

67 PAGES OF MUST-DO SPRING GARDEN IDEAS

AUSTRALIAN

BOOST KERB APPEAL page 13

Handyman

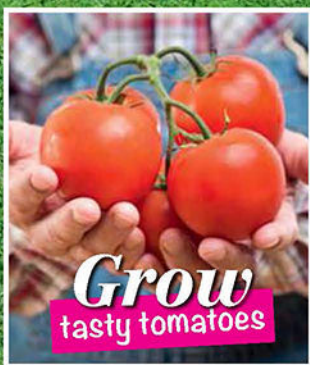
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OCTOBER ISSUE



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THIS ISSUE

HANDY HINT OF THE MONTH



BAR CLAMP TOWEL HOLDER



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EDITOR'S LETTER

October is one of our favourite months here at *Australian Handyman*. Spring has well and truly sprung and with it comes longer days, which means we all get to spend more time outdoors after work and on the weekends.

I usually go out into my garden in spring and sigh at all the work that needs to be done, but not this year.

That's because I practised what we preach here at *Handyman* and gave the garden a good winter tidy up, weeding and clearing and pruning where appropriate.

Plus I replaced a rotten gate and lifted old pavers to level the base. Well, my nephew-in-law Adrian did the hard labour, but I helped!

But a garden is always growing, and at my place, it likes to grow asthma weed, fishbone fern and morning glory.

And this month, it's time for another tidy up, whether you tackled the yard in winter or not. If you prune trees and shrubs, clear gutters



Adrian attacking the privet with a hedge trimmer.

of debris and scour pavers clean, page 108, you'll be ready for summer living in no time.

Love your lawn

Spring is also when the lawn comes back to life and needs some TLC.

On the cover, you'll see the lawn belonging to our project editor Adam Woodhams, with his lovely wife Denise and daughter Amber, enjoying the lush green grass.

Adam, who is our undisputed turf guru, has advice on how to get the lawn at your place looking as good, page 92.

We also show you how to get the kids into the garden, with our projects for junior DIYers, page 82. And, it's tomato time. Get growing tips and lots of recipes for your juicy crops, page 134.

Enjoy the issue,

EDITOR
ARTEMIS GOUROS



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The range of pool fence panels and gates from Protector Aluminium has just been redesigned to make them stronger than ever.

All panels and gates now feature the new Ulti-M8 core system, with additional inner ribs to all pickets and rails providing extra reinforcement (protectoraluminium.com.au).



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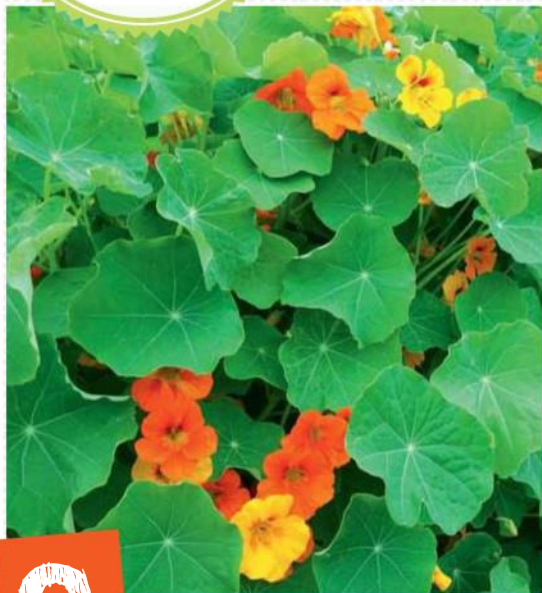
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FAST FACT

Pumpkins, tomatoes, eggplants and zucchinis are all technically fruits.

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A door is a statement of what to expect as you enter a room. That's why Sally Klopper of Sally Caroline Interior Design starts with Corinthian's Moda Collection. With 24 timeless designs to choose from, a Moda door will be right at home in your home. To watch Sally talk about her timeless design principles, visit Corinthian.com.au

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HANDY STUFF

KERB APPEAL

Give the front of your home a facelift with these home-improvement finds

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT



Dulcet daisy

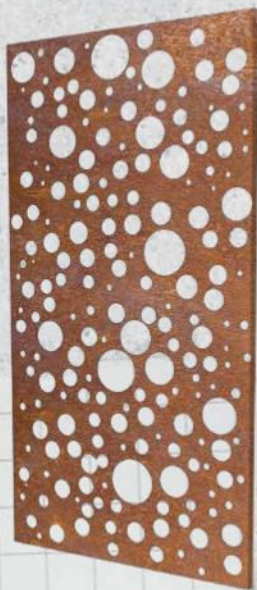
Set up the attractive Gardman Daisy Flower Wind Chime, \$10, and visitors will be welcomed to your home by its melodious tones. Lightweight and made of metal, this chime measures 80 x 470 x 80mm.

brunnings.com.au

Planetary partition

Keep prying eyes off your yard with the Whites Outdoor 1800 x 900mm Galaxy Oxy-Shield Decorative Screen Panel, \$145. The steel screen develops an earthy patina and is cut with a laser.

whitesgroup.com.au



Reception rug

Skip scuffed floors with the Madras Link Welcome Rubber and Coir Doormat, about \$30. The hard-wearing coir prevents dirt and chemicals from entering your home on shoes.

madraslinkonline.com.au

Secret stack

Cover up old brick or boring walls quickly with the Decor8 400 x 125mm Antique Sienna Panel Stone, \$25 for five. Each pack covers 0.25sqm and can be cut with a wet saw. The panels weigh less than 30kg per sqm.

decor8.com.au

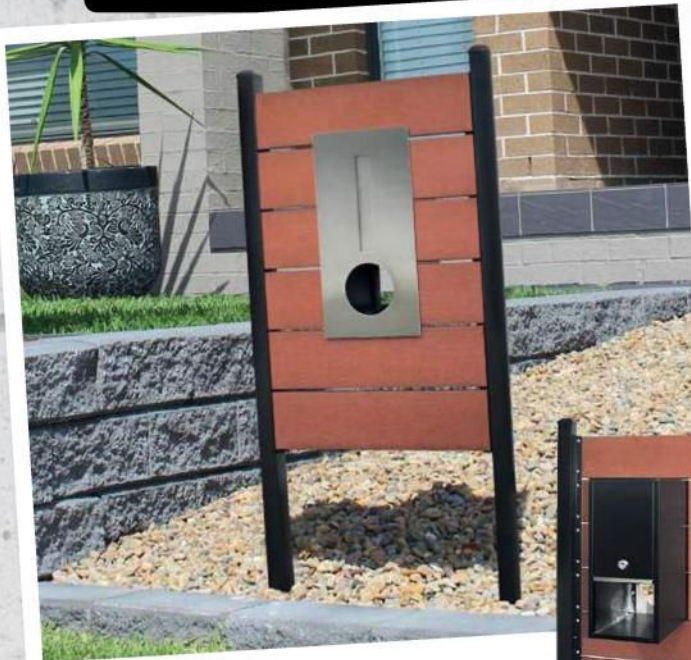


Easy elegance

Pot up plants in the European-style Tuscan Path Abbey Collection, from \$27 each. Available in four sizes, the range is crafted from lightweight fibreglass, so the pots are easy to move when full. >

tuscanpath.com.au





Functional flare

Replace your rickety old mailbox with the Northcote Pottery Caloundra Letterbox, \$199, made from wood plastic composite. northcotepottery.com.au



Garden guides

Show guests the way to your front door with the Solar Magic 26cm Solar Bollard Set, \$40 for eight. The pre-wired LED lights are spaced 1m apart and turn on automatically at dusk. The lights run off a rechargeable AA battery. merlindistribution.com.au



Secure slot

Fit the sturdy Sandleford Cobalt Letterbox, \$209, into your fence. It has a key-lockable rear door and powdercoated finish on the stainless steel faceplate. The shallow-profile box has separate slots for mail and newspapers. sandleford.com.au

Front-yard frame

Install the stylish Protector Aluminium Black Four-rail Arched 975 x 1600 x 1750mm Gate Panel, \$190. The lightweight and strong gate is powdercoated for a rustproof finish. protectoraluminium.com.au



Stackable seat

Tuck the tough Marquee Dream Grey Polycarbonate Mallee Chair, \$99, by your entry. Constructed from heavy-duty polycarbonate, the chair is weatherproof and able to hold 120kg. A great option for alfresco seating, it has an easy-to-store stackable design. bunnings.com.au

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wagneraustralia.com.au



Brick barrier

Cover old brickwork with Rockcote Toscani Fine Texture Coloured Render, \$121 for 10L. The tintable formula is 20 times thicker than standard paint and can be applied using a trowel or roller.

rockcote.com.au



Corrosion cure

Turn rust into a tough barrier against further corrosion with Dy-Mark Rust Reformer, \$11 for 350g. It dries within 40 minutes and can be sanded after three hours.

dymark.com.au

Stain stripper

Refresh your deck with Feast Watson Woodclean, \$17 for 1L. The oxalic acid-based treatment removes oils, moulds, stains and tannins to make your deck look like new. Each litre covers 20sqm when diluted with water.

feastwatson.com.au



Gravity-free glue

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athertonchemicals.com.au

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STEP TWO: Pour a small amount of sand into the hole and pat it down firmly.

STEP THREE: Place concrete paver on top of sand. Using a spirit level, check the paver sits level. Add/remove sand if required.

STEP FOUR: Apply Liquid Nails to the inside edges of the base of the letterbox.

STEP FIVE: Place in position on the prepared paver and leave to set. Once dry, the letterbox is ready to use! Finish by attaching house numbers and landscaping around it with lawn or plants.



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Parallel power

Clear cord clutter around household electronics with the Arlec Heavy Duty 1.8m Dual Output Split Lead, about \$13. It features two individual 240V sockets from one 10-amp cable.

Tough trio

Axe excess cords with the Arlec Triple Outlet Heavy Duty Extension Lead, \$14. The 1.8m cable has three outlets and a power-on indicator. It is designed to sustain rough usage.



Bring power to where you need it with the latest extension cords to suit any home or garden set-up

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT

External extender

Tackle tasks in the yard with the HPM 25m Heavy Duty Garden Extension Lead, \$46. It has a unique clamping socket for added safety and a lead packing clip for easy storage.

Camp companion

Wander the world with the HPM Extra Heavy Duty 25m Caravan Extension Lead, \$48. Heavy gauge connectors reduce voltage drop and it has a wide blade earth terminal for 15A outlets.

Construction cable

Get connected in the workshop or on site with the 20m HPM Extra Heavy Duty Construction Lead, about \$43. Built to withstand rugged applications, it features a 15A cable.

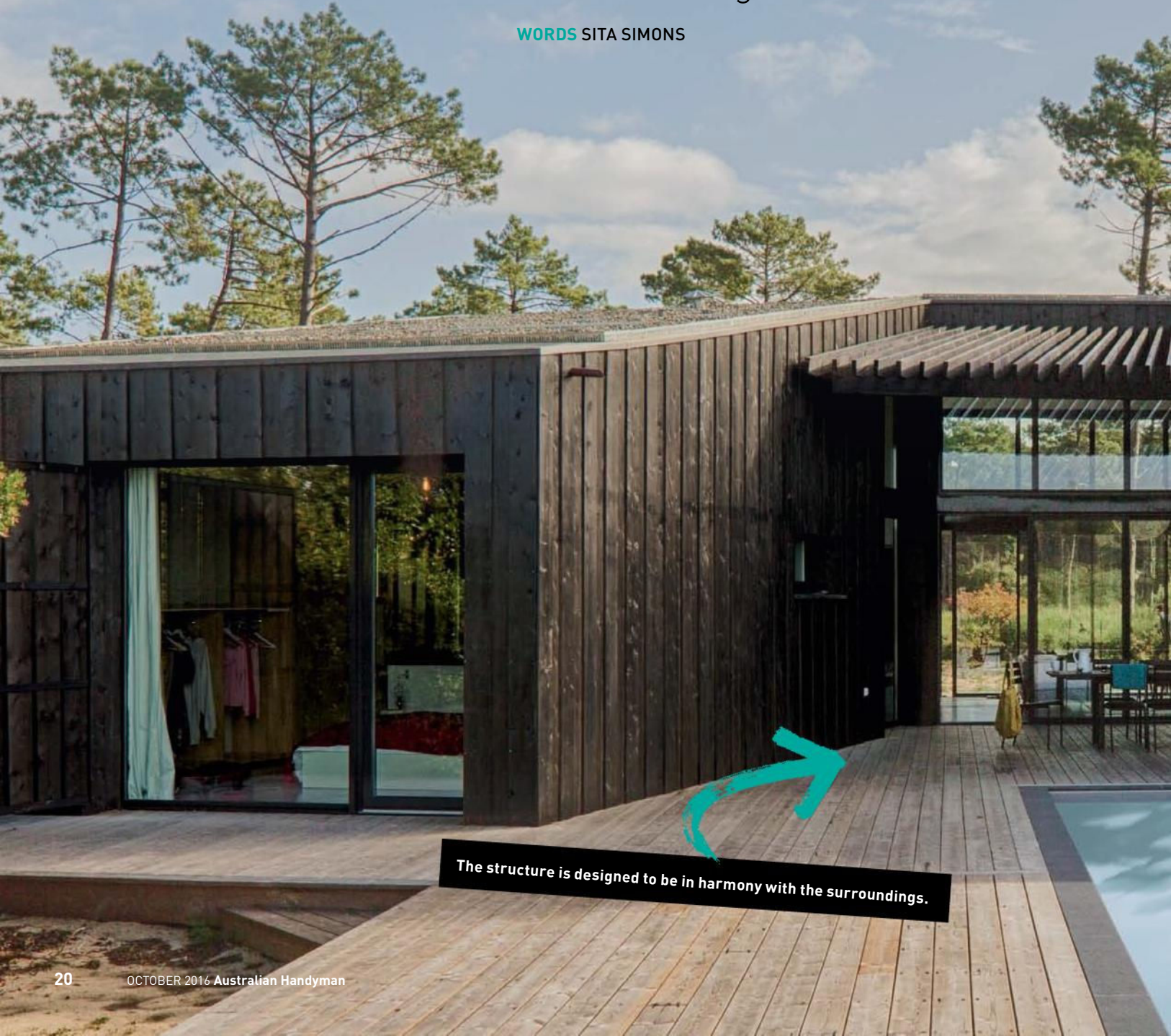
Levered link

Remove the risk of a shock with the HPM Safety Switch with 1.6m Handyman Lead, \$49. Featuring a 30-millisecond trip time, it is designed for DIY use.

SHACK TO THE FUTURE

A modern take on the modest iconic holiday house creates a comfortable home while retaining the rustic charm

WORDS SITA SIMONS



The structure is designed to be in harmony with the surroundings.

BUDGET TIP

Pare back your decorating costs by using lighting, such as oversized shades and exposed bulbs, as statement features.

Across Australia in the 1950s, in tandem with better roads and more cars, our passion for coastal getaways began to take shape, and the notion of a holiday home became a reality for the average family.

Modest and built by hand, often using scrap materials, and very basic in layout, they generally had no utilities or indoor plumbing.

Many were fibrolite lean-tos and some used a caravan as the core of the structure and extensions were added.

This humble icon has had a huge reinvention in recent years, as land prices have surged, with Australia reporting some of the most coveted and expensive coastal prices worldwide.

Perfecting coastal architecture is an ongoing design evolution, but current trends retain the central simplicity, while improving the quality of materials and building principles. ➤



Looking right through

Sitting low on the landscape, this modern home is a simple rectangular form, with two distinct halves and a unifying centre. It is designed to be looked through from front to back, in total connection to the environment.

While the form is heavy, with solid structural beams supporting vertical timber cladding, everything about the build expresses light.

The new owners had both had childhood experiences with annual

coastal holidays, and it was their hope to reclaim something of that for their own young family.

‘Even though this house is 100 times more sophisticated than my pop’s old place, where we used to spend our summer holidays, there is a real similarity in the way it feels to be here,’ says the owner.

‘This property is positively palatial in comparison, but it’s not at all grand. It’s solid and unfussy, and easy to be in. It’s okay to make a mess.’

Both sides of the house completely open up for outdoor living.

Keeping it simple

There's an easy logic to the layout and nothing is overcomplicated. The central space is separated into kitchen, dining and living spaces.

Heated concrete floors throughout the home add to the raw aesthetic while providing practical functionality.

The kitchen is a simple L-shape, with timber cabinetry lending warmth to the all-white palette and referencing the handmade style of the basic shack.

The fridge and dishwasher are integrated so no elements encroach on the clean lines of the design.

'We went about the kitchen design the opposite way than you'd expect. Instead of planning how to maximise storage, we wanted to minimise it. We spent a long while thinking of how little we could get away with.' ➤

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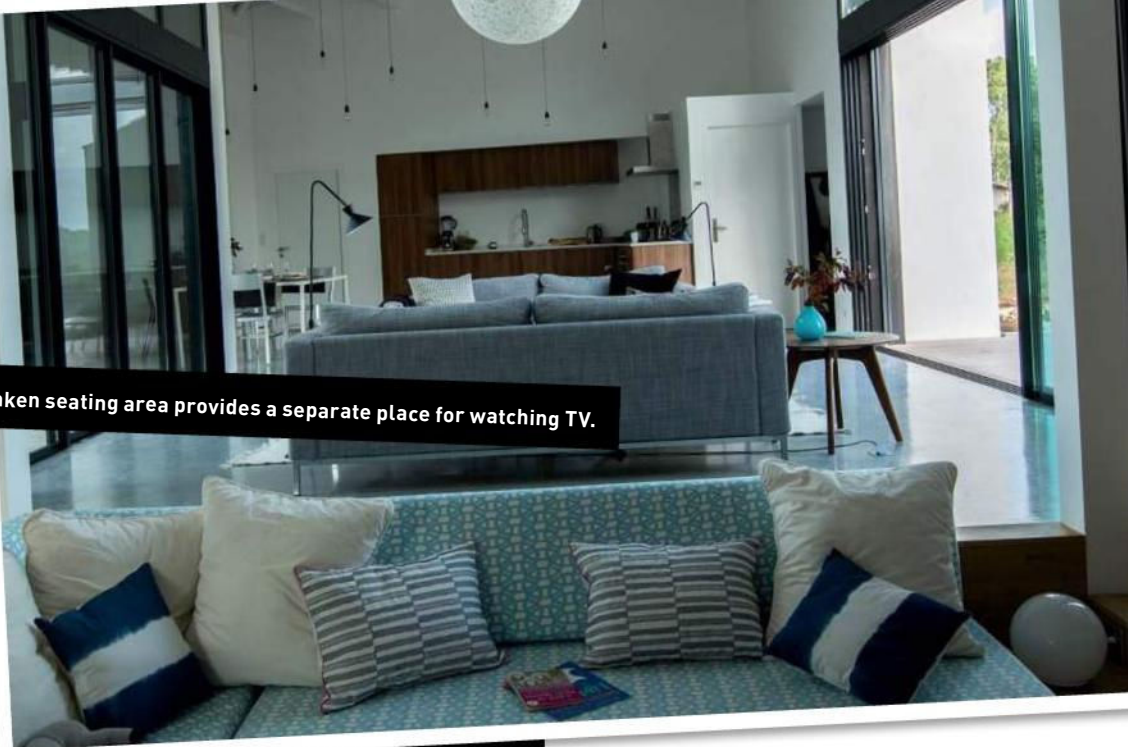
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A sunken seating area provides a separate place for watching TV.



The floor-to-ceiling sliding doors maximise light in the living spaces.

Creating open spaces

The central double-height space is flooded with natural light, and lends itself perfectly to dining and living, with these social activities benefiting from the wide-open feel.

The floor and the deck are a single seamless level, so the areas easily become one when the doubled-glazed sliding doors are open.

To one side, a sunken section was created for use as a separate lounge room. It also allowed for a mezzanine to be built above, which consists of a large kids' bedroom and play space.

'It's wonderful to have all this open space, but privacy is also important over the long holiday periods. And the kids love having somewhere they can hang out together away from the adults.'

A single-room extension was added at the front to provide an extra bathroom and changing area, with an outdoor shower for sluicing down surfboards and sandy feet. ➤



In a neutral palette, add colour with rugs, throws, cushions and bedspreads



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Maximising the views

The two bedrooms were situated to take advantage of the views and early morning light.

In the master bedroom, an ensuite is incorporated and the long wall is utilised for integrated storage.

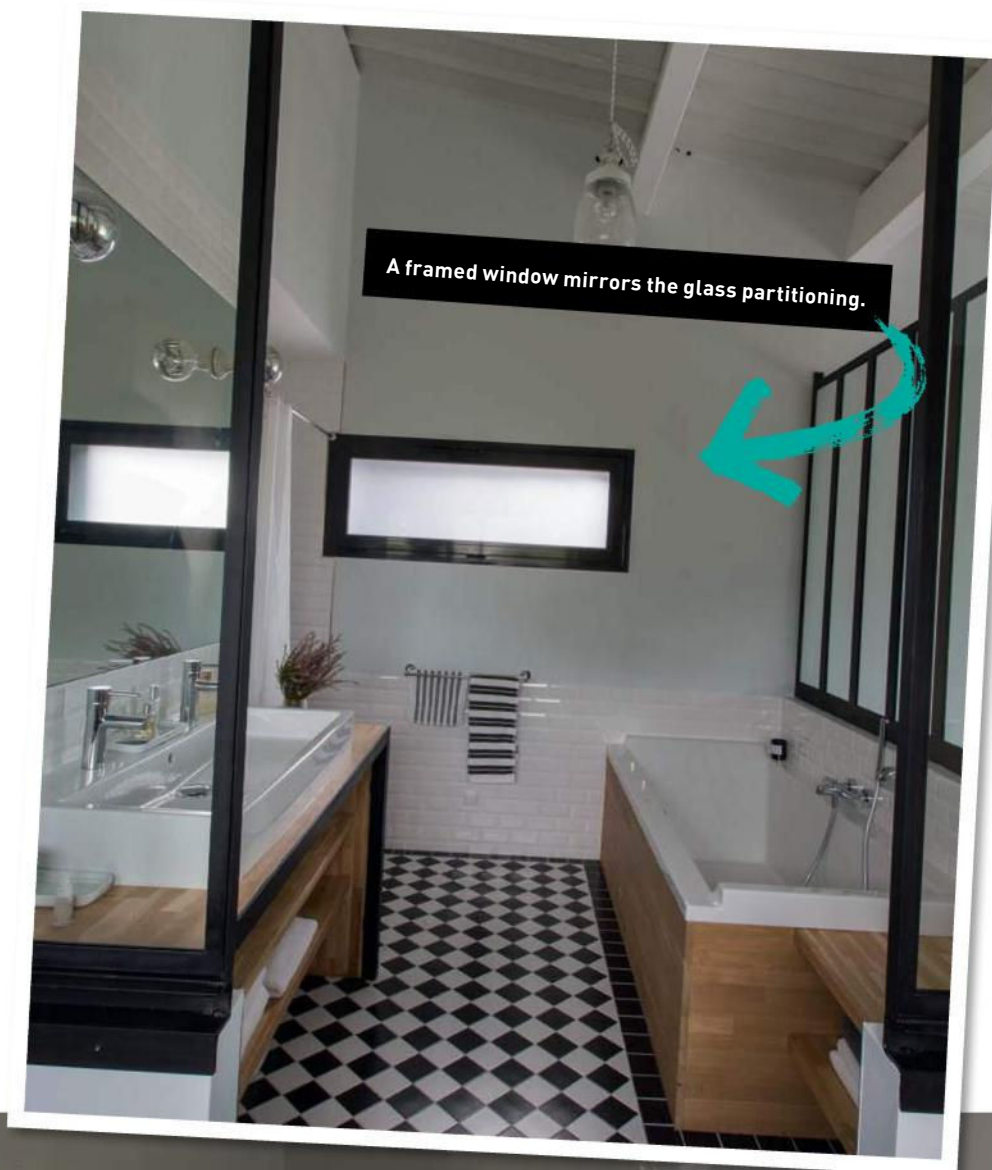
Rather than enclose another room, the ensuite was left partially open by using half-height walls and replicating the glazing style throughout the house to delineate the space.

The colour palette of the ensuite takes its cue from the rest of the house, utilising black and white, combined with timber elements in the bath and vanity to add warmth and texture.

A concealed recessed shower space provides the necessary privacy.

'This is one of my favourite features of the house. It's integrated but still private. I love that we get the light into the bathroom and can still take in all the view,' says the owner.

'I didn't want any spaces to be closed to the surroundings, and I am very pleased with this solution.' ➤



From winter chill to bathroom bliss

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Statement lights are both functional and decorative.

Adding the details

The high ceilings are focal points, with rafters forming geometric detail and providing visual interest and giving the modern build a rustic feel.

The lighting is used as a feature and the rafters form configurations that work as a decorative element.

'It's refreshing to not really have to decorate a holiday home. It is that sense of ease and not having so much to care for. But lights are essential, and our architect introduced the idea of being playful with them,' says the owner.

A large deck invites you outdoors and a timber cover mirrors the roof to create a shaded atrium space for family meals and entertaining.

'This place takes me back to my childhood, but it's new and we're making memories with our family. We hope our kids do the same.' 🌿





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SURPRISE SPACE

A carport reno provides a new studio and a future apartment

WORDS SITA SIMONS PROJECT AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

Making plans for housing arrangements in later years is something we may all have to consider at some point.

Here, the owners, who are in their sixties, wanted to ensure they would be comfortable in their home in the longer term. This meant looking at ways to include space for a live-in carer.

Handyman project editor Stuart Scott considered all the different possibilities of making amendments to the layout of the single-storey, three-bedroom home.

'There were a few options, but they all came with structural changes or awkward plumbing challenges, as well as lifestyle compromises in terms of losing a spare room that accommodated their frequent guests,' says Stuart. ➤



A carport reno was a solution that ticked the boxes without too many sacrifices or complications





The newly appointed carport is in character with the main house.

Stuart



EXPERT SECRETS

Be prepared to keep looking for a good workable solution if at first the best idea isn't obvious.



Shared studio

The couple currently uses all the available room in the main house for projects and supplies, so space and storage were already at a premium.

The new space is a light-filled, dedicated area for the artists in the family and can be used in the future as accommodation for a carer.

In the once-dark space, light is maximised.



Carport solution

Stuart says no solution was really gelling and then the penny dropped.

'There was something of an epiphany when we looked at the carport and thought, this is it,' he says.

An original piece of the heritage architecture of the home, the carport was a hexagonal structure with a slate roof and a wrought-iron lace border.

Totalling about 35sqm, it was largely unused and cars were left parked on the driveway instead. Through the carport was a locked-up workshop and a combined bathroom and main laundry for the house.

'As an idea, it came complete. It was exterior to the house but easily accessible, the plumbing and amenities were already there, and the workshop was really easy to reconfigure into a small kitchen,' says Stuart.



The original carport was structurally solid.

Breezy build

The carport itself had good bones and two existing walls, so it was a simple project to create a full structure.

With two existing brick walls, the whole structure was supported by steel posts and a steel framework, so the partition walls were easily inserted.

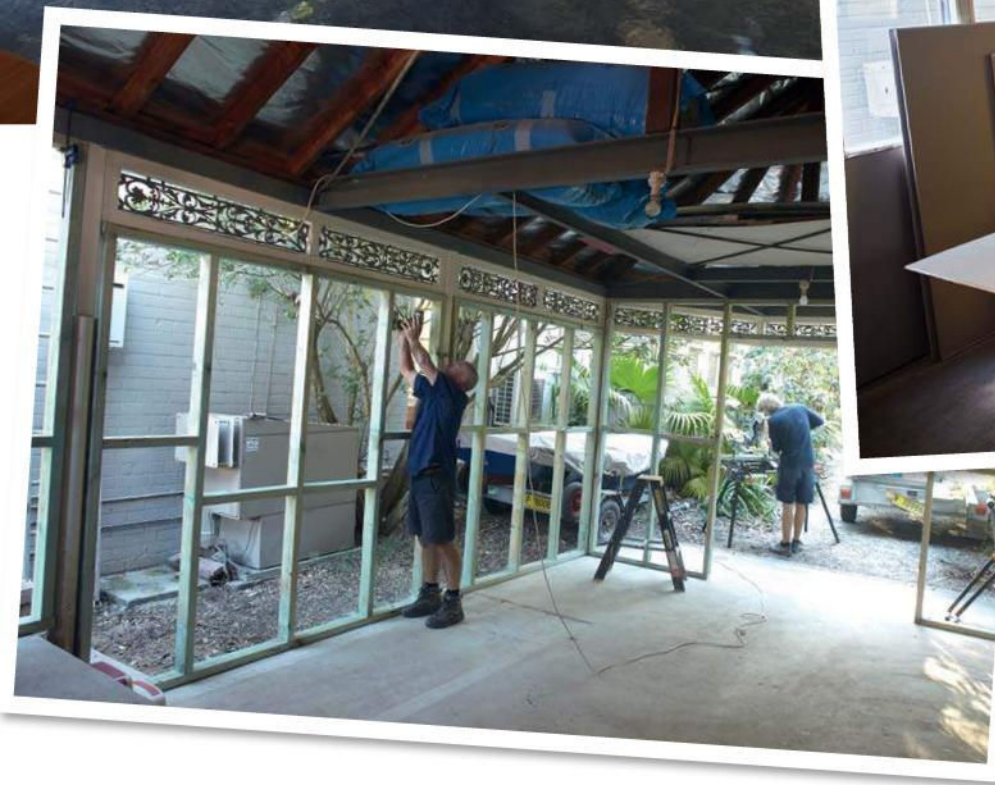
Simple frames consisting of top and base plates and studs were built, which were then bolted through the steel posts at the top and anchored into the concrete slab.

'We had to keep in mind that the carport wasn't built to be a livable space, so there were elements that needed fixing up. The slab was uneven and there were no eaves to speak of, meaning it was exposed to the weather.

'We had to be careful to seal it effectively using a good-quality sealant and a bit of flashing around the base,' says Stuart. ➤



All the walls were lined with plasterboard.



Making no structural changes meant the build was a text-book job with no surprises

Appealing ceiling

The interior vaulted ceiling was a charming feature that looked great and added volume to the 35sqm space. The initial idea was to line the existing rafters and leave it all intact.

'The issue here was that we were eliminating the main storage serving the whole house,' says Stuart.

'An effective way to reintroduce valuable storage into the space was to line about 50% of the existing roof towards the back and create a storage area to the front of the structure.'

Batons were fixed onto the existing steel structure, and plasterboard was

used to create a new ceiling. Flooring was laid above that, then the vertical section was framed and the front half boxed in with plasterboard.

A roof door was installed for access, which is reached by a ladder.

Steel braces also form part of the visual appeal, but there were a couple of issues with standard door heights and keeping the original features.

'Installing a standard-sized door from the laundry into the studio meant it would be hard up against the steel ceiling brace. The solution was to use a chain and turnbuckle to support the bracing above the door,' says Stuart. ➤



Retaining original features while improving the overall function was a design goal



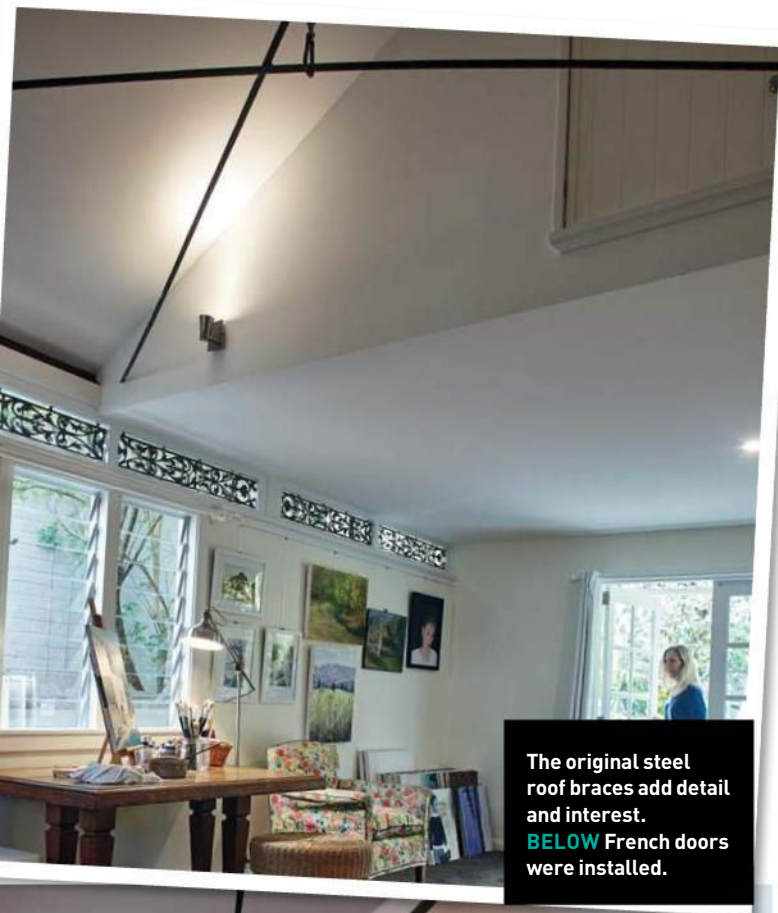
The vaulted ceiling provides storage.

DESIGN TIP

Mix old furniture with new buys to make use of what you have and create a homely and in-character addition to the main house.



A basic kitchen utilises the plumbing of the old workshop.



The original steel roof braces add detail and interest.
BELOW French doors were installed.



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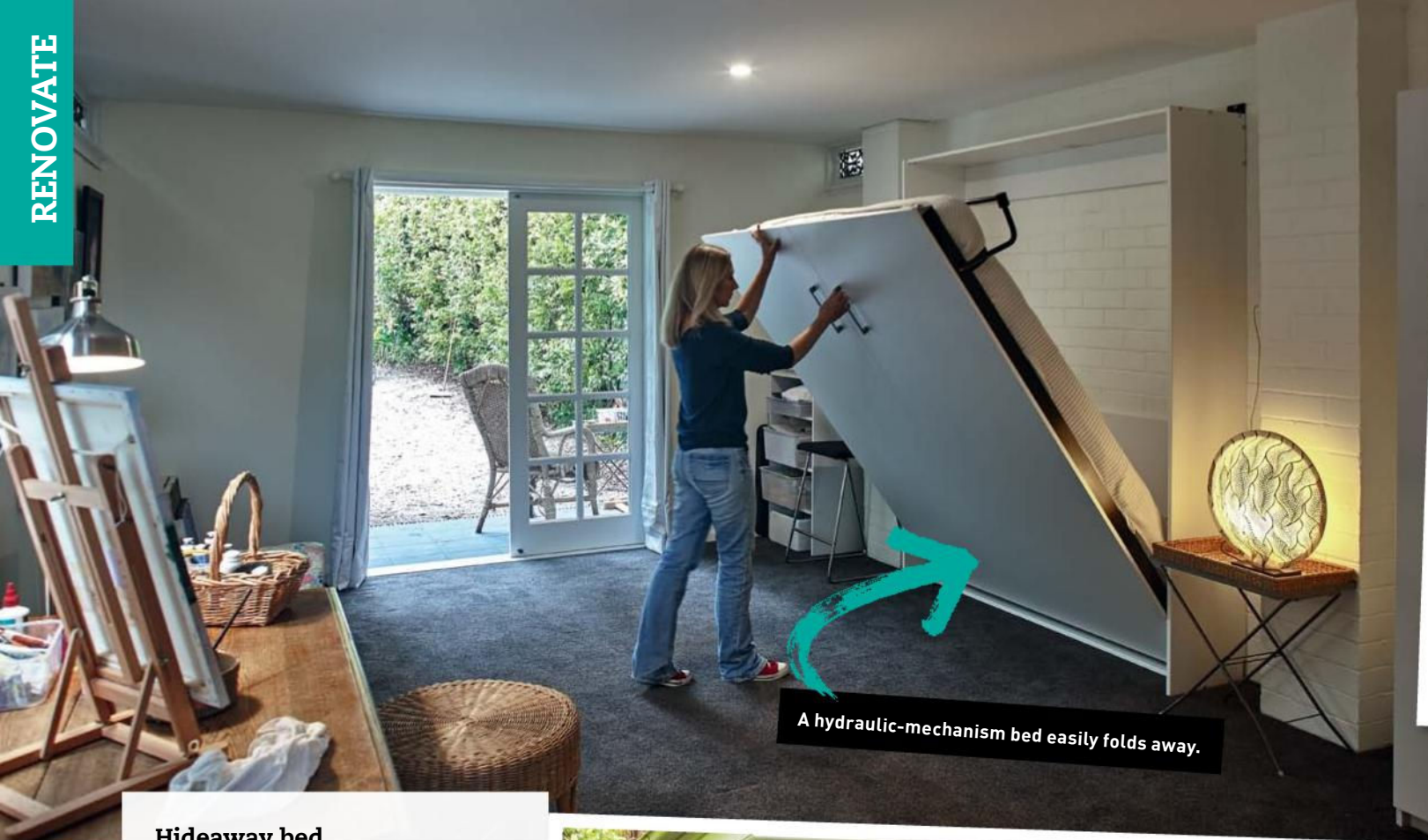


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A hydraulic-mechanism bed easily folds away.

Hideaway bed

As well as providing a future solution, the renovated carport enhances the lifestyle of the owners.

'They now have a lovely big space to enjoy together without feeling cramped and on top of each other, and with the addition of a simple hideaway bed, it transforms easily into a sleeping space,' says Stuart.

A great option for anyone living in a small dwelling, or for use in a utility space where you don't want a bed dominating the room, this is an off-the-shelf option that comes flatpacked with the mattress included.

The hydraulic mechanism makes the bed light and easy to fold in and out, and building and installing take just a few hours to complete.



A covered porch with French doors acts as the entrance.

Practical portico

Fibre cement weatherboard was a good low-cost solution for the exterior, and perfectly suits the architectural detail. It was painted to match the house in Dulux Weathershield low sheen paint.

A porch was created with enough space for a couple of chairs and an easel for when the mood strikes.

'We initially thought we'd come up flush with the roof line, but it occurred to us that it would make a nice portico if we brought the wall back and squared it off,' says Stuart.

'It's a lovely spot in the morning. You're undercover when you come and go and we added French doors for maximum airflow and light.' ➤



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best results

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DIY TIP

Do as much as you can yourself, but avoid extra ad-hoc costs by planning when hiring extra labour will be needed.

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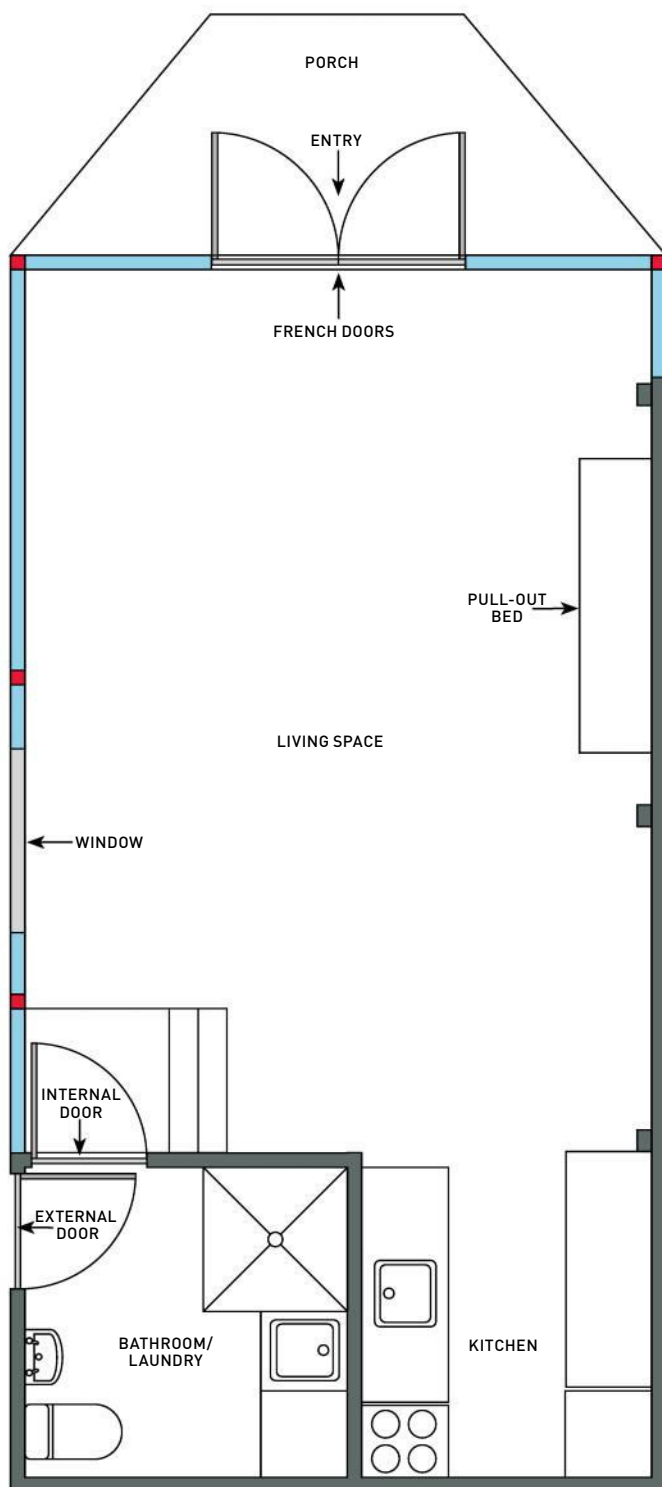
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BUILDING TRUST





STUDIO FLOORPLAN



Noise regulations

Undertaking any significant renovation project in an urban environment impacts upon the neighbours. Check state noise regulations to avoid complaints.

⚙️ **NSW** Power tools are prohibited between 8pm and 7am weekdays and Saturdays, and on Sundays before 8am or after 8pm.

⚙️ **ACT** In residential areas, noise can't exceed 45dB between 7am and 10pm, or 35dB at other times.

⚙️ **QLD** Power tools must not be audible between 7pm and 7am Monday to Saturday, and 7pm and 8am on Sundays and public holidays.

⚙️ **VIC** No power tools before 7am or after 8pm Monday to Friday, and before 9am and after 8pm on weekends and public holidays.

⚙️ **SA** Power tools can be used between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday, and between 9am and 8pm on Sundays.

⚙️ **TAS** Use of power tools is limited to between 7am and 6pm on weekdays, 9am and 6pm on Saturdays, and 10am and 6pm on Sundays and public holidays.

⚙️ **WA** Hand-held power tools can only be used for up to two hours each day between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday, and 9am and 7pm on Sundays and public holidays.

⚙️ **NT** Noise must be restricted between 7pm and 7am Monday to Saturday, and 9am and 6pm on Sundays and public holidays. ➤



Be aware of what power-tool noise is acceptable at various times

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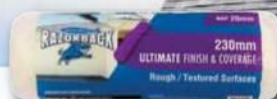
For sealing gaps around roofs, gutters & skylights, use the **Monarch Mini Roof & Gutter Translucent Silicone (\$3.30)** & **Monarch Mini**

Compact Caulking Gun (\$5.98).

Roof & Gutter silicone is also available in **Black & Grey (\$5.98)** if you would like to match the exterior colour of your house. To get a smooth finish, wipe off the excess silicone using the **Monarch 3 in 1 Caulking Tool (\$4.70).**



TIP 1



Monarch Weatherboard, Eaves & Fascia Brush 63mm (\$26.98) & **Monarch Razorback 230mm Rough/Textured Surface Roller Cover (\$15.98).** Ideal with all paints on exterior surfaces.



TIP 3



Monarch Fence Brush (\$5.00). Ideal for coarse timber application on decks, fences and pergolas.

The **Monarch Fence, Deck & Pergola Kit (\$9.59)** is designed for rough surfaces and includes a quality 20mm nap roller cover for maximum coverage.

TIP 2

TIP 4

MONARCH Deck, Stain & Lime Wash Brush (\$39.98).

Ideal for applying paint, stain or oil to timber surfaces.



✓ The key to getting a **professional finish** is using quality paint with **quality brushes and rollers.**

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Renoir Adjustable Table Top Craft Easel, \$31. bunnings.com.au



Smart Home Products 210cm Wooden Curtain Rod Set, \$50. smarthp.com.au



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Dulux Weathershield Low Sheen Exterior Paint, \$91 for 4L. dulux.com.au



BGC 4200 x 230 x 7.5mm Fibre Cement Duraplank Weatherboard, \$14. bgcinnovadesign.com.au



Renoir Large Lyre Craft Easel, about \$61. bunnings.com.au



Freedom Wing Chair in Flora Multi, \$599. freedom.com.au



Verve Design Saigon Cord Chrome Floor Lamp, \$149. bunnings.com.au

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INSTALL A TIMBER FLOOR

Add warmth to living spaces by replacing tiles with timber boards

PROJECT AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR

Having already completed a number of renovation jobs in her home this year, blogger Melissa Darr recently turned her attention to the flooring.

As part of a general overhaul of the home, she had been planning to replace the existing tiled floor in the kitchen and living areas since moving into the property with her husband Bevan six years before.

'The floor tended to be so cold during the winter that you couldn't walk barefoot on the tiles,' she says.

So Melissa and Bevan decided to install timber floorboards in the 80sqm space, after ripping out all of the tiles in a labour-intensive DIY project that took about 10 days.

'It was one of the largest renovations we've undertaken and we didn't know how full on it would be,' says Melissa.



Timber is warmer underfoot than tiles and has better soundproofing qualities

MELISSA'S PICKS



Boral Australiana Blackbutt Flooring, about \$11 per linear metre. boral.com.au



Intergrain UltraFloor in Satin, \$149 for 4L. intergrain.com.au



SikaBond Timber Flooring Adhesive, \$193 for 16kg. sikaretail.com.au

Melissa

EXPERT SECRETS

Attach felt to furniture feet and legs to protect a timber floor from any dents and scratches.

Before



DIY TIP

After sealing a timber floor, allow 2-3 days for it to fully harden before moving any furniture back into the space.



After

Rich blackbutt floorboards give the kitchen and living spaces a new look.



Select the timber

Melissa and Bevan chose to use Australiana Grade blackbutt timber from Boral.

'I love the warm tones of the blackbutt. It makes the house look, and even feel, completely different,' says Melissa. ➤

Get more DIY from Melissa

Follow her blog thewhimsicalwife.com

REPLACE THE FLOOR

1 Store the timber

Melissa and Bevan spent a long time researching and preparing for the timber flooring installation to achieve a professional finish.

'This is one of the largest projects we've undertaken and it was not to be taken lightly,' says Melissa.

The timber was ordered and stored level in the garage to keep it dry and allow for initial site acclimatisation.

Once the floor preparations were completed, the timber was taken indoors for final site acclimatisation.

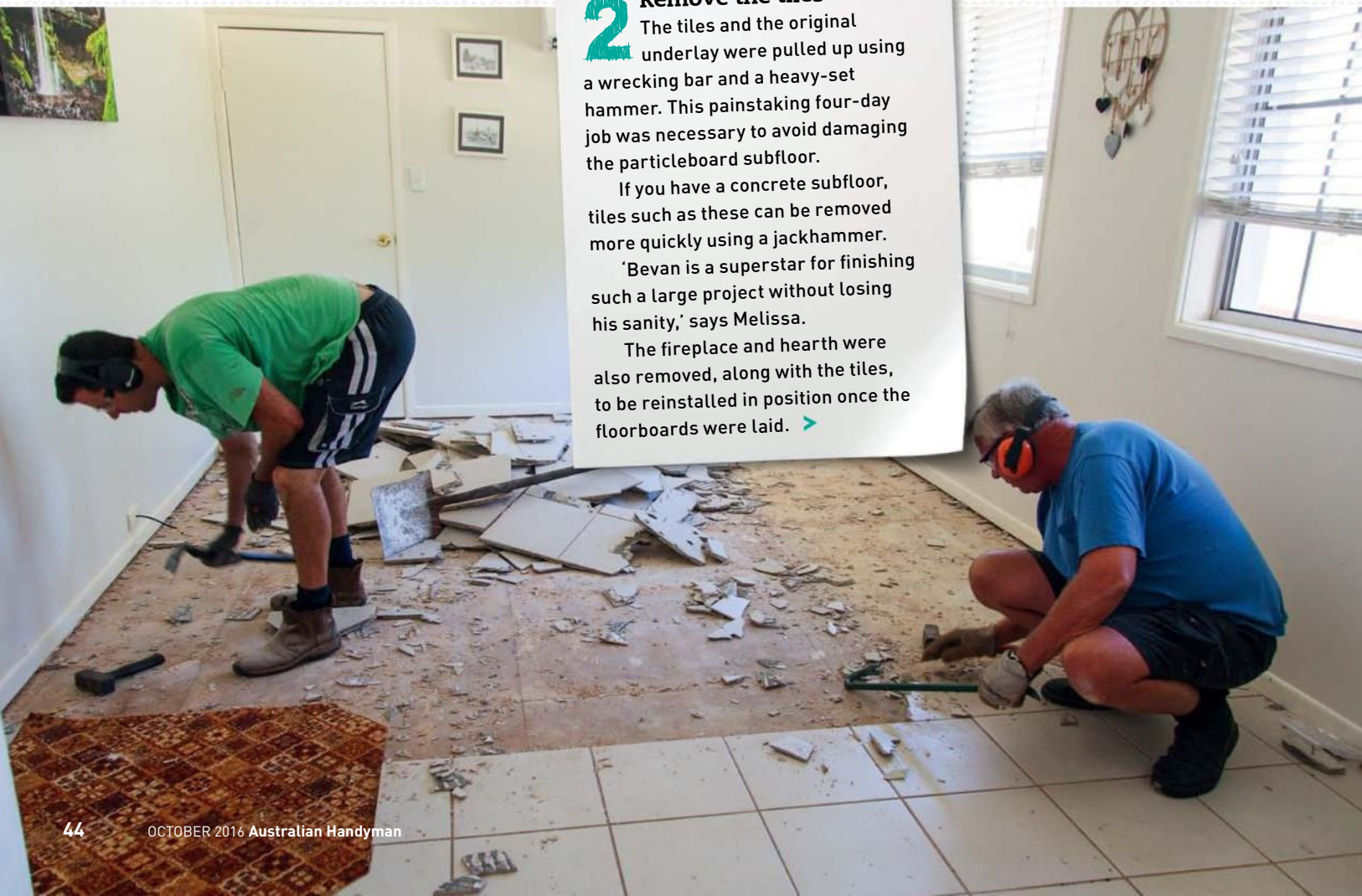
2 Remove the tiles

The tiles and the original underlay were pulled up using a wrecking bar and a heavy-set hammer. This painstaking four-day job was necessary to avoid damaging the particleboard subfloor.

If you have a concrete subfloor, tiles such as these can be removed more quickly using a jackhammer.

'Bevan is a superstar for finishing such a large project without losing his sanity,' says Melissa.

The fireplace and hearth were also removed, along with the tiles, to be reinstalled in position once the floorboards were laid. ➤



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Lay the boards

A chalkline was set out, running down the centre of the hallway, to establish a straight line from which the first floorboards were to be laid.

Flooring adhesive was applied to the subfloor using a notch trowel to make a bed for the boards.

The boards were laid four at a time, using a secret nail gun to secure the outer boards so they fitted tightly and remained straight. It took Bevan about 6-7 days to lay the 80sqm area.



Sanding the timber before staining it will give a super-smooth finish.



4 Apply the finish

A professional sander was called in to give the floorboards a smooth finish, then the timber was sealed with four coats of satin-look stain.

The floor was given another light sand after the second coat to achieve an even smoother finish.

'While most people tend to go for a high-gloss finish in their homes, we are really happy with the satin finish we used on these floors. It's exactly what we wanted,' says Melissa.

'I just love the warmth that the timber brings to the home.'





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LAY LAMINATE FLOORING DIY

Give a room a quick and easy budget makeover using floating floorboards

New flooring can completely transform the look of a home, and removing old carpet or lino and replacing it with laminate flooring is a simple DIY job.

Laminate boards click into place without fasteners, giving a sleek and streamlined look. Simply push the tongue of one board into the groove of another, then tap into position using a hammer and a tapping block.

Before laying, unpack the boards and leave them in the room for at least a day so they can acclimatise.

What you need

Laminate flooring
Underlay
Quad moulding
Tape measure and pencil
Hammer and tapping block
Stringline and nails
Packers
Circular saw
Jigsaw
Spirit level

DESIGN TIP

Laminate flooring comes in a range of designs, so you can choose timber, stone or concrete-look boards to suit the space.



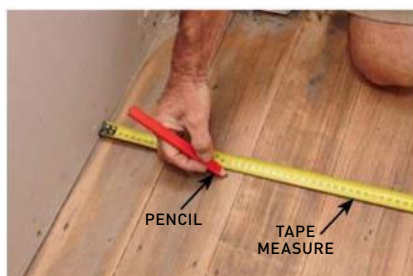
Laminate gives the look of real timber floorboards for a fraction of the cost



1 Lay the underlay

Remove skirting boards, then sweep the subfloor to prevent dirt or debris from causing an uneven finish. Roll out the underlay where the first row of boards will be laid, then cut to size.

TIP The underlay provides extra cushioning and helps absorb sound.



2 Run a stringline

Measure the width of a board, then add 10mm to account for a gap between the wall and the first board. Measure and mark this distance out from the wall at either end of the room and hammer in a nail at each point. Run a stringline between the two nails.

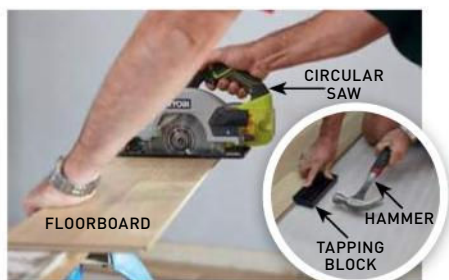


3 Lay the first row

Align the first board in the first row with the stringline, using packers to ensure there is a 10mm gap between the wall and the board. Click the next board in the row into position, spacing it with a packer. When the first row is laid, remove the stringline and nails.

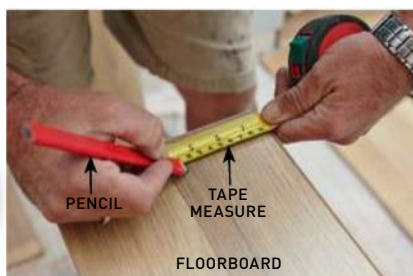


Watch the video 'How to Lay Laminate Flooring' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



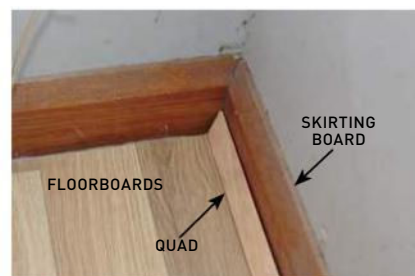
4 Lay the second row

To stagger the joins, use a circular saw to cut a board in half for every second row. Lay one half-board first, then lay the rest of the row, using a hammer and tapping block. Lay the other half-board at the end of the row. Continue laying the floorboards this way.



5 Rip the end boards

You may need to rip the final boards to fit. Measure the distance between the wall and the last full row, then deduct 10mm. Mark this measurement along the board using a tape measure and spirit level, then cut the board to the correct width using a circular saw.



6 Install quad moulding

Once the floor is laid, replace the skirting. If there is a gap between the floorboards and the skirting board, install quad moulding. Measure the wall and cut quad to size with a 45° angle for the corners. Secure the quad to the skirting board using nails.

Find it at Bunnings

Storage central

Use a versatile shelving system and modern cabinetry to create an organised and efficient laundry room

Renovating the laundry can make a surprisingly big difference, as a tidy workspace makes household chores much easier.

The key to setting up a laundry is including enough storage for everything you need to do the washing and clean the house.

Laundries can range in size from a simple cupboard to a large room, depending on the size of the home and storage requirements.

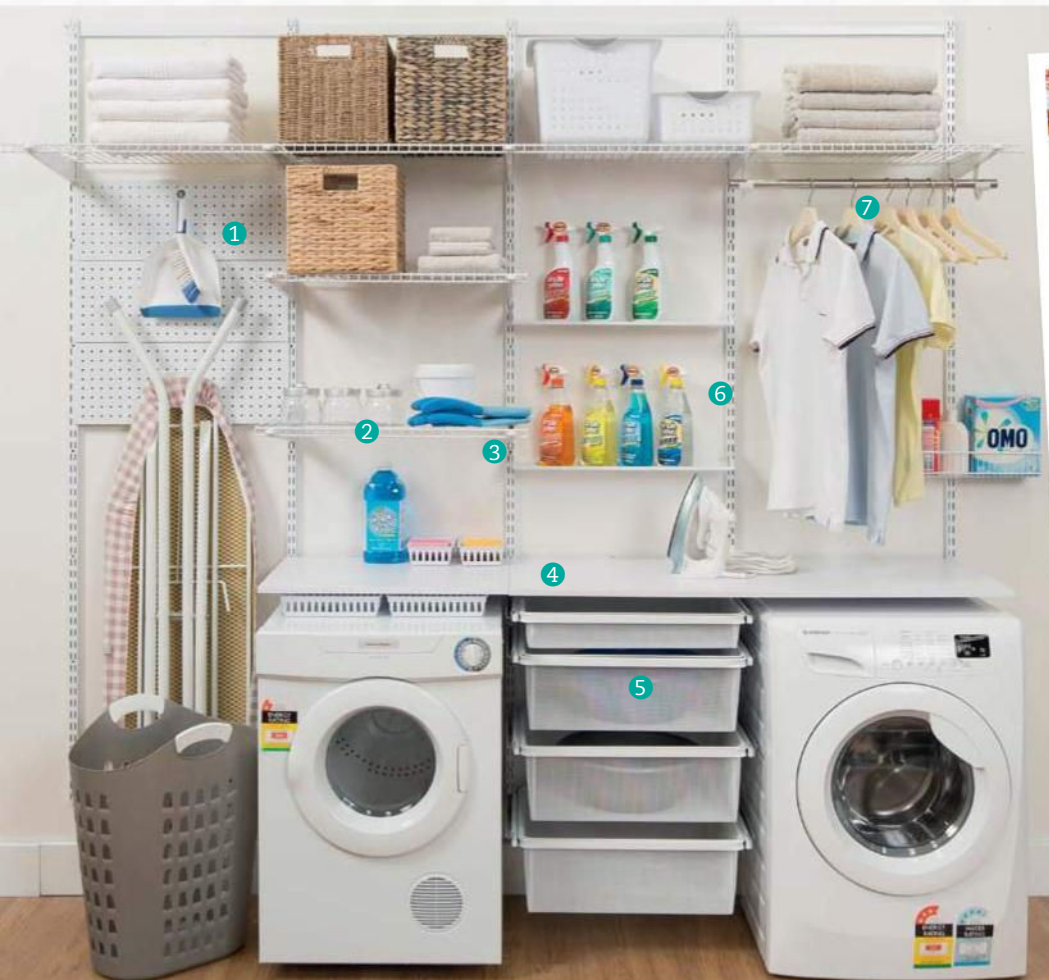
Allocate space for the basics, including a washing machine, dryer and basin, then add shelves, cabinetry and a benchtop.



Flexible storage

With a washer and dryer in place, you can customise the space to suit your needs with a wall-mounted storage system.

Simply attach tracks on the wall and hang shelves, drawers and even pegboards, updating as your storage needs change.



Install a compact, open laundry using the Flexi Storage range.

- ① Pegboard, 572mm, \$11.99 each.
- ② Wire shelf, 667mm, \$15.36 each.
- ③ Shelf bracket, 350mm, \$4.50 each.
- ④ Melamine shelf, 1196mm, \$21.98 each.
- ⑤ Mesh basket, 185mm, \$14.52 each.
- ⑥ Wall strip, 1206mm, \$7 each.
- ⑦ Hanging rod, 660mm, \$7.



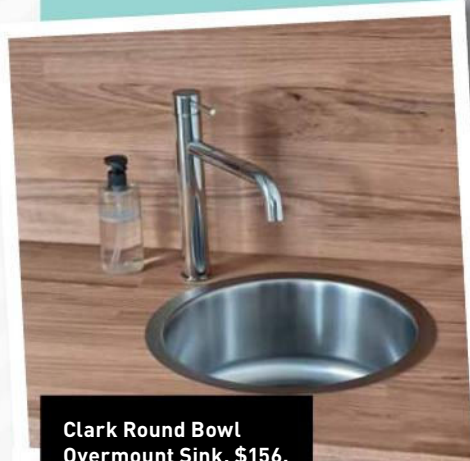
Clever cabinets

Keep everything in its place and hide clutter with streamlined cabinets, then install a modern benchtop.

A basin makes it easy to wash delicacies by hand, while a rail above the benchtop is ideal for hanging freshly ironed clothing.

DESIGN TIP

Team crisp white cabinets with warm timber surfaces for a timeless look that works in both modern and period homes.



Clark Round Bowl Overmount Sink, \$156.



Kaboodle 600mm Two-drawer Base Cabinet, \$183.



Alpine Oak 2100 x 600 x 26mm Laminated Panel, \$119.



Watch the video 'How to Install a Laundry Cabinet' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

- ① Kaboodle 600mm Slimline Cabinet, \$66, and Sugar Sorbet Door, \$52.87.
- ② Sandleford 1200 x 19mm Chrome Tube Rod, \$5.46.
- ③ Kaboodle 600mm Pantry Cabinet, \$265, and Sugar Sorbet Door, \$184.

- ④ Mondella Resonance Laundry Mixer Tap, \$109.
- ⑤ Kaboodle Discreet Chrome Grip Handle, \$12.
- ⑥ Kaboodle 600mm Two-drawer Sugar Sorbet Panels 2-pack, \$66.

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Dear Reader,
Now is the time to plan projects to get your place ready for spring. Check out our video on how to lay turf for a lush lawn. And learn the tricks to growing roses for beautiful blooms in beds or pots. To get ready for outdoor living and entertaining, replace decking boards DIY. While you have the toolbox out why not make one of our five kitchen storage solutions? And enter our competition for your chance to win an Ozito tool pack worth \$319. Hurry, don't miss out. Happy DIYing!

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EXPERT SECRETS

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Save money and have fun into the bargain by turning other people's cast-offs into items you love

PROJECTS AND STYLING AMANDA SHAW AND TRACY MARYON PICTURES SUE FERRIS



Council clean-ups are a great source of good-quality items that can be transformed into decorative items for your home.

All you need is a little upcycling imagination and know-how.

Scouring the kerbsides can be a rewarding and fun pastime for those so inclined, but even a perfunctory drive-by can yield a treasure that you can make uniquely your own with minimal time, effort and money.

Look for items with good bones and interesting or classic shapes but bypass damaged-beyond-repair pieces.

Or you can always check out garage sales and op-shops for bargains. ➤

CUSHIONED BENCH SEAT

This piece was in a particularly sorry state and was nearly beyond salvaging.

It's not clear what its original use was, but it looked like a traditional piano stool with lift-up lid.

There had obviously once been a fabric cushioned top, but all that remained now were a few remnants of material and rusty studs.

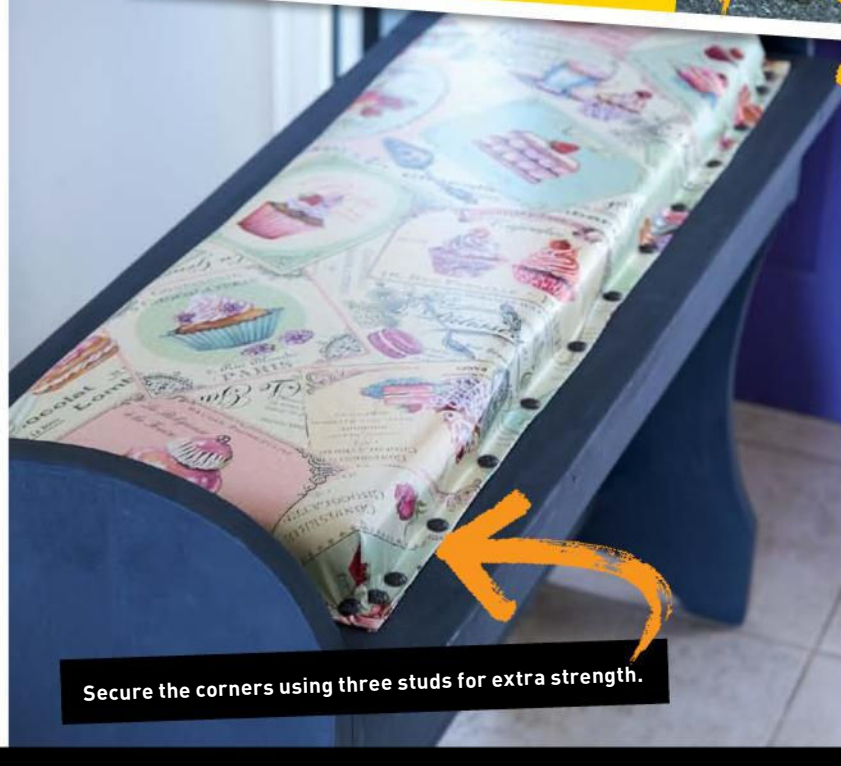
We decided to return the stool to its former glory by using a chalk paint and adding a new comfortable seat.

All you need for the project is primer, paint, fabric, medium-density foam and decorative studs.



Sand the edges of the stool lightly to give it a distressed look

1 2 3



1 Paint the seat

Pry off the old studs with a screwdriver, then remove the fabric remnants. Fill any defects using timber filler and when dry, sand smooth with fine grit paper. Sand all over with medium grit paper. Prime and apply two coats of top coat.



2 Make the seat

Position a piece of foam cut to size on the centre of the stool lid. Cut a piece of fabric to cover the foam, leaving enough of an overhang to turn over the fabric to give a straight edge and allow space to insert the studs.



3 Insert the studs

Mark the stud positions evenly around the lid. Starting from the centre of each side, insert the studs except at the corners, then hammer in. For the corners, cut and fold over the fabric, then tuck under. Insert the studs. ➤



After

Painted and featuring a new padded top, the stool has pride of place in the hallway.

BUDGET TIP

Measure the size needed for the foam insert, then ask the supplier to cut it. This will avoid wastage and save you money.



JEWELLERY HANGER

Rather than throw away this tatty old tray from the council clean-up, it was transformed into a jewellery hanger that doubles up as a piece of eye-catching artwork.

We had to fill a few cracks and dents and sand the tray down to provide a smooth finish.

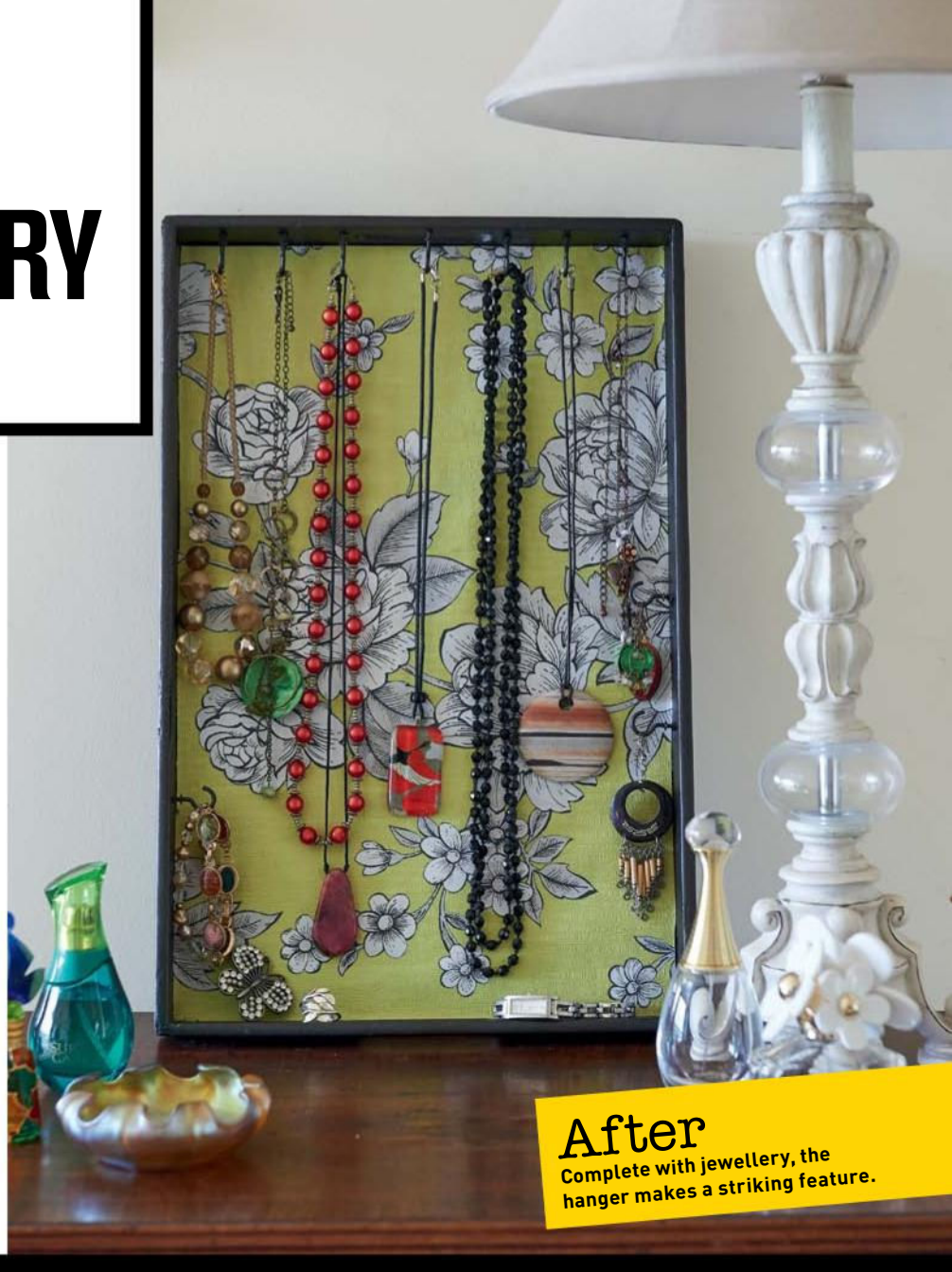
We chose a dark-grey spray paint for the tray, then used a lime green and charcoal patterned wallpaper.

Cup hooks were added to the tray at the top and sides and wallpaper was glued to the base.



Swap the jewellery for different pieces every so often to give it a fresh new look

1 2 3

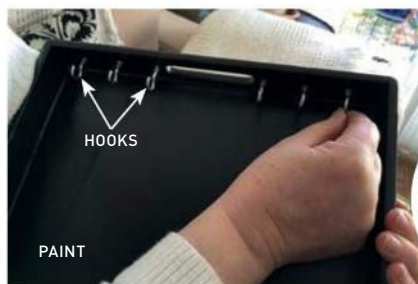


After
Complete with jewellery, the hanger makes a striking feature.



1 Paint the tray

Prepare the tray for painting by filling any damaged areas with timber filler, then sand with fine grit paper to give a smooth surface. Spray the tray in dark grey paint and allow to dry. Apply another coat of paint if needed.



2 Attach the hooks

Mark the desired positions for the hooks and make shallow holes using a sharp implement. Screw in the hooks, then spray to match the tray.

TIP We attached hooks at the top for necklaces and on each side for earrings.



3 Secure the wallpaper

Cut a piece of wallpaper to fit the base of the tray, position it, then tidy the edges using a scalpel. Remove the paper, spray the base of the tray with adhesive and attach the paper. Arrange the jewellery on the hooks. ➤

Before

STYLE TIP

Instead of using a table as a stand, attach the jewellery hanger to the wall as an alternative to a picture.

Stand the hanger on a table and lean it against the wall.

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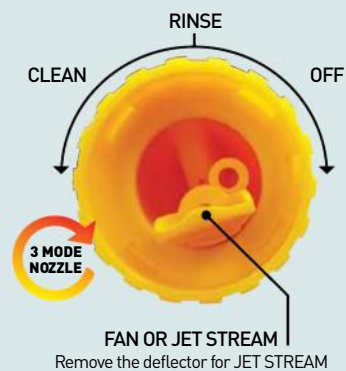
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LACE-LOOK TABLE

This elegant two-tiered table was rescued just in the nick of time. But sadly, the timber was badly scratched and stained in places and had also developed cracks that needed filling.

The only way to save it was to use filler, primer and paint. We decided to give it a patterned effect on both tiers using a piece of lace as a kind of stencil. We used a royal blue base colour with a gloss white spray paint.



After

With a patterned top and base, the table is now a standout.



Before



PAINT

PAINTBRUSH



LACE

SPRAY PAINT

1 Paint the table

Repair the damage using timber filler, allow to dry, then sand with fine grit paper. Sand all over with medium grit paper. Apply primer and allow to dry. Apply two coats of the blue top coat and allow to dry thoroughly.

2 Create the pattern

Arrange the lace on the tabletop, pressing it flat. Spray lightly all over from directly overhead. Allow to dry, then apply a second coat. Gently pull the lace off the top while the paint is still tacky. Repeat for the bottom tier.

Use any pattern you like to create this effect.

TOP PICKS

Romak Antique Daisy Head Upholstery Nails, \$3 for 25. romak.com.au

Rust-Oleum Universal Metallic Paint & Primer in One in Oil Rubbed Bronze, \$13 for 312g.

Graham & Brown 52cm x 10m Kensington Chartreuse Wallpaper, \$50 a roll. grahambrown.com.au

RotaCota 75mm Easy Clean Brush, \$16. rotacota.com.au

SikaBond Spray Fix High Strength Contact Adhesive, \$20 for 575ml. sikaretail.com.au

Rust-Oleum Chalked Ultra Matt Paint in Charcoal, \$42 for 887ml. rustoleum.com.au

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REVAMP A 50s SOFA

Update vintage furniture and weave a durable rug using jute webbing

PROJECTS AND PICTURES SUE FERRIS

It's a real shame to throw away old furniture simply because it is a bit past its best, especially when vintage pieces are often well made and built using good-quality materials.

This 1950s sofa was still structurally sound, but the webbing was broken and loose, so it sagged when sat on.

To bring it up to date, all that was needed were a few metres of jute

upholstery webbing, a staple gun, measuring tape, a screwdriver, scissors, pliers and a hammer.

The jute webbing was measured to the same length as the old straps, which had been removed, then secured firmly to the sofa frame with staples.

It takes less than an hour to restore a sagging sofa like this one DIY, giving it a completely new lease of life.

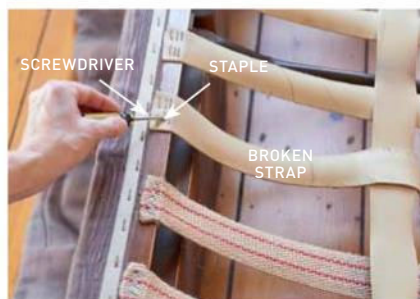


What you need

Upholstery webbing
Heavy-duty staple gun
Pliers
Measuring tape
Scissors
Small screwdriver
Hammer

Style a vintage sofa with retro-design cushions and throws for an authentic look

1 2 3



1 Remove the broken straps

Extract the old staples from the broken straps by prising them from the sofa frame with a screwdriver. Use pliers to extract any remaining staple ends. Remove the broken straps and discard them.



2 Add the new straps

Measure the new jute webbing straps to the same length as the original pieces, then cut them. Staple them onto the frame using a heavy-duty staple gun, making sure to match their position to the old straps.



3 Secure the staples

Use a hammer to gently bang the staples into the timber frame to fasten them more firmly, ensuring the straps are fully secured. Measure, cut and attach all the remaining replacement webbing straps. ➤

DIY TIP

If re-webbing the sofa fails to firm up the seat adequately, re-fill the cushions with new upholstery foam for a plumper feel.

After

With new webbing straps, the sofa is firm and comfortable.



WOVEN RUG



You can also turn jute upholstery webbing into a durable, reversible rug using an easy-weave technique and a hot-glue gun.

Measure the floor area and width of the webbing to find the number of strips needed, cutting them to length with scissors.

Lay the strips out flat and side by side to match the width of the rug, called the warp, then weave the crossways strips.

1 2 3



1 Start the weave

Thread a crossways strip under and over the warp to start the weave, then line the strip up with an edge. Dab hot glue between the layers of the weave using a glue gun to hold it firmly in place.



2 Bind the edges

Continue weaving crossways strips under and over the warp until the weave is finished, keeping the pattern square. Fold two strips in half and position them over the edges of the warp, securing with hot glue.



3 Add extra strips

Trim the crossways strips at the edges, then position the extra strips over the trimmed edges, folding under the ends and securing using hot glue.

TIP Put a non-skid mat under the rug when laying it in the home.

Use jute webbing to weave a floor rug or hallway runner.

SUE'S PICKS



Jute Webbing, \$15 for a 10lb x 50mm roll.
homeupholsterer.com.au



Arrow Heavy Duty All Purpose Staple Gun, \$54.
arrowfastener.com.au



Wiss 254mm General Purpose Scissors, \$22.
apextoolgroup.com.au



Before



Cover a chair

If you have other pieces of furniture in need of repair, you can learn how to give a vintage chair a chic new look by visiting handyman.net.au/chair-makeover.

This useful guide will teach you how to completely reupholster a chair by removing the old seat and back covers and replacing it with new fabric, as well as lining the back of the chair with hessian.

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DESIGNER BEDROOMS

Turn a cramped space into a luxurious master suite and give a dated room a modern update using colour



After

Neutral tones, metallic accents and textured fabrics transform the space.

The trend for making master bedrooms really took off in the 1980s when new builds began to get bigger and bigger.

In older homes, the largest bedroom was often converted by the addition of an ensuite.

A master bedroom is designed to be a private retreat, especially in family homes where a single bathroom can't meet the demands of a busy household.

Well-thought out storage, a modern soothing colour scheme and touches of luxury are key to turning a master bedroom into a serene suite.

Before



STYLE TIP

Get that professionally decorated look by thinking about texture as well as colour. Layer fabrics and include different textures.

Simple luxury

This old-fashioned bedroom featured a patterned carpet and bulky furniture, making it look smaller than it was.

To create a master suite, the old wardrobes were removed and the adjoining bathroom turned into an ensuite and a walk-in wardrobe.

French doors replaced the windows and open to a small courtyard. The walls were painted in a neutral tone,

and new skirting and architraves installed then painted white.

A vintage-style flock wallpaper creates a feature wall behind the bed. Adding visual depth and texture, it is a modern alternative to hanging pictures and sets the palette for the decorative accents, such as blankets and pillows.

Wire bedside tables keep the room uncluttered while metallic pendants replace the lamps for a sleek look. ➤



ABOVE Customise a walk-in robe with drawers, shelves and hanging rods.
BELOW The old built-in closets were replaced with a walk-in wardrobe that leads to an ensuite.



Watch the video 'How to Hang Wallpaper' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

GET THE LOOK



Multistore 550 x 608 x 450mm Two-shelf Wardrobe Insert, \$129. multistore.com.au



Brilliant 240V 15cm Onimbus Chrome Pendant Light, \$60. brilliantlighting.com.au



Graham & Brown Vintage Flock Pure White 52cm x 10m Wallpaper, \$60. grahambrown.com.au



Smart Home Products Cream 110 x 210cm Tab Top Single Curtain, \$25. smarthp.com.au



Chase Cafe 43cm Chrome Base Table Lamp with White Shade, \$54. cafelightning.com.au



Clever Cube 330 x 330 x 370mm Ember Black Insert, \$9. handy-storage.com.au

BUDGET TIP

If a large feature artwork isn't in the budget, create your own. Look for fabric remnants and secure to a frame with staples.

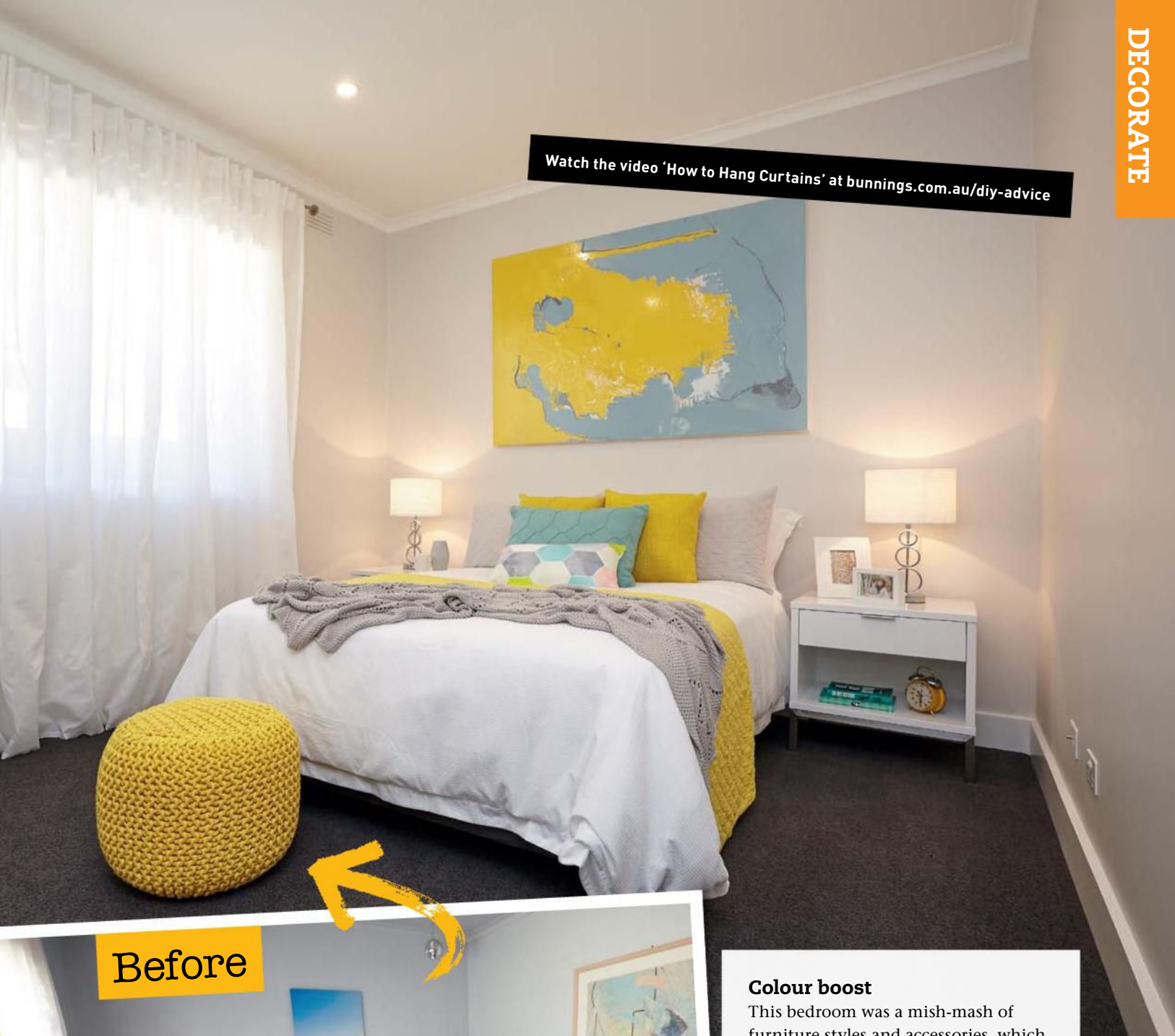
After

New paint, carpet and curtains create a fresh, modern space.



Use block-out blinds on bedroom windows for privacy and add sheer curtains to soften the look

Watch the video 'How to Hang Curtains' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



Before



Colour boost

This bedroom was a mish-mash of furniture styles and accessories, which made it look dated and uninviting.

To create the ideal backdrop for pops of colour, the walls were painted in a neutral tone and dark-grey carpet laid over the floorboards.

The bedspread complements the window treatment, while simple white bedside tables streamline the space.

An oversized artwork above the bed is the focal point of the room and eliminates the need for a headboard.

It also sets the blue-and-yellow scheme, as the colours in the painting were simply picked up in the pillows, blankets and ottoman. 🌟

 Find it at Bunnings

BUILT-IN BENEFITS

Install a customised wardrobe to increase storage in the bedroom

Having enough storage for clothes, shoes and accessories is a must in any household, and the best way to get it is to install a built-in wardrobe.

With a range of flatpacked options available to suit any space, the storage possibilities are endless.

If your home already has wardrobe cavities, you can customise the interior using shelves, drawers and rails, and keep it tidy with your choice of doors.

For plain walls, you can be more creative, choosing open shelves for an airy feel or using freestanding wardrobes for a flexible layout.

DESIGN TIP

Choose the closet that's right for you by determining what you need to store and using an online wardrobe planner.



Walk-in wonder

Create the feel of a classic dressing room in a big bedroom by installing built-ins without doors along two walls.

Use drawers for everyday items and display decorative bags, hats and linen on shelves.

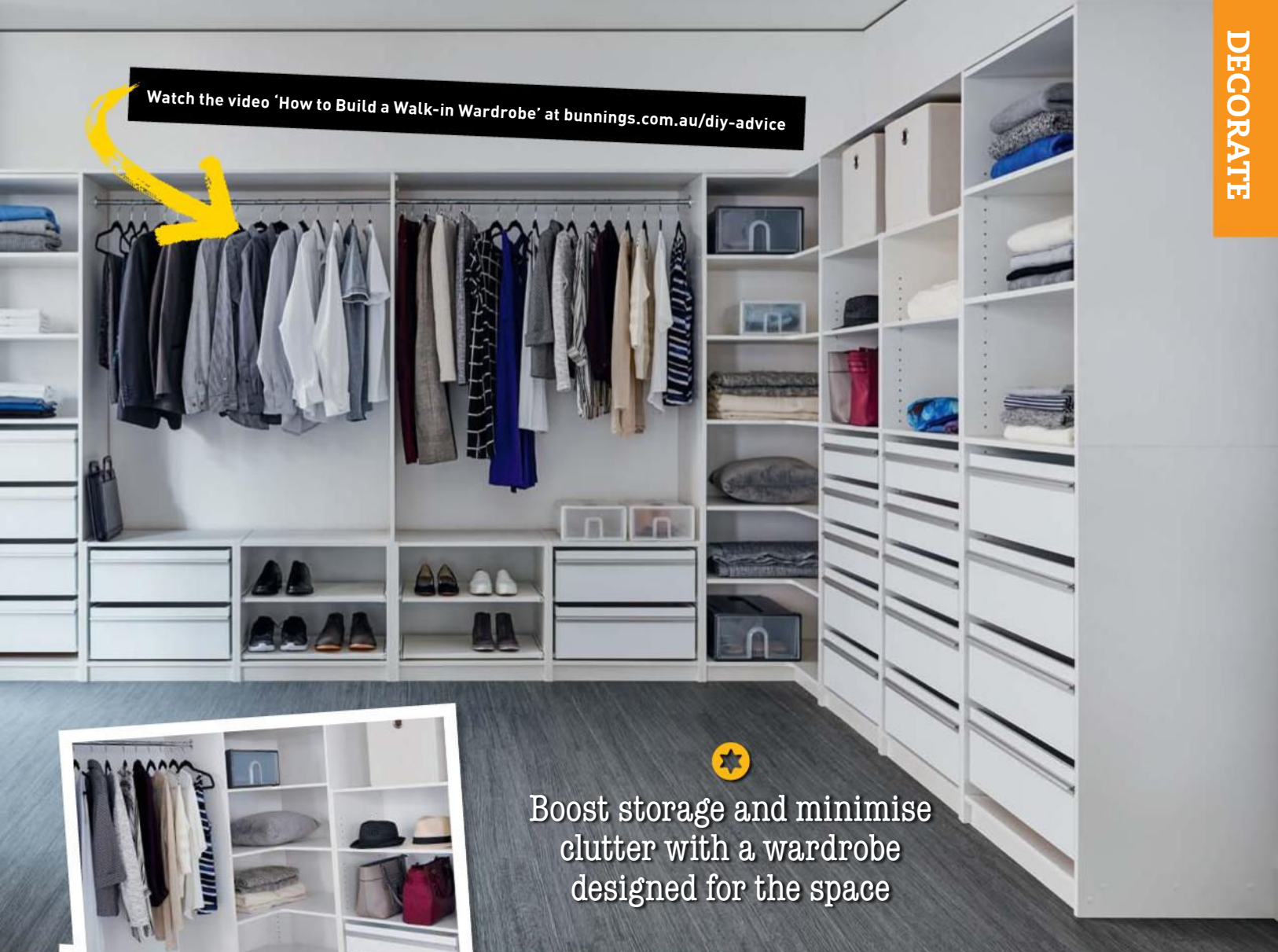


Space-saving storage

Mount brackets to the wall and attach shelves, rails and drawers for a space-saving, budget-friendly solution.

This system creates an open feel and makes clothes, shoes and accessories easy to find.

Watch the video 'How to Build a Walk-in Wardrobe' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



Boost storage and minimise clutter with a wardrobe designed for the space



Freestanding feature

Add storage while keeping the floorplan flexible with freestanding wardrobes.

Choose from a range of sizes, customise the interior with rods and shelves, and add mirrored doors for increased functionality.



MAKE A PATIO PLANTER

Use plywood and pine to build a simple landscape feature for flowering displays

Bring life to the patio or deck with a lush planter filled with greenery and blooms. Simple to plant up and maintain, a planter can be moved around as needed and changed with the seasons.

This planter can be built in a day and painted in any colour, but use exterior paint to protect the timber.

A simple plywood box with pine legs, the planter features pine trim and bevelled capping, and is clad with tongue-and-groove lining boards.

It's designed to hold an 800mm plastic trough, but if you can't find the exact same size, modify the planter dimensions to suit the pot.

Use a tablesaw to cut the plywood and the bevel on the capping, and a mitresaw to cut the tight-fitting mitres on the capping. You can also use a mitresaw to make all the square cuts on the legs and the trim.

For a display with colour and depth, fill the planter with upright, mounding and trailing varieties. ➤

Materials

Plywood	\$45
Pine	\$136
Plastic pot	\$37
PVA adhesive	\$11
Galvanised nails	\$18
Screws	\$4
Paint	\$8
TOTAL	\$259



Cutting the bevel

To create the bevel on the capping, rip the timber using a tablesaw. Set the blade at a 20° angle with the blade tilted away from the fence.

If you need to remove the guard, use extreme caution. Mount a featherboard and use two push sticks to complete the cut.

Push with your back hand, holding the board down with a push stick in your front hand.

As your back hand gets to the rear edge of the tablesaw, use the second push stick to push the board clear past the saw blade.

Keep your attention focused on the saw blade at all times.

TOP PICKS



Bosch 18V Li-ion Cordless Drill Driver, \$129, skin only. bosch.com.au



Trojan 450g Claw Hammer, \$17. trojantools.com.au



Irwin 610mm Quick Grip Bar Clamp, \$38. irwin.com.au



Ryobi 1800W 254mm Table Saw, \$479. ryobi.com.au

GROW TIP

Install a self-watering pot inside the planter box to create a potted display that requires minimal ongoing maintenance.

TOOLS
MITRESAW, DRILL,
TABLESAW

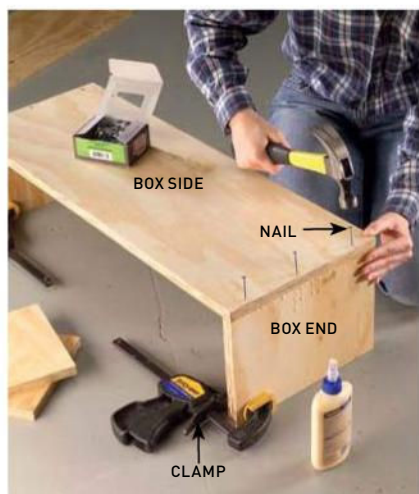
\$259
COST

1
DAY



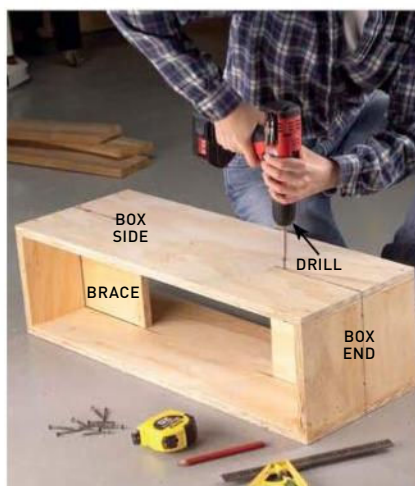
Mix small evergreen shrubs with spring annuals to create a colourful display that can be changed with the seasons

BUILD THE BOX



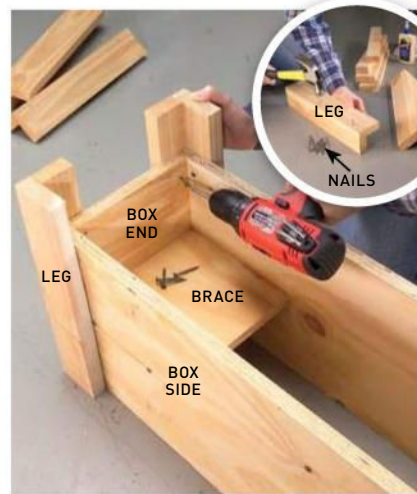
1 Assemble the box

With the plywood box ends upright, position a box side on top, securing the butt joints using water-resistant adhesive and nails. Use clamps to hold the box ends upright to make it easier to drive the nails through the sides and into the ends. Turn over and attach the other box side.



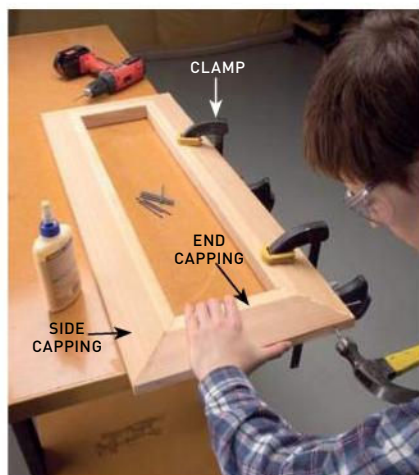
2 Install the braces

Position the plastic pot inside the plywood box and mark the position of the pot base on the inside and outside faces. Predrill clearance holes through the box sides at this position, securing a plywood brace at each end with screws to square the box, keep the sides straight and hold the pot.



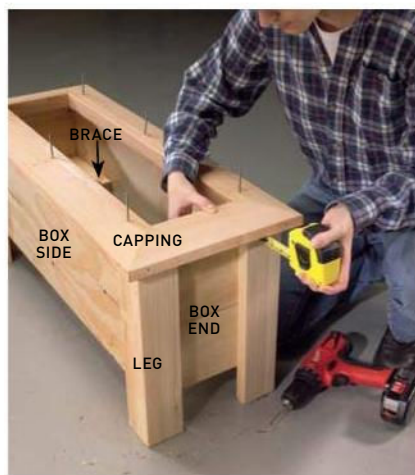
3 Add the legs

Cut the pine legs to length, then position the 40mm wide legs against the 65mm wide legs, securing the butt joints with adhesive and nails. Set the plywood box on a flat surface, then position the legs at each corner flush with the top of the box, securing with screws.



4 Make the capping

Cut the ends of the side and end capping at a 45° angle to create the mitres, then arrange to form a frame. Clamp one side to a workbench, then drill pilot holes in the mitred corners and secure with adhesive and nails. **TIP** Offset the nails slightly so they don't hit each other.



5 Secure the frame

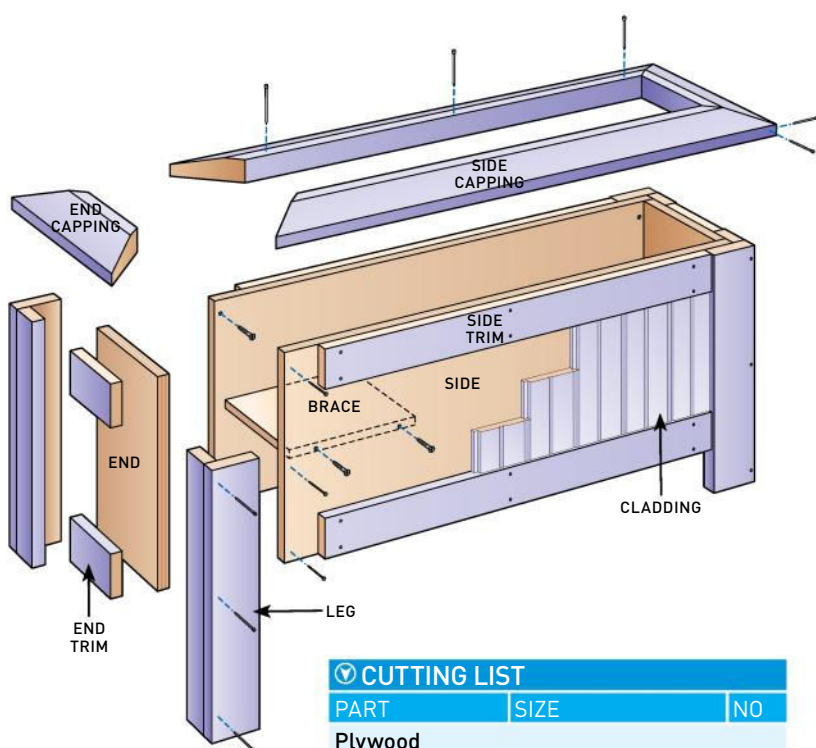
Position the capping on the box and centre it, using a tape measure to make sure the overhang is even on all sides. Drill pilot holes for the nails, making sure they are centred on the top edges of the plywood box. Secure the capping with nails and adhesive.



6 Attach the cladding

Secure the top trim to the box sides and ends using nails. Use a lining board to position the base trim, using 3mm spacers at the ends to allow room for expansion. Secure the base trim with nails. Clad the box with the lining boards using adhesive. Fill the nail holes, then paint. 🌀

PATIO PLANTER



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO
Plywood		
Box ends	300 x 200 x 17mm	2
Box sides	840 x 300 x 17mm	2
Box braces	200 x 195 x 17mm	2
Pine DAR		
Legs	380 x 65 x 18mm	4
	380 x 40 x 18mm	4
Side capping	914 x 90 x 35mm	2
End capping	343 x 90 x 35mm	2
Side trim	746 x 65 x 18mm	4
End trim	154 x 65 x 18mm	4
Pine lining boards		
Cladding	170 x 86 x 12mm	22

FASTENERS

TYPE	USE
10g x 30mm galvanised screws	Legs, braces
40 x 2mm galvanised bullethead nails	Box and trim
65 x 2.8mm galvanised bullethead nails	Legs and capping mitres
75 x 3.5mm galvanised bullethead nails	Capping



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TIMBER TRUNK

Use leftover materials to make a box that doubles as storage and seating

PROJECT AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

After completing a renovation to a bathroom and hallway, *Handyman* project editor Stuart Scott had leftover pine trim and lining boards that were too good to waste.

He decided to use them to build a storage trunk that would double as a window seat for the hallway.

This versatile box was built in less than a day. It has a simple structure

made from rails, braces and a top frame, clad at the ends and sides with the double-panelled lining boards.

A bifold lid is secured to the rear of the trunk, with two hinged pieces at the front that can be folded back.

This makes for easy access to the trunk, so you can store away blankets and clutter, while allowing for it to be used as a seat when the lid is closed.



Materials

Treated pine	\$79
Pine lining board	\$51
Screws	\$11
Nails	\$7
Wood glue	\$7
Hinges	\$13
TOTAL	\$168

Save surplus timber after renovation jobs to recycle it for later DIY projects

STUART'S PICKS



Zenith 38mm Brass Fixed Pin Hinge, about \$6 for two. itwproline.com.au



Lufkin 8m Ezy-read Tape Measure, \$20. apextoolgroup.com.au



Ozito 3.6V Li-ion Staple Nail Gun, \$59. ozito.com.au



Hovex Vaporgard Clothing Moth Killer, about \$6 for two. hovex.com.au



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

Stuart



EXPERT SECRETS

Set up stops on the mitresaw to ensure all studs and lining boards are cut to the same length.

TOOLS
NAILGUN, DRILL,
MITRESAW

**1
DAY**

**\$168
COST**



Recycling timber

The pine trim and lining boards had accumulated over time as leftovers from a number of DIY projects.

The lining boards used for the trunk were from a feature wall that was built on the outside of a renovated bathroom, after a sliding door had been installed.

The rails, the rear of the top frame and the side trims on the ends were left over from hanging a new plasterboard wall in the hallway. ➤

BUILD THE TRUNK



1 Assemble the box frame

Drill 2.8mm pilot holes in the rails and braces, then secure the front rails to the braces, using two screws for each joint. Repeat with the end rails and braces, forming four frames in total. Secure the four frames together with a screw at the top, base and centre of each joint, making a box frame.



2 Add the lining boards

Clad the front of the box frame with lining boards, starting flush with one of the corners and securing them with nails and adhesive. Clad the ends using the same method, starting flush to the front corners. Rip a lining board to size to cover the rear corners at both ends. Leave the rear of the box frame unclad.



3 Attach the trim

Position the four end side trims at the corners of both ends, flush with the front and rear edges. Secure the trims with adhesive and nails using a nailgun, then secure the front side trims flush to the vertical end trims at the front corners, using the same method.



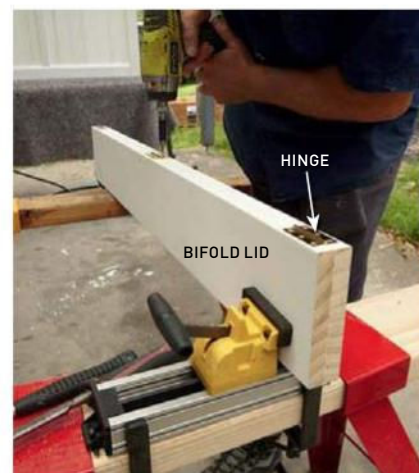
4 Make the top frame

Attach the front and two end pieces of the top frame flush with the inside edges of the box, using mitres at the two front corners and ensuring the frame is overhanging the edges of the box at the corners by about 3mm. Cut and fit the rear piece neat between the two end pieces and flush with the rear.



5 Secure the skirting

Position the end skirtings flush with the base and neat between the end side trims, securing with nails and adhesive. Secure the end top trims to the top frame neat between the end side trims. Repeat for the front skirting and the front trims. Secure the centre trim through the lining board with screws.

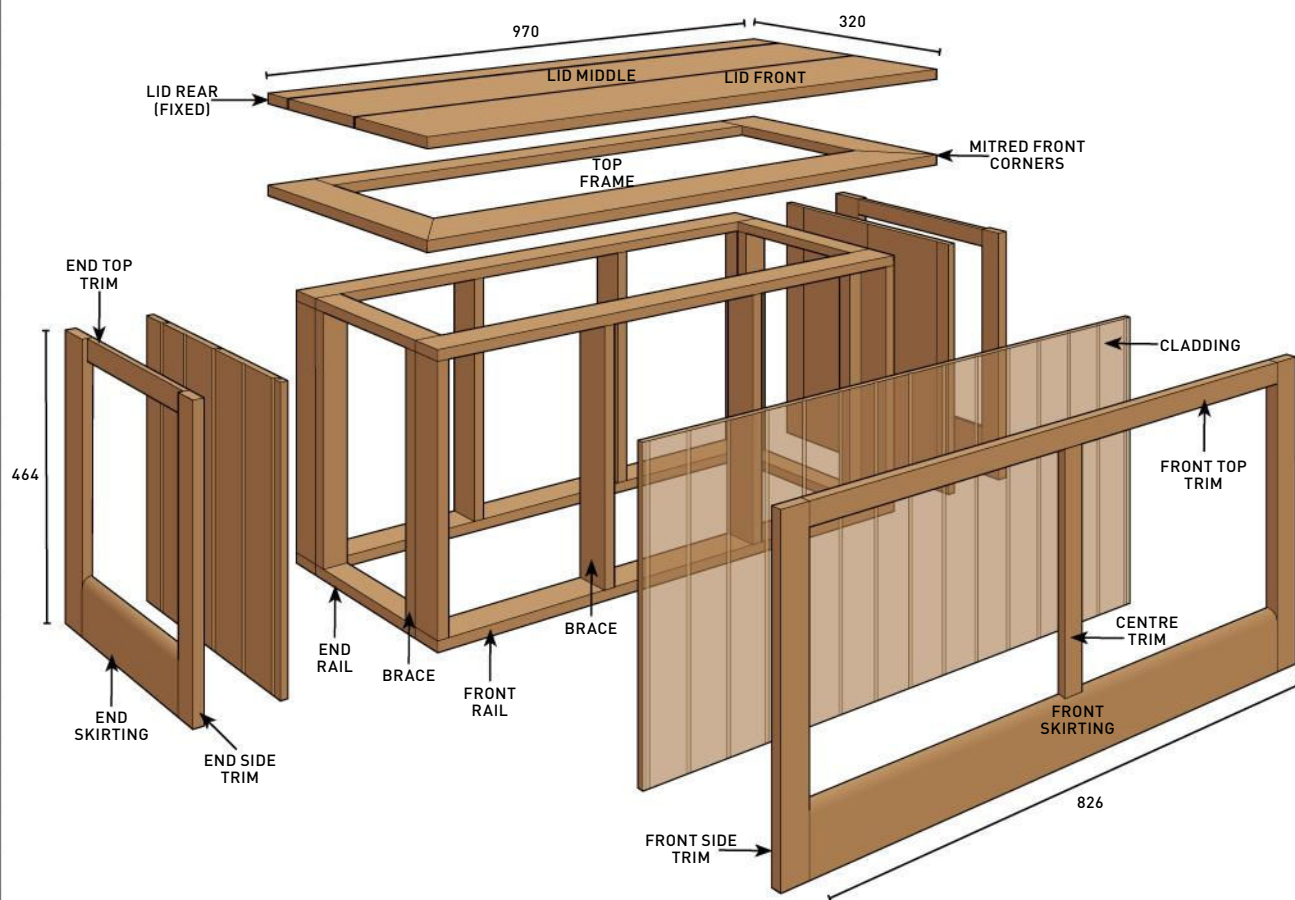


6 Install the lid

Secure the rear lid piece flush with the rear of the top frame, leaving an overhang of 5mm at each end. Attach the middle piece of the lid to the fixed rear piece with three hinges on the top surface. Secure the front piece of the lid to the middle piece with hinges on the underside to create a bifold. 

TIMBER TRUNK

measurements in mm



CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE	NO
DAR pine		
Braces	428 x 48 x 18	12
End rails	195 x 48 x 18	4
Front and rear rails	886 x 42 x 18	4
Frame front	960 x 75 x 18	1
Frame sides	315 x 75 x 18	2
Frame rear	810 x 42 x 18	1
Lid rear (fixed)	970 x 42 x 18	1

Lid middle and front	970 x 138 x 18	2
Front skirting	826 x 92 x 18	1
End skirting	207 x 92 x 18	2
Front top trim	826 x 32 x 11	1
End top trim	218 x 32 x 11	2
Centre trim	342 x 32 x 11	1
Front side trim	464 x 60 x 18	2
End side trim	464 x 42 x 18	4
FJ pine lining boards		
Cladding	464 x 133 x 12	12

FASTENERS

TYPE	USE
50mm G8 bright steel wood screws	Frames
40 x 1.6mm bullethead nails	Frames, lining boards, trim
38mm brass butt hinges	Lid
25mm G6 brass wood screws	Hinges, centre trim

★ ORIGINS

Plywood



Plywood floors and walls add warmth to an interior.



BENEATH THE LAYERS

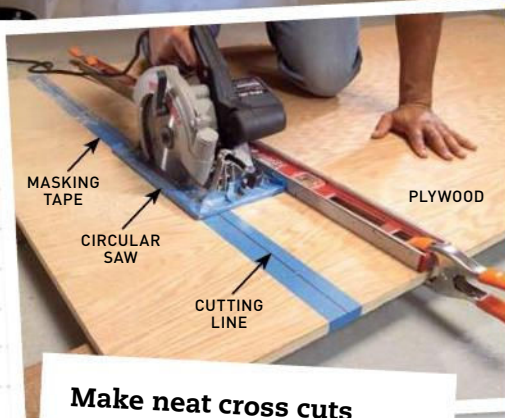
Plywood is one of the most versatile materials for DIYers, as it's strong, available in large panels and can be used to create anything from floors and walls to cabinets and furniture.

Plywood is made from at least three layers of thin timber veneer, sliced from hardwood or softwood logs using a large lathe.

The layers of veneers are glued together and pressed at high temperature and pressure so the adhesive forms a strong bond.

The alternating orientation of the grain minimises warping and shrinking, and reduces the chance of the timber splitting when driving nails or screws.

Plywood is available in sheet sizes up to 2440 x 1220mm.



Make neat cross cuts

Cutting across the grain can cause the top layer of veneer to splinter.

To cut neatly, apply masking tape around the sheet. Mark the cutting line along the tape, then cut the sheet. To avoid peeling off the veneer, pull the tape off at a 90° angle to the cut.

DIY TIP

To minimise splintering when cutting plywood, swap the standard blade in your circular saw for an 80-tooth carbide tip blade.

Which ply?

Plywood face grades range from A, which is nearly free of defects, to D, which has knots or splits.

- ✦ **INTERIOR** has high-quality faces for aesthetic purposes.
- ✦ **EXTERIOR** features waterproof adhesive and is ideal for outdoors.
- ✦ **MARINE** has A-grade hardwood faces and is resistant to mould.
- ✦ **STRUCTURAL** is C or D grade and is used for construction.
- ✦ **FORMPLY** has smooth film faces and is used for concrete formwork.

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★ BASIC SKILLS

How to use a cordless drill



The great all-rounder

One of the most essential power tools for DIYers is a cordless drill, and modern types are easy to use and come with many useful features.

To install a drill or driver bit, open the chuck jaws by grasping the handle of the drill with one hand and turning the sleeve on the chuck counterclockwise with the other hand.

Insert the bit as far as it will go, then tighten the sleeve by turning it clockwise. To remove the bit, grasp the handle of the drill and turn the sleeve counterclockwise.



✚ SELECT THE SPEED RANGE

Most cordless drills have a switch that gives you the option of two speeds. Use low speed for driving screws and drilling into metal or plastic and high speed for drilling into timber.



✚ SELECT THE ACTION MODE

Use the drill setting for boring holes, the drive setting for driving screws, and the hammer setting for drilling into bricks or masonry. Always use masonry bits when using the hammer mode.



✚ CHOOSE THE CLUTCH SETTING

The torque adjuster controls the turning force that the drill will deliver when driving screws. Select a low setting for soft materials such as plasterboard and a high setting for roofing or decking.



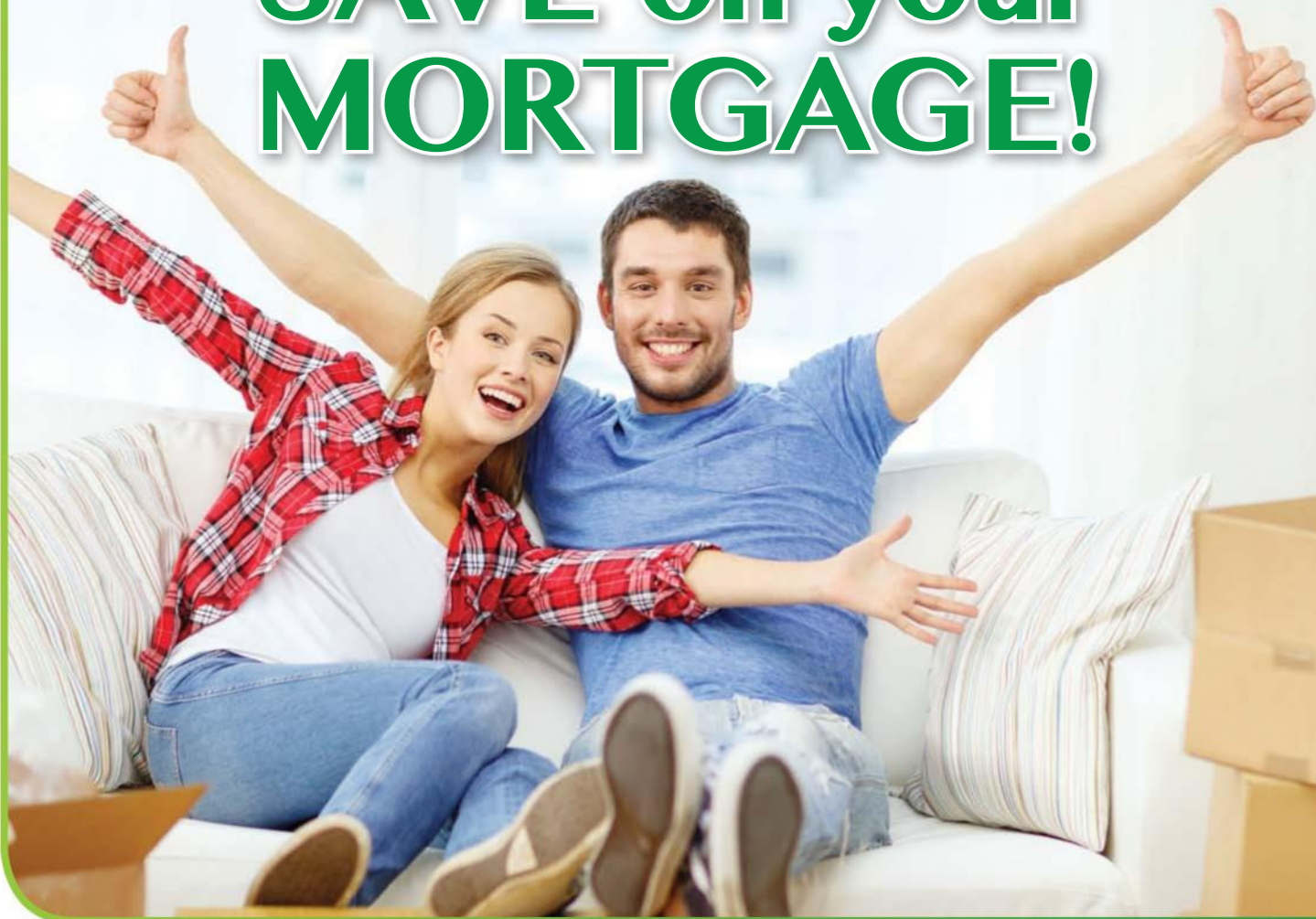
✚ SET FORWARD OR REVERSE

The forward and reverse switch change the rotation of the chuck. Click the switch to the left for forward drilling action and to the right to reverse the drill for removing screws and drill bits.



▶ Watch the video online
Visit handyman.net.au/drill

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KIDS DIY

Handy holidays

Involve kids in DIY and gardening with fun and simple projects to build practical life skills

WORDS ASHLEIGH PERRIOTT PICTURES STEVE PERRIOTT

Growing fruit is a great way to spark an interest in gardening.

Sharing your love of gardening and DIY with your child from an early age will set them up with practical skills for their future.

To spark their interest, let them watch and mimic your movements from a safe distance while you work.

Capture their imagination by starting them off with simple projects that they can add their own touch to.

But be wary of trying to introduce too many new skills at once, as kids can be easily frustrated. ➤

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With Tool Blox, the clever new storage system from Ryobi, you can assemble new units as the need arises. The units lock together to create a modular system and you can even add wheels to make Tool Blox mobile.



Let kids tend the garden independently with their own equipment.



KIDS DIY

Keep it simple

Growing edibles is a great starting point with kids, as they also learn where fresh food comes from and will love eating the fruits of their labour at dinnertime.

In the workshop, you can begin early with imitation toys such as plastic nuts and bolts. Over time, you can slowly introduce real tools and have them assist you.



Let kids take their time and figure out each tool themselves



Growing gardener

Arm kids with a watering can or challenge them to a weed-pulling contest and they'll be busy for hours helping out.

Introduce growing fruit and vegetables by potting up pips or sprouting seeds on a windowsill. They'll have their very own crops to care for in just weeks.

You can assign a patch of the garden to them and get them involved when you harvest vegies. They'll love getting their hands dirty and filling a basket to eat.



Teaching kids tidiness in the workshop is key for safety.



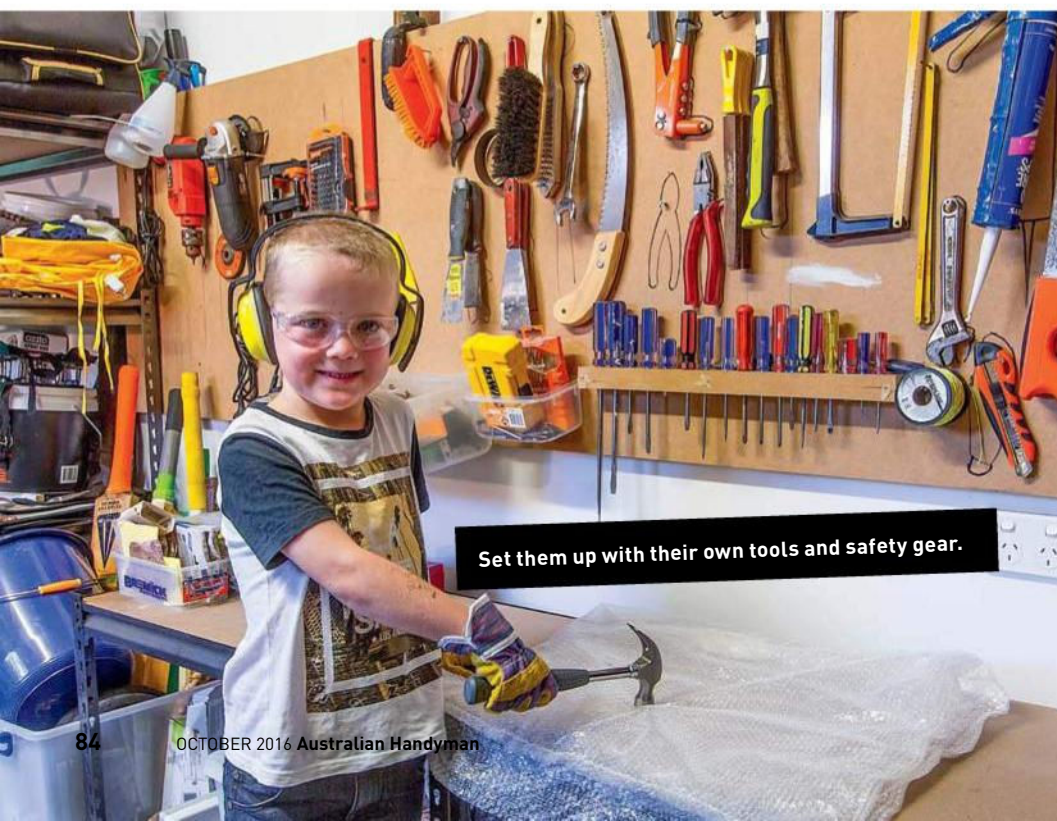
Budding builder

These days, hands-on skills are often forgotten in favour of technological ones, but they're easy to teach if you start early.

Begin building kids' basic skills by having them hit bubble wrap with a hammer or rubber mallet. Then progress to driving prepped roofing nails into a stump.

Get them to help measure areas of the house or mark up timber when working on a project.

Keep old egg cartons so they can use them to sort screws. ➤



Set them up with their own tools and safety gear.

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BOWL OF HERBS



A heavy pot prevents Lily from picking up or knocking over her garden.

 Watch the video online
Visit handyman.net.au/kids-garden



Mother of two Carrie Gregg chose to make this simple herb garden with her three-year-old daughter Lily to begin teaching her about the link between gardening and what shows up on her dinner plate.

Edible violas were added to include a burst of Lily's favourite colour to the pot. Carrie worked at her daughter's height and placed the finished garden where it would be easy for Lily to reach when watering or picking herbs.

1 2 3



1 Write the labels

Use a fine-tip permanent marker to clearly print the name of each herb towards one end of a paddle-pop stick before calling your child over.

TIP Lightly spray the labelled sticks with lacquer to prevent the ink running when in contact with water.



2 Plant the herbs

Add potting mix to the pot until two-thirds full, then dig a small hole for each plant. Gently squeeze the herbs to loosen them from their pots. Position as desired, then lightly press down around the roots. Make sure the mix is about 25mm from the rim.



3 Feed the plants

Fill a small watering can and water in the plants well, topping up the mix if it sinks. Position the pot in bright but indirect light for best results.

TIP Add a seaweed solution rich in nutrients when watering in the herbs to prevent transplant shock. ➤



KIDS DIY

The herb garden is a centrepiece for an outdoor table, where Lily can continue to learn about gardening.



Kids will love sitting on your shoulders to pick fruit fresh from the tree.



TOY TIMBER TRUCK



Landscaper Matt Winner wanted to begin teaching his five-year-old son Alex the basics of DIY over the school holidays and created an easy truck build to spark his interest.

Matt chose balsa wood as the base for the truck, as the soft material is easy to work with. He kept it simple and focused on developing two skills, using a saw and screwdriver.

The cost was kept to a minimum with some upcycling. Milk-bottle caps function as wheels that won't scratch floors and are easy to replace.

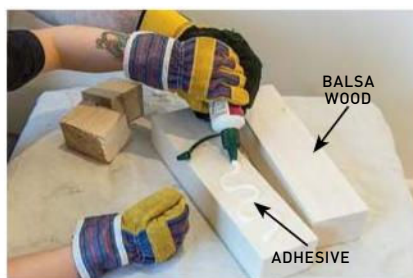
What you need

- 3 lengths of balsa wood
- Screws
- PVA adhesive
- Paint
- Black marker
- Milk bottle caps
- Mini hacksaw
- Screwdriver
- Measuring tape
- Paintbrush
- Egg carton



1 Cut the wood

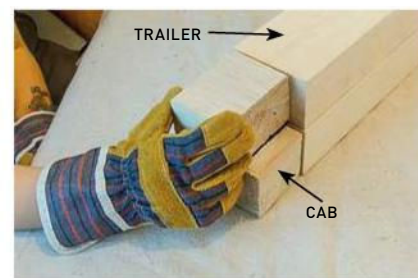
Measure two 60mm long pieces of balsa wood for the cab, marking the wood with a pencil. Hold or clamp the wood securely in position for your child, to prevent an accident. Carefully cut the pieces with a mini hacksaw, using the pencil lines as a guide.



2 Apply the adhesive

To make the trailer, cut the tip off the adhesive applicator and apply adhesive to the wide face of a balsa wood block. Stack another block on top, align the pieces and press down firmly.

TIP Kids may need help guiding the glue evenly over the block of wood.



3 Attach the cab

Glue one 60mm cab piece to the end of the trailer, flush with the edges. Apply adhesive to the end of the trailer and the top of the cab piece, then add the second 60mm cab piece to form a cross shape. Wipe off excess adhesive with a rag. Leave to dry for 30 minutes.

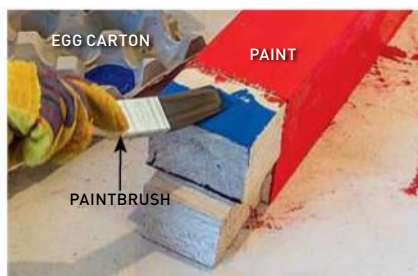


KIDS DIY

DIY TIP

Keep a piece of balsa wood to practise turning the screws into the soft material before attaching the bottle-cap wheels.

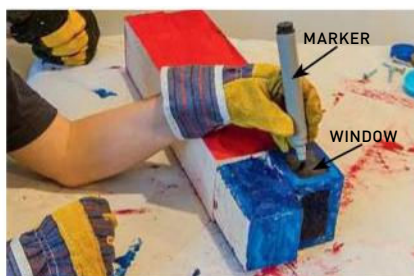
▶ Watch the video online
Visit handyman.net.au/toy-truck



4 Paint the truck

Flip over the truck. Apply non-toxic, washable red paint to the trailer and apply blue paint to the cab, then allow to dry. Apply a second coat to both, then allow to dry thoroughly.

TIP Pour paint into an empty egg carton to make application mess-free.



5 Add the details

Check the paint is completely dry, then add the final details such as windows or logos using a permanent marker. Look online for shapes to use as templates for windows or design features such as flames. Touch up any white patches for an even finish.



6 Secure the wheels

Pierce a hole in the centre of the milk bottle caps using a thick nail, pushing right through for wide holes. Mark the wheel positions on the trailer with a permanent marker, then secure the wheel caps, leaving about 10mm of screw for the cap to revolve on. 🍀

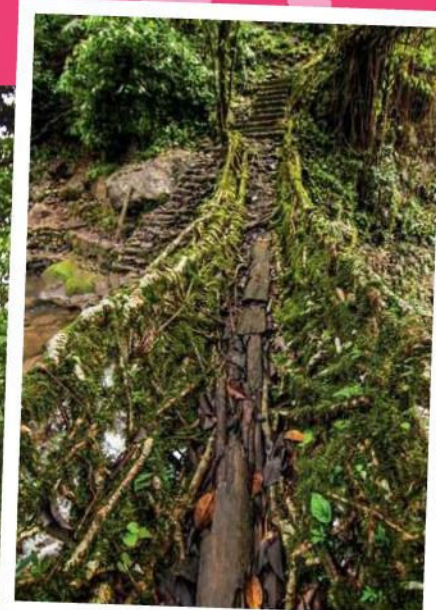


SEE THE WORLD



India's living suspension bridges

Roots are woven and slowly directed to join midway and form a living bridge.



Fact check

- ⊕ A bridge takes 15-20 years to attain the necessary form and strength.
- ⊕ The rubber tree (*Ficus elastica*) is well adapted to heavy rainfall and soil erosion.
- ⊕ Average annual rainfall in the area is 12,000mm. During 1860-61, the town Cherrapunji in Meghalaya, which means 'the abode of clouds', recorded 26,467mm.
- ⊕ The bridges have now become a valuable source of tourism.



Branching out

Who needs steel and concrete, the tools of modern bridge construction, when nature can supply strong, durable materials at no cost?

In one of the wettest places on Earth, in the Himalayan region of Meghalaya, India, necessity is very much the mother of invention.

Here, the living aerial roots of rubber trees along with bamboo or hollowed betel tree trunks and other plant fibres are woven by local Khasi people into walkways, ladders and handrails to form bridges.

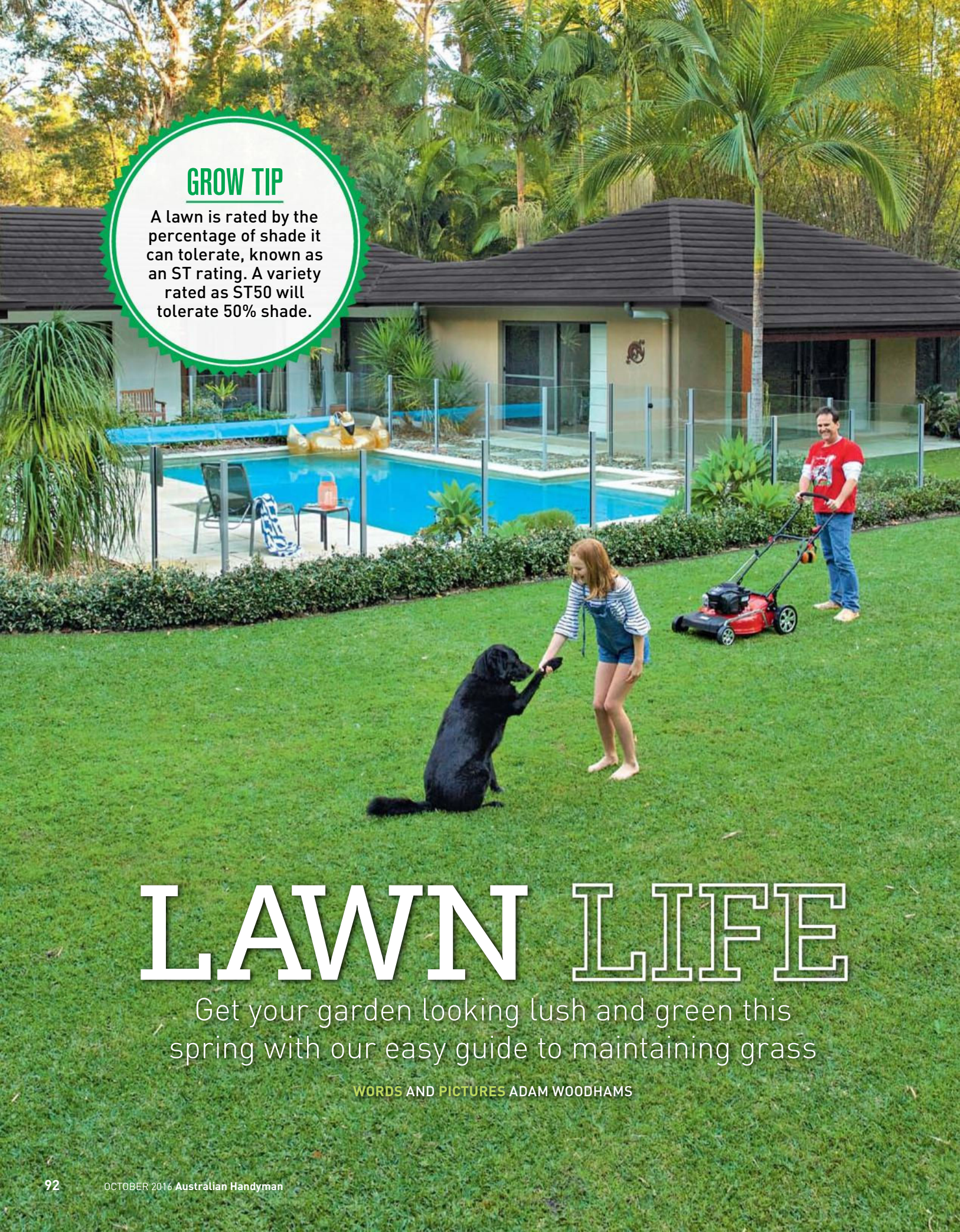
These bridges are their lifeline in steep, treacherous terrain and across turbulent rivers, affording access to plots of land, sources of firewood and produce markets.



↑ The monsoon region has many majestic waterfalls, with the Nohkalikai Falls being India's highest plunge waterfall.
 ← Stones are used to fill gaps in the bridge floor, which eventually become embedded in the fabric of the bridge.
 ↓ The impressive Umshiang double-decker suspension bridge in the village of Nongriat measures 20m long and can accommodate up to 50 people at once.



The tradition of creating root bridges is believed to go back five centuries

A vibrant backyard scene featuring a swimming pool with a blue cover and a yellow inflatable ring. A man in a red shirt is mowing the lawn with a red lawnmower. A young girl in a striped shirt and blue shorts is playing with a black dog. The background shows a modern house with a dark roof and lush tropical landscaping.

GROW TIP

A lawn is rated by the percentage of shade it can tolerate, known as an ST rating. A variety rated as ST50 will tolerate 50% shade.

LAWN LIFE

Get your garden looking lush and green this spring with our easy guide to maintaining grass

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

There's no denying that in our climate of great extremes, the job of keeping a lawn looking its very best can be quite a tough challenge.

The problems are often the same, whether you have a large plot of land or just a small suburban yard, especially after the winter has played its part in wearing the grass down.

To help you get that perfect patch of green here's our handy guide, covering it all from growing to fertilising.



Adam

EXPERT SECRETS

If a neighbour's lawn has a similar aspect as yours and it's thriving, consider laying the same type of grass.



Grass needs to be hardy enough to take heavy foot traffic.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TURF

Whether you're starting a new lawn from scratch or replacing an old one, picking the right variety for your location and needs is an important part of having a successful lawn.

With the correct information in hand, you can select just the right lawn for your place. Here are the questions to ask.

➤ **ASPECT** Think about how much sun your lawn will get and what type of light. Is it full sun all day, dappled light all day, or maybe morning sun with afternoon shade or vice versa.

➤ **CONDITIONS** Is the area that is to be turfed dry, exposed to prevailing winds or sloping?

➤ **SOIL** What is the underlying soil? You may need to improve this before laying turf to get the best results.

➤ **USAGE** What will the lawn be used for? Different varieties of lawn better suit different activities.

➤ **MAINTENANCE** How much time are you willing to dedicate to your lawn? Certain varieties may require more regular mowing, watering and feeding than others. ➤

Spring is the ideal time for thick new lawn growth.

THICKEN UP THE GRASS

At this time of year, the most likely cause of the lawn thinning is a lack of feeding in autumn or early winter.

This will have left the grass unable to tolerate the cooler winter conditions and it will now be looking worse for wear.

There are two possible courses of action to thicken the lawn again.

The first is to feed your lawn well with a quality slow-release fertiliser and in a couple of weeks, it will burst out with lush new growth.

The other option, especially if the grass is looking very thin, is to spread lawn seed that is suitable for over-sowing or lawn thickening.

If the seed is not already fortified with a starter fertiliser, spread a gentle lawn-seed starter fertiliser as well. Keep the lawn well watered as the seed germinates and establishes.

REPAIRING

After a long, cold and often wet winter, most lawns can look pretty average once the temperature starts to warm up in spring and early summer.

There are some simple ways you can get your lawn looking a million bucks in no time and fixing common problems is the best place to start.

Patching up

There can be a multitude of reasons for bare spots, ranging from weed infestation to dog urine.

But regardless of what has brought the problem about in the first place, the solution is a quick and easy repair.



3 ROLL out the turf, trim to shape, then pat down. Water well and keep it moist, but not wet, until established. ➤



1 PREPARE the bare area to be patched by breaking up the soil using a garden fork, then remove any unwanted material.

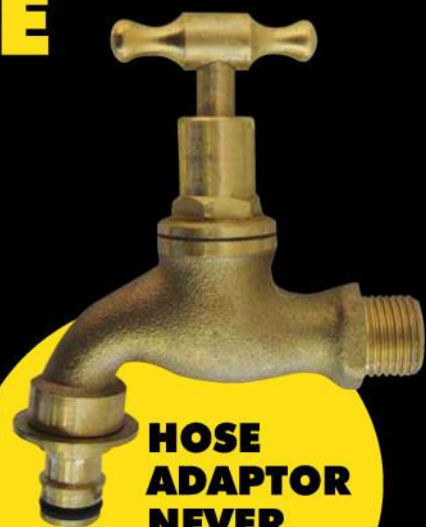


2 ADD a quality lawn soil blend to the patch. Blend through, along with seed and turf starter fertiliser, levelling with a rake.

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AERATING

Over time, with even just a little foot traffic, the soil beneath your lawn can become compacted.

This makes it harder for roots to penetrate the soil and to get nutrients and water to filter down to where the grass needs them most.



Treating compaction

Problems with compacted soil will show up as dead patches or worn areas of lawn that don't self-repair well. Fixing this problem is easy.

➤ **RAKE** the lawn vigorously with a metal-tined lawn or leaf rake to remove dead grass and leaves.

➤ **DRIVE** a garden fork 50mm into the soil and gently rock it back and forth, to aerate a small area. Repeat this every 100mm until the whole area has been treated.

For large lawns, hire a spiked lawn aerator, part fill it with water and roll it over the entire area.

➤ **SPREAD** washed river sand or a fine lawn topdressing mix over the area and apply a slow-release fertiliser. Rake in and water well.

Use a spiked lawn aerator on large lawns.



Agitate topdressing into the thatch with a landscape rake.



GROW TIP

To guarantee maximum growth, it's a good practice to fertilise the lawn a couple of weeks before you add topdressing.

ADD TOPDRESSING

Old-school gardeners often insist you need to topdress, which involves spreading organically rich, sandy soil over your lawn annually.

The idea is that the topdress mix fills the voids that develop in the thatch to stop the lawn becoming too spongy.

The fact is that most modern turf varieties do not need topdressing, as they usually don't develop a heavy thatch, while older varieties, especially couch, do benefit from an annual topdress.

Otherwise, topdressing techniques are generally only used to repair areas of the lawn where dips have developed.

➤ **USE** a metal-tined lawn or leaf rake to vigorously rake the grass, removing leaves, any dead grass and loose thatch, then aerate with a garden fork.

➤ **SPREAD** a quality lawn topdressing mix and slow-release fertiliser over the area, then use the back of a landscape rake to agitate it into the thatch. Don't apply to a depth of greater than 40mm.

To fix a deeper area, make multiple applications or fill completely and lay new turf or seed on top.

➤ **WAIT** until you see new grass before watering, or a crust can form, making it hard for grass to break through. ➤



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^Okay to re-enter lawn after application. Does not include Lawn Builder + WeedKill or Lawn Builder + Grub & Insect Control.



FERTILISING

If there is only one bit of lawn maintenance, other than mowing, that you are able to undertake, make sure it is feeding your lawn.

Applying a quality slow-release lawn fertiliser will not only make your grass lush and green, but also stronger and more able to resist dry conditions, weed invasion and pest attack, or at least better able to self-repair after.



A push spreader will help minimise the time it takes to feed the lawn.



When using a hand-held spreader, it can be easier to walk backwards.

FEED THE LAWN

Despite all the advantages of fertilising the lawn, only a quarter of homeowners actually get around to doing it.

You shouldn't think of it as hard work, as the days of 40kg sacks of fertiliser are long gone, with new easy-to-use fertilisers now available. Just follow these tips for a good job.

- **RAKE** your lawn clear of dead grass and loose leaves before fertilising.
- **AVOID** mowing your lawn immediately before or after applying fertiliser.

➤ **DON'T** water before spreading, as the fertiliser will be more likely to be unevenly distributed.

➤ **WATER** after fertilising, if this is recommended on the packet.

➤ **SELECT** a quality slow-release fertiliser that is right for your lawn and the time of year.

➤ **FEED** in early spring, mid to late summer and late autumn.

➤ **USE** a hand-held or push spreader to ensure even coverage.

Easy feeding, fast greening

Fertiliser technology has advanced hugely in recent years.

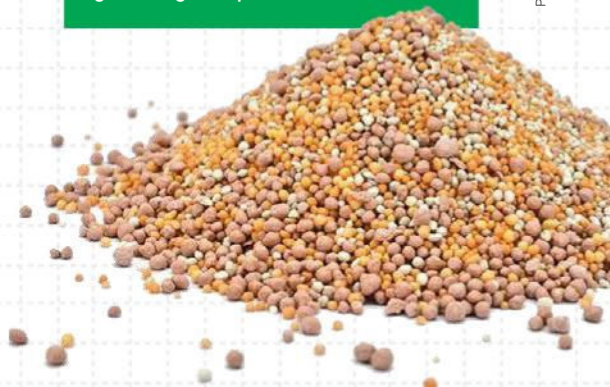
You can achieve super-fast deep greening in three days, while also sustainably feeding the lawn for up to three months.

All you need is a leaf rake, a spreader and Scott's Extreme Green Lawn Builder, \$34 for 4kg.

➤ **MEASURE** your lawn and calculate the amount of fertiliser required. Pour it into a spreader hopper and use the chart on the bag to set the correct aperture.

➤ **WALK** the full area of your lawn while spreading fertiliser, following a pattern that allows a slight overlap on the edges.

➤ **WATER** your lawn well after application to activate the quick greening component. ➤



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HYDRATING

A well-fed and maintained lawn that is cut at a good height will be fairly resistant to damage from hot and dry conditions, but there will be times when a little extra water is required.

The real trick is to make sure that when you water, you do it both effectively and efficiently.



Watering the grass

Follow these tips for a lush and healthy lawn.

- **CHARGE** your lawn up for the day ahead by watering early.
- **AVOID** watering at windy times.
- **WATER** less often but for longer to allow deeper water penetration and promote deeper grass roots.
- **APPLY** a fertiliser that has an added soil wetter.
- **USE** a basic mechanical timer on your tap for extra control.
- **BUY** a sprinkler that comes with an adjustable spray pattern to avoid wasting water.

DIY TIP

Avoid using a hose on the lawn, as it tends to be less efficient than a sprinkler and can result in poor water penetration.

H Kill common lawn weeds

Visit handyman.net.au/lawn-weeds

Green perks

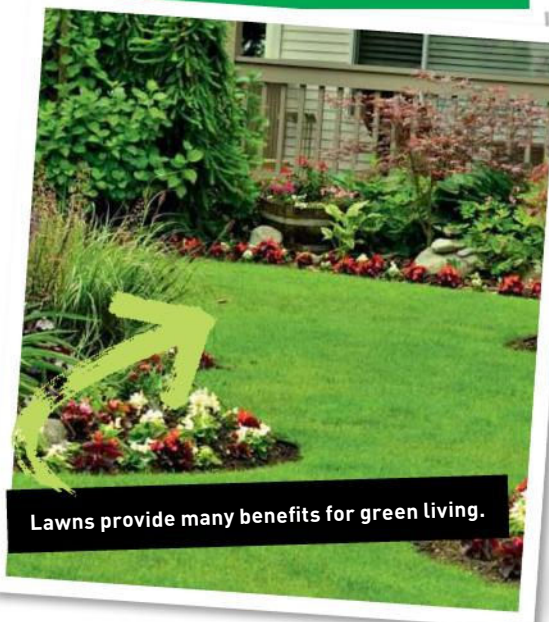
Your lawn is actually a lot greener than you may think, and not just in regard to its lush colour.

Despite information to the contrary, lawns can make many substantial positive contributions to the environment. Here are just a few of the main benefits.

- A lawn 450sqm in size will absorb 11,000 litres of rainfall. That's about 25mm, without major runoff.
- About 200sqm of lawn will produce enough oxygen to meet the needs of a family of four.

- Lawns can absorb as much as four times the amount of carbon as your mower emits, and they also absorb CO₂, generating oxygen.
- Your lawn can be 10° cooler than the surrounding hard surfaces, including garden beds with exposed soil or dark mulch.
- A healthy lawn dampens reflected noise by up to 20% and reduces glare.
- Your lawn works like a giant filter, trapping dust and dirt, which in turn keeps it out of your home and reduces the silting up of local waterways.

Lawns provide many benefits for green living.



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Mower buyer's guide

Pick the best grass cutter for your green patch with this comprehensive round-up

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

One of the most crucial parts of maintaining a healthy lawn is cutting it regularly, and with spring now here, it's time to get the mower out of the garage again.

But if you've got a smoke-belching old rattler and you're having trouble getting it started after the winter

break, it could be the ideal time to invest in a new machine.

A lot has changed since good old two-stroke was the only way to go, with many mowers now designed specifically for different kinds of lawns.

Here's our pick of a range of great mowers to suit just about any situation.



A ride-on mower is best for large, open lawns.



Grass cuttings can be used for composting.

DIY TIP

Avoid cutting patches of long grass in one pass. Make two or three, taking a bit each time, with the last pass in mulch-mowing mode.



Weigh up the options

Consider the following points before buying your mower.

- ✦ **SIZE** Will you need to get your mower through a narrow doorway or gate? If so, choose a mower that you'll be able to manoeuvre easily.
- ✦ **WIDTH** Although you don't need the widest cut, if your lawn is on the large side, a wider cut means you'll finish mowing faster.
- ✦ **MULCH** In addition to being sustainably smart, mulch-mowing also saves you the hassle of having to dispose of lawn clippings. Look

for a model that switches easily from mulching to catching.

- ✦ **ELECTRIC** Corded electric mowers are excellent for small lawns but can be awkward for larger spaces, where a long power lead is required.
- ✦ **BATTERY** Cordless battery power saves you having to store tins of fuel, and today's battery mowers are suitable for medium to large lawns.
- ✦ **PETROL** Mowers driven by petrol give unrivalled power and can tackle the toughest and largest of lawns without any problems, but they will require regular servicing. ➤



SMALL LAWNS



The battery-driven Ryobi 36V 4.0ah Li-ion Cordless Mower, \$499, has a 16" cut width to get the job done quickly and quietly. It features a foldable handle (ryobi.com.au).



With swing-back blades for a superior cut and mulch, the Masport 2-in-1 Catch or Mulch Mower, \$439, is hard to beat for a petrol-powered option (masport.com.au).



Lightweight and with a 12½" cut width, the Ozito 1000W Ecomow Mower, \$119, is super easy to use and move about, making it ideal for small spaces (ozito.com.au).



GREEN MACHINES



The Ozito Push Reel Mower, \$79, proves nothing is more sustainable than old-school people power. This model gives a super-fine cut and has an adjustable height.



Super efficient and weighing only 7kg, the Flymo 1400W Electric Lawn Mower, \$219, floats on a cushion of air to give the perfect cut every time (flymo.com.au).



MEDIUM TO LARGE LAWNS



With a quiet and efficient motor, compact body and 15" cut width, the Ozito 1400W Ecomow Electric Mower, \$179, is ideal for medium-sized lawns.



A battery-powered starter and self-propulsion system make the Victa 19" Easy Walker with InStart Mower, \$849, a joy to use in large spaces (victa.com.au).



Powered by a Subaru engine and with an 18" cut width, the Ryobi 190cc 4-Stroke Mower, \$499, has a height adjustable soft-grip handle and an easy-to-use mulching plug.

DIFFICULT LAWNS



Designed for tough grassy areas, the 42" ride-on Victa 17.5hp Hydrotran Petrol Lawn Tractor, \$3549, has a host of high-tech and ergonomic features.



With a 30" commercial-width cut and super-efficient mulch or catch, the Toro TimeMaster Petrol Mower, \$1599, is the go-to option for large, sloped lawns (toro.com.au). >





DIY TIP

Mow in straight lines, checking the straightness of the mower path at each section and making an overlap if the previous path is crooked.

Make it a stress-free job

While there's no escaping mowing the lawn and it can take up valuable time, you can turn this task into a rewarding and even enjoyable bit of yard time.

- ✦ **LEAVE** the grass long enough to feel comfortable under bare feet.
- ✦ **DON'T** mow too low, as the grass will grow back faster and become patchy.
- ✦ **AVOID** watering the lawn before and after you've mowed.

- ✦ **DON'T** mow at the hottest times of the day to keep moisture in the roots.
- ✦ **KEEP** your mower well serviced, making sure the blades and disc are clean and sharp.
- ✦ **EMPTY** the catcher before it is completely full or you'll find your mower cutting the grass lower the more you mow, as the mower sinks into the lawn with the weight.



Mulch-mowing

Many new mowers will have a mulch-mowing feature. Some require a mulching plug be inserted while others will switch to mulch-mowing as soon as the catcher is removed.

The way mulch-mowing works is simple and it is easily the most sustainable way to cut the lawn.

After the lawn clippings are sliced up by the mower, they are spread across the grass where they quickly break down, adding valuable nutrients and organic matter to the lawn and soil.

Ideally, you should mulch-mow whenever possible during the warmer months.

Only avoid mulch-mowing if the grass is damp and too long, or you're expecting foot traffic shortly after mowing. 🌱



Mowing in mulch mode in spring and summer is by far the most sustainable way of cutting the lawn



Loose mulch will add nutrients to the lawn.

A CUT ABOVE 

RYOBI.

**Lithium
36V**

ryobi.com.au

 Ryobi ANZ



RYOBI 36V GARDEN RANGE. POWER MADE EASY.



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The big backyard tidy-up

Take a little time to get your garden spick-and-span
so you can enjoy the warm months outdoors

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

Adam's plan

- ✦ **PRUNE** the hedges and shrubs.
- ✦ **MULCH** the garden.
- ✦ **CLEAN** the pavers, pathways, walls and decks.
- ✦ **CLEAR** away debris from the gutters and roofs.



Wear protective gloves when handling garden mulch.

Before you begin

A list can be your best friend. Take a wander around and work out everything you need to do, from small tasks to bigger projects.

Once you've got it all jotted down, break the tasks into sections, such as lawn, garden and deck, paving and paths, and roofs and gutters.

Within each section, prioritise the tasks, keeping them in a logical order.

Leave cleaning jobs until the end when you will likely have created extra mess through clearing away debris and pruning shrubs and plants.

Doing all of this may seem like a lot of prep work, but it will help you complete tasks quicker instead of jumping from one to another, or not even finishing all of them.

It is also very satisfying to tick things off the list as you go. ➤

TOP PICKS



30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner Concentrate, \$20 for 5L.
30seconds.com.au



Ozito 2400W Silent Electric Shredder, \$329.
ozito.com.au



Karcher T450 T-Racer Patio Cleaner, \$115.
karcher.com.au



Ryobi 600mm Petrol Blade Hedge Trimmer, \$279.
ryobi.com.au

As spring has sprung and the warm days and evenings are drawing us outside once more, it's time to give the outdoor spaces a big tidy-up.

Spend a little time getting things shipshape now and you'll be able to spend a lot more time enjoying your backyard this coming summer.

Here's our quick guide to make the task as painless as possible.

Regular pruning of shrubs and hedges encourages growth.

PRUNING

From shrubs and hedges to tree branches, there is no shortage of things that will likely require pruning at this time of year.

Here are a few pruning tips to help you keep your greenery tidy and healthy, and ensure that your shrubs are growing the right way.

Hedges and shrubs

- **DON'T** let hedges get too shaggy before you prune them. Taking little bits, more often, is the best way.
- **INVEST** in battery or petrol-driven hedge clippers. They make the job faster and give a neater finish. If you have taller hedges to prune, a work platform is safer than ladders.
- **REMOVE** the flowers from any rosebushes, and many other spring

bloomers, as they finish. It will often bring on a new flush of blooms.

- **CHECK** the base of grafted fruit trees and roses, removing any shoots coming up below the graft to prevent the understock taking over.
- **LOOK** for crossing and rubbing branches on trees and shrubs, which can damage each other. Prune off one or both of the offending shoots.

Cutting a tree branch



- ➊ **MAKE** a cut to about halfway through the underside of the branch to be removed using a pruning saw. The cut should be about 150-200mm from the trunk.



- ➋ **CUT** about 50-100mm further up the branch, from the top. The branch should now break and fall instead of splitting all the way to the trunk.



- ➌ **LOCATE** the branch collar and prune to here rather than flush with the trunk. On some trees, such as jacaranda, the collar will be very pronounced.

DIY TIP

Always wash gravel and pebbles thoroughly before using in pots as the fine silt often found on these materials can clog potting mix.

MULCHING

One way to freshen up the garden that won't cost a fortune, and only takes an hour or two, is mulching.

Spreading mulch on your garden areas provides many benefits.

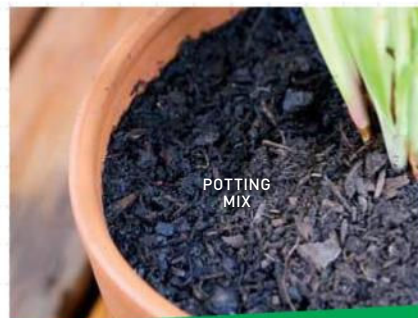
These include helping retain moisture in the soil, protecting the soil from wind and water erosion, protecting roots from temperature extremes and adding nutrients and organic matter to soil.

Mulch is good to use in pots, too, as it conserves moisture while also giving the pot a great look.

In the garden

- + **SPREAD** the mulch at least 30mm thick on garden beds.
- + **AVOID** pushing organic mulches up against trunks and stems, as this can easily result in rot.
- + **WATER** and fertilise before mulching, and water afterwards.
- + **WEAR** protective gloves while spreading and handling mulch.
- + **LAY** 4-6 layers of newspaper as a weed barrier before mulching.
- + **BUY** mulch in bulk to save money. You can always split the cost with a neighbour and share it.
- + **USE** a shredder to turn clippings into mulch or material for compost.

For pot plants



POTTING MIX

- 1 **MAKE** sure the potting mix surface is free of weeds and, if the plant has just been potted, ensure the mix is gently pressed down before you begin mulching.



INORGANIC MULCH

- 2 **FILL** the saucer edges with an inorganic mulch. This can help prevent saucers from becoming potential mozzie breeding spots, while still allowing watering.



INORGANIC MULCH

- 3 **ADD** the selected mulch to the top of the pot. When using a gravel or pebble mulch, you can push it against stems. Press down gently before watering. ➤

Use a pressure cleaner to get rid of dirt and grime outdoors.

CLEANING

Paths, paving slabs, pool surrounds, driveways, walls and decks can all become a little worse for wear after months of cool, damp weather.

Follow these tips to giving those outdoor areas a deep clean and get them looking their best again.

Pavers and paths

Over time, dirt and algae, and in shady areas, moss, will begin to develop on pavers and pathways.

Not only does this discolour the surface, it can often make it dangerously slippery.

Deep-cleaning with a pressure cleaner will get rid of the dirt, algae and moss and, once done, the pavers probably won't need to be cleaned again for another year.

Here's the simple way to get the surfaces looking as good as new.

- **DIVIDE** your area into sections and complete one bit at a time.
- **BLOW** or sweep the area clean, breaking up any moss with a broom.
- **APPLY** a surface cleaner to areas that have more ingrained dirt or algae, spraying over the entire area.
- **USE** a pressure cleaner to remove the remaining dirt and muck.

SAFETY TIP

Always wear safety glasses or goggles, and ear protection and full-cover footwear when working with pressure cleaners.

Walls and decking

When cleaning walls and decks, be aware that high-pressure jets of water can damage soft timber and masonry walls when held too close.

Pressure cleaners and even garden hoses can also cause water penetration when used around windows and doors and on some weatherboard structures.

If in doubt, fit a rotary brush to the pressure cleaner to get rid of stubborn dirt more gently, or simply clean the surface by hand using a specialised outdoor or detergent-based cleaner. ➤

Before

After

The newly cleaned brick pathway is completely free of dirt and moss.



THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERTS

D.I.Y Barrier spray stops pests from entering your home

HANDYTIP:

Spray 1m up the wall and 1m away from wall to keep pests from entering your home.



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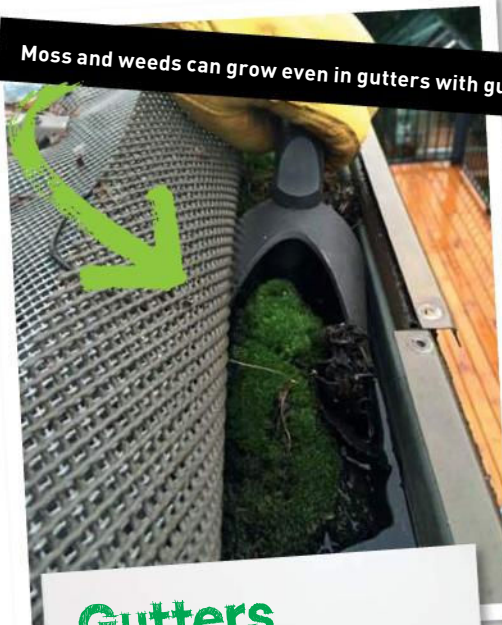
CLEARING

The best time to check and clean the gutters and roof surfaces is before it gets too hot.

Keeping them free of accumulated debris isn't just a cosmetic thing either. For a start, you'll be reducing the risks of damage to the home if you're in a bushfire-prone area.

Having clean downpipes and gutters also ensures that runoff from heavy downpours is carried away.

Moss and weeds can grow even in gutters with guards.



Gutters

An ideal growing area for moss and weeds, debris can quickly build up and clog up gutters.

To clean them, remove any gutter guards and use a plastic potting mix scoop to get rid of the moss, weeds and debris.

Avoid using metal tools to clean out gutters, as you may scratch the surface, which in turn can allow rust to develop.

Roofs and gutters

- **AVOID** climbing onto the roof. Instead, use an appropriate ladder to access your gutters.
- **USE** a long-handled exterior cobweb broom for cleaning out roof valleys and hard-to-reach spots.
- **CLEAR** leaves and twigs from your roof and gutters with a leaf blower while standing on a ladder.
- **REMEMBER** the golden rule of ladder use and maintain three points of contact at all times. 🟢





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TRANSFORM WITH PAVING

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Rear courtyard

Side passage

DIY TIP

Work out the number of pavers needed by measuring the surface area in square metres, adding 5% for breakages and cutting waste.

Concrete patios, paths and passageways can be easily neglected and, over time, dirt accumulates and cracks may appear.

Rather than commit to the bigger job of breaking up the existing slab and pouring new concrete, the easiest and quickest way to transform the area is by laying paving bricks.

This method does mean that the finished paving will be higher than the original slab. You'll also need to plan

for transitions to other areas, especially where a patio adjoins the house.

If you are going to resurface a concrete patio, make sure that the paving finishes below the height of any exterior door or window sills. It should also slope away from the house to allow for runoff.

Small drainage holes can be drilled through the concrete every 100mm to help any pooling water seep into the ground. ➤



Paved areas have a classic charm that enhance the surrounding landscaping

Pathway



Choosing a pattern

The right paving pattern enhances the area and complements the surroundings.

There are many different options for patterns, with the shape of the paver dictating which layout will work best.

As a general rule, small pavers work best in a small space and large pavers suit a bigger area.

For a herringbone design, you need pavers twice as long as they are wide. Select a contrasting colour for the border.

After

The refreshed patio looks like new with a simple paving fix.

SET OUT THE BORDER

Use stringlines or chalklines marked on the slab to set out the border and paving area. Bed the border pavers on mortar and leave to dry, then bring in the paving sand using a wheelbarrow. Spread the sand, then screed level.

➊ **SET** a stringline parallel to the house to mark the location of the border pavers, leaving a gap of at least 5mm between the pavers and the house.

➋ **LAY** out a row of pavers to establish a field width that allows each course to end with a full or half paver. This means there will be less cutting and waste.

➌ **MARK** a side border square with the house using a stringline and the 3-4-5 method. When one side of a triangle is 3m and the other side 4m, then the diagonal will be 5m, if the corner is a 90° angle. Any multiple of the 3-4-5 equation can be used.

➍ **SET** out the other side border, measuring from the first side, to make sure they are parallel.

➎ **LEAVE** the border that is opposite the house unmarked, installing the pavers after the herringbone pattern has been laid. This makes it easier to screed the excess sand.

Notch a screed board

Cut a timber board with a notch on one end so it runs across the top of the border pavers while screeding the sand to the correct depth and level.

➏ **MEASURE** the thickness of a paver and transfer the measurement to the end of the screed board, reducing the height by 5mm for later compaction. Mark the notch about 100mm long.

➐ **CUT** out the notch with a handsaw, checking it fits against a paver.

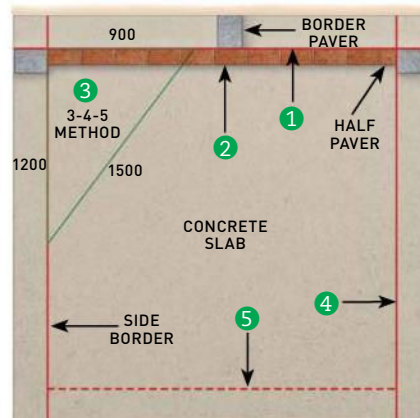


Before

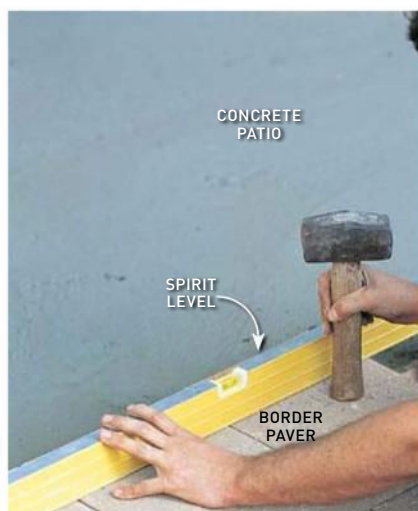


PAVING LAYOUT

measurements in mm



LAY THE PAVERS



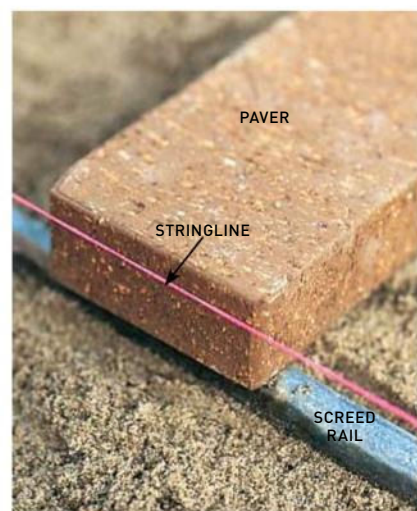
1 Lay the border

Measure and mark the setout of the border pavers on three sides so the corners are square. Mix the mortar and spread a 20mm thick bed, laying the pavers side by side in a soldier pattern with a 3mm gap in between. Use a spirit level to set the pavers in place.



2 Spread the sand

Allow 24 hours for the mortar to dry, then spread paving sand over the entire concrete patio slab to a depth of 20-25mm. Use a square-mouthed shovel or a rake to roughly level the sand bed and use the back of the rake to tamp and compact the sand.



3 Set the screed rail

Divide the screed area into two by positioning a centre screed rail, such as galvanised pipe, down the middle. Set a stringline at the finished paving height and use a paver to set the rail depth to the thickness of a paver less 5mm, to allow for compaction.



4 Screed the area

Cut a 45mm notch in one end of a straight timber screed board. Position the notch on top of the border pavers and the other end on the centre screed rail, then screed the area level. Remove the rail and fill the channel with sand, smoothing with a steel float.



5 Lay the pavers

Set up stringlines to follow at 1m intervals to help keep the paving lines straight. Lay down the stringlines first, then fill in with pavers to each side, keeping the paving aligned with the border pavers and adjusting the joints so the gaps are even.



6 Finish the paving

Mark the pavers to be cut, cutting on the marked lines with a wet bricksaw and placing the cut edges against the border. Lay the last border side and sweep dry beach sand into the joints with a yard broom. Level the surface of the paving with a plate compactor. ➤

PAVING TOOLKIT

Once you know the basics, paving is surprisingly easy and, yes, even fun. And with the right tools, many of which you'll find useful for other DIY tasks, the process will be even easier.

Here are the paving tools you'll need for all your paving projects.

Make accurate cuts to pavers with an angle grinder. This model is battery powered, making it easier to take the tool to the job.



Ryobi One+ 18V 115mm Cordless Angle Grinder, \$115, skin only. ryobi.com.au

QEP 500g Rubber Mallet, \$13. qep.com



When you are laying light-coloured pavers, using a white-headed mallet will prevent marking and damage.



Stanley FatMax Xtreme Torpedo Level, \$33. stanleytools.com.au

SAFETY TIP

Always wear breathing, eye and ear protection, and gloves when cutting pavers. Wear safety glasses when using a bolster and hammer.

A torpedo or pocket level allows you to keep a check on how level pavers are relative to each other, as you work.



Grout with sand and level with a plate compactor.



Using a compactor

When paving is complete, it needs to be compacted to level the surface, keeping it flush with the border pavers.

Run a plate compactor over the surface once in sequence, but not over the mortared border pavers.

If the compactor bounces too much, tie a scrap of carpet to the base and continue.

TIP A plate compactor can be hired for about \$60 a day.

Stanley 80mm Aluminium Line Level, \$13.



A line level hangs off the stringline and allows you to use the line as a long level. Just ensure the line is pulled very tight.

Hart 680g Rubber Mallet, \$25. harttools.com.au



A rubber mallet is a must for firming down pavers without damaging them. The rubber grip reduces vibration in the hand.



Trojan 300mm Bricklayer's Trowel, \$22. trojantools.com.au

A good-quality brickie's trowel is useful for quick spot levelling and adding small amounts of bedding sand as you go.

Simple stone and concrete care.



**Spear & Jackson 50m
No8 Pink Brickline, \$6.
spearandjackson.com.au**

For setting out and keeping paving in a straight line, a quality stringline is a must. Pick a bright colour so you don't trip over it.

The ideal way to quickly split smaller brick-sized pavers is with a brickie's bolster. Look for one that has a built-in hand guard.



**Hart 1.35kg
Club Hammer,
\$40.**

A club or lump hammer is the best striking tool to use with a brickie's bolster to deliver one hard, swift blow.



**Hart Masonry
Chisel with Hand
Guard, \$33.**

It's essential to have a diamond cutting blade that is suitable for bricks fitted to the angle grinder when cutting pavers.



**Flexovit Segmented Diamond
Blade Tile & Brick Cutter,
about \$11. bunnings.com.au**



**Masterfinish 2400mm
Screed, \$58.
agpulie.com.au**

A screed bar allows you to easily spread and level the base of paving sand. They are available in a range of lengths. ●



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LIGHT UP OUTSIDE

Enhance an entrance and illuminate alfresco spaces with outdoor lighting

Exterior lighting can transform a home, whether it's by illuminating an entrance or creating a well-lit entertaining area that can be enjoyed in the evening.

Installing outdoor lights at the front of your home boosts kerb appeal by highlighting architectural features and creating warmth and ambience.

Lighting up the exterior also improves safety and security, with motion-activated sensor lights making it easier to find your way in the dark while also deterring intruders.



Frame an entrance

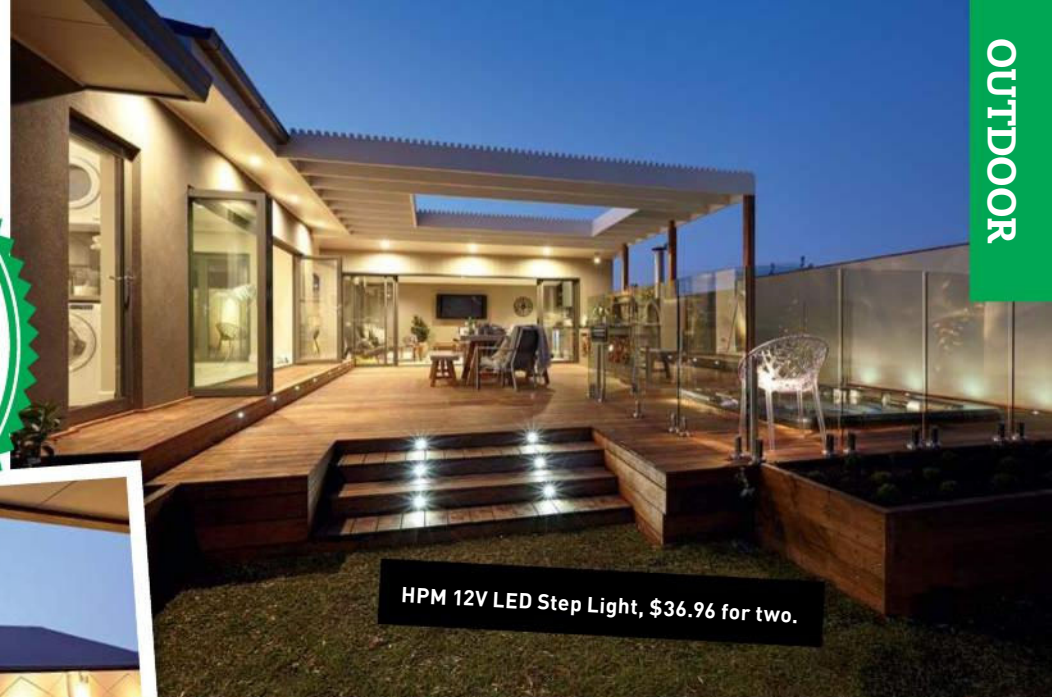
Installing outdoor lighting at the entry to your home creates a warm and welcoming feel while making it easy to find your way in the dark.

Illuminate walkways by positioning light posts on either side of the path. Solar lights are quick to install and save money, plus they're easy to reposition.

Downlights can enhance the look of wall textures and work well when installed on either side of a doorway.

DESIGN TIP

Highlight garden features such as trees or statues by positioning spotlights underneath to cast dramatic shadows.



HPM 12V LED Step Light, \$36.96 for two.



Arlec Stainless Steel Down Wall Light, \$29.90.



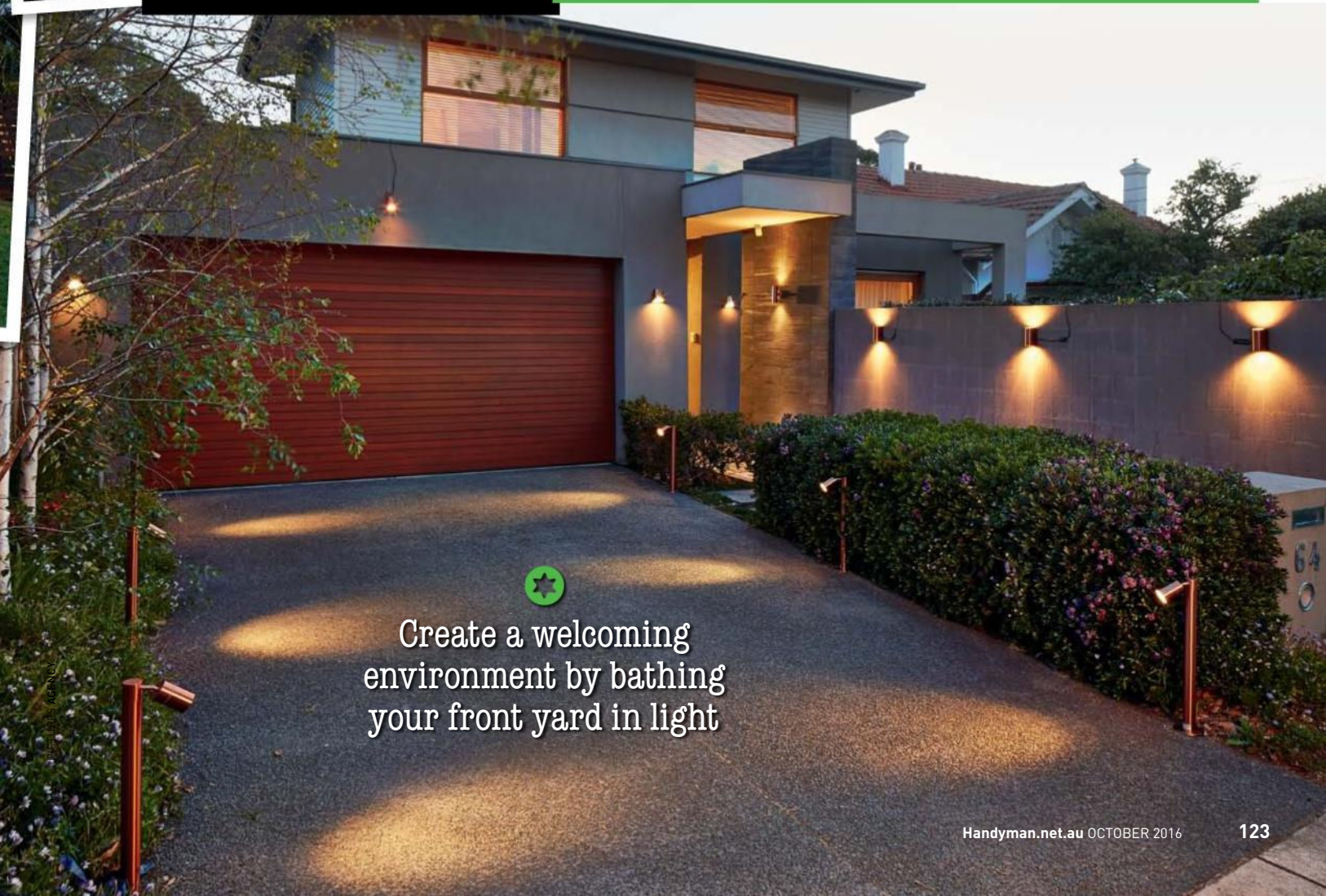
Enhance ambience

Turn an outdoor area into an extension of your living space by providing adequate lighting so that it can be used at any time.

Select fixtures that match your interior lights for a consistent look.

Use soft, indirect lighting and point beams downwards or bounce light off walls and structures to illuminate the space without harsh direct light.

For a designer look, install deck lights flush with the surface.



Create a welcoming environment by bathing your front yard in light

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What's new

Pick up the latest products for the home and garden instore



Protect tree trunks with the Whites Outdoors Oxy-shield Interlocking Tree Ring, \$13.



Replace old curtains with the Elegance Roller Blind, \$59, with Dulux colour-match technology.



Grow your own vegetables at home in the Birdies 8-in-1 Original Range, \$159.



- 1 Selley's Black Storm Sealant, \$16.48 for 460g, for use on all wet or dry surfaces, and also available in clear.
- 2 Selley's Ezi Press Roof & Gutter Silicone, \$9.98 for 100g, for most exterior surfaces.
- 3 Selley's Ezi Press Wet Area Silicone, \$9.98 for 100g, with no caulking gun needed.



Define garden beds with the Whites Outdoors Oxy-shield Interlocking Edging Strip, \$15.



- 1 White Resin and Timber Chair, \$89.
- 2 White Glass Table with Timber Legs, \$299.



1

2

Entertain outside and embrace the warmer weather with the Corsica Wicker Timber Combo Range.

- 1 Bar Setting, \$699.
- 2 Dining Chair, \$229.
- 3 Corner Lounge, \$1599.

BUDGET TIP

Save on household energy bills and keep the house cool during the heat of the day with blackout roller blinds.



3



1



2

Dine out alfresco all summer long with the White Coral Bay Range.

- 1 Four-piece Lounge Set, \$1399.
- 2 Dining Set, \$899.
- 3 Corner Lounge, \$1799.



3

Handyman BUYER'S GUIDE

Take the DIY option for your home improvement projects by choosing the best tools and equipment from our market round-up

ryobi.com.au
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A CUT ABOVE  **RYOBI.**
Lithium 36V



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www.easycraft.com.au

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Handyman BUYER'S GUIDE

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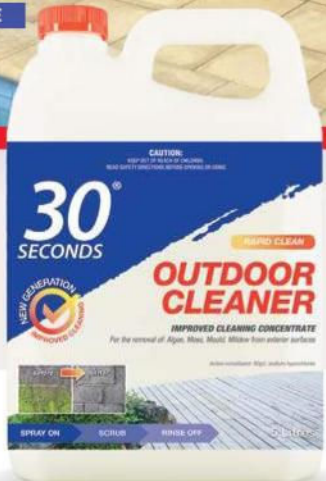
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This month

Spring is well underway and there is lots to plant and do outdoors



Do now

- **HARVEST** juicy tomatoes, page 134.
- **GROW** succulents from cuttings, page 150.
- **CREATE** handmade garden gifts, page 157.



Flowers to sow

Plant these varieties for blooms in just 12 weeks.

- **AGERATUM**
- **CELOSIA**
- **MARIGOLD**
- **IMPATIENS**
- **SALVIA**

Marigold



Vegies to grow

For crops from early summer, add these to your patch.

- **BEANS**
- **CABBAGE**
- **ZUCCHINI**
- **CAPSICUM**
- **RADISH**

Radish



WHAT'S IN COLOUR

Agapanthus 'Perpetual Peace'

✦ **AGAPANTHUS 'PERPETUAL PEACE'** is a medium-sized variety with a long flowering period, bearing pure white blooms from October until May.

This hardy evergreen spreads to 60cm and reaches 45cm high with the flowers sitting 15cm above the foliage.

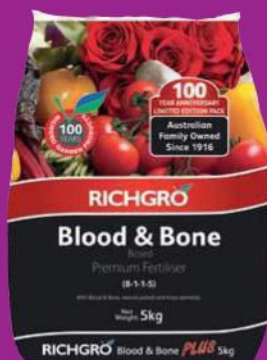
Mass plant as a low-maintenance groundcover, use it to edge driveways, paths and paved areas or grow in pots.

Grow 'Perpetual Peace' in full sun to part shade in well-drained soil, use a slow-release fertiliser in spring and remove spent flowers for more blooms.

It has low water needs and is dry tolerant once established, but increase watering in the heat of summer.

Information courtesy of Plants Management Australia (pma.com.au).

Boost growth



The spring garden likes a good feed, so give flowers, fruit and vegies a boost with Richgro Blood & Bone Based Premium Fertiliser, \$10 for 5kg (richgro.com.au).

A granular food made from rich organic matter, it's designed to help plant health, growth and yield, and is available in special packs to celebrate 100 years of the Australian-owned Richgro.

Team white-flowering evergreens with bright annuals for a colourful spring display

To-do list

Give plants TLC and prepare for summer.

✓ **MULCH** garden beds in advance of hot weather.

✓ **LIFT** waterlilies and divide, replanting in aquatic baskets.

✓ **WATER** gardenias with yellow leaves with an epsom salt solution.

✓ **GROW** clivias from seed.

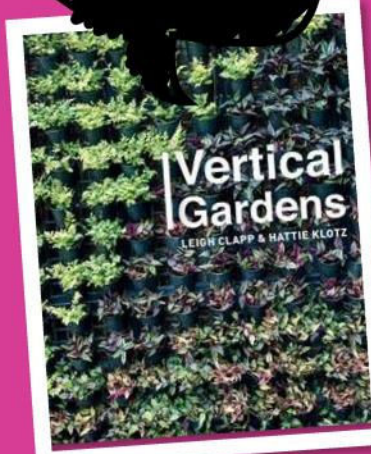
✓ **APPLY** a soil wetter to established shrubs.

✓ **DIVIDE** and repot cymbidium orchids.

✓ **CHECK** ornamental plants for pest infestations and spray to treat.

✓ **PLANT** evergreen trees, shrubs and climbers. ➤

BOOK CLUB



Photographer Leigh Clapp and journalist Hattie Klotz combine their talents in *Vertical Gardens* (\$50, New Holland Publishers) to show people how to green up their walls and make the most of small spaces.

Featuring inspiration from landscape designers and over 100 projects, this book shows you how to create edible gardens, privacy screens and more to transform balconies, rooftops and courtyards into lush outdoor areas.

Forsythia



Prune now

Deadhead and lightly trim shrubs.

- + FORSYTHIA
- + BUDDLEIA
- + CAMELLIA
- + LAVENDER
- + HIBISCUS

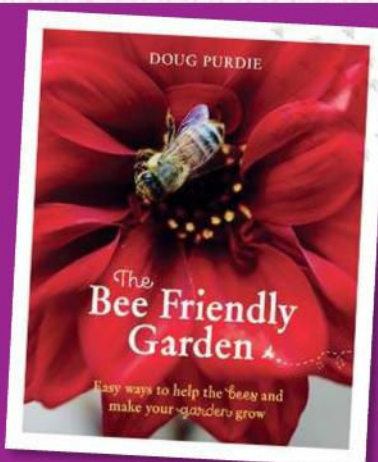


Asparagus

Written by a self-styled 'beevangelist', *The Bee Friendly Garden* by Doug Purdie (\$40, Murdoch Books) is the ultimate guide to attracting bees.

It's full of beautiful pictures and easy-to-follow advice on how you can make simple changes to help our most important pollinators.

Whether you have a balcony or big backyard, you can easily grow bee-friendly plants, including edibles, natives and exotics, and use natural pest-control methods.



Harvest now

Bring in these spring crops.

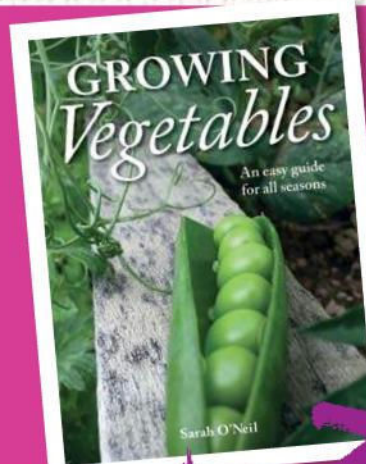
- + ASPARAGUS
- + BEANSPROUTS
- + CAULIFLOWER
- + PEAS
- + SPINACH

Feed now

Apply fertiliser to plants in flower.

- + CHRYSANTHEMUM
- + CITRUS
- + FRUIT TREES
- + NEW ROSES
- + POT PLANTS

Chrysanthemum



On a mission to get more people growing their own food, author, blogger, speaker and passionate gardener Sarah O'Neil has released her third book, *Growing Vegetables* (\$35, New Holland Publishers).

It guides you through the whole process from choosing the best spot for growing vegies at your place to harvesting crops at their peak.

Packed with practical advice, planning charts and seasonal info, it will become your vegie go-to guide. 🌱



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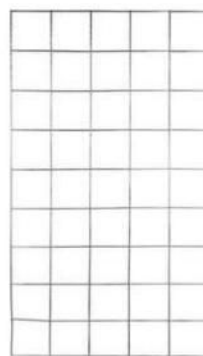
Ready to Grow

Tomatoes, beans, passionfruit, and even heavier produce like eggplant and cucumbers - Grip & Grow's sturdy winged design supports them all. With plant ties included, the ready-to-use kit simply pushes into the ground so you're set up and ready to grow in seconds - no stakes, no construction!

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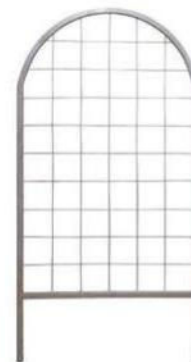
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GROW YOUR OWN TOMATOES

Plant seedlings or get seeds in the ground this spring to enjoy these juicy red fruit at their best

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

To experience that wonderful tangy tomato taste, you really can't beat growing your own.

Tomatoes are easy to cultivate, and the fruit comes in many shapes and sizes, depending on the variety. And they can be grown in pots or beds.

You can grow red, yellow, orange, black, green, and even striped varieties.

Not only do they taste good, but tomatoes are also good for your health.

Research shows they may reduce your risk of cancer, especially prostate cancer, as the fruit contains the potent antioxidant lycopene.

While eating tomatoes raw will provide lycopene, more becomes available when they're lightly cooked.

In addition, they're a good source of vitamins A and C, betacarotene, potassium and fibre. They contain no cholesterol and are low in fat.



Extend the crop

Plant seedlings or seeds successively to ensure a continuous supply of juicy fruit.

In mild climates, plant now for an early summer crop and in November for a late summer/early autumn crop. This will increase your harvest and you'll be picking tomatoes for months.

Growing seedlings

Except for grafted tomatoes, seedlings like to be deep-stem planted. Before planting, remove the lower set of leaves and position the seedling in the ground so about half the stem is below the soil level.

This will enable the seedling to put down extra roots from its stem, which will give it a more developed root system.



Tomatoes will thrive in garden beds or in pots.

Planting in pots

Choose a premium potting mix for vegetables that carries the Australian Standards ticks, and use 400-500mm pots. Tall-growing plants need a stake, so add one when planting.

Some tomato plants are especially suited to pots. Look out for the dwarf varieties Tiny Tom and Red Robin, which grow to about 300mm high.

Tumbling Tom Red will cascade out of a pot and produces masses of small fruit.

- ✦ **FEED** fortnightly with a soluble fertiliser such as PowerFeed Plant Food for Tomatoes & Vegetables.
- ✦ **WATER** regularly, often daily in the summer.
- ✦ **MULCH** to help retain moisture.



Did you know?

The darker the colour of a tomato, the more antioxidants it contains. Black tomatoes are high in antioxidants and low in acidity.

Choose from Black Cherry, which has small dusky-purple fruit, medium-sized Black Russian with its purple-tinged skin and dark reddish-brown flesh, or the flavoursome red-purple Black Krim. >



TOP 10 TOMATO TIPS

1 Sow tomatoes from seeds or buy seedlings. In spring and summer seedlings are available in abundance from nurseries and there are lots of different varieties to choose from.

2 Choose the sunniest spot, as full sun is essential for growing tomatoes.

If you don't have a dedicated vegetable patch, simply scatter a few tomato plants through your flowerbeds, or grow them in pots.



3 Tomatoes are big feeders, so add organic matter such as chicken manure, compost or Yates Dynamic Lifter to the soil.

Also dig one-third of a cup of complete plant food per square metre into the garden bed a week before planting, and if your soil is acidic, add liquid lime to help prevent blossom end rot.



4 Plant your seedlings 500-600mm apart, and as most tomatoes need support, add a 2m high stake.

Position the stake 50mm from the stem, to avoid damaging the root system later. As they grow, tie the stems to the stake using soft cloth, plant ties or twine.



1 2 3

SOW SEEDS Growing from seed will give you a wider selection of tomato varieties to choose from. Jiffy pots are ideal to use as seed trays, as you can plant the seedlings complete with the pots to eliminate transplant shock.



1 Plant the seeds

Fill a few Jiffy pots with seed-raising mix, then make shallow dents about 5mm deep in the surface of the mix with your fingertip. Add a seed to each pot and cover with a layer of seed-raising mix.



2 Germinate the seed

Wrap the pot in clear plastic wrap to provide warmth and promote germination. Remove it when the seeds germinate in 6-14 days. Leave in a warm, shady spot and water with a mist spray if the mix dries out.



3 Harden the seedlings

Move the pots to a sunny position to harden off the seedlings when they have reached a height of about 75mm. Plant the seedlings in a garden bed or pot when they are 100-125mm high.

5 Water newly planted seedlings with an application of Seasol to prevent transplant shock.

6 Mulch around the seedlings with straw, lucerne hay or sugar cane to help reduce weeds and retain the moisture in the soil.

7 Irregular watering can cause tomatoes to split, so water deeply, at least twice a week.

To prevent disease, water around the base of the plants rather than from overhead.

8 When the first flower truss appears, feed with a soluble plant food such as Scotts Miracle-Gro MaxFeed Tomato, Fruit & Vegetable. Repeat fortnightly while fruiting.

9 Basil makes a good companion for tomatoes, as it helps to repel aphids, so plant it close by.

10 Pick the tomatoes when they're ripe by cutting the stalk and leaving the calyx intact.

HOW TO EAT THEM



Tommy Toe



Black Russian



Red Cherry Cocktail



Black Krim



Roma



Tomatoes have various uses. Some, especially cherry, are perfect for salads, while others are more suited for sauces, drying and preserving.

- ✦ **AMISH PASTE** Sauces, salads, bottling and drying.
- ✦ **BEEFSTEAK** Sandwiches, sauces and stuffing.
- ✦ **BLACK CHERRY** Salads and oven-bake whole.

- ✦ **BLACK KRIM** Salads and sandwiches.
- ✦ **BLACK RUSSIAN** Salads and sauces.
- ✦ **CHERRY SWEET BITE** Salads and oven-bake whole.
- ✦ **GROSSE LISSE** Salads, stuffing, sauces and preserving.
- ✦ **GOURMET TRUSS** Salads, sauces and casseroles.
- ✦ **MORTGAGE LIFTER** Sandwiches, stuffing and sauces.

- ✦ **TINY TOM** Salads and oven-bake whole.
- ✦ **RED CHERRY COCKTAIL** Salads and oven-bake whole.
- ✦ **ROMA** Sauces, salads, drying and preserving.
- ✦ **ROUGE DE MARMANDE** Salads and sauces.
- ✦ **TOMMY TOE** Salads, sauces and drying. ➤

HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

These old-fashioned open-pollinated tomatoes were grown in an earlier era and have been selected and saved by generations of gardeners.

Popular varieties include the Black Russian, Tigerella with red and yellow striped fruit, Mortgage Lifter, which has large, meaty fruit, Tommy Toe with lots of medium-sized very sweet fruit, Green Zebra with its green-striped skin and Amish Paste, which has few seeds.

TIP Don't save hybridised seeds, as they won't be the same as the plant you originally grew and you'll end up with characteristics of both or either parents.



Save the seeds and store them to plant out the next year

PROBLEM SOLVER



Split fruit

This is caused by over-watering or heavy rain after a dry period.

SPOT IT The fruit splits just as it begins to ripen.

FIX IT Water regularly, especially during dry periods.



Tomato caterpillar

The larvae feed on the leaves, flowers and fruit.

SPOT IT Holes appear in the fruit and young growth that has been eaten.

FIX IT Use Yates Tomato & Vegetable Dust when you notice the caterpillars.



Blossom end rot

Irregular watering and a lack of calcium cause this condition.

SPOT IT The end of the fruit becomes sunken and turns black.

FIX IT Add soluble lime and water the plants regularly.

BUDGET TIP

Fill a toilet roll with seed-raising mix and add a seed. When the seedlings are ready, plant in the cardboard, which will break down.



Share your vegetable photos

Post a pic to Instagram and tag @HandymanMagazine

To help prevent disease, unless you are raising grafted tomatoes, don't grow tomatoes in the same spot as you planted them the previous year.

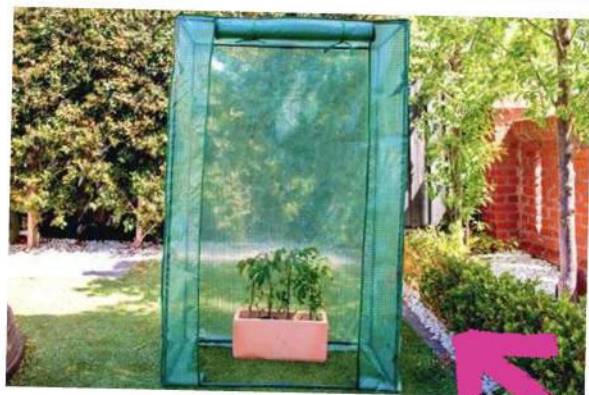
SAVE SEEDS

To save seeds from heirloom tomatoes, pick the fruit when just over-ripe and a little too soft for the table. The seeds need to be fermented, as this removes the gel sac that prevents germination and destroys any seed-borne diseases.

➤ **SQUEEZE** the tomato pulp and seeds into a jar or small bowl. Add a little water so it resembles a thick soup.

➤ **PUT** in a warm place and leave until a mould or foam forms on the top, in 4-8 days, depending on the weather.

➤ **SCOOP** the mould off the top and put into a sieve. Rinse the seeds under cold running water until clean, place on greaseproof paper and allow to dry. Store in envelopes or dark-coloured jars so light can't get in, ready for next year.



Protect your plants

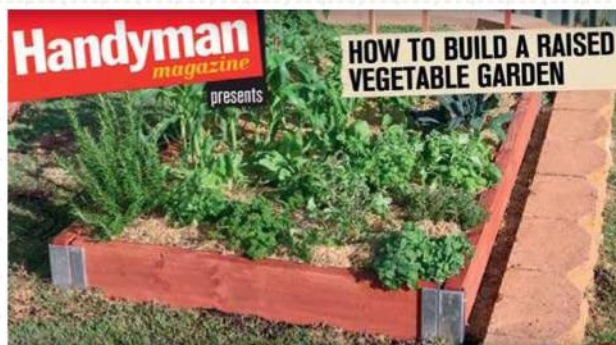
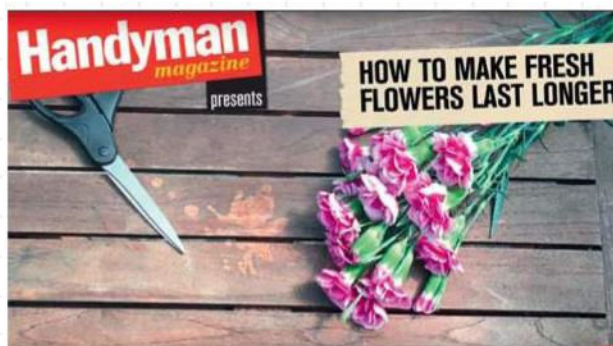
Keep your tomato plants safe from harmful insects by growing them in the NaturalLife Tomato Greenhouse, \$35 (tuscanpath.com.au).

With a sturdy powdercoated steel frame and wire shelving, it's easy to assemble. It measures 100 x 50 x 150mm and the protective mesh cover allows the UV rays to get through to the plants. ➤

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Serves 4

White bean, tomato and anchovy bruschetta

PREPARATION TIME 20 minutes, plus 20 minutes soaking
COOKING TIME 5 minutes

Ingredients

45g can anchovies, drained
Milk, for soaking
400g can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
2 tomatoes, diced
1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup (15g) firmly packed fresh basil, shredded
1/3 cup (7g) fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Freshly ground black pepper
8 thick slices wholegrain sourdough bread
1 small avocado
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

- 1 PUT** the anchovies in a shallow bowl and cover with milk. Set aside for 20 minutes to soak. Drain and pat dry with paper towel, then finely chop.
- 2 COMBINE** the cannellini beans, tomato, onion, basil, parsley, lemon juice and anchovies in a bowl, then season with pepper.
- 3 TOAST** the bread, then spread it with the avocado and spoon the bean mixture on top. Drizzle with the extra virgin olive oil and serve immediately.



This bruschetta makes a quick and easy light meal served with a leafy green salad



Oven-dried tomatoes in oil

An excess of fresh ripe tomatoes can be oven-dried quite easily at home. You can enhance them with a garlic-flavoured oil, if desired.



1 HALVE the tomatoes lengthways, scoop out the seeds if desired, then arrange the tomatoes on a baking tray.



2 BRUSH the tomatoes with olive oil, or use a flavoured oil. Bake at 120°C for 4-6 hours or until semi-dry.



3 Pack the tomatoes into sterilised jars and cover with olive oil. Seal, label, date and store in a cool, dry place.

Gazpacho

Combine 4 cups (1L) tomato juice, 4 seeded and coarsely chopped Roma tomatoes, 1 peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped cucumber, 1 seeded and coarsely chopped small yellow capsicum, and 3 finely chopped spring onions in a large bowl.

Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (15g) coarsely chopped fresh basil and 1 crushed garlic clove. Season to taste with salt, freshly ground black pepper and Tabasco sauce.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and serve the gazpacho cold.



Serves 4

Bloody Mary

This cocktail is the traditional pick-me-up after a big night out.

Ingredients

1 measure (30ml) vodka
4 measures (120ml) tomato juice
1 tablespoon (20ml) lemon juice
2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
2-3 drops Tabasco sauce
Freshly ground black pepper
1 celery stalk
Twist of lemon or lime

1 FILL a shaker with ice cubes. Add the vodka, tomato juice, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco sauce.

2 SHAKE well, then strain into a high-ball glass filled with ice cubes.

3 SEASON with a little freshly ground black pepper and garnish with the celery stalk and a twist of lemon or lime. ➤



Serves 4

Glazed tomatoes with raisins, almonds and garlic

PREPARATION TIME 10 minutes,
plus overnight soaking
COOKING TIME 30 minutes

Ingredients

1/2 cup (65g) muscatels or large
golden raisins
4 long sprigs fresh oregano
4 long sprigs fresh thyme
4 bay leaves
1 lemon
8 garlic cloves, unpeeled
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon molasses or maple syrup
Freshly ground black pepper
500g small tomatoes on the vine,
such as cherry or Roma
60g raw almonds, roughly chopped

1 SOAK the muscatels or raisins in boiling water for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight.

2 PREHEAT the oven to 220°C. Place the oregano, thyme and bay leaves in a shallow roasting pan to make a nest for the tomatoes. Slice off the lemon rind in strips and add to the pan. Juice the lemon and set aside.

3 CRUSH the garlic cloves lightly with the flat side of a large knife so the skins split. Scatter the garlic over the herb mixture. Drain the muscatels or raisins and arrange over the garlic.

4 COMBINE the lemon juice, oil and molasses or maple syrup with a generous grinding of pepper in a large bowl. Gently toss the tomatoes in the dressing until they are well coated, then arrange in the roasting pan. Pour over the remaining dressing.

5 BAKE the tomatoes for 30 minutes or until split and softened, occasionally basting with the cooking juices. Serve sprinkled with the almonds. 🍴



SHEARS & LOPPER RANGE



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GROW TIP

A lack of water when the plant is flowering can cause bud drop, while overwatering and bad drainage may result in root rot.

With its big exotic blooms, the hibiscus will add a touch of the tropics to your garden.

It can be used as a hedging plant and will make a colourful splash in a garden bed. There are also dwarf forms available that grow up to 1.5m high and look spectacular in pots.

Hibiscus belongs to the Malvaceae family and there are several hundred species in the genus and many cultivars.

SHOW-STOPPING HIBISCUS

Colour your garden with the flamboyant flowers and lush green foliage of this hardy, easy-care shrub

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

HELP THEM FLOURISH

Hibiscus, except for *H. syriacus*, love warm frost-free climates.

➤ **PLANT** in a position that receives sun for most of the day and that is protected from wind. The soil must be well drained. Enrich with compost or cow manure before planting.

➤ **FEED** monthly in spring, summer and autumn with a plant food formulated for flowers and fruit.

➤ **MULCH** with lucerne hay or sugar cane to keep the soil moist. Hibiscus like being fed, so add compost or cow manure under the mulch.

➤ **WATER** regularly and deeply, especially during summer.

Grow a colourful living hedge with hibiscus.

HOW TO PRUNE

You'll reap the rewards of even more flowers by pruning hibiscus regularly.

➤ HAWAIIAN HIBISCUS

(*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*)

Prune in spring, reducing by one-third. Make the cuts above healthy buds in the direction you want them to grow. Tip-prune the new growth to promote lateral growth and more flowers.

➤ CONFEDERATE ROSE

(*Hibiscus mutabilis*)

In early spring, cut off half the growth. Keep the shape and make each cut to a healthy bud. This also removes spent flowers and fruiting capsules.

➤ ROSE OF SHARON

(*Hibiscus syriacus*)

For the first two years, prune severely in spring by two-thirds of its growth to encourage a bushy framework. Once established, a light prune of a quarter of its growth is all that is needed. ➤

Flower power

In Polynesia, the hibiscus has romantic associations. Wearing it behind the right ear means you're unattached, behind the left ear means you're married and unavailable. And rumour has it, if you have a flower behind both ears, you're married and available!

WHAT TO GROW

1 Hawaiian hibiscus

Despite its name, the Hawaiian hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) is thought to be native to India and was taken to Hawaii by the early travellers through China and on to the Pacific Islands. Also called the China rose, it is the most commonly grown hibiscus.

It will virtually flower all year in tropical and sub-tropical climates, and will grow well in coastal gardens. In temperate, frost-free areas, it blooms from spring to late autumn.

The smaller cultivars are suitable for containers and the larger cultivars make great feature shrubs or hedges.

Colours include red, yellow, orange and soft shades of pink or white, with single, semi-double or double blooms.

2 Confederate rose

Hibiscus mutabilis was once commonly grown in the area of the Confederate States of America, which is why it acquired this common name. It is also known as the cotton rose.

An almost-deciduous shrub, it reaches a height of about 3-4m, but it can be pruned to keep it lower.

During spring and summer, the Confederate rose features large white flowers that deepen to dark pink. The cultivar 'Plenus' has beautiful double blooms that resemble a peony.

This hibiscus can be grown as far south as Melbourne and Adelaide if given a warm, protected position.

3 Rose of Sharon

If you live in a cold, frosty climate, the Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*) is a great choice.

This lovely deciduous shrub grows from 2.5-3.5m high and produces its lilac flowers during the summer and autumn. It can be used as a hedge or makes a stunning feature plant.

Cultivars are also available in shades of blue, white and pink and some have double or semi-double flowers.



4 Native hibiscus

There are about 40 native species of hibiscus that grow in tropical and hot inland areas. The most common is rosella (*Hibiscus heterophyllus*).

The young leaves of rosella can be cooked like spinach and the calyces used to make jam, in the same way as with wild rosella (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*).

An introduced species, wild rosella is not native to Australia, but it has naturalised so successfully in this country that it is now considered an environmental weed in tropical areas. ➤



PICTURES (TOP) CHERYL MADDOCKS (BOTTOM) ISTOCK



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Garden
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- Cottage Flowers
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A pretty plant, okra has lobed leaves and yellow flowers with reddish centres, which are followed by edible green pods. It is easily grown from seeds sown in spring.

Did you know?

Okra or lady's finger is a member of the hibiscus family. It is eaten as a vegetable and is popular in the West Indies, Africa, India and the Middle East. It needs a warm climate to produce its mucilaginous fruits, which are used in curries, stews and casseroles.



Lilac look-alike

Alyogyne huegelii, or lilac hibiscus as it is known, looks like a hibiscus and was once included in the genus.

A tough native shrub, it will tolerate all but the fiercest frosts. Prune it back by a third after its main flowering flush in spring to encourage a bushy habit.



Hibiscus beetle

- **SPOT IT** Dull black in colour, these beetles can be seen on the buds and flowers. Watch for bud drop and holes in petals.
- **FIX IT** Spray with Yates Confidor, but don't apply it if bees are present.



Metallic flea beetle

- **SPOT IT** This metallic-looking jumping beetle grows up to about 3mm long. Look for holes in the leaves and buds.
- **FIX IT** Use sticky traps to catch these beetles as they jump.



Aphids

- **SPOT IT** These small insects feed on the buds and new shoots. The leaves will be distorted and a black sooty mould may appear.
- **FIX IT** Spray with Yates Pyrethrum Insect Pest Gun. 🐛

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PLANT *AND* PROPAGATE

Grow succulents successfully,
then increase your supply DIY

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Modern gardeners love succulents, and it's not hard to understand why. The horticultural world today is striving to reduce water usage and they are at the top of the easy-care plant list.

Because of their low water demands, there are few plants that are more suited to growing in containers.

And they're near perfect for those gardeners who live in arid areas.

With their great diversity of leaf shapes and colours, they create strong focal points in minimalist designs and their evergreen foliage makes them ideal for small urban gardens.

They're also simple to propagate by taking leaf or stem cuttings, so you can produce more plants for free.

So if you love being surrounded by plants, but you don't have much time to care for them, succulents are for you.



PICTURE (MAIN) ISTOCK (BOTTOM) CHERYL MADDOCKS



EXPERT SECRETS

Organise a swap meet with gardening friends to trade succulents and add to your collection for free.

RIGHT Succulents are ideal plants for growing on a sunny rockery.
BELOW Bees and butterflies will flock to showy *Sedum spectabile*.

Sun or shade?

Most succulents prefer lots of sun. When a plant is suffering from a lack of light, the leaves will turn pale and it will eventually collapse.

But there are shade-loving varieties, including *Rhipsalis* spp., haworthia, *Aeonium tabuliforme* and gasteria that like shade from the hot afternoon sun. *Agave attenuata* tolerates some shade.

Other succulents, such as the rosette-shaped sempervivums, don't appreciate hot summers and do well in cooler districts. They can even withstand severe frosts.

And aeoniums thrive in coastal gardens and inland areas that are not too humid. They will tolerate moderate frosts and some shade.



Help them flourish

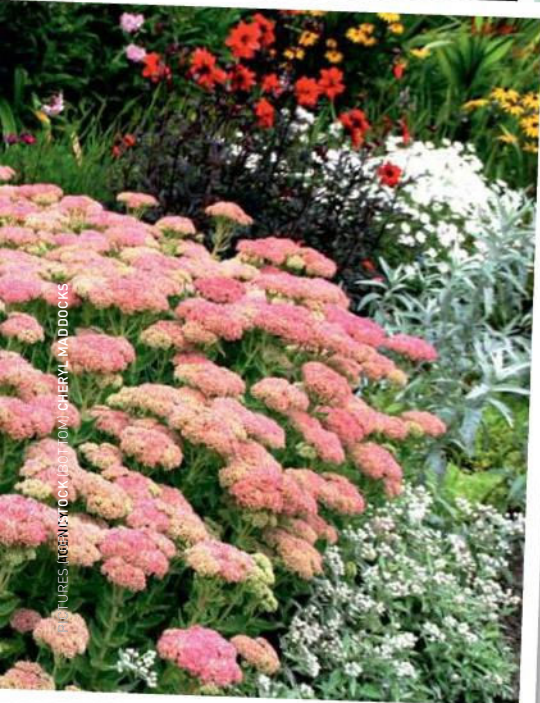
Succulents are hardy plants, but give them a little TLC so they are always looking their best.

☛ **FEED** with a soluble fertiliser in spring, summer and autumn, or apply a six-month slow-release fertiliser in spring.

☛ **WATER** when the potting mix or garden bed is nearly dry. They don't like wet feet so don't overwater. A weekly watering is sufficient for most succulents. ➤



Protect haworthia from the afternoon sun.



How to increase your supply

Succulents are so easy to propagate that many multiply themselves from leaves that drop to the ground and by producing offsets.

Spring is a good time to propagate them yourself by taking leaf and stem cuttings, and by planting the offsets.

Produce new plants for free by taking cuttings.

1 2 3

TAKE LEAF CUTTINGS Many succulents can be propagated from single leaves. The leaves root rapidly, forming small plants at the base of the leaf. Graptopetalum, pachyphytum, gasteria, sedum and echeveria grow easily from leaf cuttings.



1 Remove the leaves

Pull the leaves carefully off the rosette, taking care that they come away cleanly with an almost sealed end, as this is where the growth tissue is. Leave them to callus in a warm and shaded but well-lit situation for at least one week.



2 Position the cuttings

Fill a shallow tray with a coarse mix, consisting of one part potting mix to one part river sand. Position the leaves on top of the mix so they are nearly standing up, but don't push them into the soil. Place the tray in a warm, semi-shaded situation.

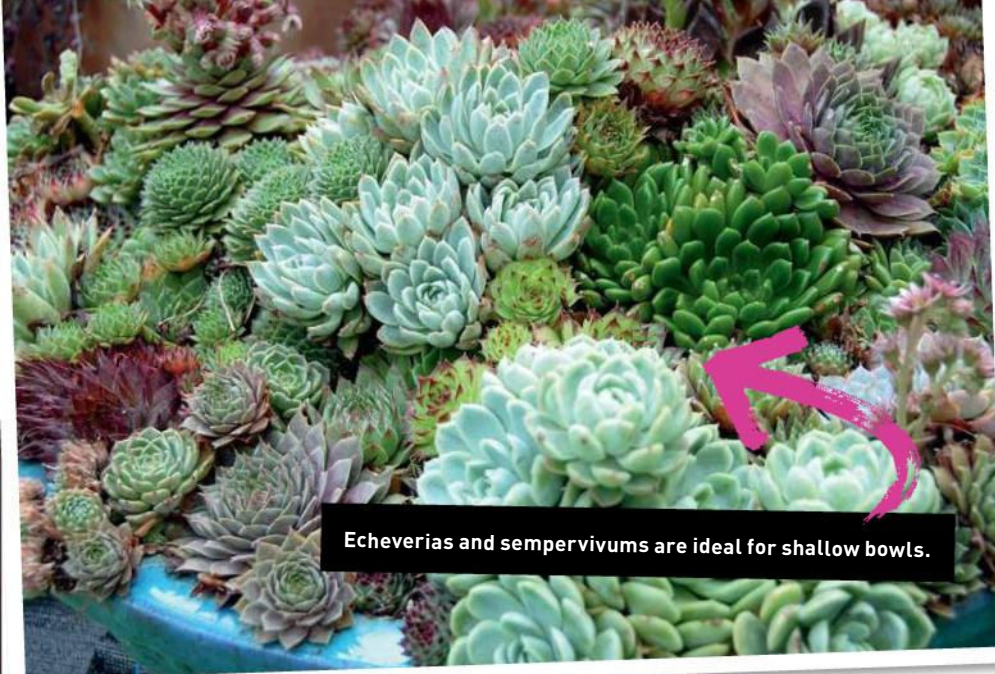


3 Transplant new plants

Wait until the plants that form at the base of each leaf in a few weeks' time have used up the nutrients from the mother leaf, which will shrivel and die. Transplant the new plants into a potting mix specially formulated for succulents.

Compost Mate

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Echeverias and sempervivums are ideal for shallow bowls.

Take stem cuttings

Aeoniums, cotyledons and kalanchoes are easy to grow from stem cuttings.

- ✦ **CUT** the stem from the mother plant using secateurs and position it in a dry, shady spot. Leave it for about a week so the stem can form a callus, which will prevent it rotting.
- ✦ **PLANT** the cutting in its intended position in a pot using a potting mix formulated for succulents, or in the ground in well-drained soil directly where you want it to grow.



Plant offsets

Offsets are plants that develop from the mother plant. They grow on the roots or stem and can be detached and replanted in spring and summer.

Succulents that produce offsets include echeveria, sempervivum, agave, haworthia and aloe.

✦ **REMOVE** the mother plant and offsets carefully from the pot or ground. Gently pull the offsets apart from the mother plant using your fingers or cut off with secateurs.

✦ **PLANT** the offsets in a pot or container using new potting mix formulated for succulents, or directly in the ground in well-drained soil. ➤



CHERYL'S PICKS

Planting ideas

Group together various types of succulents with different leaf shapes, textures and colours to create interesting displays in pots and dry garden beds.

Experiment with different pots and be creative. You can use virtually anything that has drainage holes.

Flat, rosette-shaped succulents such as echeveria and sempervivum look striking planted in low bowls,

while tall sculptural plants such as agave make a bold statement planted in large pots.

Low-growing succulents such as echeveria, *Cotyledon orbiculata*, *Senecio serpens*, sempervivum and sedum are attractive groundcovers.

Succulents are particularly useful for covering dry, sunny banks where it is often difficult to get other plants to grow.

Agave attenuata makes a sculptural statement in a bed.



Assorted 100mm Succulents, \$8 each.
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Yates Thrive All Purpose Soluble Fertiliser, \$16 for 1.8kg. yates.com.au



Scotts Osmocote Professional Seed Raising & Cutting Mix, \$7 for 10L. scottsaustralia.com.au



Scotts Osmocote Professional Cacti & Succulents Mix, \$11 for 25L.

 See more stunning succulents
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REVAMP AND REPLANT



Leggy stems

When succulents such as aeoniums and kalanchoes get too leggy, cut them back and replant the cuttings.

Cut off the stem, put it in a dry, shady spot, allow it to callus for a week, then plant it out.

TIP Leave the rooted stem in the pot and new plants may grow. These can be cut off, left to callus and planted.



Dead leaves

After a few years, the leaves around the base of sempervivums and echeverias die and the plants start to look shabby.

They can easily be tidied up and replanted, and you can also take leaf cuttings and plant the offsets.

✦ **LIFT** the plants from the pot or the ground, then separate the rosettes.

✦ **REMOVE** the dead leaves from the rosettes. Discard the old potting mix and replace with a new potting mix formulated for succulents.

✦ **REPLANT** the rosettes. Don't water for the first week, then keep the mix barely moist. Feed with a six-month controlled-release fertiliser in spring.

TIP Plant offsets with roots immediately and leave root-less offsets in a warm, dry place to callus before replanting.

Grow from seed

Many succulents can be grown from seed. They need temperatures of about 20-30°C to germinate.

✦ **FILL** a tray with seed-raising mix and sow small seeds directly on top of the mix. For larger seeds, cover with a layer of mix as deep as the size of the seed.

✦ **WATER** with a mist sprayer and cover the tray with clear plastic. Position in a dry, shady spot.

✦ **LEAVE** until the seeds germinate in 5-21 days. Check every few days and remove the plastic when germination is complete. Transplant using a potting mix for succulents. 🌱

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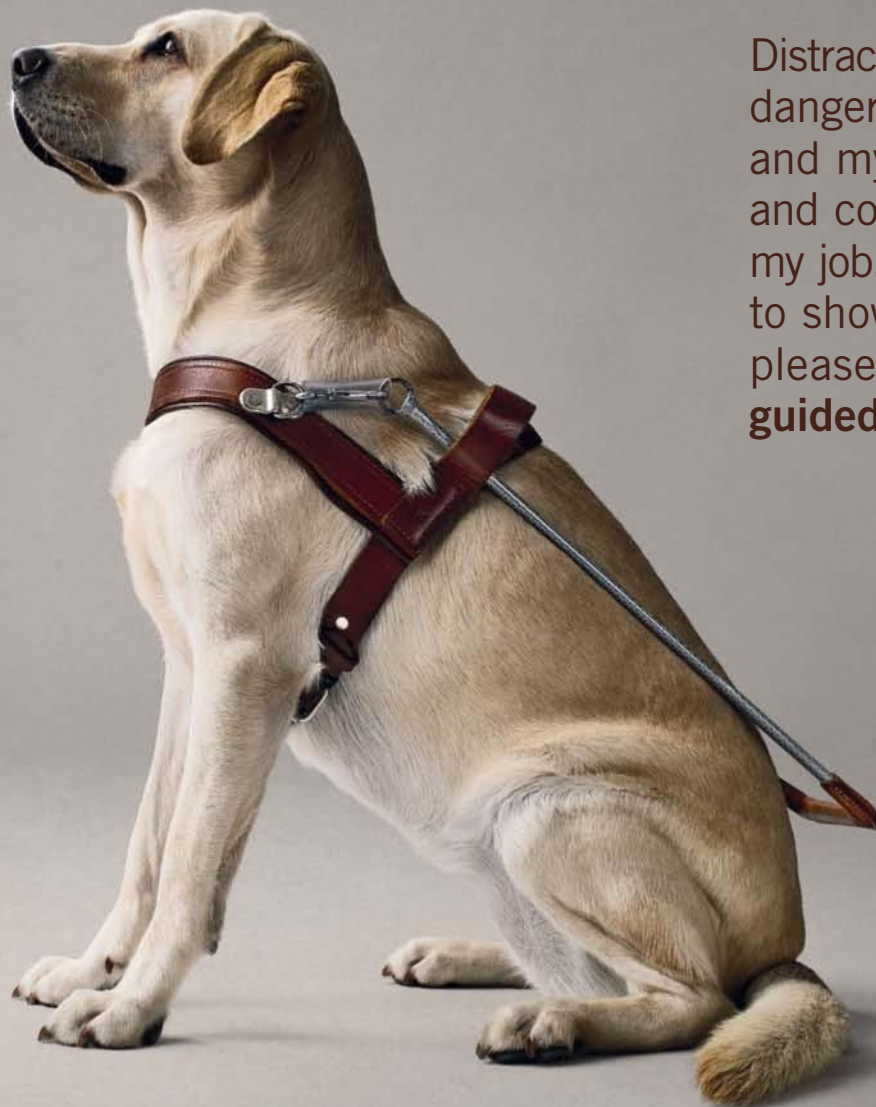
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SPRING CRAFTS

Inspired by vegetables, flowers or herbs, these projects make gorgeous gifts

PICTURES ANDRE MARTIN

Contemporary craft projects that are practical, easy, and lovely to look at are fun for all the family.

Here, we show you how to create vegetable dyes to customise items of clothing, such as a T-shirt, or fabric for furnishings. And for garden lovers, there are pretty clay plant tags for quick identification of herbs and flowers.

Candlelight generates an aura that's relaxing, romantic and flattering, and our clever take on candles uses herbs to give a special touch.

Greetings cards are expensive, so you can create your own and even incorporate seeds into the paper. They can be planted by the recipient and nurtured into flourishing plants. ➤

DYEING WITH VEGETABLES

Use ingredients from your kitchen and garden to make dyes for colouring clothes and fabrics

1 CHOOSE a vegetable from our Colour Guide (below), or experiment to find your own colours.

Roughly chop the vegetable. If using onions, peel the onion and use the skin only, then put it in an old saucepan. You don't want to use your shiny new cookware, as while you won't be using any toxic chemicals, the pan may retain a little of the colour.

Cover the chopped vegetable with water, allowing about 4 cups (1L) of water to every 1 cup of chopped vegetable matter. The larger the item you're dyeing, the more water and vegetable you'll need. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 1 hour.

2 PREPARE the item to be dyed.

How you do this depends on whether you plan to use vinegar or salt as the mordant. A mordant is a substance that helps to fix the dye in the fibres, and in this project, we use either salt or vinegar for this purpose.

If you're using vinegar as the mordant, soak the item in a solution of 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water for 1 hour. Wring it out but don't rinse it before dyeing. If you're using salt as the mordant, simply wet the item, wring it out and leave it damp.

3 STRAIN the hot dye water from the saucepan through a colander into a glass or stainless steel bowl large

enough to hold the item for dyeing, if you used vinegar as the mordant.

If you're using salt, add about ½ cup (150g) of salt for every 4 cups (1L) of dye water, stir thoroughly to dissolve, then strain into a bowl.

4 LOWER the item carefully into the dye bowl, using an old wooden spoon to submerge and agitate it gently.

Continue stirring gently and submerging the item for about 15 minutes, then leave to soak for at least 1 hour. The longer you leave it, the stronger the colour will be.

5 REMOVE the item from the bowl and rinse in cold water until the water runs clear. Wash and dry the item. ➤

COLOUR GUIDE

Vegetables provide a natural, not chemical dye, so the colours won't be strong and will also vary. Experiment first to see what colours you can achieve.

VEGETABLE	MORDANT	COLOUR
Beetroot	Vinegar	Dark pink
Beetroot	Salt	Golden yellow
Brown (yellow) onion skin	Salt or vinegar	Orange-brown
Carrot	Vinegar	Pale yellow
Mushroom	Salt	Mushroom brown
Red cabbage	Vinegar	Pale pink
Red cabbage	Salt	Blue-purple
Red onion skin	Salt or vinegar	Pinkish brown
Spinach	Vinegar	Green

What you need

Item to be dyed (made of natural fibres, such as wool or cotton)
Vegetable of choice (see the Colour Guide)
White vinegar or salt, for mordant
Rubber gloves
Old saucepan and colander
Large glass or stainless steel bowl
Old wooden spoon

In general, wool takes up the colour better than cotton. Here the cotton is shown on the left and the wool on the right. The colours may fade over time.



CLAY PLANT TAGS

Know what you've planted where with these easy-to-make clay labels



DIY TIP

If the clay starts to dry out as you work and small cracks form on the edges of the discs, use a damp cloth to gently smooth them.

1 COVER a work surface with plastic wrap or plastic sheeting, then tape down the edges so it will stay smooth.

2 OPEN the packet of clay and tear off a small amount by pinching it between your finger and thumb. Roll it between your palms to make a ball about 20mm in diameter.

3 FLATTEN the ball on the plastic surface using your fingers, then spread it out into an even, smooth round disc about 2-3mm thick. For longer plant names, make the disc an oval shape.

4 USE a skewer to make a hole about 10mm in from the top edge of the disc.

5 PRESS the plant name into the clay disc using alphabet stamps. Begin with the middle letters and work outwards.

6 ALLOW the clay to dry overnight, then thread twine through the hole.

7 TIE the label onto a small garden stake, the stem of the plant or around the plant pot itself.



Use a bamboo skewer to make a hole near the top of each disc. Press the plant name into the clay using rubber stamps.

What you need

Air-drying clay
Alphabet stamp set
Plastic wrap or black plastic sheeting
Masking tape
Bamboo skewer
Coloured twine

What you need

Fresh herb leaves or sprigs
Colour photocopier
Pale green translucent
vellum paper
Straight high-ball glass
Double-sided tape
Herb-scented candle
or tealight

Experiment with herb
sprigs and leaves to
get the effect you want.



CANDLE HOLDERS

Add a decorative
touch using herbs

- 1 **WORK** out the size of vellum paper you need to wrap around your glass, adding a small overlap, then cut out.
- 2 **LAY** a few herb leaves or sprigs on the paper to get an idea of the design you like best. Try spiky rosemary leaves, bold bay leaves or the feathery foliage of fennel.

Arrange the herbs on the copy plate of a photocopier and print an image onto ordinary paper until you're happy with the design. Then insert the vellum paper into the tray and print out your design.

- 3 **WRAP** the vellum paper around the glass, securing the edges with double-sided tape. Put a candle in each glass. ➤

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PLANTABLE PAPER

DIY TIP

To write directly on the plantable paper, add 1 tablespoon of liquid starch to the pulp to help prevent the ink bleeding.

What you need

Recyclable scrap paper
Bowl
Blender or food processor
Food colouring (optional)
32 x 26cm aluminium
roasting pan
Aluminium flyscreen mesh
Vegetable seeds
Old towels and tea towels
Iron

Embed seeds in handmade paper to give stationery a dual purpose

1 TEAR or shred the recyclable paper into small pieces, then put in a bowl and cover with water. Soak the paper for ½-1 hour.

2 PUT the soaked paper in a blender or food processor and cover with water. Blend the paper until it forms a thick, sludgy pulp. The pulp will be a slightly grey colour as a result of any ink that was on the paper.

If you wish, you can add 2-3 drops of food colouring to tint the pulp.

3 CUT a piece of flyscreen mesh about 1mm bigger all round than the base of the roasting pan, so the mesh will sit in the pan just slightly raised above the base. Place the mesh in the pan and half-fill the pan with water.

Add the pulp and stir to make an even suspension of particles. Sprinkle over about 1 tablespoon of seeds.

4 LIFT the mesh carefully out of the pan and hold it above the pan for a few seconds to allow water to drain through the pulp. You should have a 2mm thick layer of pulp covering the mesh.

Lay a tea towel on a benchtop or flat surface, then carefully put the mesh on a tea towel and allow it to drain more.

5 LAY a thick towel on a flat surface, then place the tea towel with the mesh and pulp on the towel.

Lay another tea towel over the pulp and use an iron set on low to press more water out of the pulp. When steam begins to rise, stop ironing.

6 REMOVE the pulp gently from the mesh, lay it on a dry tea towel and leave to dry for about 1-2 days or until completely dried out. Cut or tear it into shapes and use it to stick on stationery and cards. ✂



Use simple kitchen equipment to make seed-encrusted paper, which can be planted in the garden.

Projects are from *The Ultimate Book of Vegetables* and *The Complete Book of Herbs*, published by Reader's Digest.

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STAKE PLANTS



Young trees and climbing plants need staking for support and protection from strong winds. Stakes can also be used to train plants to grow in the right direction.

It's important to choose the right ties for the plant. Fabric ties are ideal for most plants, as they give support but also the flexibility to move and grow.

Chains are suitable for roses, as they grow fast and the ties can be easily adjusted as the branches grow and expand.

Materials

Timber stakes
Fabric ties
Scissors
Mallet
Gloves

Watch the video 'How to Stake Your Plants' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

1 2 3



1 Position the stake

Look at the plant to see which way it is leaning and position the stake on the opposite side. In windy areas, position it opposite to the direction of the wind. It's best to add the stake when planting to avoid damaging the roots.



2 Hammer in the stake

Hold the stake upright, then drive it into the ground by firmly hitting it on the top with a mallet until it's at least 300mm deep.

TIP Wear gloves when hammering in the stake to avoid splinters.



3 Secure the plant

Cut fabric ties to length and secure the first tie near the base, below the first branch. Wrap it around the trunk and the stake twice and tie it with a bow so it's easy to reposition. Add more ties 200mm apart as required.



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What's on this Month

FREE Kids' D.I.Y. Workshops

» Saturday 1 October FOOTY FEVER Make something special to support your team	» Saturday 15 October ART CLASS Create a work of art for your bedroom
» Sunday 2 October GARDEN CREATURES Create a creepy-crawly garden creature	» Sunday 16 October DRESS-UPS Have some fun with dress-up activities
» Saturday 8 October NATURE Get creative and make a living masterpiece	» Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October WATER SAVING Learn different ways to save water at home
» Sunday 9 October CRAFT Get crafty with different materials	» Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October HALLOWEEN Celebrate Halloween with our themed workshops

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

FREE Adult D.I.Y. Workshops

» Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 October GARDENING Learn about growing herbs, plants and vegies	» Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 October FENCING Learn how to build your own fence
» Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October OUTDOOR PROJECT Gain useful skills to tackle those D.I.Y. projects	
» Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 October DECKING Create the perfect deck for summer	
» Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October NATIONAL WATER WEEK How to save water around the home and garden	

For more information on other instore events or to book, visit bunnings.com.au/yourstore

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GARDEN

How to get ready for a long, hot summer, and the best plants for an allergy-free garden.

PLUS Easy ways to grow salad greens.

DECORATE

Paint concrete and timber floors to transform interior spaces on a budget.

PLUS Make a cement wine cooler DIY.

BUILD

Replace a metal pool fence with glass panels and build a circular deck on a sloping site.

PLUS Custom-make a plywood BBQ bench.

1



2



3



POP QUIZ!

Name that Herb

Can you identify these popular culinary plants by their flowers? The answers are at the bottom of the page

4



7



6



5



8



9



ANSWERS 1 OREGANO 2 BASIL 3 CHIVES 4 CORIANDER 5 THYME 6 PARSLEY 7 MINT 8 ROSEMARY 9 FENNEL

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