through built-up grime with the Karcher 36V Cordless Pressure Washer, \$349.



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## STORAGE TIP

Kit out a garden shed with workshop shelves that can be configured to fit the space, so that Dad has a place for everything.



Tuck away tools and keep them out of the weather with the Q10 Fix Garden Shed, \$199.



Build your dad a backyard vegie patch with The Organic Garden Co 200 x 100 x 73cm Zinc Raised Garden Bed, \$199.



Store Dad's gear inside the 3 x 3m Zinc Shed, \$399, which is big enough for a workbench too.



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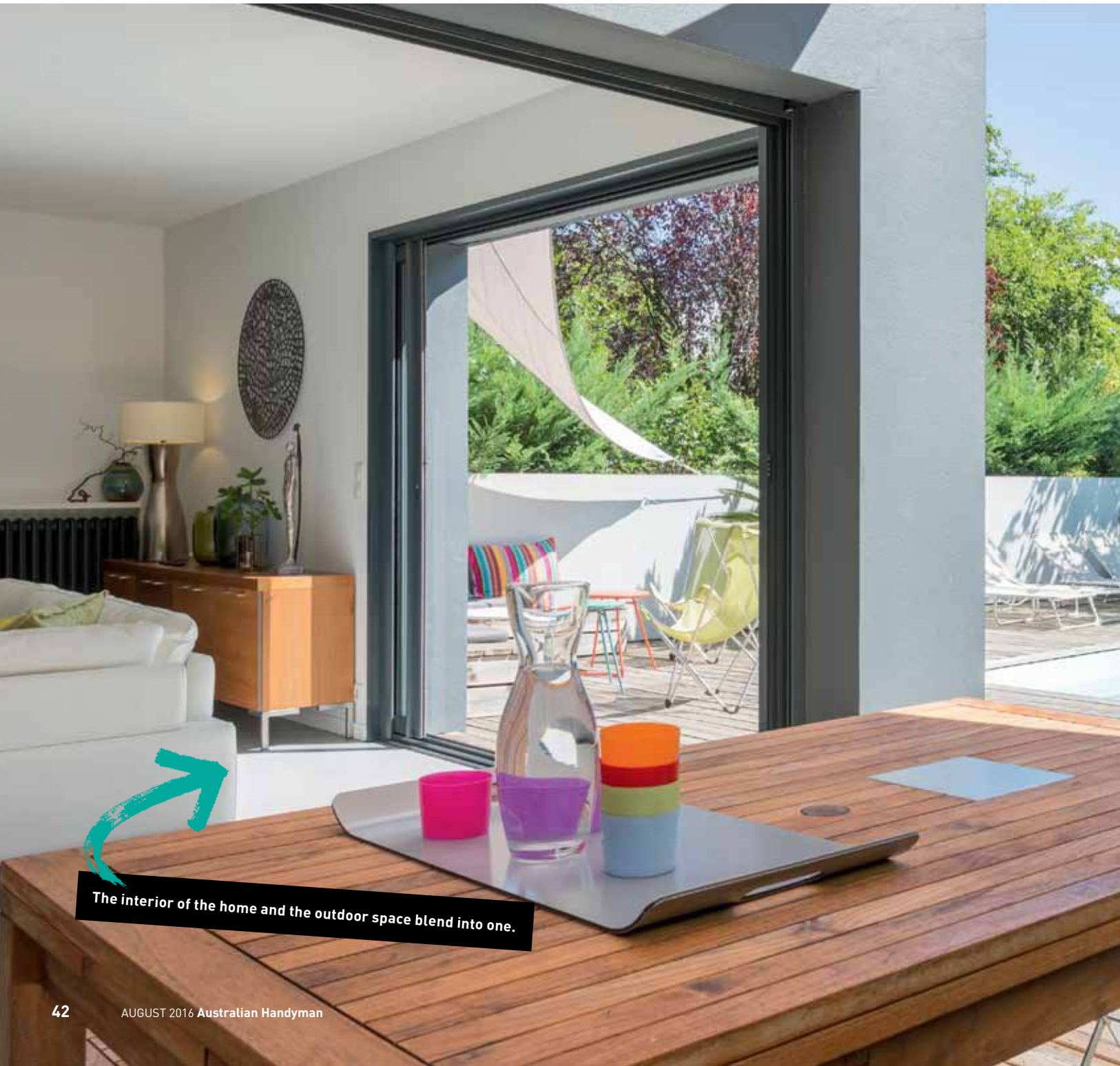
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# LESS IS MORE

A well-planned renovation and modest extension made the most of this suburban home without blowing the budget

WORDS SITA SIMONS



The interior of the home and the outdoor space blend into one.



## BUDGET TIP

Choose two high-end features for each room, then save on everything else to avoid overspending when renovating.



When a new job meant a change of city, it gave the Harris family the chance to rethink what they wanted in a home.

Having rented an old terrace in the inner city for many years, Tina Harris wanted to create something new, and a move to the suburbs of a smaller city meant the possibility of buying.

Without a large budget, Tina knew she would be in the market for a bit of a fixer-upper, but had her mind set on a more modern house than she'd lived in previously.

When the couple first inspected their new home, price and location drove the sale. It was a fairly standard detached house and the interior layout consisted of a number of small closed-off rooms and narrow hallways.

But the big backyard and pool had them immediately interested.

'For the first time, I understood what people mean when they say they saw the potential. As it stood, there was just a back door leading to the outside space and no real view from anywhere in the house, but I knew we could make a big improvement,' says Tina. ➤



## Letting in light

The price was right and left enough in the budget to plan for a 37sqm extension to be built off the back.

The original kitchen and living room were dark and uninviting, and felt separate from the back garden.

'It's taken for granted now that you integrate your outdoor area, but it always comes as a surprise to realise how little value this held to builders and homeowners in the past,' says Tina.

'I just couldn't wait to get walls knocked down and let in the light.'

The single-level extension would leave enough room in the garden for a large entertaining deck, a good-sized pool and a grassed area.

Internally, the extension would allow for the new open-plan living areas and kitchen, which in turn would make way for extra personal space in the main house, comprising a study and small powder room.



Floor-to-ceiling sliding doors connect open-plan living areas to the outdoors

## DESIGN TIP

Use columns and recesses to define zones and add interest in an open-plan layout while retaining a sense of space.







The sleek kitchen is fitted with cost-effective flatpack cabinets.

### Seeking simplicity

The new layout in the extension is simple and effective, and while the zones are large and open, there isn't any wasted space.

A staggered design positioned the kitchen at one end of the space, which in turn allowed for a private dining nook to be created on the other side of a dividing column.

Large without being cavernous, the kitchen features sleek, narrow cabinets that mirror the shape of the room, and so are in perfect balance.

'Storage is everything in the kitchen, of course, but instead of running cabinets up the whole wall, we used the length of the room instead,' says Tina.

'We have lots of cabinets, but the space looks and feels very pared back. This approach has really set the tone for the whole house.' ➤

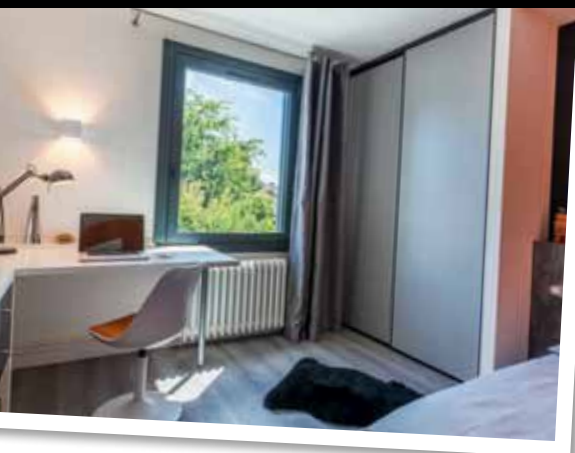




In the main bedroom, the focus is on creating a cosy and relaxed mood.



**ABOVE** A sliding cavity door connects the ensuite to the bedroom, saving space.  
**BELOW** Customised inexpensive furniture in a kid's bedroom can be changed as they grow.



### Playing with space

The rooms in the main house are small, but maximum function and space has been retained in each. All the bedrooms have built-in storage, and the lack of space is embraced.

Instead of using mirrored built-ins, which would be a traditional way to create the illusion of space, Tina opted for timber for warmth and earthiness.

The playful strip of mirror on the doors serves a practical purpose and also reflects the feature pendant lights.

'I like a bedroom to be cosy and relaxing, and I don't think you need lots of space for that. Colours and textures used are the main considerations,' says Tina.

The smaller rooms also helped with budget constraints. Using recesses not only provides a focal feature and adds depth to a space, but it also creates extra practical surfaces with built-in headboards.

Built-in desks and wardrobes streamline the kids' bedrooms. ➤



Choose timber doors with mirrored panels for built-ins to inject texture and warmth



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### Living in colour

White works well for an overall scheme, particularly in an open-plan area, but knowing where to introduce colour is key to adding visual depth.

Built-in recesses serve a practical purpose of adding storage space, but also create shadows, so expanses of white wall are broken up.

While the living area is zoned to watch TV, floor-to-ceiling sliding doors give the home what it was missing, a connection to the outdoors.

Paying homage to 1950s style and featuring carefully curated items, the living spaces are visually interesting without feeling overdone.

'I've been a bit of a collector and you keep hold of things because letting them go feels wasteful. But in preparing for the move, I realised I had lots of stuff that I didn't even like,' says Tina.

'I understand now that having less but loving it makes me happier and my home look more put together.'

Panels of feature colour create a theme and give a definite nod to the owners' personalities.

'I love colour, but I didn't want anything to look too busy. In previous homes, I've gone to town with colour, as I didn't know where to stop. I was determined not to do this here and I'm pleased with the results.' ➤



Using the basics of feng shui, a Chinese philosophy of directing energy, the colours were chosen to reflect the mood that was wanted in each space.



Break up expanses of white walls and add character with pops of colour

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### Creating consistency

The bathrooms and ensuite in the house all feature the same tiles but in different tones and ways.

A downstairs powder room uses the large-format grey tiles on a false wall to hide the toilet cistern and streamline the space.

An angled section of the wall creates shadows and the illusion of depth, making the room feel bigger.

The bathroom features the tiles in two different greys on the walls and floor. The recess theme is continued, this time backed with a mirror, which takes the emphasis off the corner of the room and creates an infinity view.

In the ensuite, a large shower and lots of glass give an upscale hotel feel, with not a white tile in sight. Storage is provided by a large vanity and a heated towel rail ups the luxury.

### BUDGET TIP

Use the same tiles in bathrooms throughout the house to reduce material buying costs and create a uniform, streamlined look.



**ABOVE** Tiles are used to cleverly conceal the toilet cistern.  
**RIGHT** Lots of glass in the ensuite gives the illusion of spaciousness.



### Planning wisely

This is a house that has taken budget and building restrictions and made the most of what was there.

Money was saved by using the same paint and tiles throughout, and small pops of colour.

Paint has been used to define and brighten but also to disguise less-than-perfect walls in the main house, and also make a feature of unsightly radiators.

Furnishing is kept to a minimum, but interest is brought into each space with the use of simple recesses.



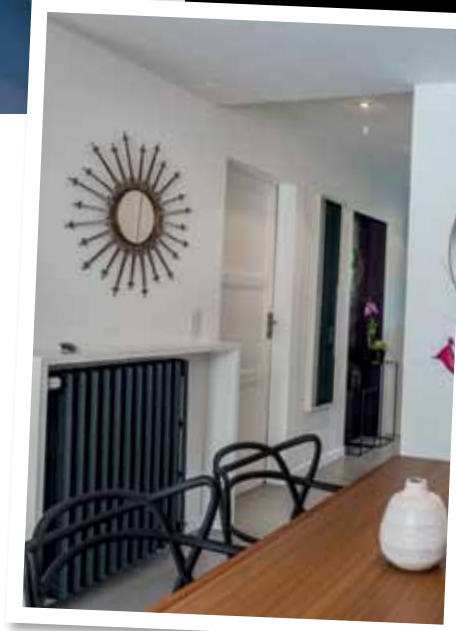


In the bathrooms, a mix of inexpensive and high-end fittings work together in harmony. **BELOW** A timber frame and paint make a feature out of the old-fashioned radiator.

Knowing where to spend and where to save meant that Tina was able to incorporate inexpensive items but still keep the overall look sleek and sophisticated.

In the bathrooms, vanities are run-of-the-mill, but tapware is high end. Likewise in the kitchen, the cabinets are standard flatpack, but Tina splurged on the island bench chairs and the extractor.

'These elements lift the room and claim your attention. A lot can be done with clever planning and a good builder,' says Tina. 🍋



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Laminate boards are typically installed floating over an existing floor without adhering to the substrate. Usually joined together with a simple tongue-and-groove system that clicks into position, they're ideal for DIY.

Their hard-wearing melamine resin finishes are kid-friendly and pet-proof, making them ideal for busy areas such as the living room.

Innovative new boards include an extra layer of sound absorption and no longer require an underlay, making them an easy way to upgrade underfoot in just a weekend.

The broad range of styles available, including new on-trend embossed blacks, will suit any style of home.

## DIY TIP

Allow a new concrete subfloor to cure for one month per 25mm thickness before laying laminate boards to ensure it has fully set.

Formica 8mm Spotted Gum Laminate Floor, \$29.80 per sqm.





Tarkett 8mm Painted Black Laminate Floor, \$35 per sqm.

Watch the video 'How To Lay Laminate Flooring' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)



Tarkett 7mm Soft Cumin Oak Laminate Floor, \$29.96 per sqm.



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# INSIDE *AND* OUT

Create a seamless transition between living spaces with a multipurpose outdoor room

**A** well-equipped alfresco entertaining area is one of the most sought-after features in the modern Australian home.

Creating an outdoor room extends the existing living area, providing a space where you can take advantage of the long, hot summers.

Protected from the elements, it can be used all year, whatever the weather.

Here, a garage was converted into an outdoor room. Large windows and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors close off or open up the room, providing a natural flow between zones and bringing the outdoors in.

Adding a home-entertainment system and comfortable seating offers an alternative to the traditional living room, creating a relaxing retreat. ➤

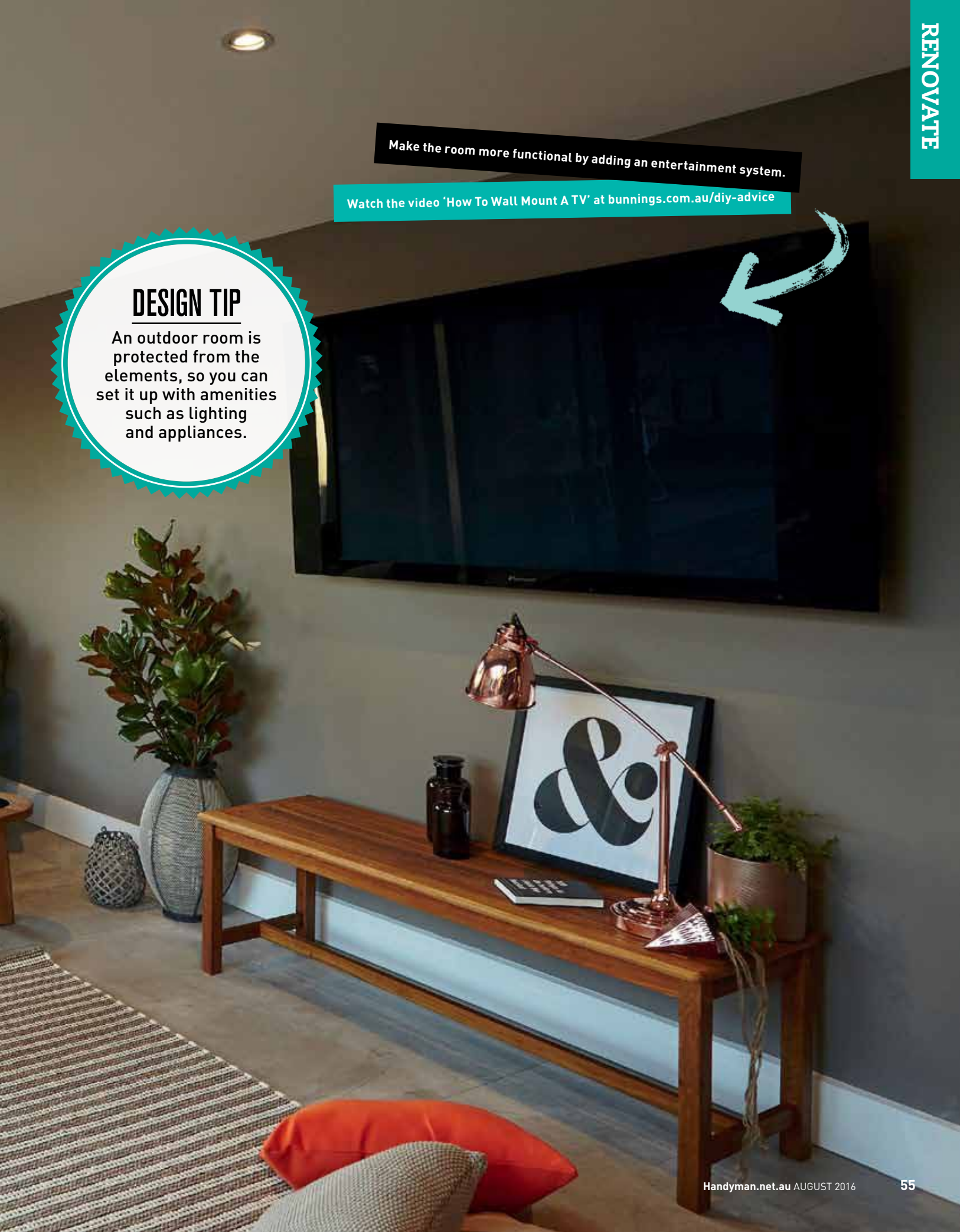


Make the room more functional by adding an entertainment system.

Watch the video 'How To Wall Mount A TV' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)

## DESIGN TIP

An outdoor room is protected from the elements, so you can set it up with amenities such as lighting and appliances.





### Entertainer's delight

The backyard barbecue is a great Aussie tradition, but heading in and out of the house to prepare food and clean up is inconvenient and keeps you away from the action.

Equipping your outdoor room with a compact, but functional, kitchen makes entertaining easy and

allows you to take care of your guests' needs without leaving the party.

Adding a bar fridge keeps drinks and snacks on hand, while a sink and a dishwasher make clearing up simple at the end of the day.

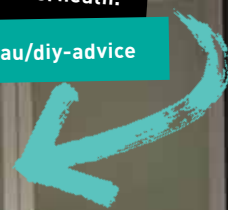
Installing wall cabinets provides storage space for plates, cups and appliances and keeps things tidy. 



Boost your living space by converting the garage into an outdoor room

Increase storage with wall cabinets and add wow-factor with LED lighting underneath.

Watch the video 'How to Install Kitchen Wall Cabinets' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)



### DIY TIP

When designing an outdoor kitchen, consider the location of current plumbing to minimise costs of installing new outlets.





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## DIY TIP

Modular decking can be laid on top of a concrete slab without the need for post holes, making installation quicker and more affordable.

### After

Transforming the wasted space redefines the entry and adds value.



### Before



# FROM AWKWARD TO AWESOME

A neglected outdoor area is reclaimed with decking to become a cosy entertaining space

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERIE BARBER



The biggest problem with the side entrance of this house is all the dead space that could be put to better use.

The bare, decades-old concrete appears cold and uninviting, and the ramp means there's no room to put any outdoor furniture.

And the backdrop of grey steel fence panels doesn't make for much of a relaxing outdoor sanctuary.

While the plants add greenery, the bulky planters are getting in the way of the entry.

## The reno challenge

The owners are keen to turn the area into an outdoor space they can use for relaxation.

A simple solution is to install a deck that still allows traffic flow but can double as an inviting entertaining area.

Modern furniture creates a comfortable seating area, while decorative panels and a vertical garden create a pleasant haven. ➤

## 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](http://handyman.net.au/virtual-makeover).



# SIX STEPS TO SUCCESS

## 1 LEVEL THE AREA

A level surface is needed for the new deck, so the concrete ramp is the first thing to go, which I'll replace with two steps.

At the same time, I'll get rid of the plastic planter tubs to free up more floorspace.



Australian Builders Ready Mixed Concrete, \$8 for 20kg. [bpsaust.com](http://bpsaust.com)

## 2 LAY A DECK

Now for the merbau timber deck. You could either add traditional decking with footings, or install a modular deck.

This won't require digging up the concrete slab, which is ideal if you're on a budget.

I'll skirt the deck around the hot water tank, as it's permanent.

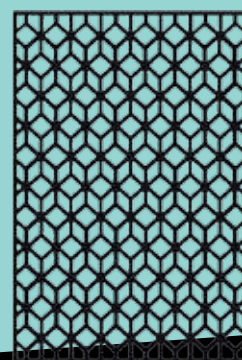


Good Times 1113 x 555mm Merbau Modular Decking Panel, \$88. [goodtimesdecking.com](http://goodtimesdecking.com)

## 3 INSTALL SCREENING

I'll add decorative detail by installing geometric privacy screens directly over the dividing fence.

Made from recycled plastic, these screens are available in a range of modern designs and add wow factor without breaking the budget.



Matrix 1805 x 1205 x 7mm Cubism Screen Panel in Charcoal, \$129. [designflow.com.au](http://designflow.com.au)

## 4 ADD THE GREENERY

Vertical wall gardens are a great use of space. They provide a lush cascade of greenery without taking up valuable floorspace.

You can plant them with herbs to create a kitchen garden, but I've opted for a mix of plants that give ripples of colour and texture.



Holman GreenWall Vertical Garden Kit, \$69. [holmanindustries.com.au](http://holmanindustries.com.au)

## 5 CHANGE THE DOOR

The old entrance door and flyscreen definitely have to go.

In many ways, the door is a key focal point, so it needs to be made more streamlined and contemporary.

Painting the new door to match the trim and privacy screening unifies the new look.



Hume Doors & Timber Newington 2040 x 820 x 40mm Entrance Door, \$218. [humedoors.com.au](http://humedoors.com.au)

## 6 COMPLETE THE LOOK

All it will take to finish off this space are a few trimmings that will offer a resort-like feel.

A feature plant in a big urn replaces the plastic tubs, while a compact all-weather setting turns this dead space into a relaxing outdoor area.



Mimosa Three-piece Retro Bistro Setting, \$519. [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au)





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# PAINT-JOB PERFECTION

Update the exterior of your home with expert preparation and application techniques

**I**t requires plenty of time and elbow grease to paint the outside of your house, so it pays to get it right the first time around.

Paint won't adhere to dirty or flaky surfaces, so ensure the walls are clean and smooth before picking up a brush.

Factor in preparation time when planning and work from the top down to avoid dirtying cleaned surfaces.

Always allow enough time for repairs to dry or cure, leaving finishes such as new sand and cement-based render for 30 days before painting.



## FIVE-STEP PLAN

### SAFETY TIP

Pressure washers should be used safely. Don't operate one when on a ladder, as the force could cause you to lose your footing.

Follow these easy steps to cleaning, preparing and painting the house to get the job done well.

- ① **CLEAN** the surfaces thoroughly by hand or use a pressure washer.
- ② **PREPARE** the surfaces by removing rough sections and flaking paint with a scraper or sandpaper.
- ③ **PATCH** any damaged areas such as gaps, holes or cracks.
- ④ **PROTECT** the surrounds using drop sheets and mask off trim.
- ⑤ **APPLY** two coats of paint, allowing it to dry completely in between.



Fill and sand any gaps or cracks.



Use a stiff brush to scrub off grime.



### Cleaning the surfaces

A pressure washer is effective for removing loose paint and built-up grime on surfaces.

It's worth investing in one for general home maintenance, but make sure you use it carefully near windows, as it may break the glass.

Avoid directing water up under the eaves and keep the nozzle 500mm

away from the surface being cleaned. Always start with a low pressure and test a small section prior to full-scale cleaning.

If you don't have a pressure washer, you can scrub surfaces using a stiff brush on a pole and a bucket. Mix the water with liquid sugar soap or mild detergent, then hose thoroughly with clean water. >



Keep weatherboards in good condition for easy repainting.

## Preparing weatherboards

Weatherboards are used as external wall cladding on a house.

They are long, thin boards that run vertically or horizontally and either overlap or fit together with a tongue-and-groove joint.

Traditionally, weatherboards are made from timber such as cedar, cypress or baltic pine, but they are now also available in H3 LOSP finger-jointed clear grade pine and composite materials.

It's worth keeping these boards in good condition, as preparation for painting can be a time-consuming and difficult task, particularly if the old paint has been left for too long and has started flaking.

For boards with flat profiles, it's possible to use a power sander, but those with curved profiles need to be sanded by hand using flexible sanding sponges, making it a tough and laborious job if there's a lot to do.



### Sanding weatherboards

If the paint is pre-1980s, the chances are it is lead-based.

To check, buy a test kit and read the Lead Alert booklet produced by the Australian Government. Go to [environment.gov.au](http://environment.gov.au) to download.

If it's lead-free, remove any flaking paint with a scraper, then feather the edges by sanding with 80 grit, then 180 grit paper.



1 2 3



### 1 Prepare the boards

Scrape and sand away any flaking paint using a scraper. Remove any rusty or protruding nails and replace them with galvanised nails, positioned 10mm from the original holes.



### 2 Patch damaged areas

Remove paint from around the damaged area. Overfill slightly using an epoxy two-part filler and allow to dry. Sand with 80 and 180 grit paper, then prime the filled area and any bare timber.



### 3 Fill nail holes

Use a caulking gun with a paintable, flexible gap sealant to fill holes, gaps or cracks around window and door jambs.

**TIP** Old caulk loses elasticity, so dig it out and refill to weatherproof. ➤





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## Preparing masonry

Masonry includes brick, block or stone that is bound with mortar. It's commonly used for the exterior walls of houses and retaining walls.

➤ **BAGGED MASONRY** has a skim coat of wet mortar applied over the surface to partially hide the joints and create a textured finish. Coloured oxide can be added to the mix or the finish painted.

➤ **RENDERED MASONRY** has a smooth appearance that completely hides all joints. Colour can be painted on or added to specialty textured coatings.



1 2 3



### 1 Prepare the area

Brush off any loose debris, then apply a sealing and bonding agent for render. Remove any drummy render using an angle grinder, bevelling the edges for smooth joining of old and new render.



### 2 Patch the hole

Lay mortar in the damaged area with a trowel, overfilling slightly. Screed by pushing and pulling a straightedge across the patched surface. Fill any depressions and repeat the process.



### 3 Smooth the surface

As the render firms and dries, use a float to smooth the area in a circular motion. Finish by rubbing the area in a circular motion using a flat sponge, blending the patch with the existing edges. ➤



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## DIY TIP

A composite material, fibre cement cladding is very absorbent, so make sure you always apply primer before painting.

## Preparing fibre cement

Made from cement and cellulose, fibre cement (FC) is used on exterior walls.

To prepare it for painting, sand any flaking paint, then punch nail heads beneath the surface and cover with a flexible gap sealant.

Remove mildew by scrubbing with one part bleach and three parts water, leave for 20 minutes, then rinse clean. Prime with sealer, then apply two coats of exterior grade acrylic.

**TIP** FC installed before the early 1980s may contain asbestos, in which case, have repairs done by a specialist. ➤

FC cladding comes in sheets, planks and weatherboards.

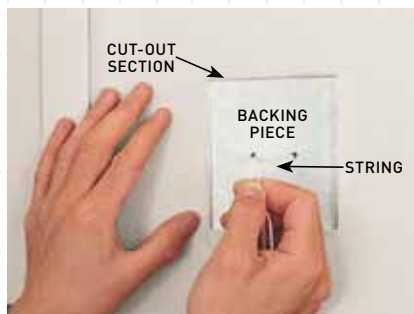
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### 1 Cut around damage

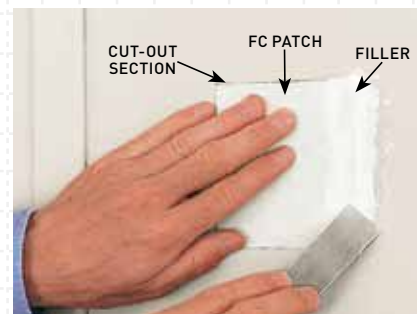
Mark around the damaged area using a steel rule and pencil, then cut out the section using a jigsaw.

**TIP** Use a tungsten carbide-coated jigsaw blade to cut the FC.



### 2 Add the backing

Cut a backing piece 40mm longer and 2mm narrower than the cut-out section. Add holes for string, apply construction adhesive to the ends, then position in the cut-out section and pull against the wall.



### 3 Fill the section

Allow the adhesive to dry, then cut an FC patch to fit the cut-out section. Apply adhesive to the back and position on the backing. Smooth over the joints with an epoxy filler, then sand, seal and paint.





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## Applying paint

There are a few simple rules to painting to get a professional finish.

Work from the top down to avoid drips on freshly painted areas. Start with gutters, fascia boards and eaves, then paint walls, downpipes and trim.

With windows and doors, paint them early in the day so they can be closed at night.

For windows, use a 50mm angled sash brush, overlapping paint slightly onto the glass. When dry, remove it with a razor-bladed paint scraper.

For doors, paint the panels, then work into the corners. Use long strokes in the direction of the grain, brushing back over wet paint to avoid marks. Paint walls, downpipes and trim.

When painting weatherboards, work horizontally, doing three boards at a time. If there are vertical boards or panels, complete each from top to base before moving to the next.



### Using a paintbrush

① **USE** a bucket with 100mm of paint rather than a full can to prevent it from drying out.

Dip 50mm of bristles into the paint and drag the brush against the inside of the bucket to remove the excess.

② **LAY** the paint on thickly using two or three back-and-forth strokes. Reload and repeat until about 1sqm is covered.

③ **SMOOTH** the paint without reloading using long strokes, working from the unpainted area towards the painted.



Protect trees, shrubs, driveways and paths from overspray with drop sheets



### Using a roller

① **ROLL** on the paint using moderate pressure and reload the roller when the paint stops flowing easily.

② **START** near the top of the wall, rolling upwards in a big M shape and covering 1sqm at a time. Roll stripes across with even strokes, finishing in one direction, then continue lapping into the wet edge.

Use a brush to work the paint into cracks and splits and onto the base edge of the board, going with the grain to smooth the paint.

③ **MASK** trim or use a paint shield or straightedge and cut in as close as possible with an angled sash brush.

Extend the paint at least 50mm out from the trim, then overlap close to the trim using the roller.







### Using a spray gun

A spray gun is the quickest way to apply paint to a large, smooth surface but you need to factor in the time taken to protect fixtures and the surrounding area from overspray.

- ① **COVER** any surfaces that are not being sprayed. Use drop sheets on flooring and newspaper over doors and windows.
- ② **WEAR** a lightweight spray suit, a quality mask and safety glasses.
- ③ **START** at the top and move across and down in overlapping layers until the area is covered. Use a steady back-and-forth motion and keep the gun perpendicular to the wall. 🌟

## TOP PICKS



3M Instant Lead Test, \$25 for two swabs.  
3m.com.au



3M Scotch Blue Exterior Painter's Tape, \$15 for a 36mm roll. [scotchblue.com.au](http://scotchblue.com.au)



Ozito 1050W Multi Purpose Mixing Drill, \$109. [ozito.com.au](http://ozito.com.au)



Karcher 1700W K3 High Pressure Cleaner with Home Kit, \$299. [karcher.com.au](http://karcher.com.au)



Wagner Flexio 990 Direct Feed Paint Sprayer, \$499. [wagneraustralia.com.au](http://wagneraustralia.com.au)

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# VINTAGE CHINA CABINET

Turn a dated piece into a shabby-chic sideboard to display collectables

PROJECT AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR

**T**his old-fashioned display cabinet had been picked up from an op-shop by blogger Melissa Darr, but was then left under the house to gather dust.

'It was in pretty good condition with just a few chips on the veneer. I knew it would do up nicely with paint and new knobs,' she says.

Melissa removed the doors, knobs and hinges and sanded it down, then

gave it a new finish with an off-white spray paint and replaced the hardware, using crystal knobs she found on eBay.

'I had fun filling it with my trinkets, but I am sadly having to let it go, as it's too tempting for my little boy to play with all the items on the shelves.'

'I've decided to give it to my sister-in-law who has just moved into a Federation-style Queenslander and I know it will suit the space.'



Decorative crystal knobs add wow factor.

Melissa



## EXPERT SECRETS

To save yourself time and effort, use a spray that is a primer and paint all in one.

Select a creamy shade instead of a stark white to give a classic piece warmth and elegance

## MELISSA'S PICKS



Rust-Oleum 2X Ultra Cover Paint + Primer in Satin Heirloom White, \$12 for 340g. [rustoleum.com.au](http://rustoleum.com.au)



Ryobi 180W Multi Pad Sander, \$99. [ryobi.com.au](http://ryobi.com.au)



Crystal door knobs, from \$1 each. [eBay.com.au](http://eBay.com.au)

## Before





Get more DIY from Melissa  
Follow her blog [thewhimsicalwife.com](http://thewhimsicalwife.com)

After

The transformed cabinet is  
a showcase for treasured objects.





# DESIGNER UPDATES

Use simple techniques to turn basic homewares into one-of-a-kind pieces

WORDS ARTEMIS GOUROS PROJECTS AND PICTURES SUE FERRIS

**T**he secret to redecorating without spending a fortune is to update existing fittings and furniture instead of replacing them.

Give accessories a different look DIY with easy makeover techniques, changing the style of your home and bringing it bang up to date.

Here, a leather hanger was created for a mirror and a pendant light was given a new finish with spray paint.

Most mirrors have a chain for the vintage look and a rope to give a beach-house feel. For contemporary chic, use leather to make a hanger.

Leather straps are sold in 120cm lengths from suppliers such as Birdsall Leathercraft ([birdsall-leather.com.au](http://birdsall-leather.com.au)).

They come in natural, red, brown or black in several widths, and are easy to join using rivets. We added brass buckles to reinforce the belt effect.



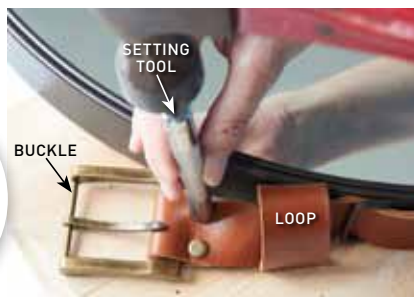
Leather homewares and accessories are easy to craft DIY using simple tools

1 2 3



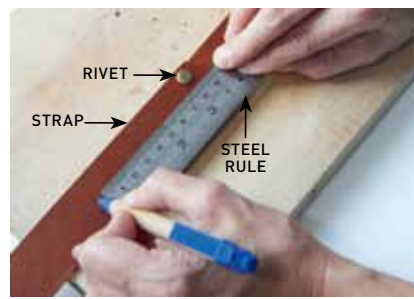
## 1 Make the mirror strap

Wrap a leather strap around the base of the mirror frame, then thread it evenly through the hanging hooks. Cut two 100mm leather pieces for loops, making two holes 10mm from either end using a leather hole punch and hammer.



## 2 Attach the buckles

Fold over each 100mm leather piece and insert rivets, using a rivet setting tool to secure. Thread the loops onto the ends of the mirror strap. Wrap each end of the mirror strap around a belt buckle and secure with rivets.



## 3 Secure the hanger

Join two straps with rivets to make the hanger. Attach a 600mm strap to each end, mark and punch belt holes 40mm apart, then thread onto the buckles. Taper the ends of the hanger using a steel rule and utility knife. ➤



### What you need

Mirror  
120cm leather straps  
Leather hole punch  
Rivet setting tool  
10mm rivets  
Hammer  
Belt buckles  
Utility knife



**SAFETY TIP**

Use a hook suited to the type of wall, and make sure it is rated to take the weight of the mirror and hanging strap.

**MIRROR HANGER**

Make a feature out of a plain mirror with a leather hanger.





# PENDANT LIGHT



The fastest way to update an interior colour scheme on a shoestring is to use paint.

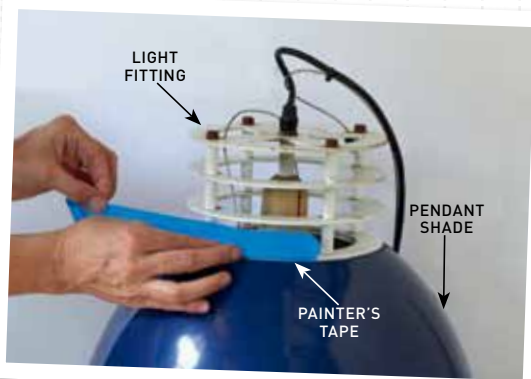
It's the DIY-friendly way to give accessories a new look. You can also use specialty paints to create different textured effects.

This industrial-style metal pendant light was sprayed with Dulux Metalshield in Wilderness for a fast colour revamp.

## DIY TIP

Choose a paint specially formulated for bare or previously painted metal to save on prep time and eliminate the need for a primer.

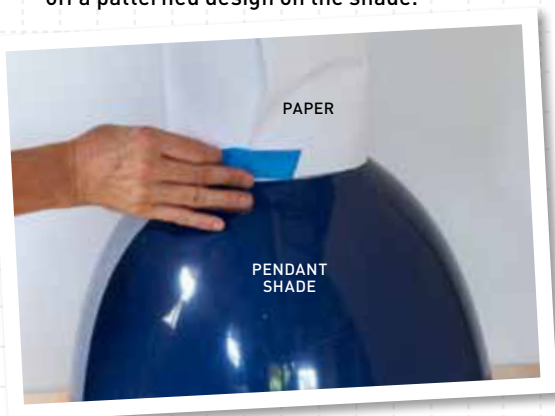




### 1 Prepare the pendant

Remove any dust or dirt from the pendant shade, then use painter's tape to mask around the top of the shade to get a clean edge.

**TIP** You can also use the tape to mask off a patterned design on the shade.



### 2 Cover the fitting

Fold a piece of paper around the light fitting to protect it from overspray, securing with painter's tape. Make sure you work in a well-ventilated area.

**TIP** Set up a spray booth using cardboard and position the shade inside.



### 3 Spray the shade

Hold the can 300mm from the surface and spray in a side-to-side motion to evenly coat the entire surface. Allow the paint to dry, then apply a second coat, removing the painter's tape while the paint is still tacky. 🍷



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TOOLS  
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POWER SAW,  
DRILL

# BUILD *A* CLASSIC PERGOLA

Attach polycarbonate roof sheets to a timber frame to create a cover for a deck without losing natural light

PROJECT AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

## DIY TIP

Always seek engineering advice before undertaking any structural changes and check with the local council for approvals.

To make the most of a revamped deck space at this 60-year-old cottage, the awning, which was badly designed and had rotted, was removed and a new pergola installed.

The new roof structure is raised higher than the original, with rafters extending out from a beam secured to the house fascia. The roof spans to a front beam, supported by three posts set into an existing slab.

Battens run across the top of the rafters, with polycarbonate sheets attached to the top of them, providing shade for the decking area while still allowing in plenty of natural light.

## Materials

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Structural pine      | \$2067 |
| Polycarbonate sheets | \$744  |
| Fascia brackets      | \$119  |
| Post stirrups        | \$22   |
| Bolts and screws     | \$341  |
| Anchoring adhesive   | \$27   |
| Foam infill strips   | \$37   |
| Aluminium flashing   | \$22   |
| Silicone             | \$28   |
| TOTAL                | \$3407 |



## Create the structure

To gain the new, higher aspect, the roof was pitched from the fascia of the house instead of the wall, where the awning had originally been fixed.

For this, several house rafters were reinforced with 70 x 35mm H2 pine stiffeners, then heavy-duty galvanised brackets were secured under the gutter, adjacent to the reinforced rafters.

These brackets were attached with bolts through both the rafters and stiffeners, providing a sturdy structure to hold the rear beam of the pergola.

Woodhouse Weatherproof F7 185 x 42mm timber was used for the

rear beam. This pre-primed H3-level treated timber is highly resistant to termite and fungal attack.

For the front beam, a 185 x 65mm length of GL8 engineered pine was used, set 4.2m away from the house. Three supporting 88 x 88mm GL8 pine posts were anchored with adhesive and the beam was secured to these.

Nine 185 x 42mm rafters were cut to size, spanning the deck area from the rear beam to the front beam.

Finally, five 66 x 30mm F7 pine battens were fixed across the top of the rafters to hold the roof sheets in place.



A polycarbonate roof can reduce harmful UV light by up to 99%



### Add the roof

The pergola was roofed with Suntuf corrugated polycarbonate sheets. These roofing sheets are easy to install DIY and they go perfectly with corrugated iron for a classic Aussie look.

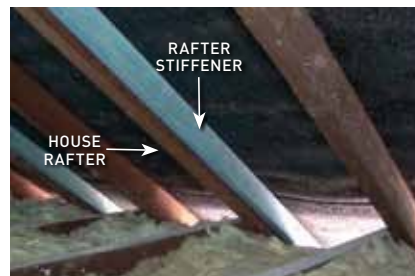
To cover the 6 x 4.5m roof, eight roofing sheets were laid on the

battens with overlaps, then secured with Suntuf One Shot screws.

These fasteners have excellent corrosion resistance and the hex head is easy to drive.

Barge capping was secured to the rafter on the open side, then apron flashing was added and the junctions were sealed with silicone.

1 2 3



### 1 Install rafter stiffeners

Mark the end points for the rear beam on the fascia, fixing a 1.8m stiffener to the first, last and every second house rafter. Predrill 4.5mm holes at 300mm centres in the rafters, clamp the stiffeners in position and secure.



### 2 Add the fascia brackets

Cut 60 x 8mm slots through the fascia, adjacent to each rafter stiffener. Install the first and last brackets plumb with the outside of the gutter. Run a stringline between these brackets, then install the remaining brackets.



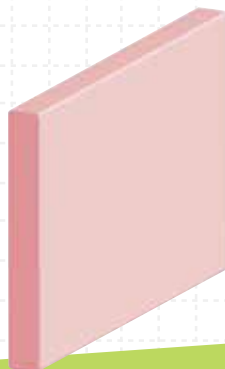
### 3 Secure the rear beam

Clamp the rear beam in position. Mark on it the flange hole positions, then lower the beam and drill 6mm pilot holes. Replace the beam, then open the holes to 10.5mm and secure the beam with cuphead bolts. ➤

STUART'S PICKS



Bosch 14.4V Cordless Drill Driver Kit, about \$89. [bosch.com.au](http://bosch.com.au)



Suntuf SolarSMART 6m Diffused Ice Polycarbonate Roofing Sheet, \$93. [palram.com.au](http://palram.com.au)

Woodhouse Weatherproof 138 x 18mm x 5.4m FJ H3 LOSP Dressed Primed Pine, about \$54. [woodhouse-weatherproof.com.au](http://woodhouse-weatherproof.com.au)



# BUILD THE PERGOLA



## 1 Mark the post positions

Drop a plumb at both ends of the rear beam and measure 4.2m out from this to find the front beam position, using the 3:4:5 method. Measure 300, 3000 and 5700mm along the front chalkline, marking out the post positions.



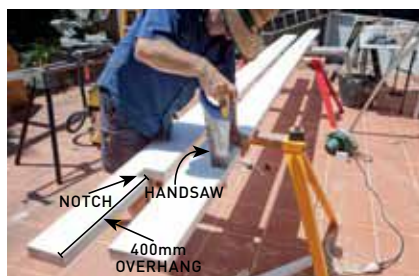
## 2 Secure the front posts

Use stirrups as templates to mark the hole positions on the existing slab for the three front posts. Drill 12mm holes to 100mm deep at the marked points, then secure the stirrups to the slab with anchor bolts and adhesive.



## 3 Add the front beam

Use a level to find a 180mm drop from the back to the front beam, then cut the posts to this level. Cut a 40mm beam housing on each post, securing with coach head bolts. Attach the front beam using two cuphead bolts on each post.



## 4 Make the rafter template

Position a rafter over the beams with a 400mm overhang at the front. Cut a 50mm notch at the front and back of the rafter so it sits snugly on the beams. Cut a level line from the front beam to the rafter end to taper the overhang.



## 5 Install the rafters

Lift the template rafter back onto the beams, checking for fit in all positions. Use this template to cut the rest of the rafters. Secure the end and centre rafters in place at either end, then secure the remaining rafters at 745mm centres.



## 6 Add the battens

Secure the front and back battens to the rafters, then add the centre batten, ensuring the rafters remain parallel. Add the intermediate battens. Brace the front beam with decorative lace braces secured to the outside posts.



## 7 Cut the sheets

Measure the length required for the roof, allowing a 50mm overhang. Mark the crests of the top roofing sheet and tape the bundle together. Use a power saw with a fine tooth blade to cut the sheets to size. File off the cut edges.



## 8 Secure the roof

Align the first sheet, marking the screw positions on the crests as you go using a felt tip. Secure at these positions, but leave the first and last unsecured. Install the subsequent sheets, screwing through both on their overlaps.



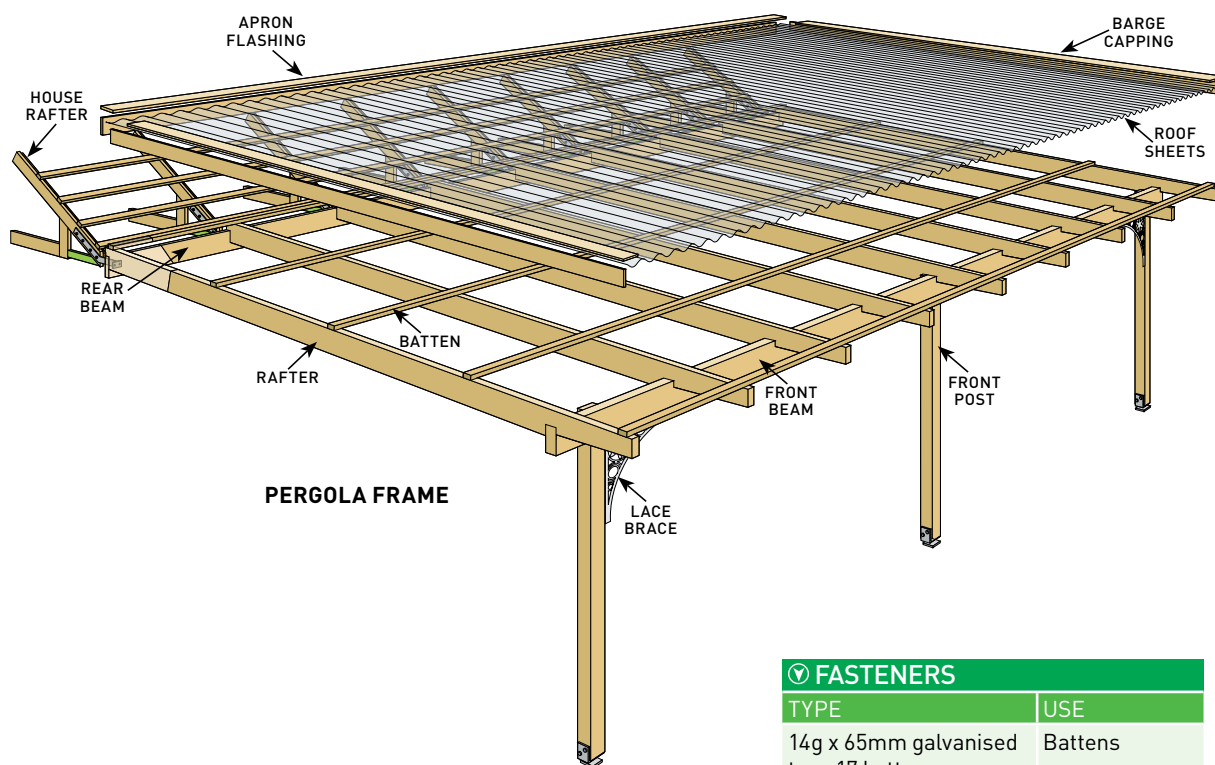
## 9 Install the flashing

Attach the barge capping to the final rafter, flush with the crests. Secure this and the apron flashing through the roof into the battens. Seal the junctions with silicone, securing aluminium flashing as needed for extra protection. 

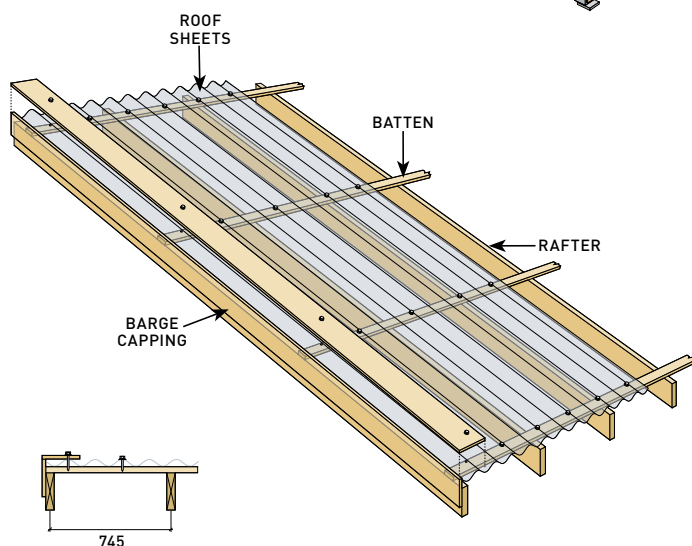


# CLASSIC PERGOLA

measurements in mm



**PERGOLA FRAME**



**PERGOLA ROOF**

## FASTENERS

| TYPE                                        | USE                          |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 14g x 65mm galvanised type 17 batten screws | Battens                      |
| 14g x 75mm galvanised type 17 batten screws | Rafters and stiffeners       |
| 10g x 75mm galvanised cuphead bolts         | Fascia bracket and rear beam |
| 10g x 130mm galvanised cuphead bolts        | Posts and beams              |
| 14g x 85mm galvanised type 17 batten screws | Beams                        |
| 10g x 130mm galvanised coach head bolts     | Posts, stirrups              |
| 10g x 130mm galvanised anchor studs         | Stirrups, concrete           |
| 14g x 50mm galvanised type 17 batten screws | Barges                       |
| 10g x 65mm galvanised countersunk screws    | Barges and flashing          |
| 10g x 50mm galvanised countersunk screws    | Barges                       |
| Suntuf One Shot timber roofing screws       | Roof sheets                  |





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# NURTURE YOUR WINTER LAWN

Give your grass plenty of TLC in the cooler months to keep it lush, strong and healthy

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

**A**s its growth slows over the cooler months, the lawn is often forgotten about while we spend more of our time indoors.

Come spring, the grass can be in a sorry state thanks to cold days and nights and short daylight hours.

A bit of care over winter will help keep your lawn healthy and will see it bouncing back quickly in spring.

Here are our simple steps for looking after your lawn in winter. ➤



Adam

## EXPERT SECRETS

Having a healthy lawn can add significant value to your home when it comes to selling.



*A well-cared-for winter lawn will bounce back quickly when spring arrives.*





## GROW TIP

Ask a local lawn-care specialist for advice on which fertiliser you should use for the type of grass you have in your garden.

## Feed the soil

Regular feeding across the seasons with a quality slow-release fertiliser will make your lawn much stronger, healthier and more able to survive the harsher conditions.

Fertilising well and appropriately develops grass that is stronger down to a cellular level. Thicker cell walls help it resist serious damage caused by cold and frosty nights.

As lawn growth is slower and the activity of soil micro-organisms, which help process nutrients to make them easily available for your grass, is also slower, you don't want to use a full-strength fertiliser in winter.

You may be able to find a special purpose autumn or winter blend, but if not, use a gentler fertiliser.

To give your lawn, and those all-important soil micro-organisms extra nourishment, use a hose-on seaweed-based product.



## Let in light

A critical part of keeping your lawn looking the best it can during winter is to maximise the amount of sunlight that reaches the grass.

In order to produce energy, and for photosynthesis, grass needs sunlight. Sunlight also makes the soil warmer, which helps keep roots healthy and soil micro-organisms active.

Keep the lawn raked clean of leaves and twigs. It's a fast and easy way to increase light-fall, helping your lawn warm up on a winter's morning.

Another option is to set the mower slightly higher than usual and, with the catcher fitted, run it over the lawn. It will work like a vacuum cleaner, sucking up any loose detritus and foliage.

Look at overshadowing plants or branches from surrounding garden beds and prune them back as well.



Grass needs sunlight to ward off the harsh effects of the cold.



Use a computerised timer attached to a tap to ensure your lawn gets exactly the right amount of water



### Winter watering

The cold months can be a deceptive time for watering, as soil may become dry, especially if it's windy, but you're less likely to notice due to the cool temperatures.

On the other hand, a period of rain can cause your lawn to stay damp for weeks on end.

You can't do much about an overly wet lawn in winter, but you can give a dry one a helping hand.

If the soil beneath your lawn appears to be dry, run a sprinkler for 15-20 minutes. Use a tap timer, as timing is important.

Choose a sunny day and water early to allow surface water to evaporate. If you leave it until late in the day, this water can sit on the grass and cause fungal problems.

Applying a hose-on seaweed fertiliser once every month should provide adequate water. ➤



## GROW TIP

When mowing in winter, keep grass as long as possible to insulate the roots from temperature extremes and create a healthier lawn.

Clean and maintain the mower in winter to keep it running well.

## Mow monthly

In most areas and with most types of lawn, you'll probably only need to mow once every 4-6 weeks across the cooler months.

When you do mow, keep the blades set at a normal height or even raise them one click.

Only mow after the lawn has dried off from any overnight dew and definitely don't mow a wet lawn.

In winter, clippings can take too long to break down and this may lead to fungal problems damaging your lawn, so if you normally mulch-mow, switch to catching mode instead.

Even if the lawn doesn't look like it needs a mow, it's still worth running the mower over it, as this will remove fallen leaves and other material that can reduce the amount of sunlight your grass receives.

## TYPES OF GRASS



### Zoysia

- ✚ **SOIL** Likes sandy and clay soils.
- ✚ **GROWS** Features soft, dark green leaves and is drought-tolerant.
- ✚ **MAINTENANCE** Requires less mowing than other grasses.



### Sir Walter Buffalo

- ✚ **SOIL** Suitable for all soil types.
- ✚ **GROWS** Has soft, green leaves, likes hot weather and tolerates shade and drought. This grass runs across the top and is not an edge invader.
- ✚ **MAINTENANCE** Mow fortnightly throughout the summer.



### Kikuyu

- ✚ **SOIL** Likes medium-textured soils.
- ✚ **GROWS** A quick grower in warm, sunny areas and withstands heavy traffic. Sends runners under the edges.
- ✚ **MAINTENANCE** Mow weekly throughout the summer.



### Windsor Green

- ✚ **SOIL** Can be grown in all soils.
- ✚ **GROWS** A fine-leaf grass with a low seed head that likes full sun and is not sand tolerant. Sends runners under the edges.
- ✚ **MAINTENANCE** Requires relatively high maintenance.

## Did you know?

The majority of the more popular lawn grasses are actually warm-season varieties. This is why it's important to nurture them across the cooler months to reduce damage from the cold.



## ADAM'S PICKS



WD-40 Specialist Lawn & Garden Powerful Foaming Cleaner, \$5 for 400g. [wd40.com.au](http://wd40.com.au)



Holman Digital Tap Timer with Wireless Moisture Probe, \$59. [holmanindustries.com.au](http://holmanindustries.com.au)



Gardena Comfort Aquazoom Hose-end Sprinkler, \$48. [gardena.com.au](http://gardena.com.au)



Richgro Ezi-Wet Hose-on Soil Wetter, \$12 for 2L. [richgro.com.au](http://richgro.com.au)



Scotts Pure Organic Premium Seaweed Hose-on Plant Food, \$16 for 1L. [scottsaustralia.com.au](http://scottsaustralia.com.au)



Scotts Lawn Builder Seed & Turf Starter Fertiliser, \$26 for 4kg. >

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\*Galvanised grates are not suitable around swimming pools or environments affected by salt water.

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## DIY TIP

Use long-handled weed pullers to remove stubborn weeds on your lawn, taking the bending and hard work out of the job.

## Beat the weeds

Your lawn may be having a rest in winter, but quite a few weeds are cool-season annuals and make great growth in the cooler conditions.

Most winter weeds are actually the culprits for spring lawn dead patches.

As the weeds spread, they smother the lawn and kill it off then, in turn, they die off as their season finishes, leaving you with a dead patch.

The weed, bindii, starts growing in autumn and continues through winter. By the spring and summer, the prickles, which are its seeds, can render a lawn

unusable. It's too late to treat it at this stage, but it can be beaten in winter.

With small lawns, physically removing it may be the best option. It's easy to see, as it stands out in the grass as small rosettes of bright-green foliage.

You can also use certain herbicides to kill bindii, but ensure the product you use is safe for the lawn type.

Other types of weeds can also be physically removed or treated with a suitable selective herbicide. Keeping grass well fed is also an excellent preventative technique. 🌱

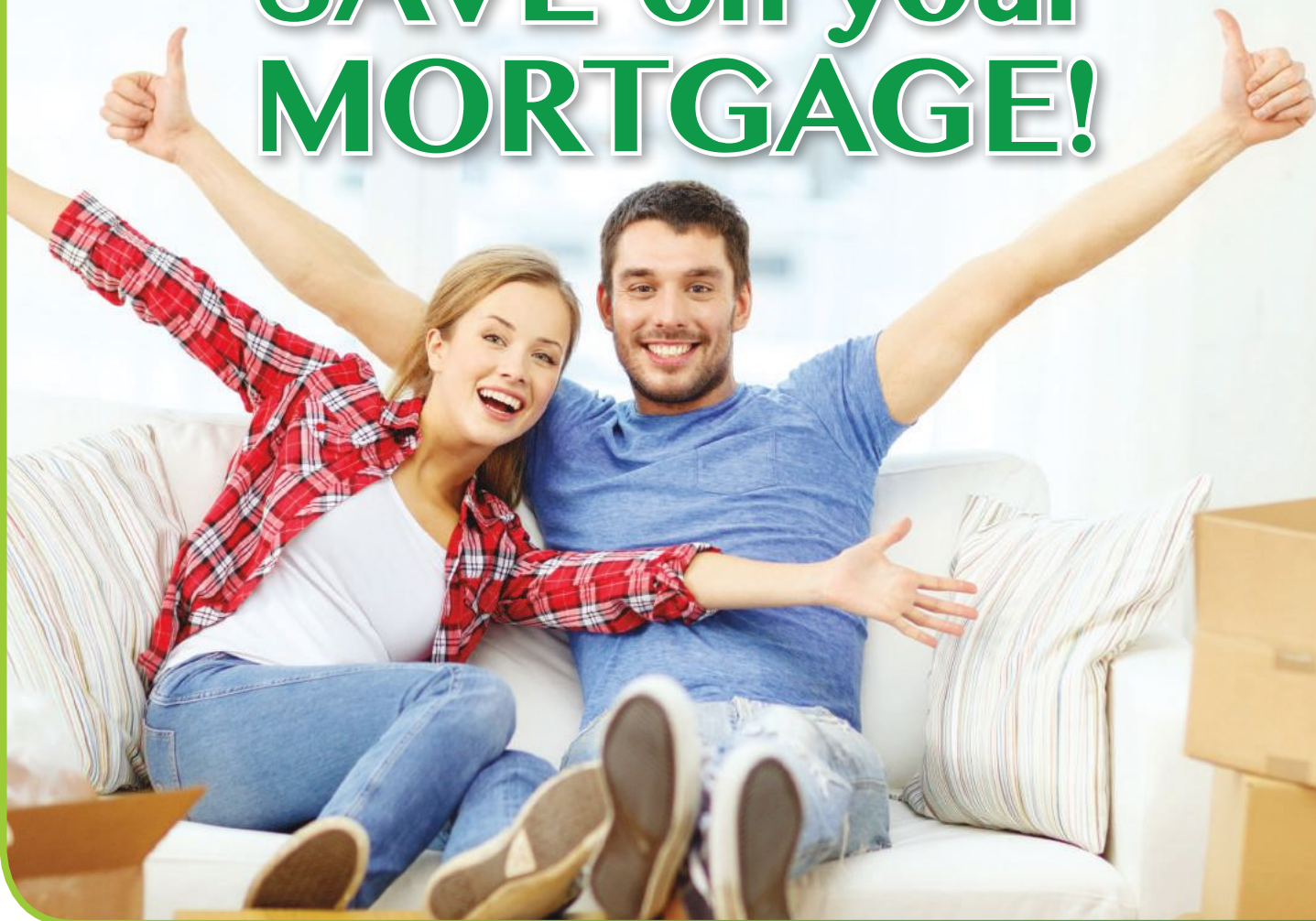
For a clear spring lawn, don't let weeds take over in winter.

Physically removing weeds is often the most effective solution.

▶ Watch Adam lay a new lawn  
Visit [handyman.net.au/turf](http://handyman.net.au/turf)



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**After**

New mesh guards keep the gutters free of leaves and other debris.

**Before**

# Guard the gutters

Install barriers to keep guttering clear and improve fire safety

WORDS LEE DASHIELL MAIN PICTURE GEOFF BECK

**H**aving gutters constantly filled with leaves and other debris can lead to water-drainage issues. It can even pose a safety risk in locations prone to bushfires.

Installing gutter guards can help reduce these problems, as they prevent loose foliage from collecting and allow rainwater to flow through gutters.

Easy to install DIY, gutter guards are simply lengths of metal or plastic, measuring about a metre in length.

Plastic gutter guards are more affordable and bend to fit into place without the need for fasteners or tools, while metal ones need to be secured in position. Choose the type that best suits your home and guttering.

We installed metal guards at a property in a bushfire-risk area, helping to reduce the risk of ember attack. They also allow good water flow while stopping leaves and debris from clogging the gutters and downpipes.





Cut overhanging foliage that can clog gutters.

## ECO TIP

By improving water flow, gutter guards help maximise rainwater collection and reduce silt build-up in the base of the tank.

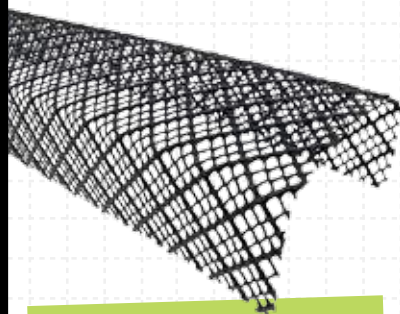


There are gutter guards to suit both corrugated and tiled roofs

To install the guard, we bent the tabs down 30°, then positioned each length, overlapping them by 30mm. The scalloped design of the gutter guard matched the corrugated roof.

The mesh guards were secured every 300mm along the gutter lip on every second corrugation and each join using galvanised hexagon screws.

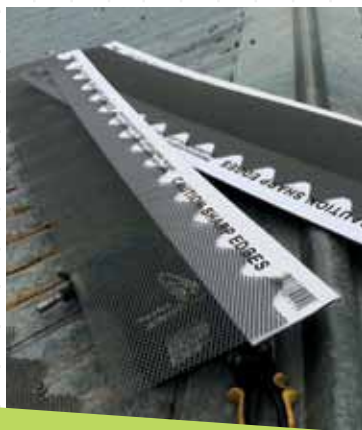
Roof and gutter silicone was used to seal the gaps along the corrugations to stop loose leaves getting caught.



Whites Outdoor 1000mm Plastic StayMesh Ultra Gutter Strip, about \$7. [whitesgroup.com.au](http://whitesgroup.com.au)



Whites Outdoor 110mm Gutter Bristles Brush Filter, \$14.



GumLeaf 1200mm 90 Fold Metal Gutter Guard in Woodland Grey, \$15. [gumleafgutterguard.com.au](http://gumleafgutterguard.com.au)

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# PIZZA OVEN RENEWAL

Get rid of rust and repaint the doors to bring an outdoor stove back to life

WORDS LEE DASHIELL MAIN PICTURE GEOFF BECK

## DIY TIP

Use acidic household liquids, such as lemon juice or vinegar, to get rid of any particularly hard-to-remove patches of rust.

Constant exposure to the harsh elements had caused the iron doors on this pizza oven to deteriorate, making them look shabby.

If the doors had been left for much longer, they would have needed replacing, so we repainted them to save them from rusting beyond repair.

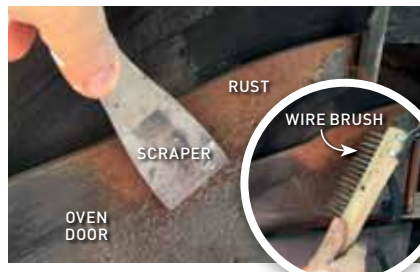
After removing the rust, we applied two coats of a specialised, heat-resistant paint DIY to restore the doors.



Resurfacing the oven doors makes them look like new



1 2 3



### 1 Remove the rust

Use a scraper to remove flaking rust on the front, inside and around the edges, then go over the surface with a wire brush until it is smooth. Repeat with the scraper and wire brush to ensure all loose rust is removed.



### 2 Paint the first coat

Apply a single coat of heat-resistant paint in broad strokes to the doors, ensuring the front, sides and inside are all covered. If the brush strokes are visible, smooth them out for a clean finish, then allow to dry overnight.



### 3 Sand between coats

Gently rub over all the painted surfaces using a 120 grit sanding block. Remove any excess dust with a lint-free cloth and apply a second coat of paint. Allow this to dry overnight before using the oven.





## After

The oven is now rust-free and has been restored to its original state.

## TOP PICKS



Oates Plastic Four-row Wire Brush, \$8.  
oates.com.au



Monarch 38mm Multi Purpose Brush, about \$5.  
austbrush.com.au



White Knight Pot Belly Black Heat Resistant Paint, \$31 for 500ml.  
whiteknightpaints.com.au



Rhino Black 75mm Scraper, about \$8.  
bunnings.com.au





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Entries close 24 August 2016 and the winners will be announced online in October 2016. See the website for the full terms and conditions.



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# PATHWAY PAVING

Lay pavers DIY to create a durable and modern garden walkway

For a timeless and durable pathway solution, it's hard to look past pavers. They come in a range of materials including concrete, clay, brick and stone, and they are easy to lay DIY.

Prepare the area by excavating the pathway to a depth of 200mm and removing any rocks and debris before laying the foundation.



Laying a solid foundation is the key to a long-lasting path

## What you need

- Pavers
- Paving sand
- Cement
- Timber edging
- Shovel
- Wheelbarrow
- Stringline
- Spirit level
- Rubber mallet
- Angle grinder
- Straightedge
- Measuring tape
- Broom
- Safety glasses
- Dust mask and gloves



### 1 Prepare the area

Lay a 50mm bed of crushed rock and compact it to create a level base. Position timber edging along the path sides, securing with stakes. The edging should rise above the gravel by the height of the pavers plus 20mm.



### 2 Add the sand

Pour three bags of paving sand onto the crushed rock base and thoroughly mix in a handful of cement with your hands, wearing work gloves and a dust mask. Smooth the sand across the path base to about 20mm deep.



### 3 Make a straightedge

Cut a piece of timber to the width of the path and use the height of one paver to mark a level line along one side. Drive in a nail at the marked line on each end and use the nails to position the straightedge on the timber edging.



**DIY TIP**

Installing timber edging along a paved pathway means you don't have to haunch the edges with mortar, and it creates a tidy border.

Allow the grout to set completely before walking on the pathway.

Watch the video 'How To Pave A Pathway' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)

**4 Screed the base**

Working from the start of the path, pull the straightedge towards you to screed the base and create a level section, then start laying pavers. This path uses a stretcher bond pattern, where the joints are offset by half the length of a paver.

**5 Lay the pavers**

Lay two rows of pavers, gently tapping into position with a rubber mallet, then set a stringline across the path. Check for level, adding or removing sand as needed. Mix more sand and cement on the base and screed it level.

**6 Finish the paving**

Lay the path using the stringline to check for level, cutting end pavers with an angle grinder. Mix sand and cement in a 4:1 ratio, sweep into the joints and spray with water to harden the mix. Repeat until all the gaps are filled.



Find it at Bunnings

# TRIMMING A HEDGE

Watch the video 'How to Trim Hedges' at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](http://bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)

## What you need

Cordless hedge trimmer  
Garden shears  
Safety glasses

**H**edges are ideal for borders and screening and an excellent way to define the boundaries of a garden.

A hedge needs regular trimming to keep it in good shape and promote healthy, dense growth. Trim hedges 3-4 times a year at the turn of the season for the best results.

Trim new, non-established hedges along the top, leaving the sides untrimmed to encourage growth.



Create a dense hedge by spacing plants one quarter of their maximum growing width apart



### Garden shears

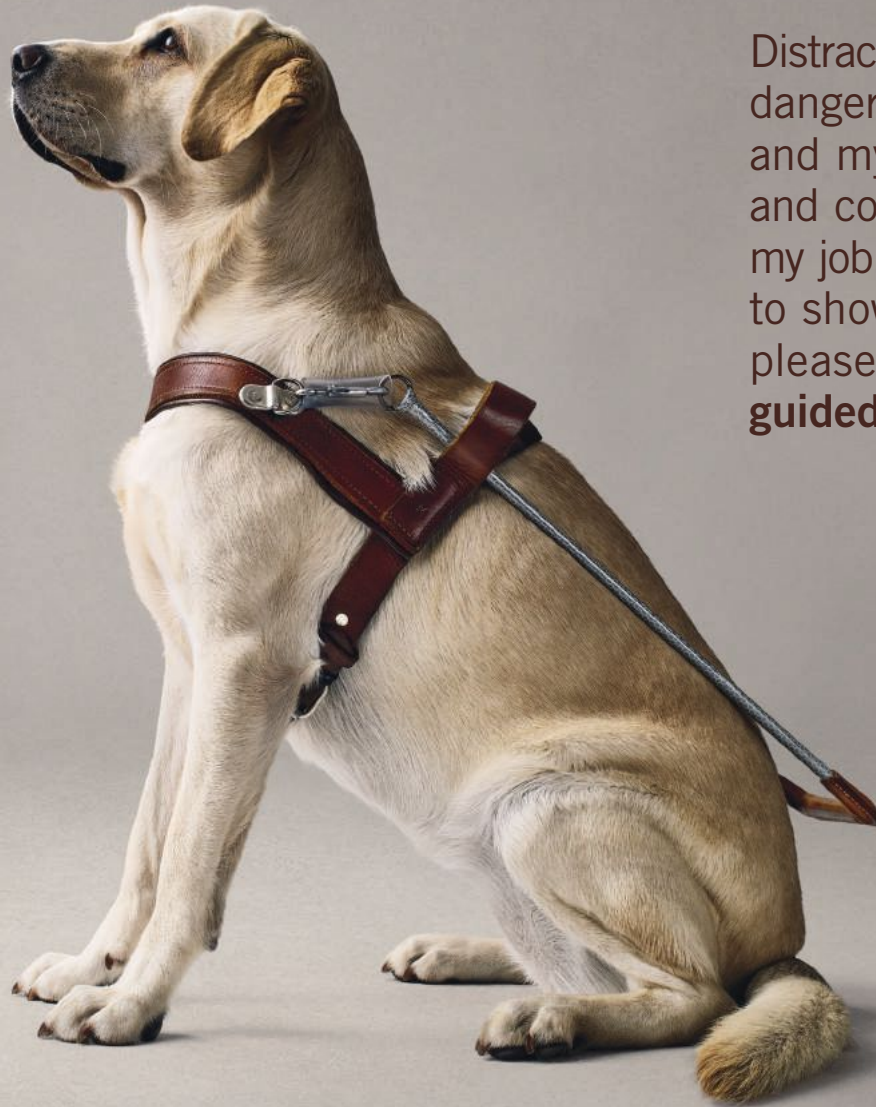
Prune the topmost foliage of each plant to the same height using garden shears. Start at the end of the hedge and work along the top for a consistent cut, keeping the shears level to create a tidy top. Assess cuts at eye level to make sure the hedge is trimmed evenly.



### Cordless trimmer

To cut larger and established hedges, using a cordless trimmer is quicker than using garden shears. For a neat edge, keep the trimmer horizontal and maintain an even flow while cutting.  
**TIP** Set up a stringline to keep the top of the hedging even.





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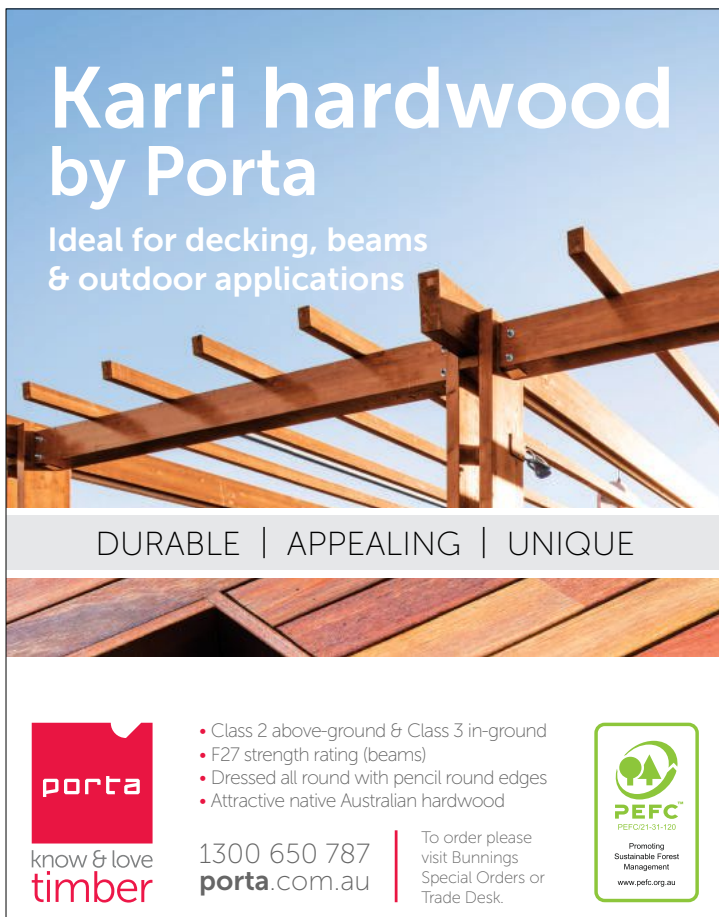
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# This month

Tidy up the winter yard and start preparing for spring

## Flowers to sow

Plant now for blooms in late spring, except in cold zones.

- + CALIFORNIAN POPPY
- + COLEUS
- + NASTURTIUM
- + PHLOX
- + VERBENA

California poppy



## Vegies to grow

Add these to the vegie patch now for a summer harvest.

- + CABBAGE
- + CAPSICUM
- + SPRING ONION
- + PARSNIP
- + POTATO

Spring onion



## Do now

- + CREATE a potted display indoors, page 108.
- + PLANT hellebores to brighten a shady spot, page 114.
- + GROW chillies to spice up your recipes, page 118.



## WHAT'S IN COLOUR

✦ **ACACIA 'SCARLET BLAZE'** has made horticultural history since its 1995 discovery by two bushwalkers and is Victoria's official Federation flower.

Bearing striking blood-red blooms from August to October, this wattle reverts to the more traditional yellow flower when grown from seed.

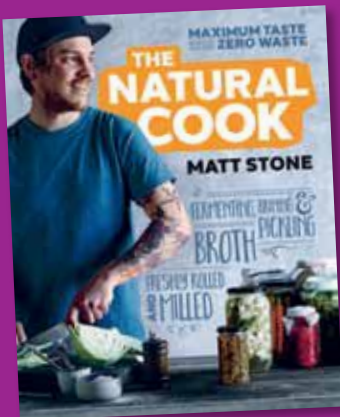
An ornamental, evergreen tree with a weeping habit, it is hardy, low maintenance and frost tolerant.

Give 'Scarlet Blaze' a position in full sun to dappled shade in moist, well-drained soil. Growing to 4.5m high by 3m wide, it can be used for screening or as a feature plant.

This native tolerates dry periods and, in warm weather, the crushed leaves release a cinnamon-like scent.

'Scarlet Blaze'

## BOOK CLUB



Aussie chef Matt Stone is all about 'maximum taste, zero waste', and in *The Natural Cook* (Murdoch Books, \$40), he shares his passion for making planet-friendly food that's full of flavour.

With this book, you'll learn how to use all you grow, from beetroot stalks to rose petals, and what you usually toss out, such as bones, to cook creatively from scratch.

Grow native wattles for low-maintenance colour in spring and summer

### To-do list

Finish off winter planting jobs and prep the garden for the new season.

✓ **POT** miniature roses in cold-climate zones.

✓ **RE-POT** indoor plants in a container one size larger.

✓ **PREPARE** summer beds for spring planting.

✓ **PLANT** bare-root roses.

✓ **DIVIDE** and replant agapanthus and daylilies.

✓ **SPRAY** bindii weeds in lawns or dig up by hand.

✓ **CHECK** roses for aphid infestations, and hose off.

✓ **PLANT** bare-root fruit and ornamental trees.

✓ **PROTECT** tender plants against late frosts. ➤



## INSTANT VEGIE BED

To grow edibles in a bed that's empty or has too little or poor soil, just add a composted organic mix suitable for direct planting, like Richgro Garden Soil Mix, \$4 for 25L ([richgro.com.au](http://richgro.com.au)). Sow Asian greens, lettuce and spinach, or try kale in deeper beds.



**1 CLEAR** any weeds or debris, break up the soil with a hoe, then level out. Pour in soil mix, blending to create 300mm deep of improved soil, then water well.



**2 SOW** seeds in rows to the depth and spacing on the packet. When seedlings emerge in about 10 days, water well until established, thinning when 100mm high.

### Spring selection

August is the time to plan spring plantings, when new seed varieties are hitting the nursery shelves.

Growing from seed is an easy and budget-friendly way to design beds and pots, and Mr. Fothergill's has a new range of flowers, natives and vegies from about \$4 each ([mrfothergills.com.au](http://mrfothergills.com.au)).

Look out for the flower packets that feature a Wildlife Attracting symbol, as they are a great way to add colour to beds, including the vegie patch, while encouraging bees and butterflies into the garden. 🍯



### Prune now

Cut back these plants in temperate climate zones.

- ✦ AUTUMN-FLOWERING EVERGREENS
- ✦ LILAC
- ✦ APPLE
- ✦ PEAR
- ✦ BERRIES



### Harvest now

Bring in these winter fruit and vegetable crops.

- ✦ CITRUS
- ✦ LETTUCES
- ✦ LEEK
- ✦ SPINACH
- ✦ SHALLOT



### Feed now

Get the garden ready for new spring growth.

- ✦ BANANA
- ✦ CAMELLIA
- ✦ CITRUS
- ✦ FRUIT TREES
- ✦ LAWN





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# *HOUSE PLANTS MADE EASY*

Bring the outdoors in with potted plants and keep them happy and healthy

WORDS ADAM WOODHAM



Choose plants that sit firmly in their pots.



## GROW TIP

Select the right plant for the desired position and make sure it is a suitable shape, size, colour and texture for the spot.

## Selecting

- ✦ **TAKE** the time to pick a plant to suit your conditions. There are indoor plants that will tolerate everything from strong light to near dark conditions so check the label before you buy.
- ✦ **GET** to know the plants you buy. The label is helpful, but read up for any extra-care information. If you're using the internet, make sure you're reading local advice.
- ✦ **CHOOSE** plants that are conspicuously healthy, with lots of lush, lustrous foliage and strong stems, and that are pest-free.

**P**lants add texture and colour to dull spaces in your home, fill gaps where furniture won't fit, work as a focal point and can be used to frame a view.

The big advantage of potted plants indoors is that you can change their look and feel by using different-style planters, from plain to patterned. Whatever works in your space.

Just about every plant you see in the nursery has been nurtured to the peak of perfection, and indoor plants are perhaps the best examples of this.

They have been raised under optimum conditions and the grower has taken every care to make them as healthy as they can be.

This means it can be a challenge to keep indoor plants looking as fresh as the day you bought them. But there are simple tricks to getting the most from them so they stay lush and lovely.



Check the plants need water before you begin pouring.

## Watering

- ✦ **AVOID** overwatering, as more house plants actually die from too much water than too little. So before you whip out the watering can, stick your finger into the potting mix.

If it's moist a few centimetres down, there's no need to water.

- ✦ **PUT** saucers under pots to avoid leakage and staining of flooring and carpets. Don't let the plants sit in

a saucer of water for an extended period of time, as this may cause rot and bring on fungal problems.

- ✦ **STOP** saucers overflowing by filling up the saucers rather than watering the plants from above. Allow the plant to suck up the water, then repeat until it stops taking it up.
- ✦ **USE** self-watering pots to make the task much easier. ➤





## GROW TIP

Remove a little of the old potting mix and trim off any dead roots using sharp pruners when re-potting your house plants.

## Potting up

A quality plant and decorative pot can be costly, so make sure you use a quality potting mix.

- **BUY** a certified premium potting mix designed specifically for potted plants, which has the Australian Standards tick.

- **CHECK** the level of the potting mix about every 12 months as, over time, it breaks down.

Re-pot in a larger pot if needed, or gently remove the plant, add new mix, then re-pot.



## Helping hand

Plants breathe and create energy through their leaves.

Unlike plants in the garden, indoor plants don't have natural air circulation or rainwater that removes dust from their all-important leaf surfaces, so they need a helping hand.

You can use a damp cloth to gently wipe dust from the leaves, then apply a glossing aerosol product.

When the weather is warm, take the plants outside to a sheltered and shady spot, then gently wash them down.

Remove the saucer and give them a good liquid feed over the foliage and potting mix with a seaweed plant food. Let them drain before taking indoors.



## Feeding

Give your indoor plants an annual feed with a quality controlled-release fertiliser. Every month or so, liquid feed them with a low-odour, organic-based product.

## Positioning

- **MAKE** sure the position you choose for your plant has the right levels of light. If a plant prefers the shade, then ensure that the spot doesn't receive too much direct or reflected sunlight.

- **AVOID** having the foliage touching window glass, as the leaves will scorch, even on sun-loving varieties.

- **KEEP** plants away from direct draughts from air conditioners and heaters, as these can dry out plants or damage the foliage.



PICTURES ISTOCK, THINKSTOCK (BOTTOM RIGHT) ADAM WOODHAMS





Make a design statement with quirky planters.

## GROWING BENEFITS

Research carried out by the University of Technology Sydney into the health and environmental benefits of indoor plants returned some very interesting results, proving that house plants should be on everyone's must-have list.

The study revealed that potted plants effectively clean the air inside the home, removing harmful VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

It was found that air cleaning is not brought about by plants alone. The micro-organisms living in the potting mix, which exist symbiotically with the plants, play an important role.

In a survey, people studied in a plant-filled office environment had reductions of up to 60% in stress, anxiety and fatigue, while about 80% of people felt that plants made a space feel more welcoming. ➤



Potted indoor plants make a room more inviting and also help purify the air



PICTURES: ISTOCK

### ADAM'S PICKS



Scotts Pure Organic Premium Seaweed Plant Food Concentrate, \$14 for 1L.



Scotts Osmocote Pots, Planters & Indoors Fertiliser, \$7 for 500g. [scottsaustalia.com.au](http://scottsaustalia.com.au)



Yates Leaf Shine Aerosol Insecticide, \$13 for 225g. [yates.com.au](http://yates.com.au)



Eco-Organic Garden Ready To Use Eco-Oil, about \$10 for 750mL.

Linda



Eco-Organic Garden Backyard Buddies Linda Ladybeetle, \$35. [ecoorganicgarden.com.au](http://ecoorganicgarden.com.au)



## MAINTENANCE

Indoor plants can suffer from a few common maladies, but if you know the symptoms and how to treat them, you'll be able to keep your house plants in tiptop shape.



### Deformed leaves and white fluffy lumps

➤ **LIKELY CAUSE** Mealybug.

➤ **SOLUTION** For small outbreaks, gently wipe the leaves with a soft cloth soaked in a 1:1 mix of water and methylated spirits, then dab each infestation with a cotton bud soaked in neat methylated spirits.

Or, take a natural approach and introduce a beneficial native ladybird, available from suppliers such as Eco-Organic Garden.

If the infestation is severe, consider disposing of the plant.

## STYLE TIP

Enhance your display when entertaining by adding a few plants from outdoors. Most will be happy inside for a couple of days.

Symptoms of overwatering are similar to under watering.



## PROBLEM SOLVER

### Lifeless pale leaves

➤ **LIKELY CAUSE** Too little light.

➤ **SOLUTION** Move the plant to a brighter spot, but make sure you're not just taking it from one extreme to the other. Ensure the light is filtered and is, at the most, morning sun only.



### Brown or black raised dots

➤ **LIKELY CAUSE** Scale insect.

➤ **SOLUTION** Spray all over with Eco-Oil at the recommended rates. A couple of applications may be needed. If this fails, ask at your local garden centre for advice on other pesticide options.



### Wilting or brown leaves

➤ **LIKELY CAUSE** Dry or moist mix at a depth of 30-40mm.

➤ **SOLUTION** If dry, soak in a bucket until bubbles stop rising. Drain, then increase watering.

If moist, allow the mix to dry a little and modify the watering. ☘



AUSTRALIAN

# Handyman

On sale 25 August

NEXT ISSUE

## GARDEN

Plant spring annuals and create a balcony garden from scratch.

**PLUS** How to choose a lime tree.

## RENOVATE

Make over the bathroom on a budget with styling tricks and DIY updates.

**PLUS** A foolproof guide to moving house.

## OUTDOOR

How to install a timber boundary fence step by step.

**PLUS** Screen out the neighbours DIY.





# HARDY WINTER HEROES

Plant shade-tolerant hellebores in the garden for bright cold-weather blooms

**WORDS** CHERYL MADDOCKS

**Y**ou can't beat hellebores (*Helleborus* spp.) for classic good performers, bringing subtle colour to shady and semi-shaded areas.

They work their magic in pots and garden beds and make ideal groundcovers under deciduous trees.

These perennial plants belong to the Ranunculaceae family, which also includes buttercups, and there are 15 species in the genus.

The five-petalled flowers have a delicate beauty in shades of white, cream, green and pink through to deep maroon and nearly black. Some have spotted blooms and there are also double-flowered cultivars.



## HOW TO GROW

Hellebores aren't complicated plants to cultivate. They grow well in cool and temperate climates, but they are not suited to the tropics, sub-tropics or dry inland areas.

They can be grown easily from seed and various-sized potted plants are available in nurseries in winter.

➤ **POSITION** in a shady or semi-shaded spot. While hellebores are ideal for woodland gardens, don't plant them under trees that have competitive fibrous root systems near the surface.

➤ **SOIL** must be moist and rich, but free draining. Dig in lots of compost or cow manure before planting.

➤ **WATER** regularly, especially during winter, as this is their growth period and new flowers are forming.

➤ **FEED** them yearly with well-rotted manure and compost. Apply a fertiliser for flowers in late autumn.

➤ **MAINTAIN** hellebores by cutting off old leaves at the base in late autumn to encourage new leaves to grow.



### DIY TIP

Hellebores do well as cut flowers, but plunge the end of the stems in boiling water before arranging in a vase to help them last longer.

For a dramatic display, plant hellebores in a drift under deciduous trees.



### Did you know?

The toxic black roots of black hellebore (*Helleborus niger*) was a common poison in the Middle Ages and used in black magic. *Helleborus* is derived from the Greek words 'elein' meaning to injure and 'bora' meaning food, which indicates its poisonous nature. It was a plant so associated with evil that superstitious people believed if you grew it near the front door, it would actually prevent evil spirits from entering. ➤





## BUDGET TIP

Many hellebores flower for months and even self-seed, spreading through the garden, so you can increase your display for free.

Deadhead blooms and cut off old foliage to promote new growth.

## PROPAGATE

### SELF-SOWN SEEDLINGS

Any gardeners who have established hellebores will have experienced forests of seedlings germinating beneath plants in autumn and winter.

These seedlings have come from self-sown seeds during the previous late spring or early summer.

All hellebore seeds need a period of warmth followed by a period of cold for germination to occur, and summer and winter naturally provide this cycle.

Remove the flowers when they have finished if you don't want your hellebores to self-seed.



### SOWING SEEDS

If you want to grow hellebores from seed, it's best to collect the ripe seeds in November for immediate sowing, as fresh is best.

➤ **FILL** a pot with a good-quality potting mix to about 20mm from the top, add about 20 seeds, then cover with 15mm of mix.

➤ **WATER** the seeds and position the pot in dappled shade. Keep the mix just moist but not wet and protect the young seedlings from snails and slugs.

➤ **TRANSPLANT** the seedlings into the garden, including self-sown ones, after they have produced their first set of true leaves.

While mature plants will survive being transplanted, it may inhibit their growth for some time.



# WHAT TO PLANT

Take advantage of these pretty winter flowers by planting a few in the colder months, and you'll be rewarded with a spectacular display for years to come. Here, we showcase four of the best.

## 1 Black hellebore

Also called the Christmas rose, as it flowers in winter in the northern hemisphere, black hellebore (*Helleborus niger*) produces cup-shaped white flowers set against leathery deep-green leaves.

It grows best in cold climates and the flowers remain until spring, often ageing to shades of pink.



## 2 Lenten rose

Often incorrectly called by its previous name, *Helleborus orientalis*, the lenten rose (*Helleborus x hybridus*) is the most commonly grown hellebore.

It starts flowering late winter, continuing into spring. Colours include shades of cream, white, pink and purple, and nearly black. Some feature speckled flowers.

Double-flowering hybrids are also available in various shades.

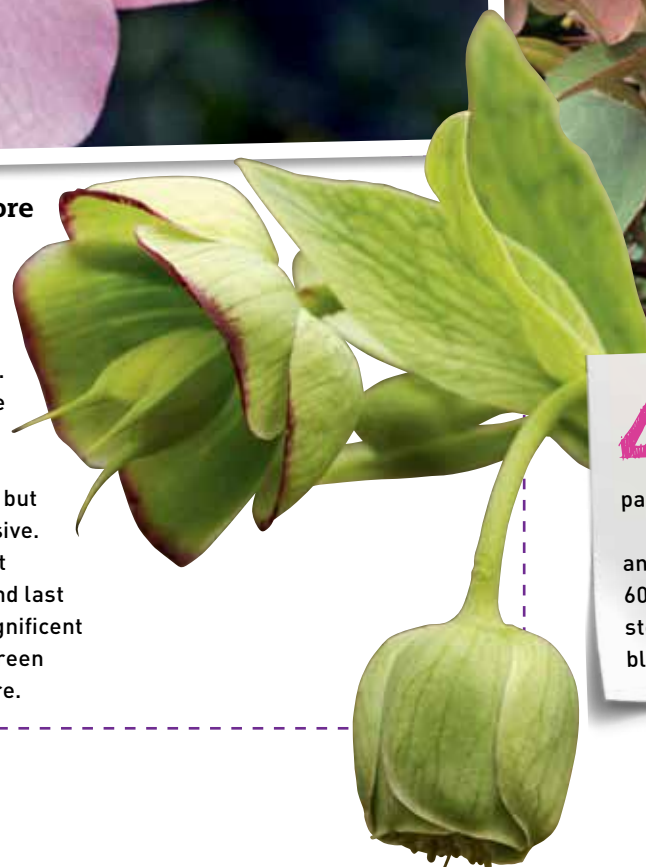


## 3 Stinking hellebore

While the common name of *Helleborus foetidus* is unappealing, don't let this put you off growing this striking plant.

The name is a reference to the stem, which emits a smell when crushed, and the earthy-smelling roots, but neither is especially offensive.

The green flowers start unfurling in late autumn and last until spring. They look magnificent nestled among the deep-green foliage of stinking hellebore.



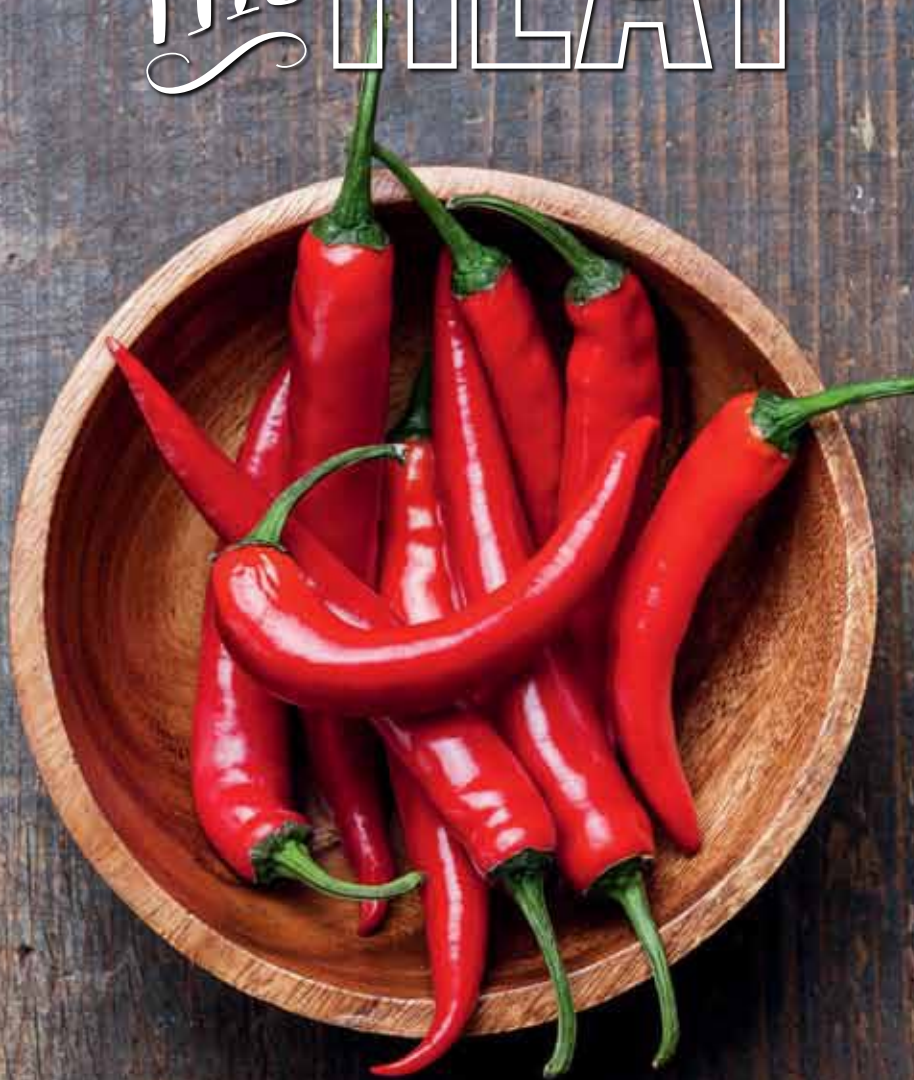
## 4 Helleborus x sternii

The large flowers of *Helleboros x sternii* are pale green and often tinged pink.

It has a shrubby growth habit and reaches a height of about 600mm. In early winter, each stem produces many cup-shaped blooms that last until spring. ❖



# TURN UP *THE* HEAT



Grow chillies in pots or beds for their white flowers and spicy fruit



Chillies have a well-earned reputation for being hot and spicy, as they can bring tears to the eyes and make mouths burn. A popular ingredient in many cuisines, they're eaten both raw and cooked.

Belonging to the Solanaceae or nightshade family along with potatoes, tomatoes and eggplants, chillies are grown the same way as another close relative, the capsicum.

Also called bell peppers, there are over 200 varieties of these short-lived perennials. Highly ornamental, they feature bright-green foliage and white flowers followed by colourful fruit.

A warm-season fruit from the tropics, chillies are easy to cultivate and come in lots of shapes and sizes. They ripen from green to shades of red, yellow, orange, brown or purple, depending on the variety.

PICTURES: ALAMY, ISTOCK





Chilli fruits add a splash of colour to the landscape.

## GROW TIP

All chillies are ornamental but not all ornamental chillies are edible, so always check the plant label and tag garden beds and pots.

## TOP PICKS



Floriana Chilli Bite,  
\$11 for a 150mm plant.  
[floriana.com.au](http://floriana.com.au)



Scotts Pure Organic Premium  
Potting & Planting Mix, \$14 for  
25L. [scottsaustralia.com.au](http://scottsaustralia.com.au)



Dynamic Lifter Plus  
Fruit Food, about \$9 for  
1.5kg. [yates.com.au](http://yates.com.au)

## Did you know

Chillies originated in Central and South America. They were domesticated in Mexico in 4000BCE and brought to Spain by explorer Christopher Columbus. From the 16th century onwards, chillies spread across Europe and beyond. Columbus had actually intended to sail to India on his great voyage of 1492, and planned to bring back spices such as white and black peppercorns. Instead, he landed in America and found the fiery pods that he called red peppers. ➤



## How to grow

Chillies can be grown from seed and planted out, or sown directly where they are to grow if the last frosts have passed and the soil is warm enough. Seedlings are also available.

Decorative as well as edible, they grow well in pots. Use a premium potting mix, water regularly and feed with a soluble complete fertiliser.

✚ **SOW** seeds 6mm deep in punnets, prick out the seedlings and transfer to 100mm pots. Give them a sunny spot.

✚ **TRANSPLANT** when 150mm high to a sheltered position with full sun. Soil should be free-draining and enriched with compost or manure.

✚ **MULCH** around the plants with lucerne hay or pea straw.

✚ **WATER** regularly. Irregular watering in hot weather can lead to blossom end rot, which shows as a sunken brown patch on the end of the fruit.

✚ **FEED** when flowers appear with an organic food for fruiting plants.

Avoid fertilisers high in nitrogen, especially when the plants are young, so there is not too much leaf growth at the expense of fruit.

✚ **HARVEST** at any time from green to fully coloured. The heat of chillies increases as they mature and they won't ripen after being picked.

## When to sow

Follow this guide on when to grow chillies from seed or from nursery seedlings in different climate zones.

✚ **TROPICAL** All year round

✚ **SUBTROPICAL** All year round

✚ **TEMPERATE** From August to December

✚ **COOL** From September to mid November

**TIP** Growing conditions for chillies and capsicums are the same.

Give chillies full sun and regular water for juicy fruit.

## SAFETY TIP

Always wear gloves or wash hands thoroughly after picking or handling chillies, and don't touch your eyes or skin in any sensitive areas.



PICTURES ISTOCK





Deseeding chillies removes a lot of the heat.

## Beat the heat

Capsaicin is the chemical in chillies that gives them their heat. They are rated on the Scoville Scale, which is divided into heat units. It is based on the dilution of ground chillies in sugar water to measure pungency.

Most of the capsaicin is contained in the seeds and white ribs in the fruit, so removing both reduces the heat.

Capsaicin levels in chillies are affected by the environment and climate, as well as by the variety. Cool weather and too much nitrogen in the soil can slow its production.

As capsaicin is not water-soluble, drinking water, a soft drink or beer won't provide relief if you eat a very hot chilli. The most effective means of relieve is casein, a protein found in milk and yoghurt-based drinks. ➤



If you have a bumper crop, freeze fresh chillies in bags for about six months



 Habanero

 Hot

 Medium

 Mild

 Poblano

 Rocoto

 Jalapeño

 Banana pepper

 Serrano

 Birdseye





## RECIPE TIP

Instead of using zucchini, stir in 250g baby spinach at the end of the cooking time and leave to wilt for two minutes.

## Red lentil and vegetable dal

Dal is a dish of simmered lentils, flavoured with aromatic spices and usually served as a sauce.

Add extra vegies to turn it into a light, low-fat vegetarian meal.

Serve with Indian-style bread and natural yoghurt or raita.

**PREPARATION TIME** 15 minutes

**COOKING TIME** 30 minutes

### Ingredients

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 green chilli, seeded and chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 eggplant, chopped
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon mild curry powder
- 2 teaspoons black mustard seeds
- 150g split red lentils
- 800ml salt-reduced vegetable stock
- 1 zucchini, halved and sliced
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander

**1 PUT** the onion, garlic, chilli, carrot and eggplant in a flameproof casserole dish or large saucepan. Stir in the oil and 2 tablespoons water. Heat until the mixture starts to sizzle, then cover and cook gently for 5 minutes, or until the eggplant has softened.

**2 STIR** in the spices and cook for 1 minute, then stir in the lentils and stock. Bring to the boil, then add the zucchini and tomato.

**3 COVER** and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Remove the lid and cook for a further 5 minutes, or until the lentils burst open and thicken the dal. Season to taste and sprinkle with the coriander to serve.

Serves 4



## Seafood kebabs with tomato salsa

**PREPARATION TIME** 40 minutes,  
plus 1 hour marinating

**COOKING TIME** 6-8 minutes

### Ingredients

700g white firm-fleshed fish fillets  
4 raw prawns

1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 teaspoon crushed ginger  
1 green chilli, deseeded and  
finely chopped  
1 tablespoon sunflower oil

### TOMATO SALSA

500g Roma tomatoes  
2 teaspoons coriander seeds  
1 green chilli, deseeded and  
finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 lemongrass stem, outer leaves  
removed, very thinly sliced  
Juice of 1 lime  
Lime wedges, to serve  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**1 CUT** the fish fillets into 2-3cm chunks. Peel the prawns, removing the legs and heads, leaving the tails on. Run a small sharp knife along the back of each prawn and pull away the dark vein. Rinse and pat dry with paper towel.

**2 MIX** the garlic, ginger and chilli with the oil in a large bowl. Add the fish and the prawns and mix well. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for 1 hour. If using wooden skewers, soak them in cold water for at least 30 minutes before using.

**3 MAKE** the salsa. Cut a cross in the base of the tomatoes, cover with boiling water and leave for 1 minute. Peel and deseed the tomatoes and chop the flesh into a chunky puree.

**4 DRY-FRY** the coriander seeds in a heavy-based frying pan over high heat for a few seconds until they release their aroma. Crush the seeds in a spice mill or with a mortar and pestle and add to the tomato. Mix in the chilli, garlic, lemongrass and lime juice and season well. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes.

**5 HEAT** the grill to medium-high. Thread the fish and prawns onto four skewers and grill for 3-4 minutes on each side, or until the prawns are firm and pink. Season and garnish with the lime wedges. Serve with the tomato salsa on the side. ➤



Serves 4



Serves 4

## RECIPE TIP

For a healthier version, spray the tortilla strips with olive oil and toast in a preheated 180°C oven for five minutes, or until lightly crisped.

 Try delicious chilli recipes  
Visit [pinterest.com/DIYHandyman](https://pinterest.com/DIYHandyman)

## Mexican chicken soup

Fresh coriander, green chillies and lime juice bring an authentic Mexican flavour to this warming soup.

Topped with sautéed tortilla strips, it's a great dish to share with friends on a chilly winter evening.

**PREPARATION TIME** 20 minutes

**COOKING TIME** 25 minutes

### Ingredients

¼ cup (60ml) olive oil  
6 corn tortillas (15cm), halved and cut crossways into 1cm strips  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 cup (250g) canned chopped tomatoes

3 mild green chillies, chopped  
1 pickled jalapeño chilli, finely chopped  
1½ cups (375ml) chicken stock, preferably homemade  
½ teaspoon chilli powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
1½ cups (375ml) water  
625g boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced  
4 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander leaves  
¼ cup (60ml) lime juice

**1 HEAT** 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over medium heat. Add half of the tortilla strips and sauté for 3 minutes, or until

crisp. Remove the strips with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel. Repeat with another tablespoon of the oil and remaining tortilla strips.

**2 ADD** the remaining oil, onion and garlic to the pan and cook for 5 minutes, or until the onion has softened. Add the tomatoes, chilli, pickled jalapeño, stock, chilli powder, salt and water, then bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for a further 5 minutes.

**3 ADD** the chicken, cover and simmer for 5 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked. Stir in the chopped coriander and the lime juice. Divide the soup among bowls and garnish with the tortilla strips to serve.



## Spicy sauces

Fresh or dried chillies are an essential ingredient for sauces with zing. Mix them with ground herbs and spices.

### Chilli and lime sauce

From the Caribbean, this sauce recipe is delicious with barbecued or baked fish or vegetables. Baste the food with it or serve it separately.

- 2 fresh red chillies
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 cup (250ml) fresh lime juice

- 1 **REMOVE** the seeds and white pith from the chillies if you don't want too much heat. Finely slice the chillies and pack into a sterilised jar.
- 2 **DISSOLVE** the salt in the lime juice and pour over the chillies. Seal and store in a cool place to let the flavours develop. It is ready for use after four days and keeps for up to four weeks.

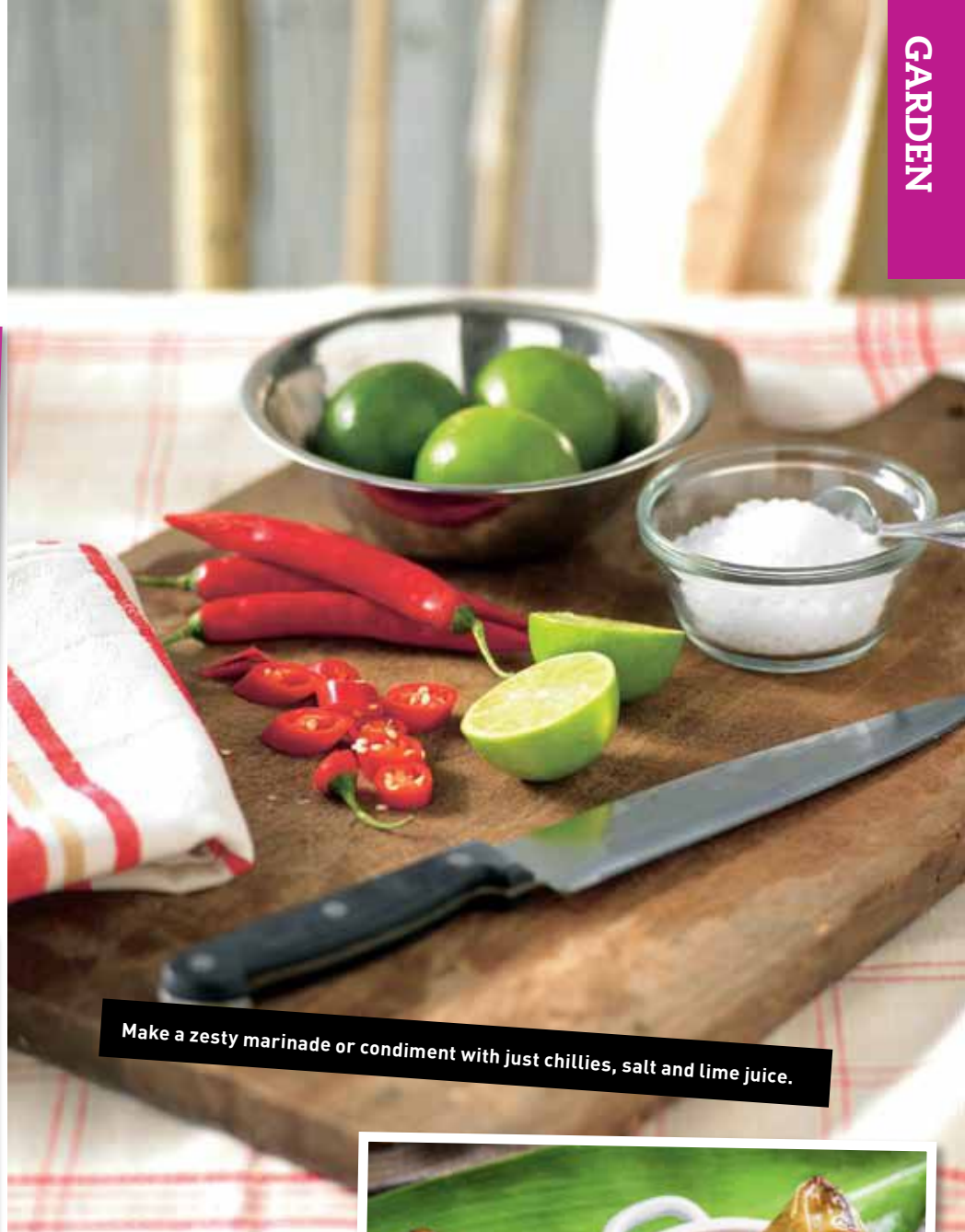
### Harissa

This fiery sauce is a feature of North African cooking. Use it as a condiment with eggs and couscous-based dishes.

**TIP** If using fresh chillies, there is no need to soak them.

- 8 dried chillies
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground caraway seeds
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin

- 1 **SOAK** the dried chillies in hot water for 30 minutes, then drain. Remove the stems and seeds, then put the chillies, garlic, salt and oil in a food processor, blending them to a paste.
- 2 **ADD** the caraway seeds, coriander and cumin, then blend. Pack into an airtight container and top with a thin layer of olive oil. It keeps for one month in the fridge. Thin with a little oil and lemon juice or hot stock before using.



Make a zesty marinade or condiment with just chillies, salt and lime juice.

### Nuoc cham

An indispensable seasoning in Vietnamese cooking, this spicy mixture can be served with mixed salad greens and herbs, or used as a dipping sauce or marinade.

- 2 small red chillies, or to taste, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 limes, peeled and chopped
- 1 tablespoon hot water
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 5 tablespoons fish sauce

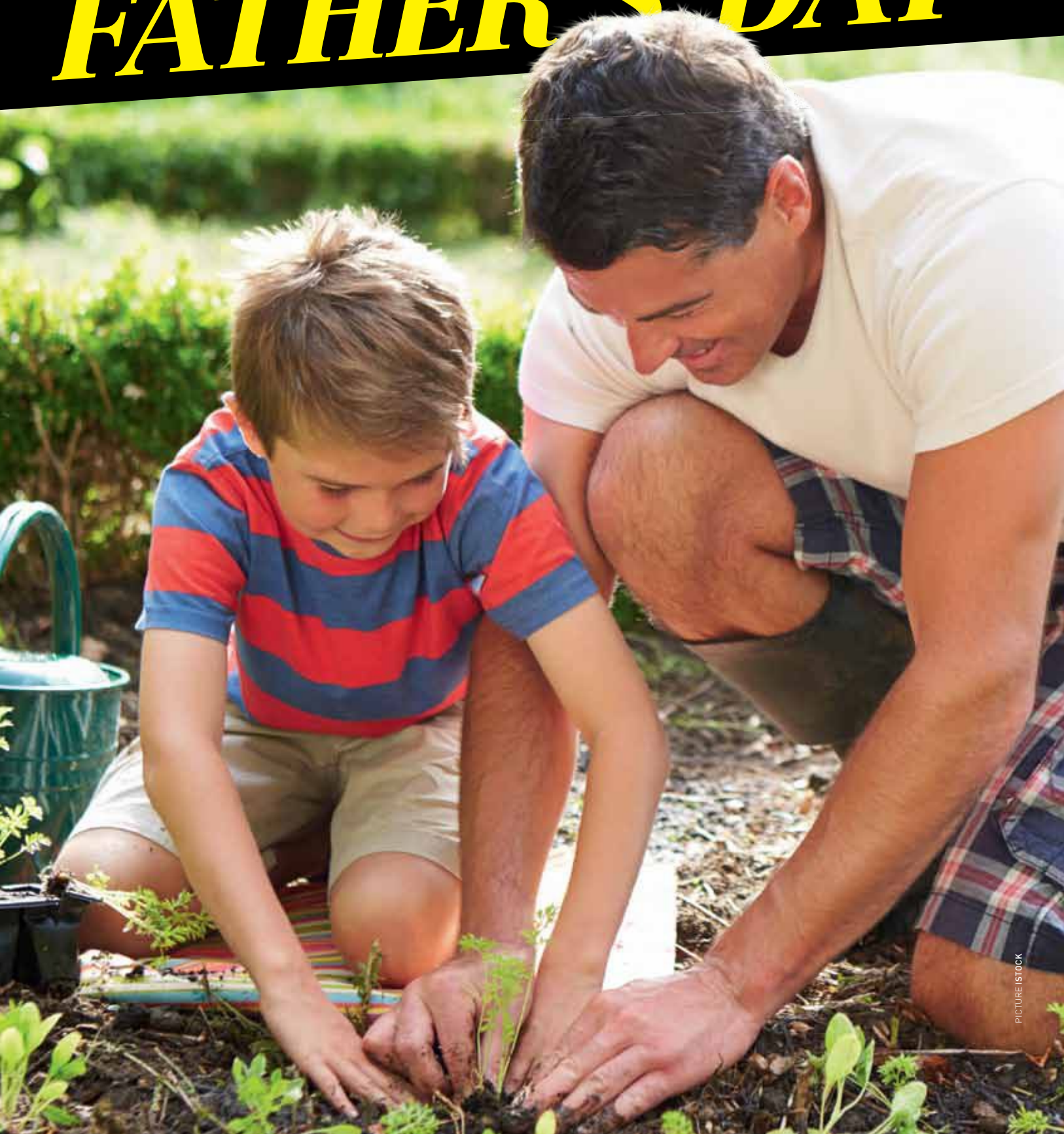
- 1 **POUND** the chilli and garlic to a fine paste. Add the sugar and lime, then pound to a pulp.
- 2 **STIR** in the water, vinegar and fish sauce, then serve.

**TIP** Remove the seeds from the chillies for less heat. 🌶️





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## EXPERT SECRETS

Organise working bees to get your yard tidied up and save money, taking turns in each other's gardens.

# Dirt-cheap gardening

Save money simply by being more savvy in the garden

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

**H**ave you just moved into your dream home? You may have all you've ever wanted inside, but those mortgage repayments can leave little spare cash for developing the garden.

Plants, pots and paving don't come cheap, but unless you desperately want an instant garden, there are ways to transform it without breaking the bank.

Try these effective money-saving strategies to get you started, and have fun into the bargain.





Pot up flowering annuals for cheap instant colour.

## Work with what you have

Take a good look at the hardscaping elements in your garden, such as paths, retaining walls, pergolas and decks.

If the garden is already landscaped, then try living with it for a while and see if it works for you.

It's expensive to replace paving, so if it's a bit dilapidated, you could consider fixing instead of removing it.

Timber decks and pergolas can often be given a new lease of life with a coat of oil or paint.



Give outdoor furniture and sheds a facelift with paint.



## RE-USING MATERIALS

Removing unwanted items from your garden such as bricks, broken concrete or timber can be expensive, so re-use them in small projects.

Bricks and timber make good garden bed borders and foundations for compost heaps. Broken concrete can be used as slabs for crazy paving or as stepping stones. ➤



Salvage any timber you find lying about the yard and re-use it in DIY projects



## GROW TIP

Take a walk around the suburb and talk to your neighbours about the type of plants that grow well in their garden.

## Right plant, right place

It may sound too simple, but correct plant placement is one of the key steps to having a successful garden, and one that will save you lots of money.

Growing each plant in the right position allows them to reach their full potential and purpose.

Every plant must have a suitable climate and soil, as well as enough light or shade and dryness or moisture.

So do your research beforehand instead of simply buying a plant and then trying to place it.

## WAYS TO RECYCLE

Look for items on council clean-up days, at tip shops or in skip bins and give them a new purpose in the garden. It's amazing what you can create.

➤ **USE** wicker baskets, boots and shoes, wheelbarrows, galvanised buckets, tins and trunks as containers, adding drainage holes.

➤ **REMOVE** the stuffing from the seat of an old dining chair, then staple mosquito wire to the underside. Fill up with potting mix and plant with succulents or flowering annuals.

➤ **MAKE** quirky outdoor plant stands from bookcases. You can add shells and other outdoor memorabilia.

➤ **USE** an old dresser as a potting stand and for storage.

➤ **REPURPOSE** a bathtub as a garden pond or use as a planter.

➤ **SAVE** broken crockery and mirrors and use for mosaics on paths and walls.

➤ **TURN** glass jars into lanterns by placing tealights inside, wrapping thin wire around the mouth of the jars, then hanging them in trees.



Use anything that can hold soil as a planter.



PICTURES: CHERYL MADDOCKS (MAIN) ISTOCK



### Bargain hunt

Check out local markets for cheap plants and keep an eye out in your local newspaper for any upcoming plant sales.

Botanic gardens also have special days when they sell off reasonably priced and interesting plants to the public.

## Divide and multiply

Take a close look at what plants already exist in the garden, then divide any perennials and plant the divisions in the bare areas.

If a perennial is growing well and is undemanding in its water needs, use it around the garden. It may be possible to divide a large clumping perennial into three or four clumps.

Perennials such as agapanthus, lomandra, catmint, penstemon, iris, canna, strelitzia and ornamental grasses are all easily divided to provide you with more plants.

### Swap plants

One way of obtaining plants is to swap them with friends. You could organise a day in your neighbourhood to exchange divisions, bulbs and cuttings.

Some garden clubs have days when members can bring plants to swap. Visit [gardenclubs.org.au](http://gardenclubs.org.au).

### Check online

The internet is a good place for sourcing plants, as many of them are sold online, including seeds, perennials and bulbs.

If you are buying from another state, check with your local council or [weeds.org.au](http://weeds.org.au) to make sure the plant isn't an environmental weed in your area.

### How to divide



**1 REMOVE** the plant from the ground using a fork.

Divide the rootball by pulling it apart with your hands or cutting it with secateurs.

**2 MAKE** new planting holes for the divisions, then add a layer of compost. Replant the divided sections at the same depth as the mother plant.

**3 WATER** thoroughly and apply Seasol to prevent transplant shock. Water regularly until the divisions are established. ➤



PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS (MAIN) ISTOCK





## DIY TIP

Create a mini greenhouse by sealing a punnet in a freezer bag or covering it in plastic wrap until the seeds germinate.



## Start small

Growing from seed saves money, especially in a new garden. A packet of 50-100 seeds costs roughly the same as a punnet of 6-12 seedlings.

Large seeds and those that germinate easily, which is usually indicated on the packet, can be sown where they are to grow.

This saves you the trouble of transplanting and avoids any setbacks that may occur when young plants are moved.

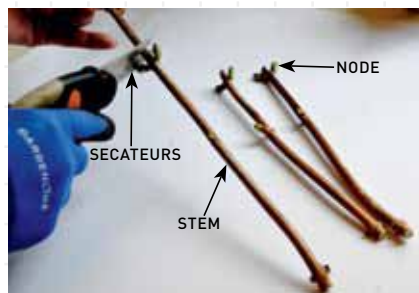
## Take cuttings

A good money-saving approach is to take hardwood cuttings during winter. For more variety, you could swap cuttings with neighbours and friends.

Hydrangea, deutzia, buddleia, mock orange (*Philadelphus*), forsythia, kolkwitzia, hibiscus and weigela all grow easily from cuttings.

Cuttings form roots in 8-10 weeks and show new growth in spring.

## 1 2 3



### 1 Cut the stems

Select 2-3 healthy, ripened stems about 150-300mm long and as thick as your little finger. Make straight base cuts below a pair of nodes and angled top cuts above a pair of nodes. This prevents you from planting them upside down.



### 2 Prepare the cuttings

Take each cutting and dip the base of the stem into hormone powder or honey. This will encourage the production of roots and ensure their even distribution. Fill a pot to just below the top with propagating mix.



### 3 Pot the cuttings

Make holes with a pencil and plant the cuttings to a depth of a third to half of their length. Keep the potting mix moist. Transfer to larger pots in late spring using a good-quality potting mix, then plant in the garden in autumn.



**Contain colour**

Flowering annuals in containers bring a balcony or courtyard to life without breaking the bank. A \$4 punnet of 12 annuals will plant out three medium-sized pots.

PICTURE: ISTOCK, THINKSTOCK



**Share your thrifty garden tricks**

Post a pic to Instagram and tag @HandymanMagazine

**Did you know?**

Recycled cardboard egg cartons make great seed punnets. Fill with seed raising mix and, after germination, simply cut off and plant the sections. The cardboard will soon break down in the soil and your seeds won't suffer transplant shock. ♻️

# Bring your garden to life with Pope's SnapShot Timers.

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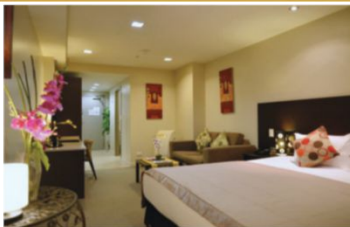


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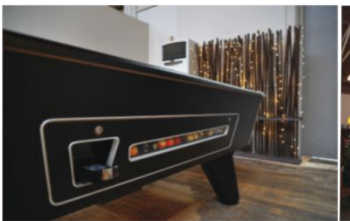
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# What's on this Month

## FREE Kids' D.I.Y. Workshops

|                                                                                                     |                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>» Saturday 30 July</b><br><b>HOW TO PLANT A TREE</b><br>Learn how to care for your very own tree | <b>» Sunday 14 August</b><br><b>GARDEN CRAFT</b><br>Create a masterpiece for your garden    |
| <b>» Sunday 31 July</b><br><b>DECORATOR</b><br>Learn new decorating skills to create art            | <b>» Saturday 20 August</b><br><b>FUN WITH PAINT</b><br>Have fun with bright-coloured paint |
| <b>» Saturday 6 August</b><br><b>ART CLASS</b><br>Create a work of art for your bedroom             | <b>» Sunday 21 August</b><br><b>WALL ART</b><br>Create a decoration to hang at home         |
| <b>» Sunday 7 August</b><br><b>CRAFT</b><br>Get creative with a variety of different materials      | <b>» Saturday 27 August</b><br><b>NATURE</b><br>Make a living masterpiece                   |
| <b>» Saturday 13 August</b><br><b>WOODWORK</b><br>Make something special out of wood                | <b>» Sunday 28 August</b><br><b>ART CLASS</b><br>Create a work of art for your bedroom      |

Our workshops are held every weekend at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm. For specific topics, ask instore or go to [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au). If you live in South Australia, speak to a team member or visit [bunnings.com.au](http://bunnings.com.au) for details about our great one-on-one D.I.Y. workshops. These workshops run from 10am to 4pm each Saturday and Sunday.

## FREE Adult D.I.Y. Workshops

|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>» Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 July</b><br><b>WINDOWS AND DOORS</b><br>Learn handy installation hints              | <b>» Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 August</b><br><b>KITCHEN, BATHROOM AND LAUNDRY</b><br>Kickstart your next project |
| <b>» Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 August</b><br><b>INDOOR PROJECTS</b><br>Organise the different rooms in your home     |                              |
| <b>» Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August</b><br><b>PAINTING AND PLASTERING</b><br>Master your next renovation project |                                                                                                                  |
| <b>» Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 August</b><br><b>HOME ORGANISATION</b><br>Get your place sorted this winter         |                                                                                                                  |

For more information on other instore events or to book, visit [bunnings.com.au/yourstore](http://bunnings.com.au/yourstore)

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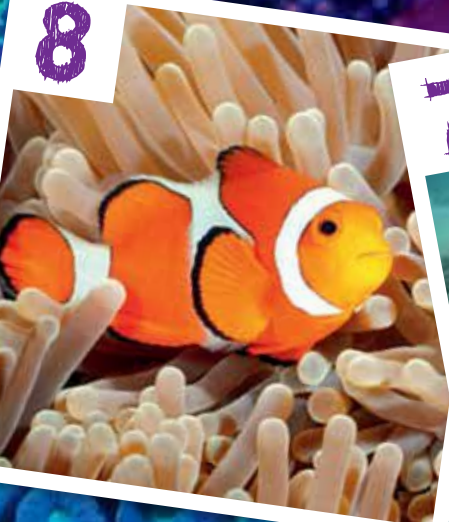
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5



8



7



6



POP QUIZ!

# Name that *fish*

Test your knowledge of aquatic animals  
by identifying these colourful species.  
The answers are at the bottom of the page.

ANSWERS 1 NEON TETRA 2 SEAHORSE 3 ANGELFISH 4 CATFISH 5 SIAMESE FIGHTING FISH 6 GOLDFISH 7 LIONFISH 8 CLOWNFISH



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