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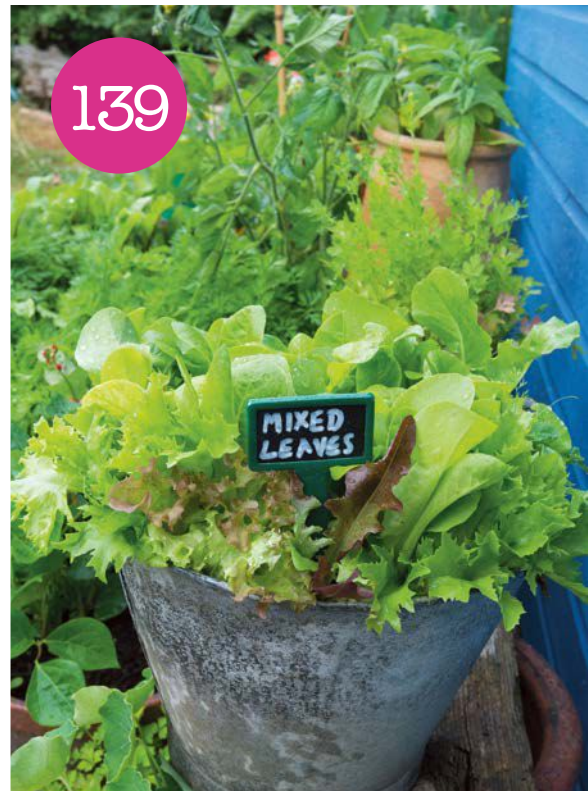
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THIS ISSUE

HANDY HINT OF THE MONTH



SECURE A HOSE TO THE FENCE TO CREATE A REMOTE CONNECTION



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EDITOR'S LETTER



Make these easy shelves to display photos and artwork.

A lush, green lawn is one of the most sought-after features of a home, and it can add a great deal of value. But keeping it in top condition can be tricky, especially after winter takes its toll.

This month, we reveal expert secrets to revive your lawn after the colder months and prepare it for the heat of summer. Follow our guide on page 92 and your neighbours will be green with envy!

While you're outside, take a look around the yard. If you see overgrown trees and shrubs, grimy pavers and garden beds taken over by weeds, it's time for a tidy-up. Find out how to whip it into shape, on page 104.

Small-space living

If you live in a small house or apartment, turn to page 42. We've explored homes designed to maximise functionality in the tiniest of spaces. It's amazing what can be done with smart design ideas in tight confines.

And for a quick and easy project for any space, try our picture ledges, on page 52. They're a versatile way to display your favourite memories.

Happy DIYing,

DAN

MANAGING EDITOR
DANIEL BUTKOVICH

Product of the month

Installing a new pedestrian gate can boost security and improve the look of your yard, and it's an easy weekend DIY project.

Decorative Gates from Protector Aluminium are available in steel or aluminium and come in a range of styles and finishes. Simply choose your desired panel and secure it to the frame with screws to create the gate.

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Protector Rust Effect Steel Decorative Gate Panel, \$130, and Steel Gate Frame, \$81. protectoraluminium.com.au

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Prepare for alfresco entertaining with these backyard additions



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jumbuckbbqs.com.au

Soft landing

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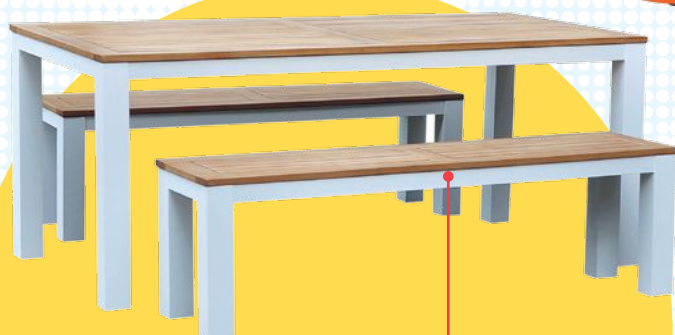
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Barbie to go

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Dining out

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WORDS MARC MCEVOY

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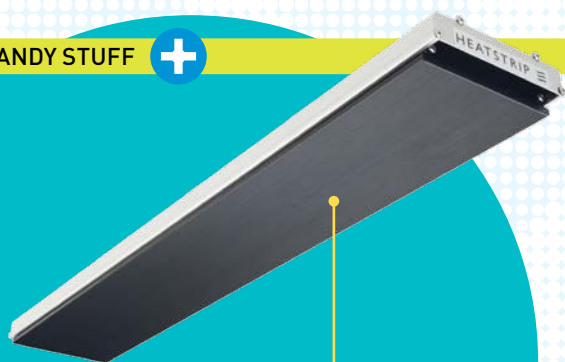
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jbhifi.com.au

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brilliantlighting.com.au



Stepping out

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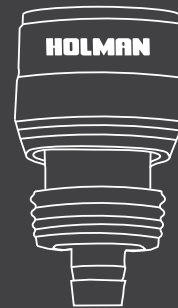
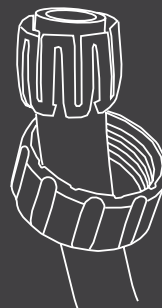
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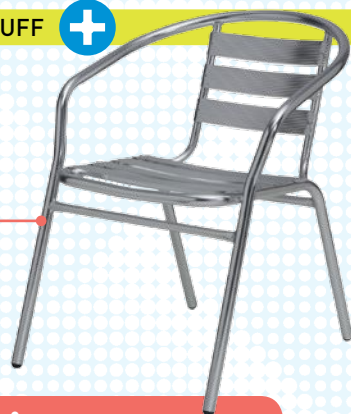
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Sitting pretty

Take a load off your feet with the Mimosa Aluminium Bistro Chair, \$40. Made in a lightweight metal design, it has a smart polished finish and is weather resistant.
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Child's play

Let the kids explore the Swing Slide Climb Timber Outback Cubby House with Slide, \$1449. Designed for DIY assembly, it includes a timber access ladder, verandah with serving counter, 1.8m slide and chalkboard naming sign.
bunnings.com.au



Gazebo fun

Add fun and colour to your backyard with the Sommersault Children's Party Gazebo, \$25. Made with a powdercoated steel frame, it has a mesh side wall and a polyester canopy with a 30+ UPF rating to help protect your kids.
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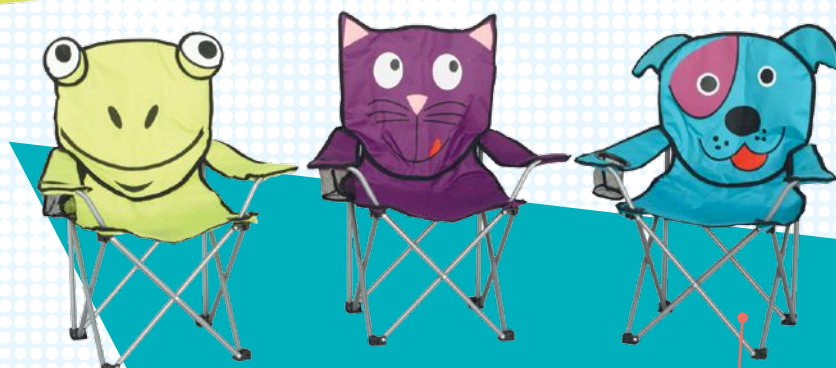
Mozzie shield

Get rid of annoying mosquitoes with the Waxworks Citronella and Sandalwood Mosquito Coils with Terracotta Diffuser, about \$6 for six coils. Each coil burns for seven hours.
waxworksworks.com.au



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A central three-storey staircase floods the house with light.

THE CUBE HOUSE

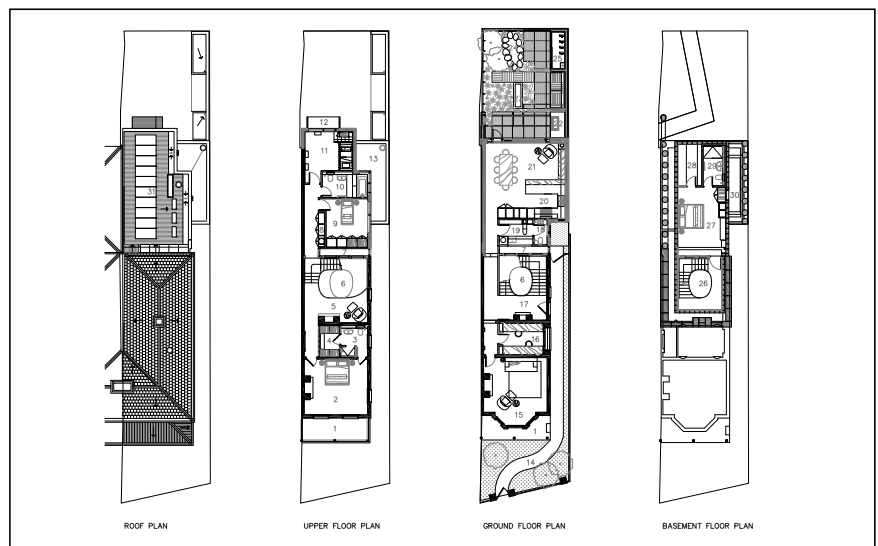
A surrealist art technique balances the old with the new in the redesign of a Victorian home

WORDS SITA SIMONS PICTURES PETER BENNETTS

Renovations of period homes usually include restoring the original features, but not too many adopt a surrealist art technique called cubomania to be the underlying principle of the redesign.

Architects Emma Young and Peter Ho, of Phooey Architects in Melbourne, took a Victorian terrace in North Fitzroy and created a unique and bespoke home based on this surrealist method.

As a result, it contributes to both sustainability and cost-effectiveness by re-using all the original materials in very different ways than they were first intended. ➤





A chandelier is made from the treads and balusters of the old staircase.



Bringing in light

This large Victorian double-storey terrace had grand proportions but hadn't been renovated since the 1980s. Large parts of the interior included dark and stuffy spaces.

The entrance had been moved to the side of the house years earlier and here the staircase takes centre stage.

Spanning three storeys after the addition of a basement, it floods the house with light and sets the scene for the defining design approach.

This abundance of light is carried through to the new rear of the house, which contains the main living area and the kitchen. With a north-east orientation, the whole space is bathed in morning light.

The kitchen has a C-shaped layout that includes a breakfast bar. The cabinetry is built from the old flooring and the cupboard handles are made from the original stair balusters.

The kitchen countertop has mosaic tiles that are also used in the splashback. This forms a relationship with the cubomania idea and the brickwork outside. ➤





A C-shaped kitchen provides extra utility with a breakfast bar.

DESIGN TIP

Open shelving helps to break up the heaviness of the cabinetry while retaining useful storage space, and it can be used for collections.



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The original lounge room is bathed in natural light.

Sensitive redesigning

The semi-formal rooms at the front of the house had good proportions and were in need of a thorough fix-up.

The walls were covered in a hessian cloth wallpaper, then painted. The result was textural and tactile, and the owners were keen to reproduce the technique.

‘When I started investigating tradespeople who were continuing this decorating technique, I began to think it was going to be impossible to find,’ says Emma.

‘Then, as synchronicity would have it, we found the same family

business that had originally done the work years ago.’

The decision to go down rather than out was a long-term response. The owners knew they wanted to live in the house for years and so collaborated with their neighbours.

‘It wasn’t the easiest route to take, but the family had a real commitment to maintaining good relationships.

‘When it became clear we couldn’t fit everything within the existing envelope, rather than going out and encroaching on light and views and changing the footprint, the clear solution was to go down,’ says Emma.



New elements look like they’ve always been in place when original materials are repurposed





About cubomania

Cubomania is an artform in which collages are made from images or pictures cut into squares and reassembled without regard for the original. This creates a new work from old pieces.

For this house, it meant re-using and reinventing the old building materials. This reduced the energy needed to produce new materials.

Materials that would have been demolished were instead salvaged for use in the extension. >

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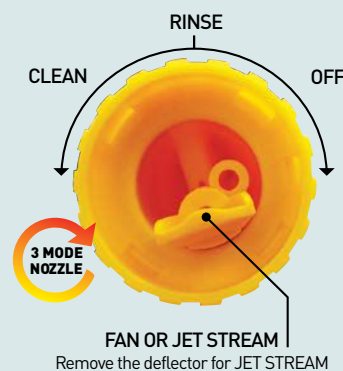
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Sleeping spaces

All the bedrooms are upstairs, with the two children's rooms separated by a bathroom. With a view of the backyard, the spaces are light and bright with an emphasis on concealed storage and uncluttered floor space.

'It's a flexible approach and it doesn't tie the room to any one age group,' says Emma.

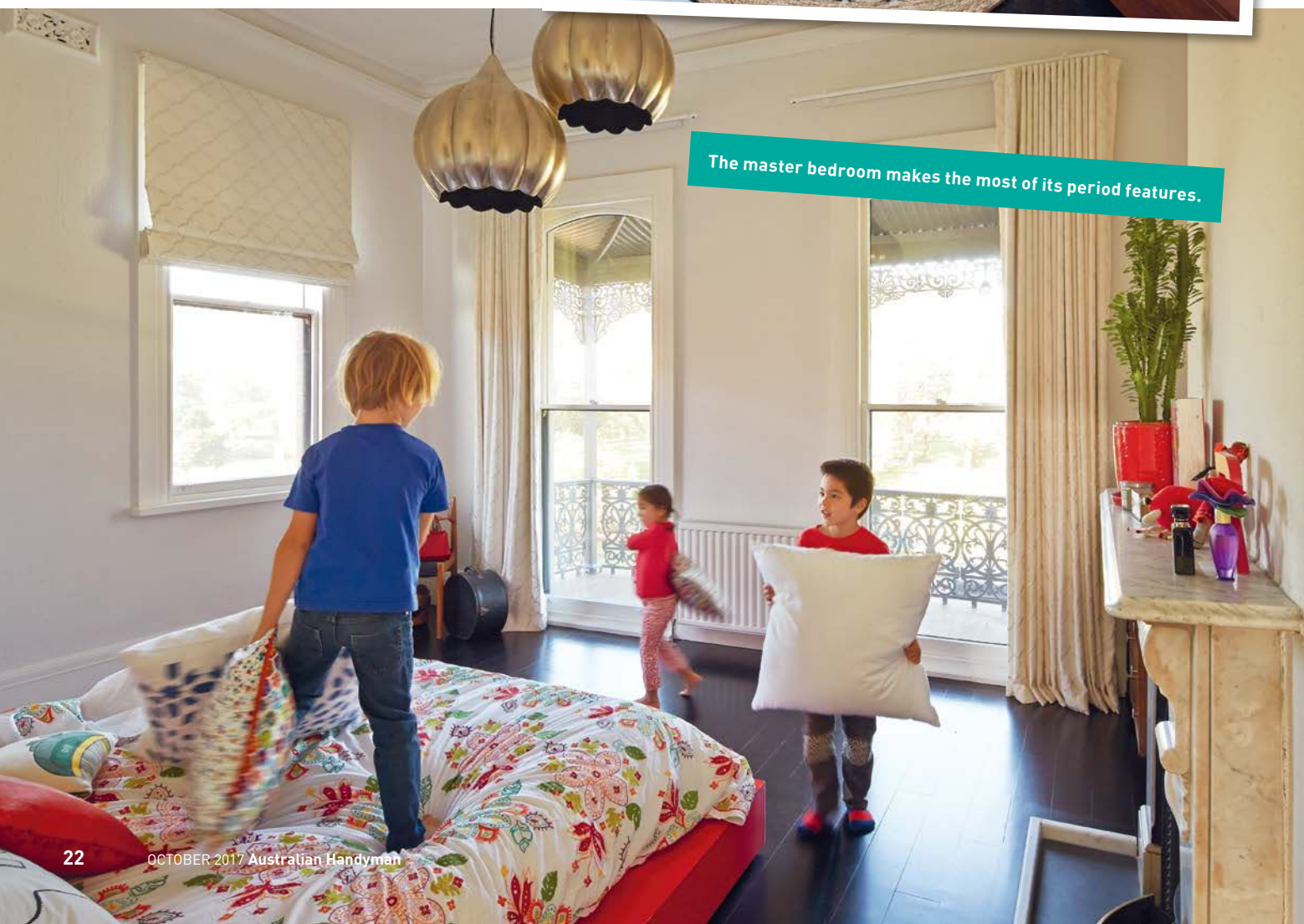
'Kids' rooms need as much storage as possible. We have added fun by building a loft bed using parts of the old staircase and creating drawers in the steps and a wardrobe in the corner.'

The master bedroom is at the front and retains the formal features of the original house. New hardwood timber floors stained very dark add contrast.

'This room was already exquisite, so all we did was replace the flooring and light fittings, repainted it and fixed it up, and introduced an ensuite.' ➤



A loft bed frees the floor space for a play area.



The master bedroom makes the most of its period features.

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Strong design details work in harmony in the toilet.

Using feature tiles

Original Moroccan tiles are the highlight in the bathrooms, but Emma says it was important not to overuse such a strong pattern.

'We kept it to where it would have the most impact in the smallest space,' she says.

In the ensuite, the tiles line the shower cubicle, which contrasts

with the bluestone tiles on the floor and the white tiles on the walls.

In the toilet, the tiles form the backdrop to the basin and the central circle in the design is replicated through the mirror and an Artemide Castore pendant light.

Porcelain and chrome fittings are light and simple and excess storage space is kept out of the room. ➤

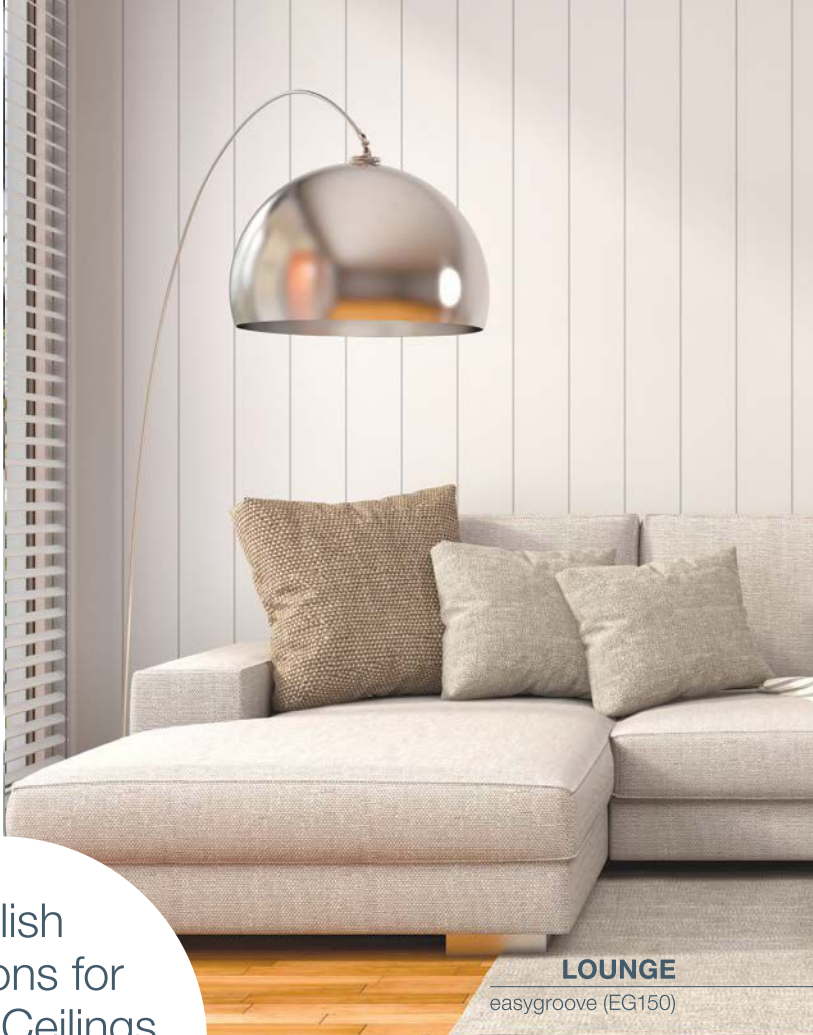


ABOVE A feature tile leads the way into the main bathroom.
BELOW The same material and treatment extends to the laundry.





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ABOVE The award-winning garden design is layered and diverse. BELOW From the street, the house is completely in keeping with the neighbourhood.



A new view

The cubomania technique is most evident on the external brickwork at the rear, which is laid out in opposing directions, giving it a distinct pattern.

Many of the existing features were salvaged from the demolition, including the timber from the structure and flooring, windows, doors, security grills and staircase.

The old security screens are used as window shades. Pieces of the old slate roof are mixed with the brick.

The award-winning garden space includes cooking and sitting areas. A back gate allows the space to be opened to the lane for neighbourly gatherings.

This is a house of contrasts – the old and the new, the dismantled and repurposed, the dark timbers and white walls, and the journey from the Victorian facade to the modern rear. 🌀

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Alexander Pollock Interiors founder Aaron Wong makes use of colour to revive a room.

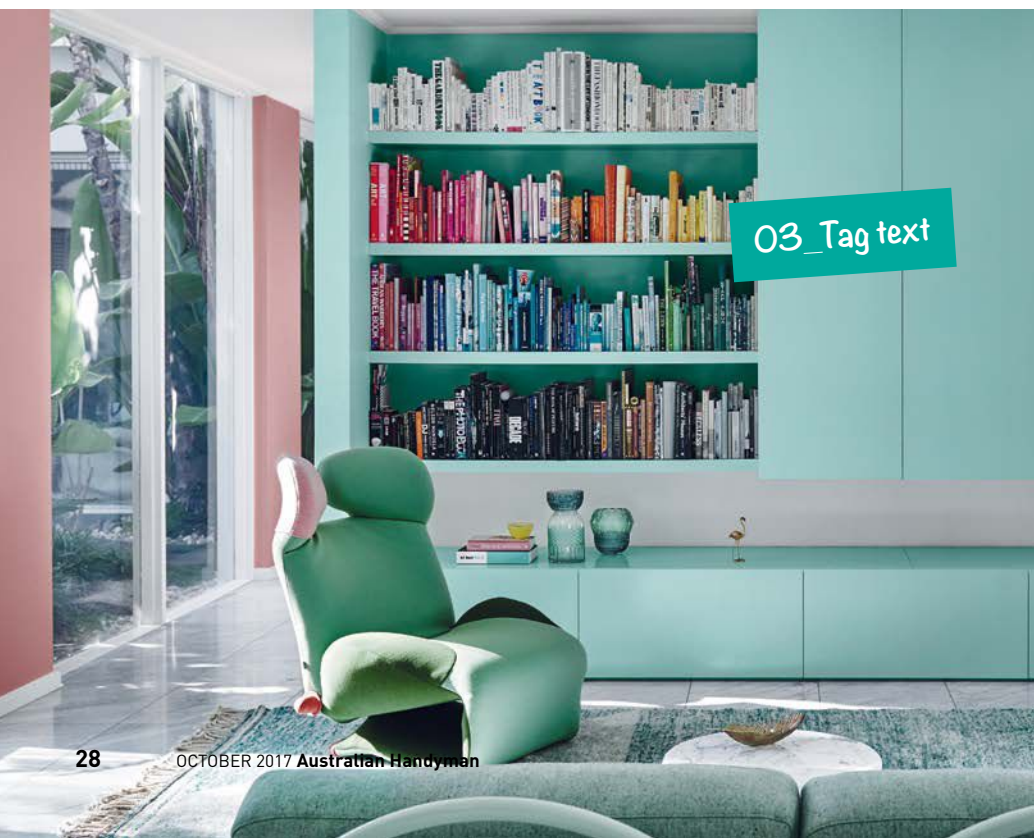


Adam Scougall's use of wallpaper adds texture that changes in different light.

Walls of colour

Replace white with an exuberant palette that expresses your own style and creates mood and ambience

WORDS SITA SIMONS



03 Tag text

To revive a room, or an entire house, there's nothing as effective as adding colour to the walls. Colour generates and enhances mood as well as sets the scene for whatever activity or theme you wish to create.

It's not just paint that can transform. Wallpaper adds texture that reflects differently in changing light, making a dynamic space. ➤



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Atticus & Milo's design director Caecilia Potter creates interest with a bold pattern and colour.



Architect David Boyle adds impact to a room with a Hokusai artwork design.



PICTURES (LEFT) DEREK SWALWELL, BOTTOM (RIGHT) BRIGID ARNOTT

Wallpaper impact

Interior designer Alix Helps (alixhelpsinteriors.com.au) says the days when wallpaper was regarded as a European preference are long gone.

'There's so much exposure to decorating trends now, from social media really influencing people's decisions to popular television shows,' says Alix.

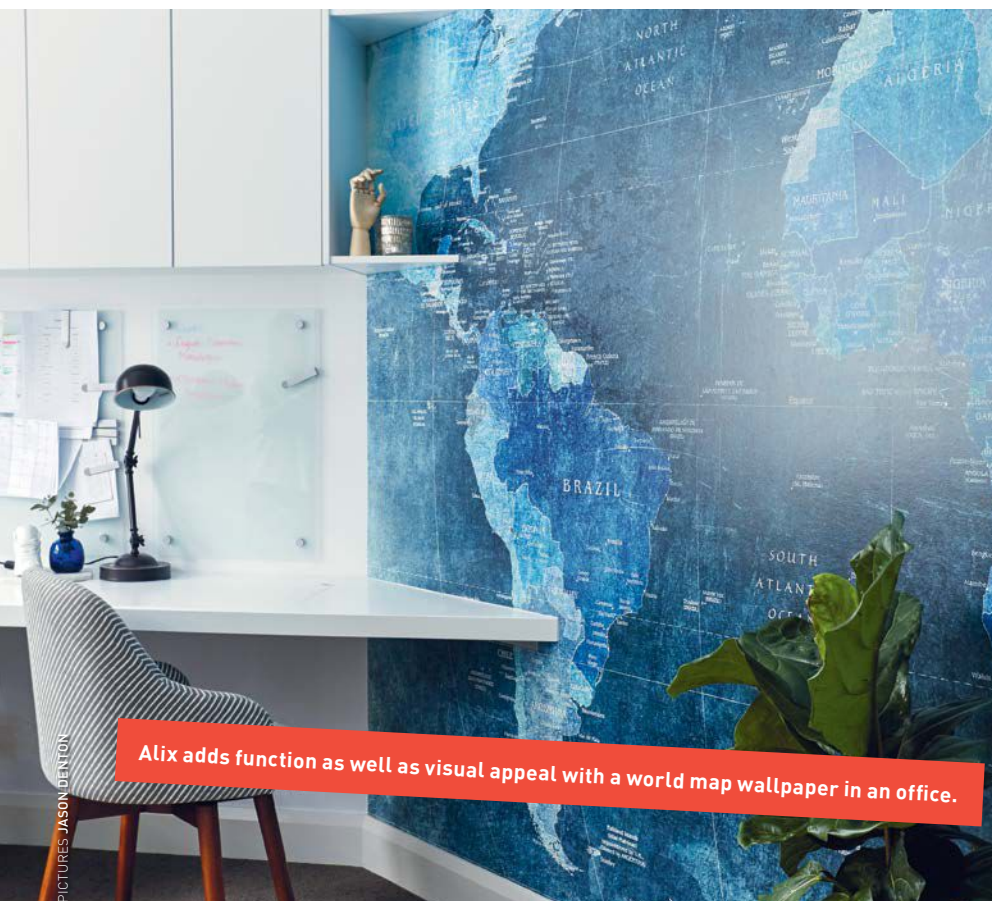
'I don't have a hard sell at all convincing people to go for it. People are ready for it and looking to find more interesting ways to decorate a room.'

Alix recommends a wallpaper novice to start with a small room.

'If you want to create a good bit of impact without taking too much of a risk, choose a small area such as a powder room. It won't overwhelm and it's a nice surprise because the door will generally be closed,' he says.

In a large space, a strong pattern can overwhelm. But even a more neutral wallpaper offers a point of difference that can make a room.

'It gives visual texture and makes a statement by repeating a pattern that is precise and exact.' ➤



PICTURES JASON DENTON



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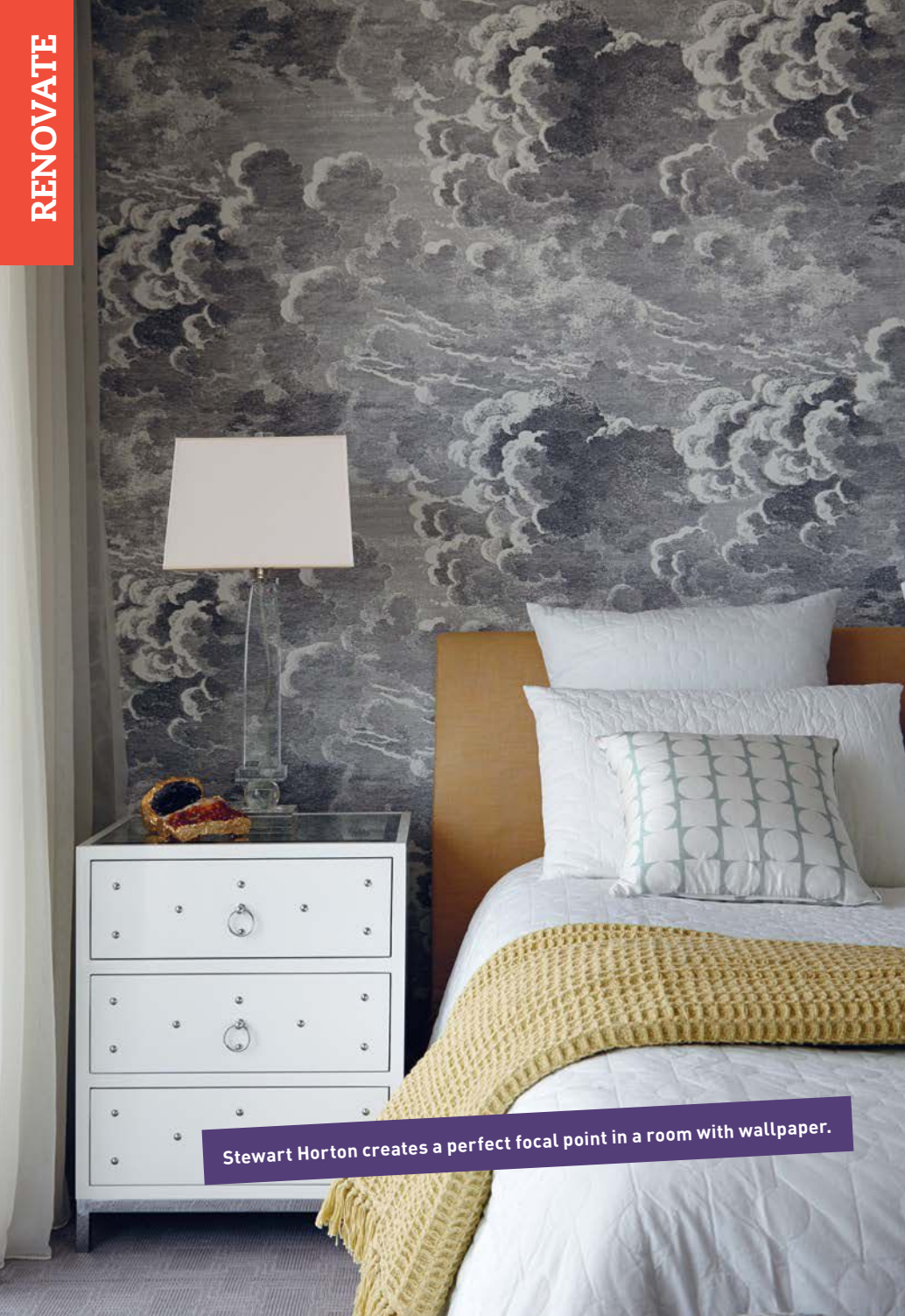
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Stewart Horton creates a perfect focal point in a room with wallpaper.

Bold bedrooms

Creating a beautiful bedroom that feels like a special retreat is something we should all aspire to, says Alix.

Wallpaper creates the perfect focal point, and preferably something that can be seen through an open door.

'We start and end each day in our bedrooms, so you should choose a design you really love and go from there. Wallpaper isn't like it was and getting it on and off is so

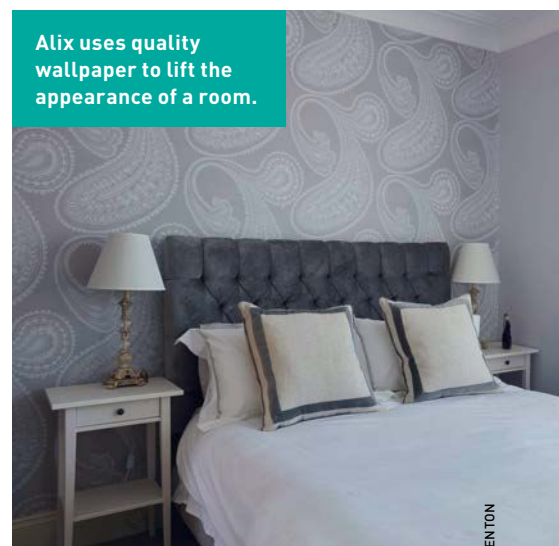
much easier these days. You don't have to feel you are stuck with it forever,' says Alix.

Wallpaper is an investment in your space, and prices vary widely, depending on where the stock is coming from and on the quality.

A good-quality wallpaper is always going to look better, so if using it on one wall or in a small space, choose the best you can afford and enjoy the wow factor it will bring. ➤



Alix uses quality wallpaper to lift the appearance of a room.



Wallpaper makes use of colour and texture to create a striking focal point in a room



Alix adds character to a space with a bold pattern.



Stewart selects colours that complement the theme of a child's room.

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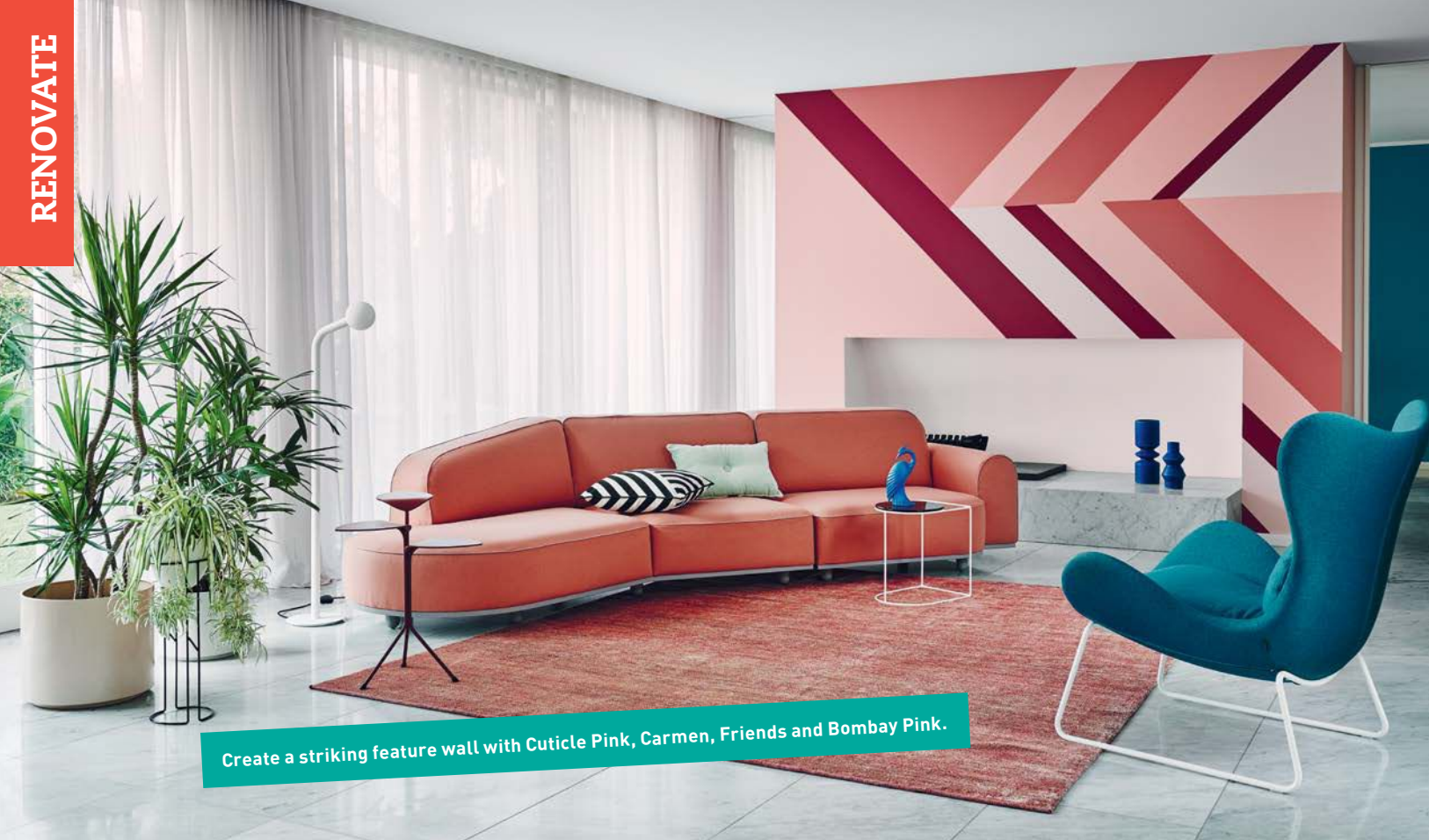
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Paint trends

With many of us looking to slow down and find more balance in our lives, design will shift from the prescriptive to the more personalised in the coming year.

Raw textures and soft neutrals will dominate, but they will be juxtaposed with rich green and tropical brights, a palette expressing individuality.

The 2018 Dulux Colour Trends Balance is a collection that celebrates four themes – essential, kinship,

escapade and reflect. This compilation aims to nurture and inspire, with colours and textures drawn from nature paired with zesty shades that hint at adventure in faraway places.

Dulux Colour Expert Andrea Lucena-Orr says 2018 will see an emphasis on balance and community.

'Our homes should tell our stories, connecting us to both the past and the future. Colour is a wonderful way to express our personal tastes and passions,' says Andrea. ➤



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Global inspiration

So how are 2018 trends shaping up? Andrea says natural, earthy colours and textures will be popular and there will be greater appreciation for the splendour of imperfection.

'At the same time, we'll also see an inspiring travel palette emerging, filled with palm prints, happiness and visual delights. Immersing yourself in colour can be transformative,' says Andrea.

'Soft, greenish-greys such as Dulux Spanish Olive and neutral pinks such as Dulux Mornington Half are predicted to be popular in 2018.

'They will provide the perfect base to experiment with many of the bolder brights coming through.' 🌈



Cuticle Pink



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★ ORIGINS

Plasterboard



Plasterboard is a popular building product used to line interior walls and ceilings, and is found in most homes.

It is made by combining gypsum plaster, plasticiser, a foaming agent and fibre, which is then pressed between two thick sheets of paper.

Additives allow plasterboard to be fire and water resistant and used as soundproofing.

Plasterboard was introduced to Australia in the 1940s and is also known as drywall, gypsum board, or by trade names such as Gyprock.

It can be installed by DIYers with just a few tools and can be finished with various treatments including paint, wallpaper, tiles, wainscoting and rendering.

Repairing cracks and holes in plasterboard is an easy DIY project.

DIY TIP

Don't throw out excess interior paint in case you need to paint over patches in plasterboard walls in the future.

Plasterboard panels are secured to wall studs with adhesive and nails or screws.

How to install panels

Plasterboard is usually installed after the frame of a building has been erected and the wiring and plumbing have been done.

It comes in lengths of up to 6m and in widths of either 1200mm or 1350mm. Most internal walls are lined with 10mm thick plasterboard, but ceiling plasterboard needs to be

reinforced for strength, so it tends to be slightly thicker.

The panels are secured to building frames using adhesive and screws or nails. Joints are taped and filled with finishing plaster before being sanded.

Because it is a lightweight material, plasterboard can be easily cut to install lights and fixtures.

@BIM_Engineer

Workshop Member Profile

Chris enjoys helping people with the structural issues of their projects.

Known as BIM_Engineer in the Workshop community, construction and civil engineer Chris loves to help people.

Chris has shared information on topics ranging from retiling leaky showers and repairing cracked concrete slabs to determining if a beam is load-bearing.

'The internet is a wonderful tool. Physically, I can reach only one, maybe two, people needing advice a day, but on the internet I can reach hundreds,' says Chris.

'I enjoy helping those that have issues with their projects, especially from a structural point of view.'

Chris has hands-on construction skills and design experience.

'I like being hands-on, so I spend half a day on site working with the tools. The other half, I'm involved in design engineering,' he says.

Unlike some professionals, Chris encourages people to have a go at DIY, and says the Workshop community empowers DIYers to share their projects.



**'Never doubt one's ability to undertake projects.
Most people just need a little help at the start'**

Renovation tips

Home renovations don't always go to plan. As well as being dirty, noisy and expensive, the work can be hampered by bad weather and unreliable tradies.

Thorough research and planning before the work begins can minimise

delays and expenses. Before you start your next major renovation, have a look at our most useful tips at handyman.net.au/top-10-reno-tips.

They'll help you keep budgets in check and maximise resale value.



Join the discussion at Workshop, a fun online community where you can ask DIY questions, share your projects and get tips and inspiration for your home. Sign up now at workshop.com.au.

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★ EXPERT TIPS

Mitresaw



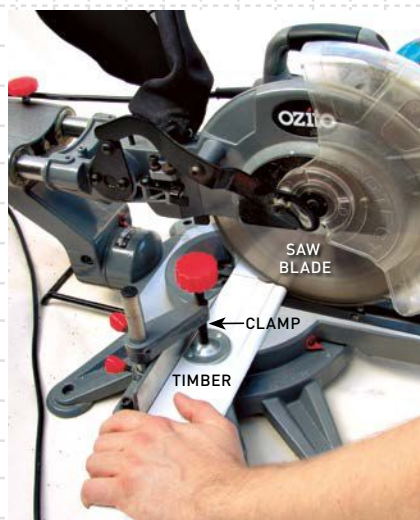
Cutting features

A mitresaw cuts across timber grain, called crosscutting. It is designed for square, mitred or bevelled sawing of door and window trim, roof framing, decking boards and other long pieces of timber.

A compound mitresaw has a circular platform. The saw is mounted on a spring-loaded arm that can be swung down to cut the timber. The pivot of the swing arm can be tilted up to 45° to one or both sides.

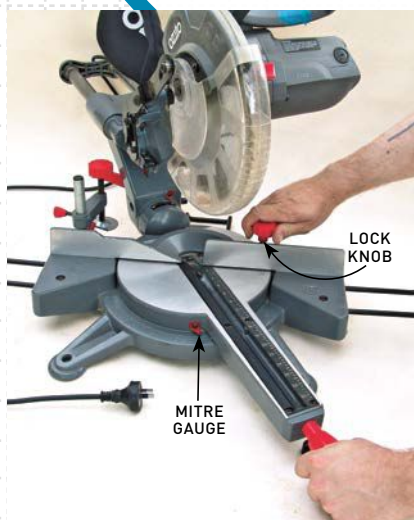
Mitresaws feature a blade guard that is connected to the swing arm pivot by a mechanical linkage.

This opens the blade guard automatically as the saw is brought down towards the workpiece and closes it again once the cut is completed. Always unplug the saw before making any adjustments.



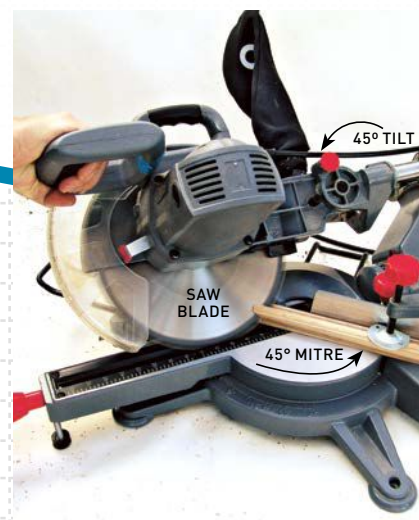
✚ MAKE SQUARE CUTS

Keep the mitre platform and the bevel pivot at the default 90° setting. Align and clamp the timber so the saw blade is on the waste side of the cut line. Turn on the saw and let it reach full power, then lower it onto the workpiece. If your mitresaw has a slide feature, move the saw slowly forward to complete the cut.



✚ CUT MITRES

Unlock the mitre platform and rotate it so the saw blade is orientated at the required angle, which is indicated on the mitre gauge. Tighten the lock knob or quick-release lever, then start the saw and cut the timber. For 45° mitres, cut test pieces of scrap timber to ensure mitres meet at precisely 90°.



✚ SET COMPOUND ANGLES

When cutting workpieces such as cornices that require a joint involving both a mitre and a bevel, set the mitre angle on the saw first. Once the mitre platform is locked in position, release the bevel pivot and set the tilt angle. Now you can start the saw and complete the cut.



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ESCAPE PODS

A Brisbane collective redefines the idea of a living space by creating tiny, affordable mobile houses

WORDS SITA SIMONS

In the face of rising property prices and limited housing availability, three colleagues with architecture, building and carpentry backgrounds formed The Tiny House Company (tinyhousecompany.com.au).

Architecture graduate turned carpenter Lara Nobel says she, Andrew Carter and Greg Thornton were drawn together by their shared concern about the impact

of housing costs and a desire to develop better alternatives.

They believed that creating smaller, high-quality mobile spaces, called pods, would deal with affordability and create diversity in housing stock.

'A tiny house on wheels is another solution worth exploring, we thought. It's also a way to in-fill rather than create more density on existing blocks by sacrificing all the green space and

trees and building multiple larger homes or high-rises,' says Lara.

'This in-fill approach preserves the character of a suburb and increases density by stealth.'

The Brisbane company's base model, Pod C, costs \$79,000 for a fully functioning house on a trailer. The 7.3 x 2.4m pod includes a bathroom and kitchen with customised upgrades accommodating one to two people. ➤

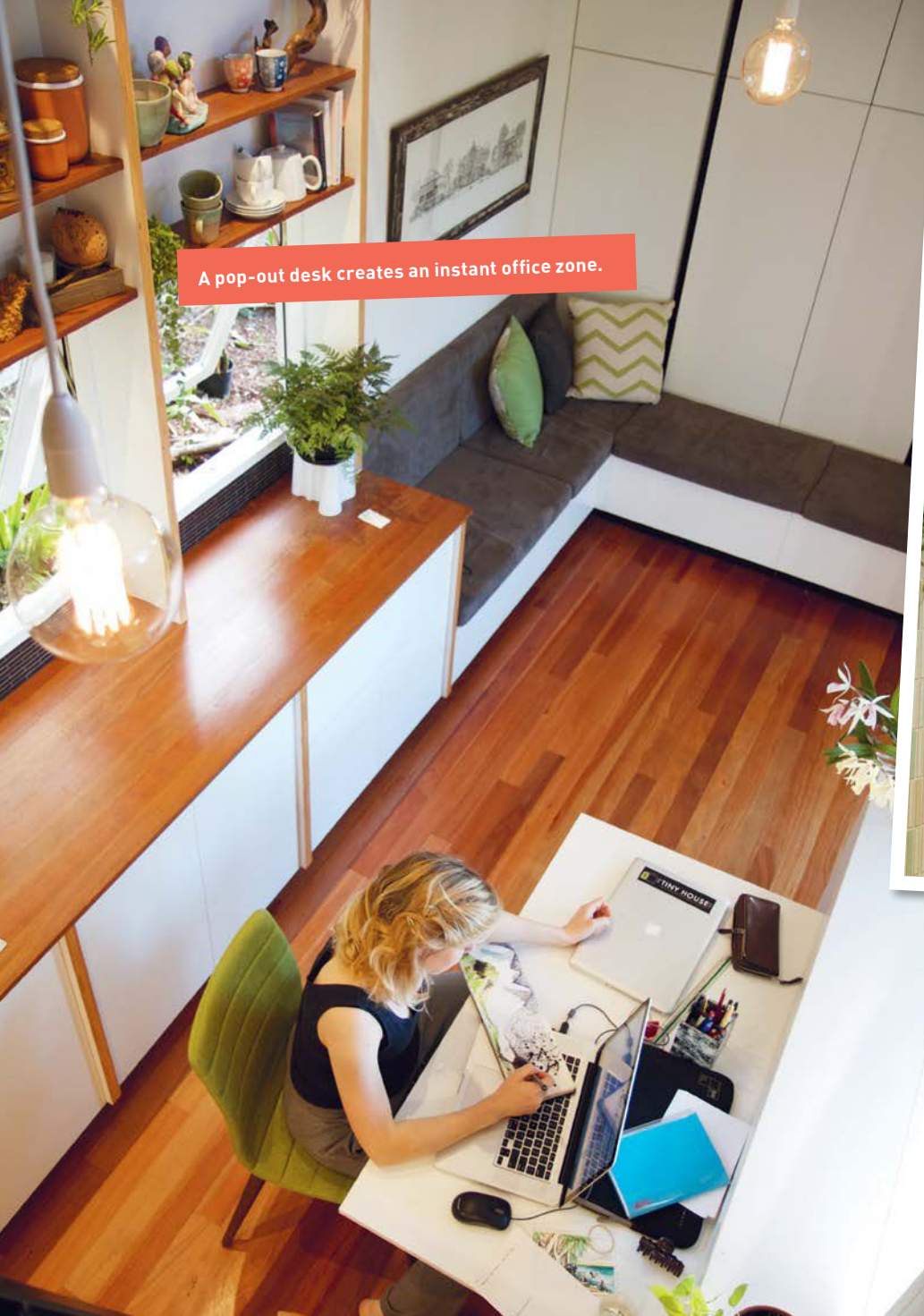


The Tiny House Company founders Greg Thornton, Andrew Carter and Lara Nobel.



Plants reinforce a close-to-nature ethos behind the design.





Versatile spaces

Flexibility is crucial to the success of affordable housing and in small spaces it is absolutely essential.

Pod C is designed with this in mind. The space has been tested for functionality and aesthetics for a variety of furniture arrangements, optional window and door upgrades and additional cabinetry.

There's also ample room to make it your own with clear wall space in sensible locations for TVs and pictures.

All the pods are built on trailers, so they must follow the same rules that apply to caravans and transportable dwellings, both for using the roads and for setting down.

So if you plan on using a pod on private land, you are required to follow local council guidelines.

In warm climates, the deck is a crucial addition that functions as an extra room. It's a modular system that is bolted together, taking only two hours to set up or pack away.

'I think a lot of people aren't living in the right-sized dwelling for their needs. That's not to say there isn't a place for the four-bedroom home,' says Lara.

'But it's for a time and place in life and many people find themselves overscaled at different stages.'

This home allows you to scale back and reframe what you really need, save money, live simply and be mobile if that appeals. It also encourages sharing of resources with the community. ➤

DIY TIP

You can buy the plans to build the The Tiny House Company pods if you want to DIY. A Tiny House Shell is also available.

The covered deck extends the living area outdoors.

After

The interior is transformed with zoned spaces and multi-levels.



Apartment redesign

The Tiny House Company has also redesigned small apartment interiors to make them liveable for more people.

This inner-city apartment was renovated to sleep five people and accommodate short-stay guests. Restricted access, a tight deadline and limited external-light sources were constant challenges.

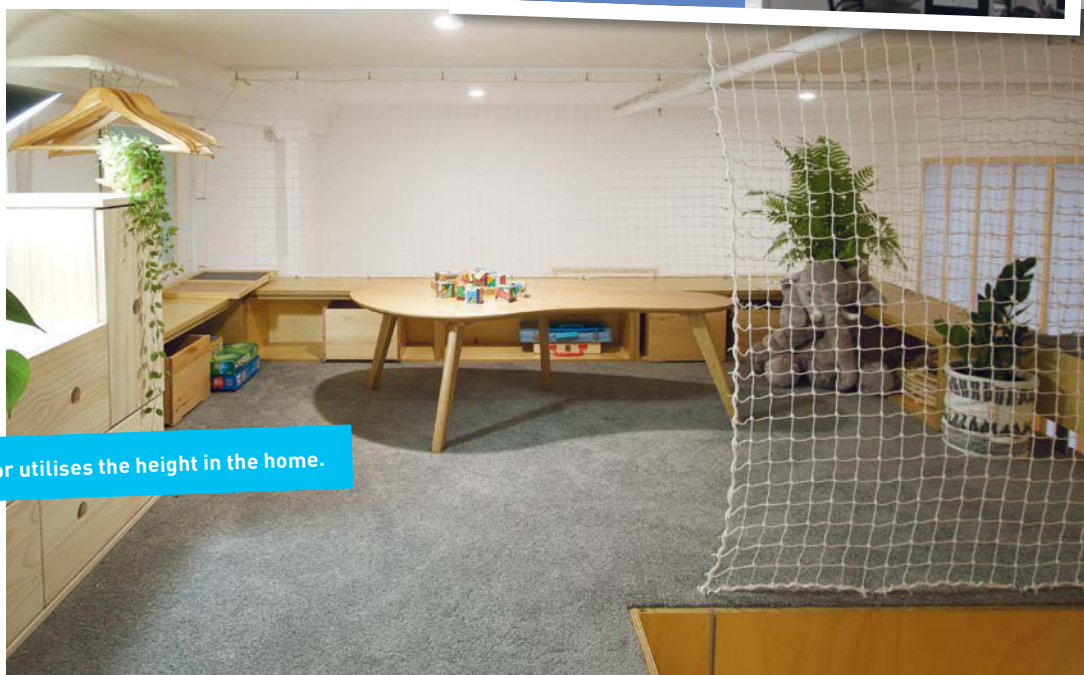
'This really was a tricky brief. It can't be compared to a puzzle because

that would imply a definitive solution. Instead, there could be multiple designs that would work equally well, so it's a matter of arriving at what works for the client and maximising the space,' says Lara.

Thinking in sections and utilising the height are the key to making a small home succeed without it feeling claustrophobic and where every zone is fighting for the space. ➤



A mezzanine floor utilises the height in the home.



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The extra floor draws attention to the height rather than the floor space. RIGHT The kitchen leads to a full bathroom with a tub.



Though there were no outdoor areas or views in this apartment, bringing in light and a sense of having different places to look at was crucial.

Light timbers and a neutral colour scheme help harmonise each area and minimise visual heaviness.

Where it was possible, translucent panels replaced solid walls and still balanced with the overall look. Storage is considered in all parts of the design.

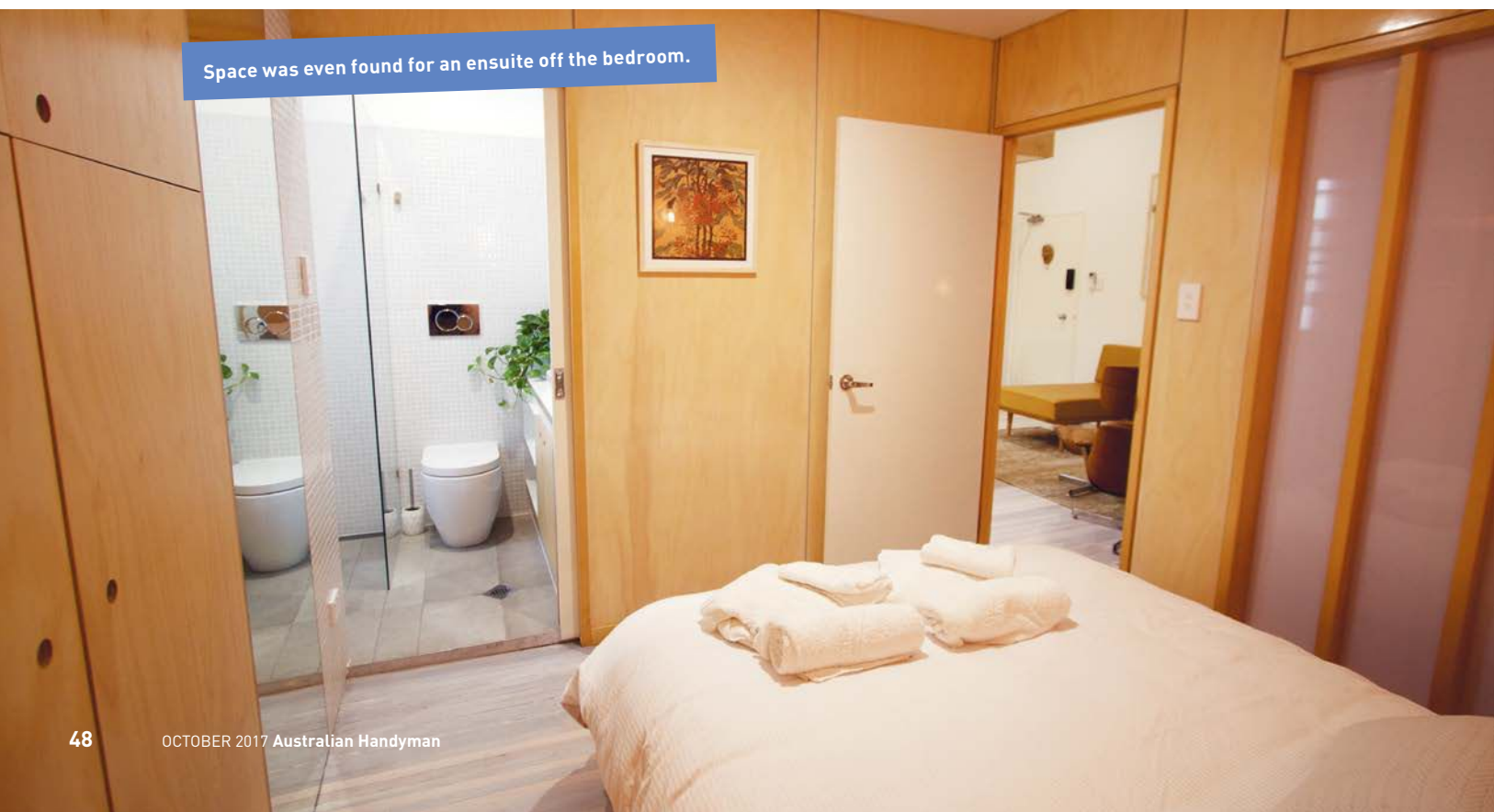
The kitchen island, the stairs and the mezzanine all have hidden storage, and one of the walls conceals the laundry, a wardrobe and a water heater.

'The owners are very happy with the result and find living in it even at maximum capacity achievable. There isn't a feeling of sacrifice, more a feeling of resolving the space well, and that transfers into a pleasing place in which to live, no matter the size,' says Lara. 🌟



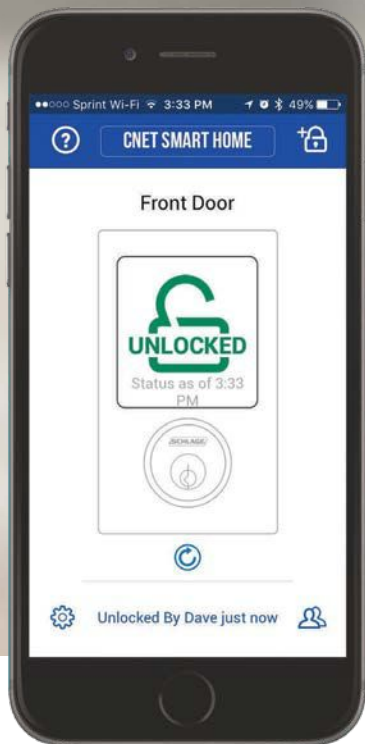
This design turns a 40sqm apartment into a family dwelling with room to sleep five

Space was even found for an ensuite off the bedroom.



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Maximise storage

Install built-in wardrobes to cut clutter in the bedroom and keep clothes and accessories organised

Built-in wardrobes are the ideal storage solution for bedrooms, as they are the most efficient way to store clothes and accessories.

Modular wardrobes make it easy to take advantage of available space, as you can choose the components you need to create a wardrobe that best suits your room.

When designing a wardrobe, take into account the different items that need to be stored. Install hanging storage for shirts, coats and pants, and add shelving for accessories.

Keep your wardrobe organised by storing smaller items in drawers. Position shoe storage down low for easy access, and keep infrequently used and bulky items on the top shelf.



Install modular storage to turn a spare room into a walk-in wardrobe.



Add slide-out shelves at the base of a wardrobe to make shoes easier to access.

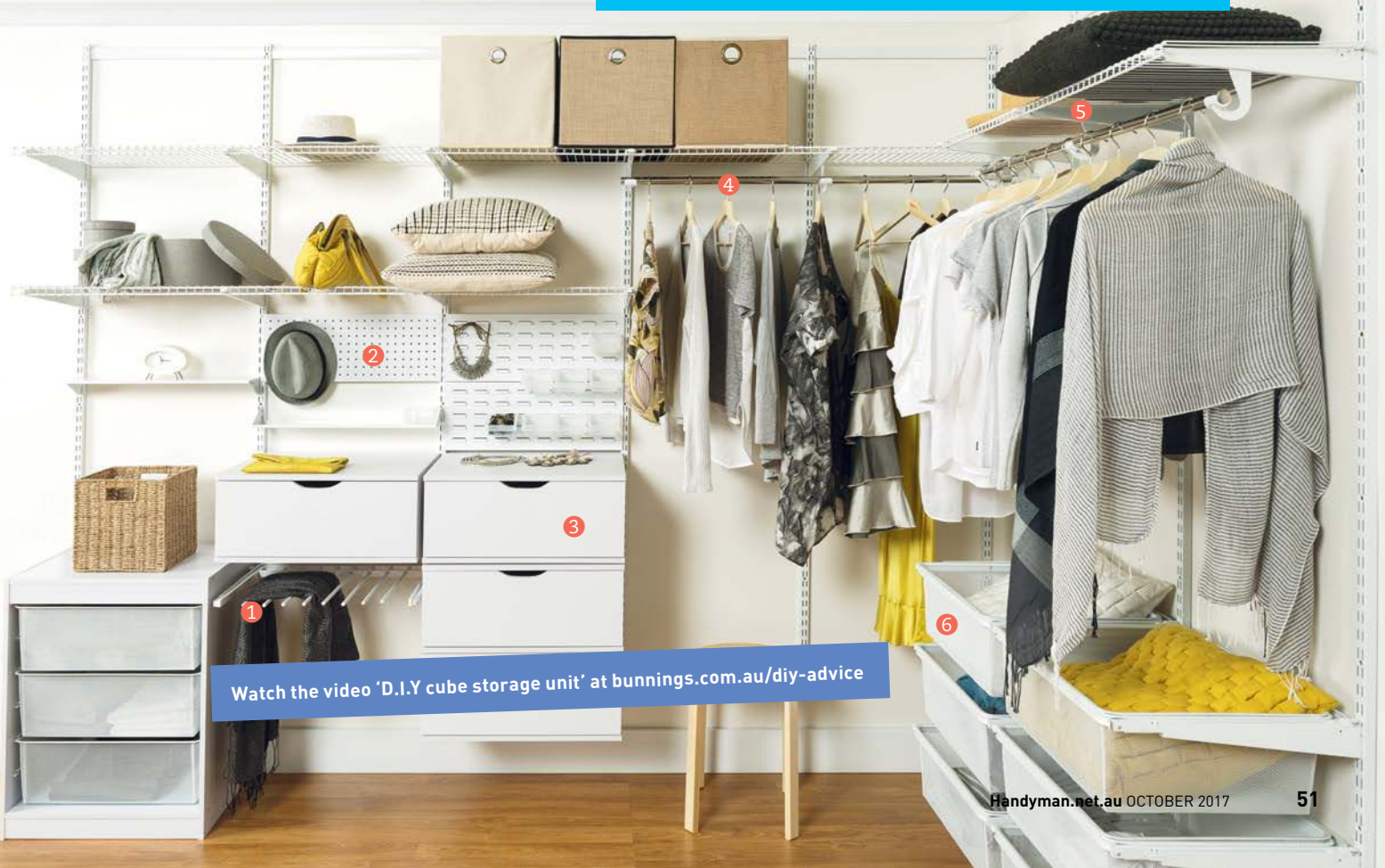


Determine what you will need to store before selecting wardrobe components.



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- 2 Flexi Storage white peg board, \$11.99.
- 3 Flexi Storage single drawer unit, \$79.
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- 5 Flexi Storage 1840mm wire shelf, \$41.34.
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Watch the video 'D.I.Y cube storage unit' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

PICTURE LEDGES

Build these simple wall shelves and paint them in your favourite colour to display artworks and photos

Ledges are an ideal way to display photos and artwork, as it's easy to move them without having to remove hooks.

They're simple to build by joining two boards and a length of moulding using PVA adhesive and brad nails.

As no complex cuts, tools or skills are needed, they're a great DIY woodworking project for beginners.

Although you'll most likely be changing your display at some point, it's a good idea to lay out the initial arrangement of pictures on the floor.

This way, you can sketch a plan to determine the length of your shelves and the spacing between them.

The ledges for this project comprise two lengths of 65 x 18mm DAR pine for the apron at the back and for the shelf, plus one 30 x 8mm square-edge moulding attached to the front. This acts as a lip to hold the frames in place.

Use pine if you plan to paint the ledges, or if you prefer a natural timber look, you could try oak.

You'll also need 65mm countersunk screws and screw-in plastic wall anchors suitable for use with conventional threaded timber screws.

Finish washers are a simple way to dress up screw heads. They'll be hidden behind the pictures, but painting them will help them blend in better. ➤

DIY TIP

Choose a paint colour for your ledges that suits the wall colour and doesn't detract from the images on display.

TOP PICKS



Dulux Aquanamel Ultra Deep Base Semi Gloss Enamel, \$55 for 1L. dulux.com.au



Ryobi One+ 18V Cordless Brad Nail Gun, skin only, \$239. ryobi.com.au



Ramset Plasterboard WallMate Anchors, \$9 for pack of 20. ramset.com.au





BUILD THE LEDGES



1 Join the parts

Measure and cut the aprons, shelves and mouldings with a mitresaw. Secure the aprons to the shelves using PVA adhesive and 50mm brad nails with an 18-gauge brad nailer. Position each shelf and moulding flush, then use adhesive and 25mm brad nails to secure the mouldings to the shelves.



2 Trim the ends

Use a mitresaw to trim each end of the assembled ledges to give a perfectly flush finish. Lightly sand the freshly cut ends of each ledge and smooth any rough edges using 120 grit sandpaper.

TIP If you don't have a mitresaw, you can use a handsaw instead.



3 Drill pilot holes

Using a pencil and straightedge, draw a line on the back of each apron 20mm from the top. Mark screw holes along the lines about 50mm from each end, then mark screw holes evenly along the lines 200mm apart. Using a cordless drill and 3mm bit, drill pilot holes for the screws.



4 Paint the ledges

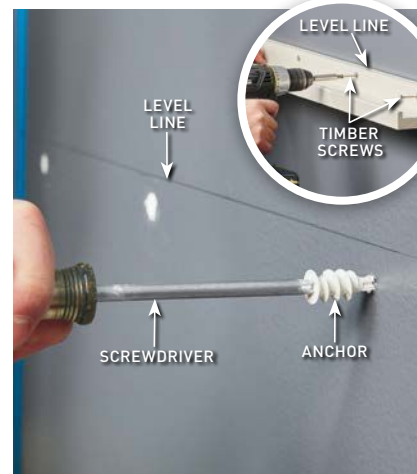
Fill the nail holes with timber filler, then allow the filler to dry completely. Gently sand the filler to a smooth finish flush with the timber. Apply a coat of primer and two coats of a top coat, allowing to dry in between coats.

TIP Use a primer and paint in one to speed up the process.



5 Mark ledge locations

Determine where one end of the ledges will be positioned on the wall and mark the position with a vertical strip of masking tape. Use a tape measure to mark the top edge of each ledge on the tape, then use the marks to draw horizontal level lines on the wall for each ledge.



6 Attach the ledges

Position the top of the ledges along the horizontal lines on the wall and mark the positions of the pilot holes on the wall. Drive an anchor into the wall 20mm below each mark, except any that are over studs. Mount the ledges on the wall by securing each one to the anchors or studs using screws. 🔩

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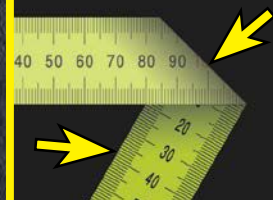
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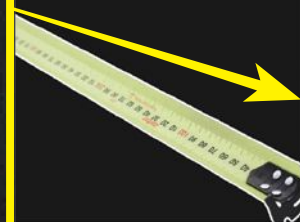
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What's trending

Workshop Talk & Tips

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Getting kids into DIY

'A good old-fashioned cubbyhouse is a brilliant project to get the kids into DIY'

@Mick

'Kids love planting seeds and watching them grow'

@Isobel

'I've got my boys interested in building skate ramps. They love the skate park'

@Dale



FAST FACT

76% of Workshop members are pet owners. Over 40% have three or more pets.

Share your pics



@Juno



@ProjectPete



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Workshop is a fun online space where you can ask DIY and gardening questions, share photos and videos of your projects, get tips and inspiration for your home and much more. To join the discussion, sign up at workshop.com.au.

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PICTURE (TOP) ISTOCK

Watch the video 'How to paint plastic' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

Find it at Bunnings

PAINT PLASTIC



Applying a coat of paint to freshen up plastic surfaces, such as a mirror cabinet in the bathroom, is easier than you think.

Most items will need some preparation, such as cleaning and

light sanding, to make them look their best after the final coat.

Apply primer first to ensure the paint adheres to the smooth surface.

TIP It's best to apply several thin coats of paint rather than one thick coat.

What you need

Sugar soap and bucket
Cleaning rag
Fine sandpaper
Painter's tape
Drop sheet
Respirator
Rubber gloves
Cardboard
Plastic primer
Enamel spray paint
Gloss sealer

1 2 3



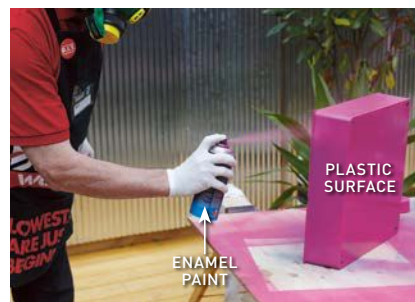
1 Prepare plastic surface

Before painting, you must prepare and clean the surface. Remove fixtures or fittings and tape up any areas you want to keep free of paint. Clean the surface with warm water and sugar soap. Use a fine sandpaper to smooth out bumps and scratches.



2 Apply the primer

Place drop sheets under your work area to catch spills. Wear a respirator and gloves. Apply primer, which will help the paint adhere to the plastic surface. For an even finish, hold the can at an angle and spray about 20cm from the surface. Allow to dry.



3 Paint the surface

Before applying the spray paint, shake the can and test on a piece of cardboard. Apply spray paint using a side-to-side motion with smooth movements for the best finish. Allow the paint to dry, then apply a gloss sealer for the final finish.

BEDROOM MAKEOVER

Transform a kid's room with these decorating and upholstery ideas

PROJECTS JESS COX PICTURES STUART SCOTT

One of the best parts about decorating a child's bedroom is being able to experiment with themes, colours and patterns.

The inspiration behind this bedroom makeover was the illustrated children's book *The Fox and the Star*, by Coralie Bickford-Smith.

It has lots of graphic elements, including a bold colour palette of oranges, blues and greys, striking patterns and textures, and repeat elements such as leaves, trees and stars.

Pages from the book were framed to hang on the wall as art, and leaves in a similar shape to those in the book were made from felt and used to create a feature wall of falling leaves.

Cushions made from leaf-pattern fabrics allow the bed to be used in a second role as a daytime reading nook, and curtains with a geometric tree pattern dress the windows. ➤



Decorating a kid's bedroom around a favourite book is a great way to encourage reading

DIY TIP

Choose a theme that can be displayed through repeat elements and a bright colour palette in the different fabrics.



Before

After

Striking colours and patterns give the bedroom lots of personality.





Window facelift

Making curtains is easier than you think. Start by measuring the window opening and determining whether you want the curtain rod to sit inside, outside or on the edge of the window architrave.

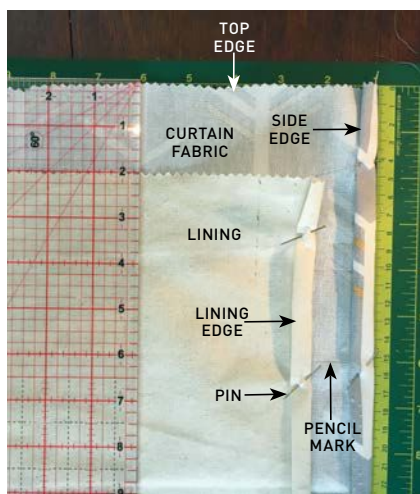
Measure the fall of the curtain from the curtain rod. Add an extra 150mm at the top and 200mm at the base for the heading and hem.

Now decide on the width. This will depend on how gathered you want the curtain to be when closed, as well as the width of fabric available.

The windows in this project are small so they only needed one width of fabric, cut to 100mm wider than the architrave. For fuller curtains, use 1.5-2 times more than the window width.

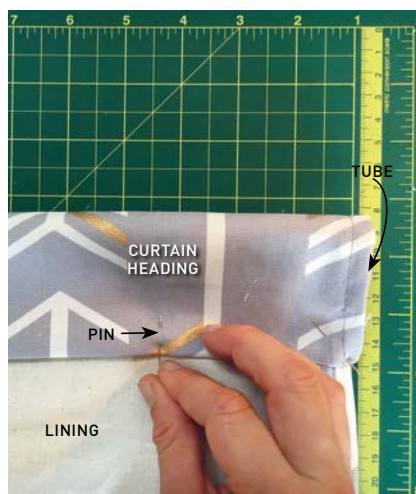
If you want to line your curtains as well, you'll need the same amount of lining as curtain fabric.

MAKE THE CURTAINS



1 Cut the fabric

Cut the curtain fabric and lining to length. Mark 150mm from the top with a pencil. To hem the sides, fold over the side edges by 10-15mm and iron flat. Repeat, then pin. Sew with a straight stitch along side seams. Position the lining 50mm from the curtain top edge and a seam-width from the side edge.



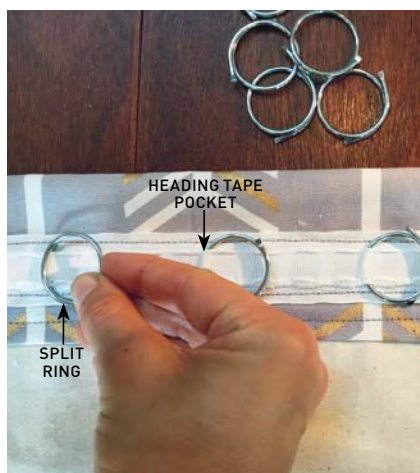
2 Make the heading

For the curtain heading, fold the top edge of the curtain fabric over 15mm and iron flat. Fold the curtain and lining so the curtain top edge sits on the 150mm line. Pin the layers together and sew to form a tube. For simple curtains that don't need gathering, a rod can be inserted in this tube.



3 Attach heading tape

For gathered curtains, run a piece of heading tape the full width of the back of the curtain heading. Pin, then sew into place. To sew the corners, ensure that the needle is poking through the fabric, then lift up the running foot and turn the fabric 90°. Replace the foot and continue sewing.



4 Thread split rings

Lay the curtain flat on a work surface with the heading tape right side up. Thread the split rings through the pockets on the heading tape, not the strings, spaced about 50-60mm apart. Insert the curtain rod through the rings, then attach finials to each end of the curtain rod.



5 Attach the brackets

Mount the curtains using brackets. If attaching brackets to a window architrave, drill small pilot holes, then secure the brackets with the screws provided. If attaching to plasterboard, locate the internal studs if possible and secure the brackets to these. Or, use plasterboard wall anchors and screws.



6 Create the hem

Hang the curtain and pin the fabric at desired length. Remove, then iron hem flat. Measure up 80-100mm, depending on the desired width of hem. Cut off the excess. Fold down 15mm, iron flat, then double over the fabric and iron flat. Pin, then sew hem. Repeat for the lining, so it is a seam-width shorter. ➤

Cushion fabric with a leaf pattern matches the room theme.

Cushion covers

This cushion has two back pieces that overlap, which means there's no need to fiddle with sewing in zips or making buttonholes.

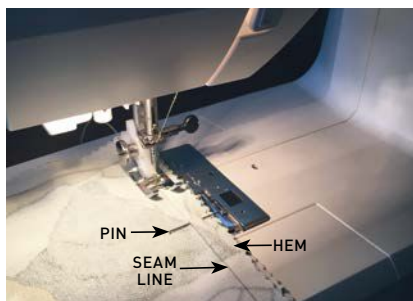
Choose a heavy cotton or a fabric designed for upholstery. Light cottons and silks tend to rip.

1 2 3



1 Cut out pieces

Measure a 430mm square for the front of the cushion and two smaller 430 x 300mm rectangles for the back. Using a pencil, mark a 15mm seam allowance inside all the pieces, then cut out with pinking shears or scissors.



2 Hem the edges

Hem one long edge of each of the back pieces by folding over to the seam line, pinning and sewing. Then attach the other long edges of the back pieces to opposite sides of the front piece, inside out. Pin along the seam lines and sew.



3 Sew pieces together

Fold the cushion together inside out so that the two back pieces overlap. Pin the two sides along the seam lines then sew together. Turn the cushion right way out and fill with a cushion insert through the back opening. 🌀



Dumpster



80 Litre



160 Litre

The universal Dumpster storage tub



Styled after its full size namesake, this mini dumpster is the perfect tub for playtime pack up, sports equipment, party drinks, recycling and everything else. Its robust design and thick wall sections make it able to withstand the rough-and-tough of playtime. The caster wheels and large easy grab handles provide easier manoeuvrability and the vibrant playful colours will brighten any room. Available in 80 & 160 litres.



www.ezystorage.com



Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

Find it at Bunnings

PIRATE SHIP SANDPIT

Build an outdoor project that sends your kids on a high-seas adventure

The kids will love digging for treasure and hoisting the mainsail in their own pirate ship sandpit. Made from sleepers and decking boards, it will get them out of the house and having fun.

To make this project easier, you can have your timber pre-cut to size at your local Bunnings.

It's a good idea to line the bottom of the sandpit with plastic before filling it to help prevent weeds.



**Countersink
all the screws so
the kids won't
scratch themselves**

What you need

Compound mitresaw
T-square
Pencil and tape measure
120 grit sandpaper
Cordless drill
2mm pilot twist bit
Countersink bit
90mm hole cutter
Power sander
10 merbau decking boards
12 treated pine sleepers
100mm bugle batten screws
Pirate steering wheel, telescope
10 20kg bags washed sand
Bamboo mast
Safety gear

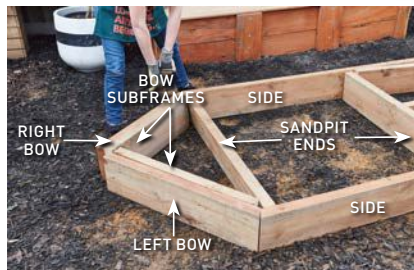
CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE (mm)	NO
Treated pine sleepers		
Sides	1800 x 200 x 50	2
Stern	1200 x 200 x 50	3
Sandpit ends	1100 x 200 x 50	2
Poop deck walls	600 x 200 x 50	6
Poop deck joists	350 x 200 x 50	3
Left bow	800 x 200 x 50	2
Right bow	845 x 200 x 50	2
Bow sides	160 x 200 x 50	2
Left bow subframe	720 x 200 x 50	1
Right bow subframe	785 x 200 x 50	1
Bowsprit	500 x 200 x 50	1
Bow top board	300 x 200 x 50	1
Steering mount	300 x 200 x 50	1



1 Make the ship shape

Cut all the sleepers to size and arrange in position. To make the ship shape, secure the sides to the stern at the rear using bugle batten screws. Secure the front sandpit end between the sides at the front, flush with the ends.



2 Create the front

For the bow, cut a 22.5° angle at one end of the left and right bow pieces and two bow sides. Butt-join the two bow pieces at the front and secure to the sides with screws. Secure the bow floor subframes with screws.



3 Secure the joists

Position two equally spaced joists perpendicular to the stern. Position the rear sandpit end between the sides at the ends of the joists to form the sandpit. Secure the joists to the stern and sandpit end using screws.



Add the final touches

For the wheel, cut the corners off one end of the steering mount. Secure it to the inside of the deck wall and attach the wheel.

For the telescope, cut the corners off the end of the bowsprit and secure it to bow top board, then attach the telescope.

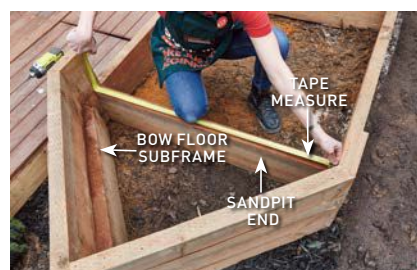
Cut a 90mm circular hole in the bow top board and install the bamboo foremast. Secure two sleepers vertically at the stern and attach a sail for shade.

Watch the video 'How to build a D.I.Y. pirate ship sandpit' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



4 Build the next levels

Install the remaining bow pieces to create the second course, then install the poop deck walls for the second and third courses. Drive screws at an angle to secure each piece to the one beneath.



5 Measure and cut decking

Measure the bow area and poop deck for the decking. Transfer these measurements to the decking boards and cut to size. For the bow, all the boards except the longest one will require mitre cuts at each end.



6 Lay the decking

Position the decking and predrill holes using the countersink drill bit to allow the screws to sit safely below the surface. Secure the boards to the joists or subframe, then sand the timber all over. Add sand to the sandpit.

DANGER ZONES

Take precautions before tackling home projects

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

Many potential dangers are obvious to us as we work, such as spinning blades on power equipment, a badly balanced ladder or an overfull wheelbarrow.

But more insidious hazards can go unseen until it's too late, sometimes resulting in fatal mistakes.

Three hazards to be aware of while working on DIY projects are electricity, asbestos and lead. All three can be present in homes and all are dangerous if they are not handled carefully.

Here, we outline what to look out for and what precautions to take to ensure a safe working environment. ➤



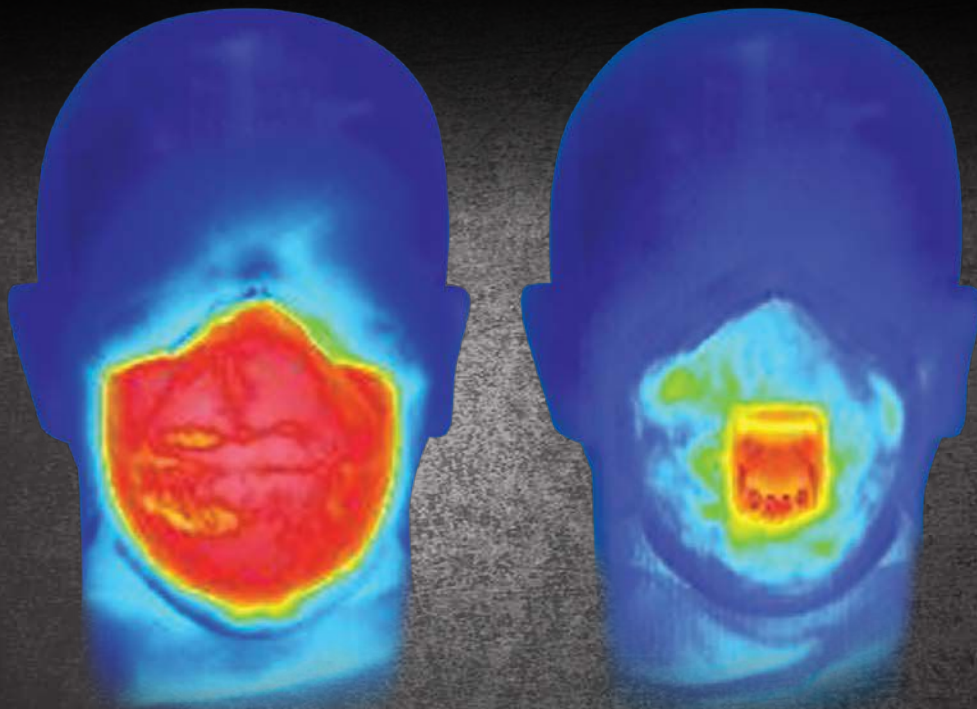
PICTURE/ISTOCK



COOL FLOW™ VALVE

3M™ Respirator
Non-valved*

3M™ Cool Flow™
Valved Respirator



The colours in these thermal images show changes in respirator's surface temperature as the model exhales, filling the respirator with warm, moist air. In the image on the right, the Cool Flow™ Valve expels warm, exhaled breath more rapidly, helping keep the rest of the respirator cooler and more comfortable.

*3M respirator of identical construction, without valve. Testing protocol, data generation and conclusions were reviewed and approved by an expert from The University of Minnesota. The testing performed by 3M is not a part of the testing and certification conducted to AS/NZ standards.

**Compared to 3M 8210 inside respirator temperature based on 3M lab testing in 2010 and 2011.



Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

DIY/HOMEOWNER: Use ONLY in non-harmful environments.
OCCUPATIONAL/HAZARDOUS USE: Use under AS/NZS 1715 guidelines.

WARNING: Limitations apply; MISUSE MAY RESULT IN SICKNESS OR DEATH. See product packaging or insert, or call 3M Australia Technical Assistance, 1800 024 464.

Electricity

Running inside your walls, under the floor and through the ceiling space or roof cavity, electric cabling is the lifeblood of your home.

Before doing any work that involves drilling, sawing or knocking into walls, make sure you know exactly where every powerline is and, even then, switch off the power at the meter.

Despite most homes being fitted with circuit breakers, mistakes may

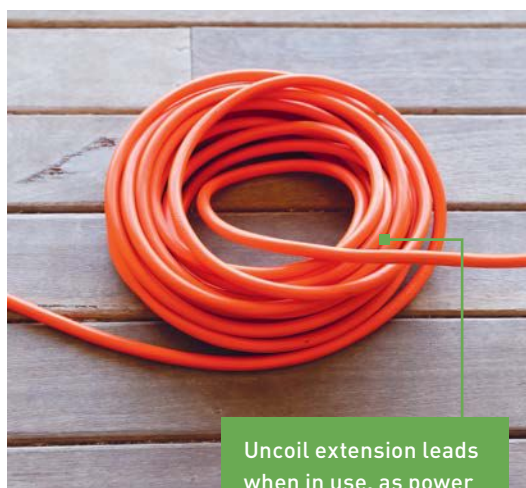
still result in electrocution. The electrical wiring in your home is likely to have a safety cut-off circuit, but a cable on the supply side of your meter has no protection.

Before you use any corded power tool, check the lead has no exposed wires, cuts in the cord or bent pins. Have the cord professionally replaced if it looks unsafe. Also, check all extension cords the same way.

Use a stud finder and services sensor to locate cables and pipes inside a wall before you drill or hammer.



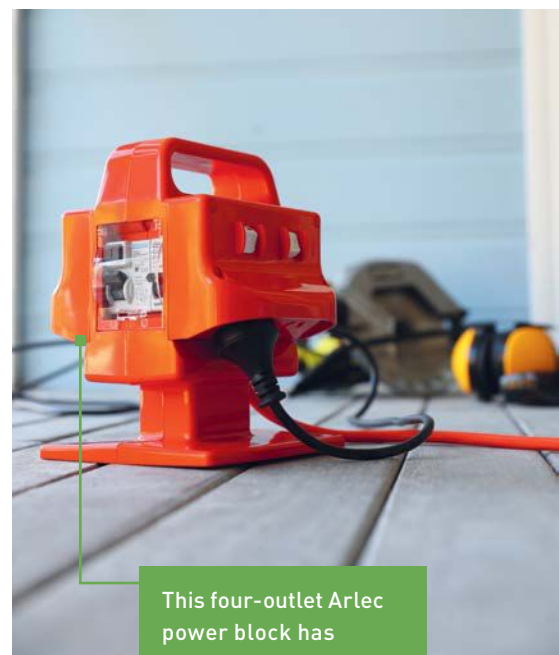
Keep ladders and equipment at least 2m clear of powerlines and always take care when using long-handled tools.



Uncoil extension leads when in use, as power running through them can melt the cable and cause a short or a fire.



To protect against shocks, this Arlec 15m heavy-duty extension lead has an in-line residual current device safety switch.



This four-outlet Arlec power block has a built-in residual current device safety cut-off, a circuit breaker overload switch and is IP44 weatherproof rated.



What lies beneath?

If you're building, renovating or landscaping, before you even lift a shovel, you need to know what may be beneath your feet.

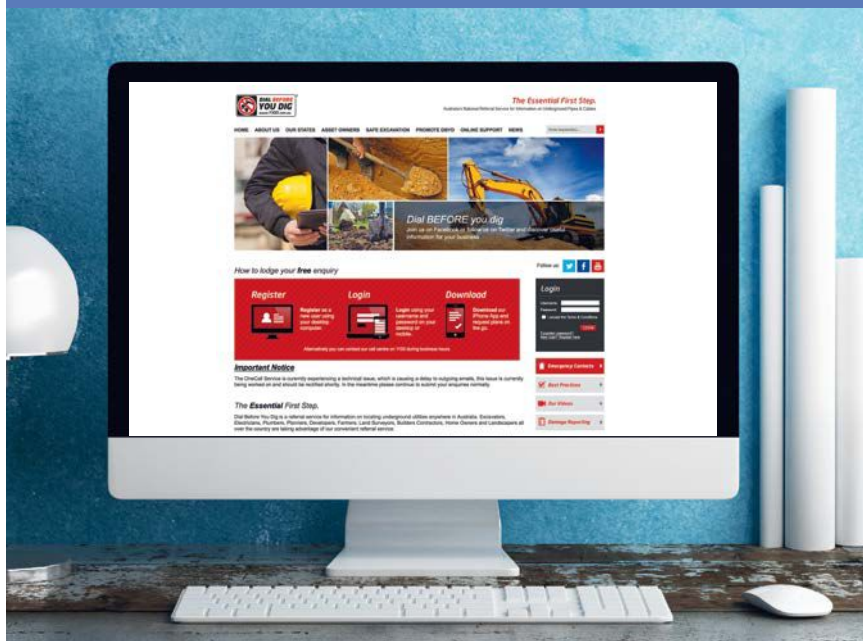
All home services, such as water, sewerage, gas, electricity, phone and internet, can be as little as 400mm below the surface of soil, paving or concrete.

If damaged, this can result in anything from just a smelly nuisance to a life-threatening emergency.

Many of these risks can be avoided by consulting Dial Before You Dig (visit 1100.com.au or call 1100).

Here, you can order free plans, showing all the listed services on your land. There are also lots of tips on safe excavation.

Even when you have the plans, they should be used only as a guide. You still need to dig with care, as the services may not always be where they are shown, especially on older properties. ➤



DECKSPACER™

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BUNNINGS
warehouse
And leading hardware stores



Quick and easy deck installation.

DECKSPACER™ from **QUIKLII™** maintains a uniform gap between decking boards and protects the deck sub-frame from potentially damaging dirt and water accumulation.



Save time and cost during installation



Achieve a trade quality result



Protect and preserve your investment

You can do it the hard way, or you can do it



QUIKLII™

Refer to the **QUIKLII™** website for installation videos and detailed product information.

www.quiklil.com

SAFETY TIP

Never use power tools or high-pressure water cleaners on asbestos, as they may cause damage that releases asbestos fibres.

Asbestos

Inhalation of asbestos dust can result in incurable asbestos-related diseases. Experts say it is the biggest health risk facing renovators and DIYers.

Any Australian building extended or constructed before 1990 will likely contain asbestos. In fact, anything built up until December 2003 may contain it.

Before starting any work at your home, evaluate the likelihood of asbestos being present by finding out where it may have been used.

Wear safety gear when renovating and treat all material as potentially dangerous. If you do need to disturb asbestos, seek professional advice.

Bonded asbestos-containing products include asbestos-cement materials such as wall cladding, waterproofing panels, roofing, fence panels, fireplace surrounds and pipes.

Loose asbestos is found in pipe insulation, spray-on insulation, ceiling panels, soundproofing and loose-fill ceiling insulation and floor tile backing.

Check out the asbestos guide at health.gov.au for more information.

Asbestos removal should only be carried out by professionals.



3M Premium Builder's Respirator, \$17 for two. 3m.com.au



When working in dusty situations, wear disposable coveralls, such as these from Protector.

If there is a contamination risk from hazardous dust, keep on your breathing protection while carefully removing the coveralls and turning them inside out.

Seal them in a heavy-duty waste bag and label that it may contain hazardous dust. Dispose of this as with any other dangerous waste material.

Lead

When absorbed through the skin, breathed in as dust or swallowed as flakes, lead is a dangerous toxin.

Lead poisoning, or plumbism, can take years to develop. It causes developmental delays in children, stomach pains and neurological issues such as hyperactivity, irritability, memory loss and insomnia. At high enough levels, it can kill.

It was added to paints to form part of the colouring base, help paint dry faster, make it look fresher for longer and improve resistance to moisture.

While it was phased out in most paints from the mid-1970s, some paints still contained lead until as late as 2010.

When renovating a home painted before the 1980s, old paint should be regarded as containing some lead. Employ professionals to do any work involving lead-based paints.



Children, pregnant women and pets are most at risk



Test for the presence of lead in old painted surfaces.



Dealing with lead

Lead is a hidden hazard that must be taken seriously and is quite difficult for a home owner to deal with safely.

The most dangerous situations are created when lead paints are removed by scraping, sanding, sand-blasting and using heat guns.

Sanding with power tools is the most hazardous, as the resulting dust is very fine, making it easy to inhale and spread throughout the home. It can lodge in carpet and soft furnishings or in the garden.

When removing paint, use a test kit or call in testing professionals to get a full evaluation.

Wear protective clothing, including disposable coveralls, overshoes, gloves, a suitable respirator and a hat.

Remove or cover furniture and play equipment, seal off areas where paint is to be removed, protect garden soil with drop sheets and use plastic disposable sheets to collect material.

For a guide on dealing safely with lead, see environment.com.au.

Find it at Bunnings

TIDY GARAGE

Install shelving and cabinets and mount tools on the wall to create a neat and efficient workshop space

Garages serve a lot of purposes, being the place where we store tools, garden equipment and bulky items such as camping gear, not to mention housing the car.

Without efficient storage, it's easy for a garage to become cluttered and messy, making it difficult to find the right item when you most need it.

Equipping your garage with smart storage solutions such as sturdy shelving, lockable cabinets and mobile drawers can create a tidy and organised space where everything has a place.



- 1 Kinchrome Evolve 26" 5-drawer tool trolley, \$435.
- 2 Rack-It 1200mm x 400 x 9mm MDF timber shelf, \$7.
- 3 Rack-It 1800 x 50mm black shelving beam, \$12 each.

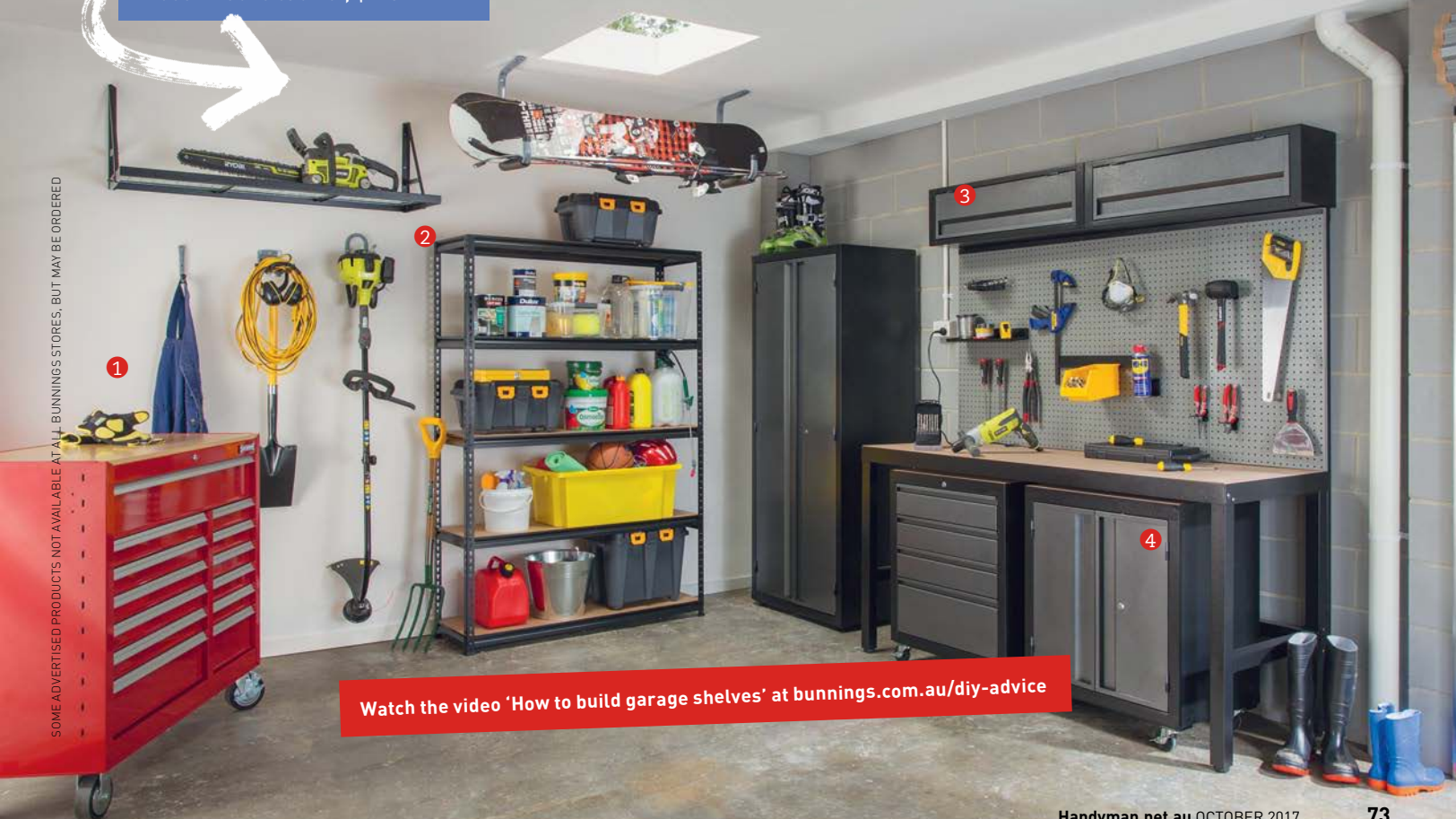
Expand your tool trolley with the Kinchrome Evolve 26" 6-drawer tool chest, \$209.





- 1 Sidchrome 13-drawer tool trolley, \$1094.
- 2 Pinnacle 1830 x 1200 x 410mm 5-tier shelf, \$99.
- 3 Pinnacle 260 x 230 x 900mm slimline cabinet, \$89.
- 4 Pinnacle 830 x 665 x 465mm 2-door mobile cabinet, \$215.

- 1 Pinnacle 1405 x 1100 x 540mm workbench, \$89.
- 2 Pinnacle 1140 x 515 x 410mm wall-mounted wire shelf, \$59.
- 3 Pinnacle 2090 x 890 x 890mm 6-tier corner shelf, \$199.
- 4 Pinnacle 2090 x 860 x 540mm lockable metal cabinet, \$299.



Watch the video 'How to build garage shelves' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

5 CLEVER TOOL HACKS

Give these smart tool tips a go to help save your back, time and money

Check out these tool hacks that will come in handy for every level of DIYer, from beginner to advanced.

These simple tips and techniques will help you to get the most out of your tools, and also make awkward projects much easier, especially if you're working alone.

You'll learn creative ways to use everyday tools and how to modify them to do jobs 'outside the box'.

DIY TIP

Wrap paint rollers in plastic wrap to keep them fresh in between coats or if there's a delay in finishing the job.



1 Make mini roller covers

A 75mm roller is ideal for painting trim or small items such as a letterbox, but you may not have one on hand when you need it.

Next time you're in the paint section of the hardware store, pick up a 75mm roller frame, the type that takes the same diameter cover as a standard 230mm roller.

You can then cut a 230mm roller cover into three to fit.

Mark the 230mm roller cover into three equal sections, then cut into pieces with a hacksaw, holding the cover steady with a bar clamp. Trim the rough edges of the nap with scissors.



2 Clamp using a tie-down strap

If you need to clamp boxes together, a ratchet tie-down strap can do the job just as well as band clamps.

Remember to use pieces of cardboard under the ratchet and hooks to protect the timber.

DIY TIP

For small jobs, a medium tray is ideal for mixing concrete, but for large projects, use a wheelbarrow or a cement mixer.

3 Mix concrete with a rake

Next time you need to mix a small amount of concrete, use a garden rake instead of a hoe.

The rake won't cause as much splashing and the tines do a good job of combining the water with the powder.

Also, you waste a lot of time with a hoe just pushing powder around the tray. ➤

SAFETY TIP

Use a push stick to finish tablesaw cuts, and wait for the blade to come to a complete stop before retrieving pieces.

4 Extend a tablesaw fence with a level

The only way to achieve a straight cut is to keep the material tight up against the tablesaw fence. But this can be hard to do when you're cutting a large sheet of plywood on your own.

Using a 1200mm spirit level to lengthen the fence will make it easier to keep the plywood straight as it approaches and passes through the blade. Hold the level in place with clamps.

5 Lift heavy gear with a pry bar

If you've ever had to remove a solid-core door, you know how heavy they can be. Lifting them up to reinstall hinge pins can be a challenge if you're working alone, but a pry bar can give you just the leverage you need.

If the pry bar won't raise the door high enough, install a small

block of wood at the fulcrum point of the pry bar to increase the lifting height.

Hold the block in place with a small screw and washer, making sure the screw doesn't poke through. If it does, grind off the end so it won't damage the floor.

You can use this same set-up to raise plasterboard sheets off the floor for fastening. 🛠️

OCT

What's on this month

Head down to your local Bunnings this October to get advice for your next D.I.Y. project



7
[SAT]

8
[SUN]

GARDENING D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

Learn how to plant out and care for your garden



14
[SAT]

15
[SUN]

SAVE ENERGY AND WATER AT HOME

Help save the planet and your pocket



21
[SAT]

22
[SUN]

DECKING WORKSHOP

Rejuvenate that old deck or build a new one with our expert advice



28
[SAT]

29
[SUN]

OUTDOOR PROJECTS

Be inspired with our improvement and maintenance tips

If you live in South Australia, speak to a team member or visit bunnings.com.au/yourstore for details about our great one-on-one D.I.Y. workshops. These workshops run from 10am to 4pm each Saturday and Sunday.



'For more information on our instore events or to book, visit bunnings.com.au/yourstore'

LUKE
TEAM MEMBER

GARDENING D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

Improve your garden with great ideas and our expert advice.



7
[SAT]

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BUNNINGS
warehouse



Find it at Bunnings

What's new

Pick up the best new products for home and garden instore



Birdies Smart Shed for storing garden tools and other equipment, \$299.



Birdies Corro-Planter with base for growing herbs and flowers, \$99.



- 1 Home Design Deco Five-light Pendant, \$169.
- 2 Pianta Pendant Light with faux plant, \$129.
- 3 Verde Pendant Light with faux plant, \$89.
- 4 Home Design Deco Three-light Pendant, \$129.



Roman Stone 122cm EZ Border for garden beds, driveways and paths, \$24.98.



Three-chamber Clever Lotion Dispenser with side hooks and lever buttons, \$115.



Cyclone 61cm Bow Saw with two blades and soft tough grip, \$26.98.



Cyclone Folding Pruning Saw with safety blade lock, \$28.98.



Cyclone Foldable Seat and Kneeler with steel frame, \$29.98.



Maze 245L Two-compartment Compost Tumbler with handle for easy rotation, \$249.



**Chamberlain Universal
Garage Door Opener
Remote Control, \$69.**



**Gasmate Red Odyssey
Three-burner Barbecue with
Sear Burner and Trolley, \$749.**



**Mimosa Coral Bay
Nine-piece Aluminium
Dining Setting, \$1299.**



**Matador Titan Four-burner
Barbecue with Sear
Burner, \$1150.**



**Cast Iron Pizza Oven with
steel door for baking and
roasting, \$649.**



**Marquee Waiheke
Three-piece Folding
Timber Wicker Set, \$149.**



**Gasmate Charcoal
Smoker with Glass
Viewing Window, \$249.**



**Gasmate Black Odyssey
Portable Electric
Barbecue, \$299.**



**Mimosa Seven-piece
Silverleaves Steel
Bar Setting, \$499.**



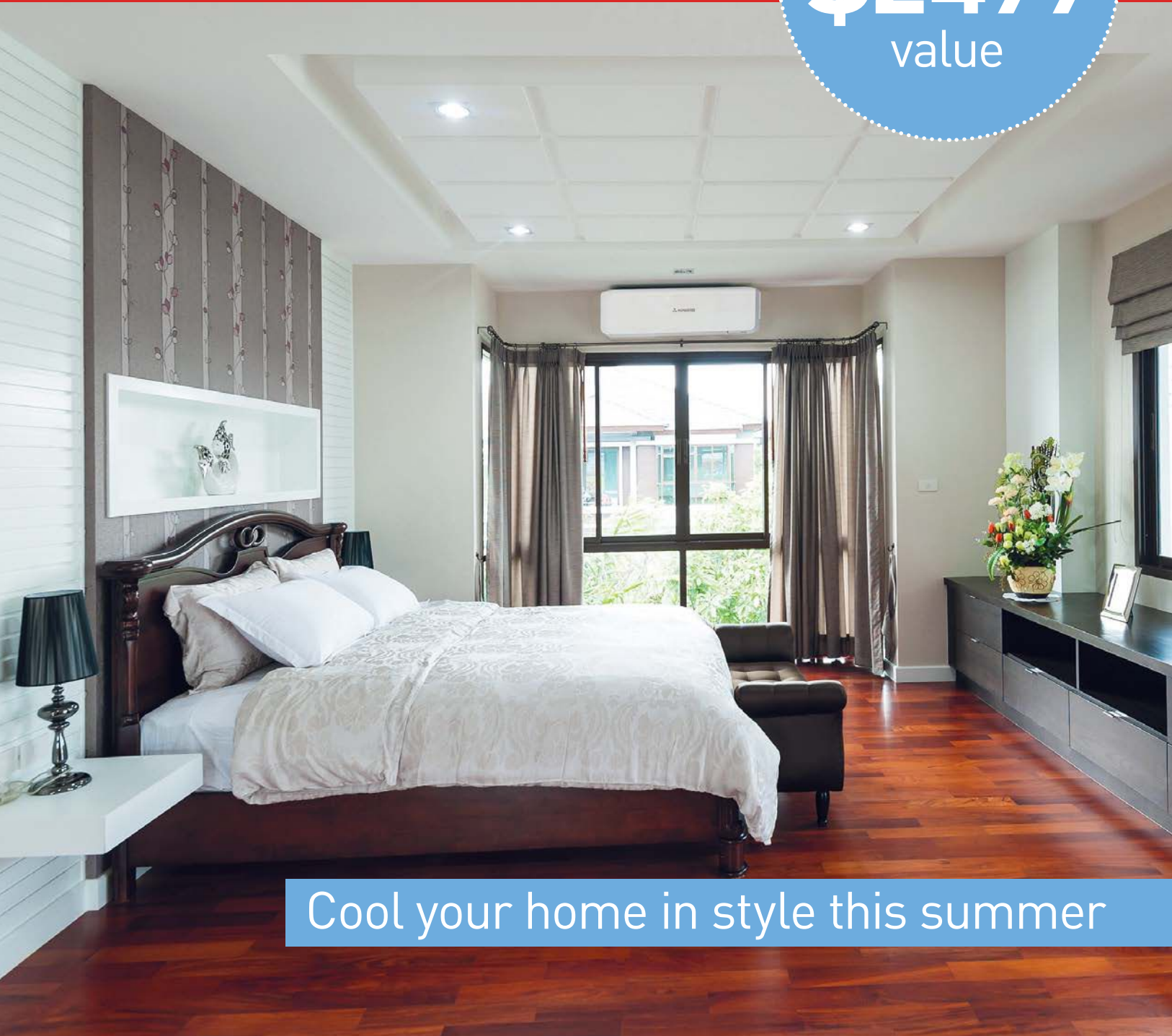
**Marquee Five-piece
Florida Sofa Setting with
removable cushions, \$499.**



**Marquee Marseilles Corner
Lounge Setting with chaise
longue and ottoman, \$389.**

WIN

Total prize
\$2499
value



Cool your home in style this summer

AN AIR CONDITIONER + INSTALLATION

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AVANTI™

New
model!



Keep your home cool in summer by entering our competition to win an award-winning Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Avanti™ air conditioner, including installation, worth \$2499.

For your chance to win, go to handyman.net.au/aircon and tell

us in 25 words or less why your home needs a new air conditioner.

Entries close 19 October 2017. The winners will be announced on the website in December 2017. Visit handyman.net.au for the full terms and conditions.

Cutting-edge technology

Boasting elegant smooth curves and rounded corners, the Avanti™ range has been designed for the modern home.

Developed for excellent energy efficiency, the range features the R32 refrigerant, which requires less energy to achieve the desired temperature, minimising power consumption.

The allergen clear filter and photocatalytic filter purify the airflow, while optional Wi-Fi control allows operation from a smartphone or tablet.

Providing powerful, efficient cooling even when the outside temperature is as high as 46°C, the reverse cycle unit also warms the house in winter.



ENTER BY 19 OCTOBER 2017

PARKING PERFECTION

Landscape a sloping site to create a functional, level surface for vehicles

WORDS AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT

Safe, secure parking for our vehicles is important. They are valuable assets and we want to look after them.

The parking space at this site was a sloping gravel area damaged by soil erosion and poor drainage. It was also full of potholes and covered in weeds.

So the area was upgraded to a well-defined, low-maintenance parking area with an even surface where the gravel remained in place.

To create a firm, secure base, a grass and gravel reinforcement system made from plastic pavers that interlock was incorporated.



Stuart

EXPERT SECRETS

Protect the cut ends of H4 timber, which is treated against termites and decay, with a spray-on timber preservative.

Before



4
DAYS

\$3422
COST



TOOLS

POST HOLE DIGGER,
DRILL, CIRCULAR SAW,
COMPACTOR

After

The new landscaped parking area has transformed the sloping site.

Materials

Pine sleepers	\$460
Concrete	\$150
Geotextile fabric	\$34
Ag pipe	\$40
Aggregate	\$50
Batten screws	\$19
Plastic pavers	\$999
Aluminium edging	\$472
Roadbase	\$620
Crusher dust	\$80
Turf underlay	\$250
Turf	\$248
TOTAL	\$3422



Reinforced surface

The site for this project was sloping, which had caused problems in the past, such as soil erosion and poor drainage, forcing the original sleeper wall to collapse.

To solve these problems and make an even and stable parking area, a retaining wall was needed. Once this was in place, it was easier to build a suitable surface for

parking vehicles, as well as two overflow areas covered with turf.

Instead of laying a concrete or asphalt surface, interlocking permeable plastic paving panels were used as a strong base beneath the aggregate and turf.

This created a free-draining and more natural-looking surface that is low maintenance, reinforces the gravel and grass and eliminates ponding and potholes. ➤

Make the retaining wall

To build a structural retaining wall supporting the new parking area, the old gravel needed to be removed first.

The retaining wall was built with 2400 x 200 x 75mm Ironwood Sienna H4 treated pine sleepers.

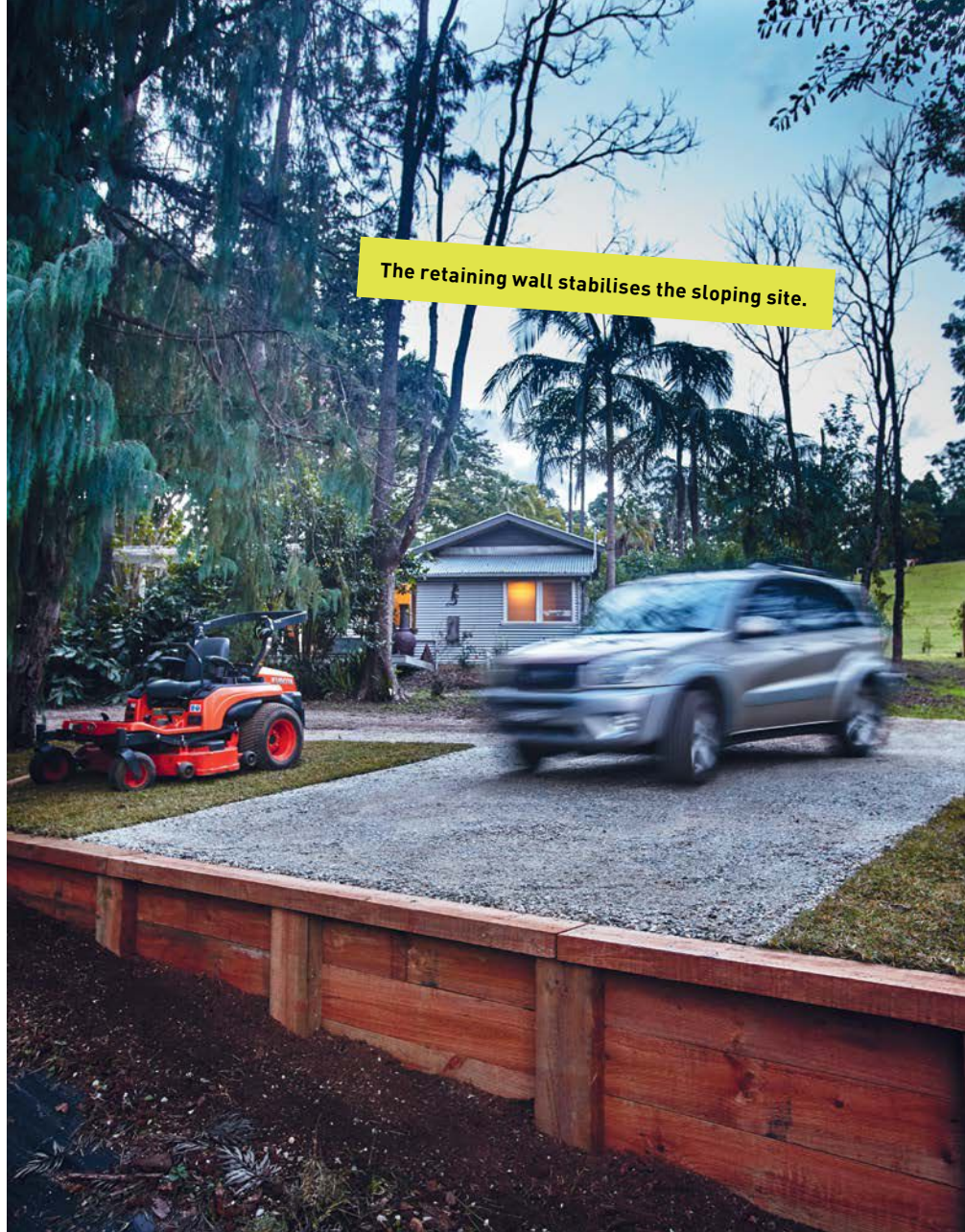
To prevent runoff from destabilising the parking area, expanding drainage was installed at the base of the wall.

The area was then backfilled before being firmed and levelled to provide an even stable substrate.

TIP Put 50mm of coarse aggregate into each hole before concreting posts.



Safety and drainage issues mean that retaining walls higher than 600mm may need certification by an engineer



The retaining wall stabilises the sloping site.

1 2 3



1 Install the posts

Set out the wall position and height with stringlines. Mark the post positions at 1200mm centres and excavate 300mm wide holes to 600mm deep. Position posts in holes plumb against stringlines, then pour concrete into holes. Allow concrete a day to set.



2 Secure the sleepers

Attach each sleeper to the posts using two batten screws. Stagger joints by starting alternate courses with a half sleeper. Trim posts flush with the final course. Secure capping sleepers to the top using galvanised batten screws into both the posts and wall.



3 Backfill retaining wall

Position ag pipe at the wall base on 50mm of aggregate and link to the stormwater. Cover the pipe with more aggregate, sloping away from the wall. Drape the wall, pipe and aggregate with geotextile fabric. Backfill to 125mm below the final level. ➤



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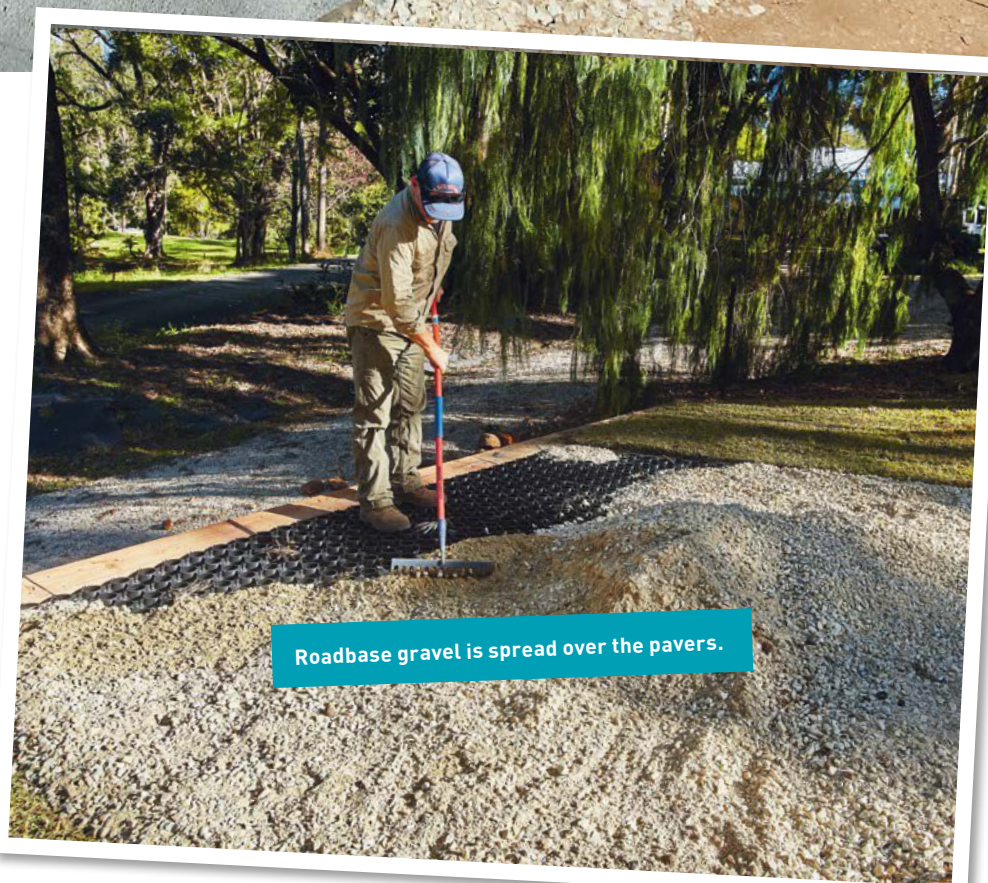
To prepare the new space, stringlines were set up to mark the layout and the levels of the parking area, and 100mm of roadbase was spread and levelled.

The base was then prepared with Cirtex AluExcel Aluminium Landscape Edging and SurePave Permeable Paving (cirtex.com.au).

On the primary space, the pavers were laid over 25mm of crusher dust. They were then backfilled with roadbase to create a firm gravel finish.

On the two overflow spaces, pavers were laid over 25mm of turf underlay and were then backfilled with more turf underlay before being finished with new turf.

Both areas were firmed and levelled with a plate compactor and the final result is a highly functional and attractive parking area. ➤





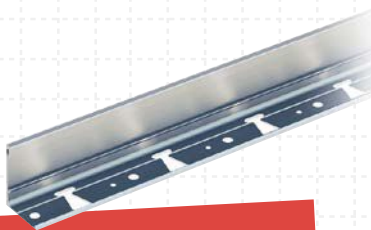
DIY TIP

Before laying the pavers, scatter slow-release fertiliser onto the turf underlay to give the new turf a good nutrient boost.

STUART'S PICKS



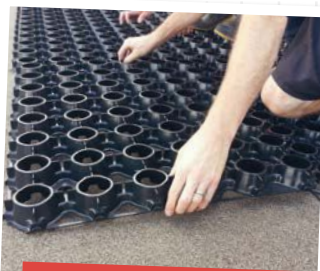
ReIn Stretch-Drain
100mm Slotted Ag Pipe,
\$40 for 8m. reln.com.au



Cirtex AluExcel 2750 x 50mm
Aluminium Landscape
Edging, \$59. cirtex.com.au



Ironwood 2400 x 200 x 75mm
Sienna Treated Pine Sleeper,
\$23. chhwoodproducts.com.au

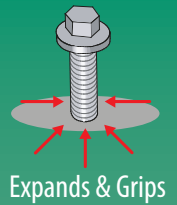


Cirtex 816 x 612 x 40mm
SurePave Plastic Paving,
\$20. cirtex.com.au

CONCRE MATE

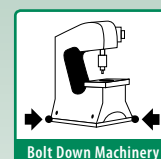
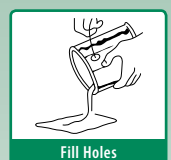
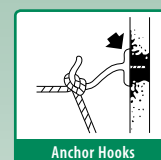
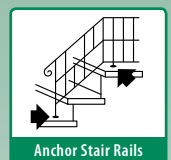
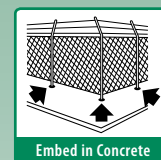
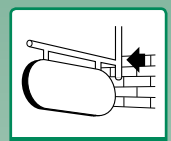
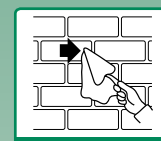
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BUILD THE PARKING AREA



1 Define parking area

Measure and mark the parking sections on the top of the retaining wall. Use pegs and stringlines to define the area at the finished level. Make the dimensions in proportion to the paver size to minimise cutting. Use the 3-4-5 method to confirm that the area is square.



2 Apply roadbase substrate

Spread roadbase to an even surface at 100mm deep, with fall to stop ponding on finished surface. Roadbase gravel incorporates fines, which allow the material to compact into a stable substrate. If using a reduced fines material for the substrate, lay geotextile fabric over the substrate.



3 Install the edging

Starting at the retaining wall, lay full lengths of edging following the stringlines. Drive the supplied 250mm spiral shank fixing pins through the edging to secure. At the corners, cut the edging to length with a grinder or hacksaw, mitring the corners where needed. File any sharp edges.



4 Spread bedding layers

Spread a 25mm layer of crusher dust, which is an ideal substitute for bedding sand, over the section of the parking area that is to be finished with gravel. Spread a 25mm layer of turf underlay over the sections to be finished with turf. Screed all the sections, using a level as a straightedge.



5 Lay the pavers

Start laying the paving panels by interlocking the lugs. Pavers can be offset if desired by full cell widths. Cut the pavers where necessary with a circular saw or handsaw. Avoid using paving offcuts that don't have the interlocking lugs. Continue until all the parking sections are filled.



6 Level the finishes

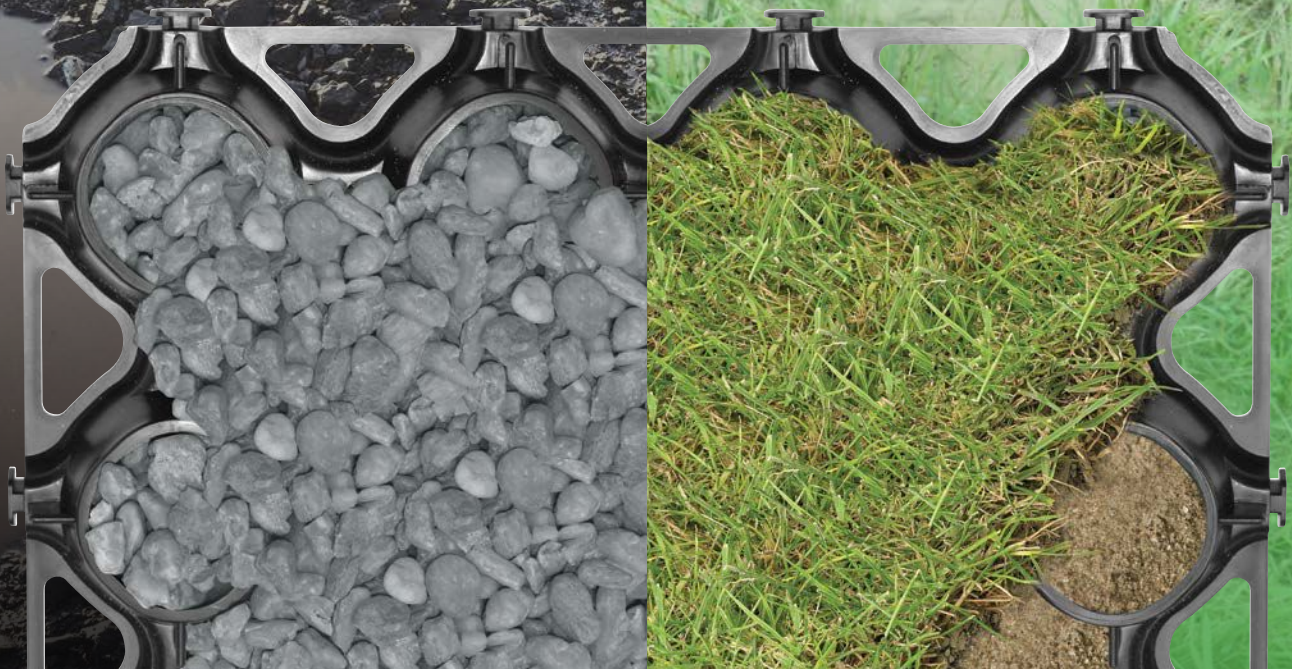
Backfill the pavers with roadbase in the finished gravel section to about 20mm above the pavers. Loosely fill the turf sections with underlay, flush with the top of the pavers. Roll out turf over the underlay. Firm the areas with a compactor for a level surface and to embed the turf into the paver cells. ❌



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Summer is just around the corner, and with warmer evenings and more hours of daylight, there's no better time to fire up the barbecue and cook up a storm.

Equipping your entertaining area with outdoor furniture and barbecue gear will turn it into a desirable place to spend the evening relaxing.

Start by choosing the right barbecue to suit your needs. A four-burner barbecue is ideal for cooking up family meals, but if you often cater for guests, opt for a six-burner barbecue.

It's then just a matter of selecting a comfortable and durable outdoor setting that suits your space.

Matador Boss Four-burner Barbecue, \$890.



Outdoor dining

Make a large table the centrepiece of your patio or deck, and choose a bar setting for casual dining.

① Mimosa 1600 x 1000 x 800mm Seven-piece Timber Bar Setting, \$679.

② Mimosa 1800 x 1000 x 750mm Mareeba Timber Dining Table, \$299.

③ Mimosa 1530 x 400mm Mareeba Timber Bench, \$129 each.

④ Mimosa Mareeba Timber Chair, \$79 each.



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Mimosa 800 x 390 x 1750mm
Avani Timber Daybed, \$549.



Matador Artiste Four-burner
Kitchen Barbecue, \$1690.

Decks and balconies

If your outdoor space isn't covered, a large umbrella can provide protection from the sun.

- ① Mimosa Andaman 3.5m Cantilever Umbrella, \$549.
- ② Matador Artiste Five-burner Barbecue, \$750.
- ③ Mimosa 1050 x 900 x 900mm Anaconda Five-piece Bar Setting, \$579.



Outdoor rooms

Extend your living area outdoors with comfortable furniture for summer relaxation.

- ① Mimosa 1230 x 770 x 160mm Five-piece Avani Timber Lounge Setting, \$679.
- ② Mimosa 1730 x 720 x 110mm Avani Corner Sofa Setting, \$1399.

Watch the video 'How to create an outdoor entertaining area' at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

LAWN REVIVAL

Create a lush green garden for the warmer months with these tips on repairing and rejuvenating grass

WORD AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

No matter where you live in Australia, the cooler months can take a toll on your lawn. Whether the conditions are cold and wet, cold and dry, too sunny, too cloudy or too windy, they do damage.

But armed with the right advice and some simple tools and products, most problems can be fixed and your lawn rejuvenated.

Even if your lawn has come through winter unscathed, now is the ideal time to get it looking its best and prepare it for summer. ➤



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GROW TIP

Thicken up a thin lawn by oversewing the area that needs improving with a suitable seed and keep well watered.

Damage control

The most common problem you'll encounter in lawns during spring is dead patches. The first step is to identify the cause so you can take action to stop them recurring.

Bear in mind that the problem could be a combination of factors.

➤ **COMPACTED SOIL** When soil becomes compacted, which is not uncommon in areas where there is high foot traffic, grass is often damaged or worn away and struggles to regrow.

It is more likely to occur if the soil contains high levels of clay or organic

matter. In the warmer months, when grass is naturally thicker, you may not have noticed the problem, but after winter, the spots are more obvious.

If the soil is hard underfoot and also draining poorly in bare areas, it needs to be aerated.

1 2 3

EASY PATCH REPAIR This area at the bottom of a set of steps had become compacted from the concentration of foot traffic. After repairing the lawn, keep turf moist, but not wet, for two weeks. For seed, water lightly twice a day in warm weather.



1 Remove damaged turf

Cut a line with a spade around the area to be repaired, then remove the turf. Break up the soil with a garden fork to a depth of 50mm. Turn over the soil and level it at least 40mm lower than the soil level of the surrounding grass.



2 Add new soil

Add lawn soil to 10mm below the level of surrounding grass for roll turf. For seed, bring it level with surrounding soil. Press with a rake to remove air pockets. Roll out turf, trimming with a spade or spread seed as recommended.



3 Water area well

For roll turf, use a lawn soil mix to fill gaps around the edges and along the seams. Water well with a diluted seaweed solution. For roll turf, avoid foot traffic for at least a week and for seed, keep off the area for a few weeks.



Avoid mowing large weeds going to seed so they don't spread.



Broadleaf weeds such as cat's ear can quickly kill grass.

Spot treatment

It is not always necessary to replace an area of lawn. Instead, just repair it with a garden fork, a rake and washed course sand.

At 100mm intervals, drive the fork into the soil about 50mm deep. Rock it back and forth to open up the holes. Rake sand over the area. This helps improve aeration and drainage.

Weed watch

As well as being unsightly, weeds can cause dead areas in a lawn. They grow vigorously during winter, smothering your lawn. Many are annuals, so they die, leaving dead areas underneath.

Weeds are also good at filling patches that cause these dead spots and enlarging them.

Appropriate feeding and watering are the best ways to discourage weeds because healthy, vigorous grass will outcompete most weeds. Sometimes, though, you will need to take action.

Manual or hand weeding can be the most effective, but is only really practical on smaller lawns or where the number of weeds is low.

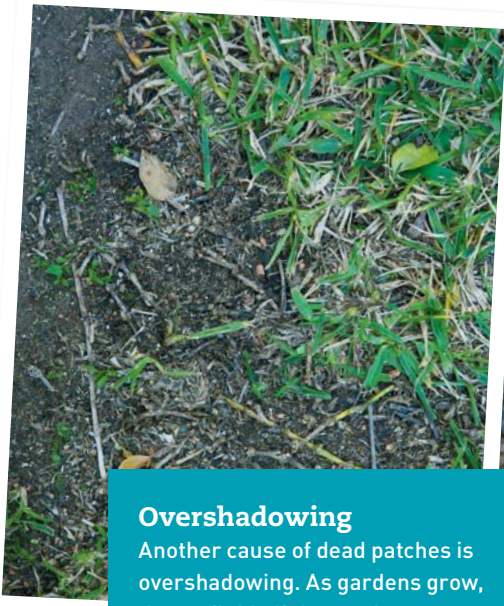
Avoid spreading any seeds when pulling up weeds and dispose of them in the green-waste bin. Only try to compost them if they don't have seeds or your compost heap runs hot.

Weedkillers, such as hose-on or granulated weed-and-feed products, can be fast and effective, but make sure they're suited to your lawn type.

Also avoid overspray on garden plants and ensure you stick to the recommended application rates.

If you have a buffalo lawn such as Sir Walter, make sure that the formulation is buffalo-safe.

TIP Long-handled weeding tools help save your back when pulling weeds. ➤



Overshadowing

Another cause of dead patches is overshadowing. As gardens grow, the available light can decrease. To fix this, trim shrubs and prune trees to lift their canopies.

Help the lawn by fluffing up the bare soil with a steel rake or garden fork, remove weeds and spread lawn seed. Keep it moist as it germinates and establishes.



Bindii blues

Feeling the prickles of bindii? Then, sadly, it's too late to treat your lawn for this problem weed. The prickles are the seeds and tell you that this annual plant has reached the end of its life cycle.

If it has been a problem, make a note in your diary that you should spray bindii in autumn and again in late winter.

Lay a new lawn

When a lawn has gone too far for patch repairs to be a viable option, then it's time to bite the bullet and lay a new lawn.

Now is the perfect time to be getting stuck into this easy project.

Fertilising

To make your lawn look amazing in as little as three days, and help prevent bare patches and weeds, feed it with a premium slow-release fertiliser.

The average lawn will take less than 10 minutes to feed, cost about \$20 and will need to be applied only twice a year.

It's also important to think about feeding your soil, not just the grass. Mulch mowing improves soil, as it adds organic matter.

But using a quality slow-release fertiliser, especially one with an organic component supplemented with a seaweed-based product, will help keep your soil healthy.

A fertiliser spreader ensures even coverage. Fill and adjust the spreader output size to suit the product.



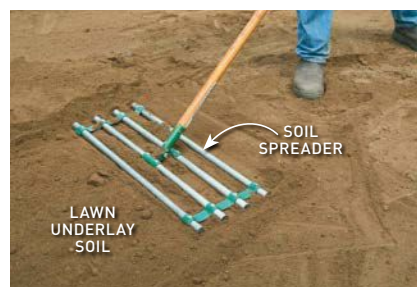
A walk-behind spreader used at a consistent pace is ideal for large lawns, as it needs fewer refills.

1 2 3



1 Remove the debris

Clear the area of debris. Use a rotary hoe or mattock to remove remaining grass and weeds and start turning over soil. Use a landscape rake to collect all the turned-over grass and other material such as roots and weeds.



2 Add lawn underlay

Use a rotary hoe or mattock to further break-up the soil, then roughly level with a rake. Add lawn underlay soil. Use a rake or soil spreader to spread to about 30mm deep over the area. Evenly spread turf starter fertiliser.



3 Lay new turf

Start laying turf in a brick-like pattern from one corner. If the area slopes, lay rolls across the slope to avoid creating erosion channels. Water well. Keep foot traffic off it for at least a week. As it establishes, keep it moist, not wet. ➤



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Mowing

There are many schools of thought regarding using different mowing heights throughout the year. But you don't really need to get technical and change heights with the seasons.

Just remember not to mow so low that the lawn is scalped and not so high that you are sinking into it.

The ideal height is what is described as 'foot feel'. That is, in bare feet, the lawn should feel comfortable.

Cutting height will vary with lawn variety and location. But the aim is to have a height that's good to walk on. This generally means leaving at least a few centimetres of leaf blade.



After the lawn's spring growth surge, mow higher first with the catcher fitted, then at the desired height in mulching mode.

Mulch mowing

When you mulch mow, clippings are cut and recut to a super-fine state before being blown back into the lawn thatch.

Here, they quickly break down, adding organic matter to the soil and nutrients to your lawn.

It's like lightly organically feeding every time you mow. It also cuts down mowing time, as you're not stopping to empty the catcher. You also won't have to dispose of loads of clippings.

ADAM'S PICKS

PowerFeed LawnFeed, with Troforte, \$20 for 4kg. seasol.com.au



Fiskars Xact Weed Puller, \$74. fiskars.com.au



Amgrow Bin-Die Selective Lawn Weeder, about \$14 for 250ml. amgrow.com.au



Scotts Lawn Builder Easy Green Broadcast Fertiliser Spreader, \$75. scottsaustralia.com.au

Watering

Even a healthy, well-maintained lawn will need additional water during extended hot or dry periods.

After the cooler seasons, the soil may be drier than expected. When watering, you need to make sure that the water is actually getting into the soil and not running off.

The best way to do this is to nurture the soil over time through mulch mowing and using quality fertilisers and organic supplements.

But sometimes, a quick fix is needed and you may also want to consider applying a suitable soil wetter.

WHEN?

Watering after a long, hot day may seem logical, but this wastes water and may encourage diseases.

When water hits the hot, dry grass and soil, some is lost through evaporation. This also increases humidity around the grass. On still, warm nights, the increased humidity creates the ideal condition for fungal problems to develop.

Water instead in the cool of the early morning, which will charge up your lawn for the day ahead.

HOW OFTEN?

This will always vary with soil and grass types, the aspect of the lawn and prevailing weather.

Water less often but more deeply. For instance, water once a week for 15 minutes instead of two or three times a week for five minutes.

If you water lightly, it encourages your lawn to develop shallow roots, as the roots will develop only where the water reaches.

Shallow-rooted lawn can be more easily damaged by hot, dry weather, so promote deeper roots by deeper watering.



A quality adjustable sprinkler will ensure your lawn is well watered without wastage.

Using a sprinkler

To water your lawn well, you need a quality sprinkler and tap timer. Look for a sprinkler that produces reasonably coarse droplets, as these are less likely to be lost to wind and wet soil more effectively.

Unless you have round lawns, go for a sprinkler that is adjustable

and has an angular rather than a round pattern.

This way, you can run it beside paths or in narrow spaces without losing water to overspray.

Set your tap timer whenever you run your sprinkler, as it's easy to forget a running hose. ❌

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DIY TIP

Avoid mowing during the heat of the day, as grass loses more water and recovers more slowly than if cut when it's cooler.



LAWNMOWER BUYER'S GUIDE

Select the right mower for your yard and budget with this round-up of the best grass cutters

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

Whether you are buying your first mower or replacing your faithful old machine, selecting the right mower can be a complex and confusing task.

It's worth taking the time to learn some mower basics, as the decision you make can affect you for many years.

Lawnmowers have come a long way since the only choice was a loud, smokey, vibrating two-stroke monster.

Now mowers come in all shapes and sizes including battery- or petrol-driven, push-button or self-propelling, and even ride-on.

Walk-behind mowers

Push-mowers and self-propelled mowers are the two main walk-behind lawnmowers.

➤ Push-mowers are traditional types that you propel across the lawn with your own power. They are considered suitable for lawns up to 1000sqm.

➤ Self-propelled mowers divert some engine power to drive the rear wheels. They're ideal for large lawns up to 3000sqm, or for people with mobility issues.

Ride-on mowers

These mowers suit lawns over 2000sqm, but smaller models may be more suitable for people who have limited mobility.

➤ Lawn tractors are best for lawns with large open areas.
 ➤ Zero-turn radius mowers are steered with separate left and right handles that control drive to the left and right rear wheels, allowing them to turn on the spot. They're best for large properties with trees and garden beds. ➤

Petrol versus battery

Since their invention, lawnmowers have traditionally been petrol-powered, but with recent advances in storage technology, battery power is giving petrol a run for its money.

Petrol

- ✦ Larger deck or cutting sizes.
- ✦ Wider choice of models and price range.
- ✦ Run-time is generally longer, comparing one tank to one charge.
- ✦ Messy and potentially dangerous to refuel.
- ✦ Requires annual maintenance.
- ✦ Ongoing costs for petrol, oil and parts.
- ✦ Starting can be a chore.

Battery

- ✦ Instant start and much quieter.
- ✦ Lower ongoing costs.
- ✦ Almost zero maintenance and no annual servicing.
- ✦ Lighter and easier to handle.
- ✦ Initial outlay can be greater.



If you want to use a battery-powered mower for a large lawn, choose one with a wide cut



CHOOSE A MOWER



The lightweight Ozito Power X Change 18V Cordless Lawn Mower Kit, \$399, has a handy 14" cut and is ideal for small spaces (ozito.com.au).



With a push-button start, this Victa Easy Starter InStart Cut & Catch Mower, \$729, takes the pain out of starting a petrol mower (victa.com.au).



The Sprinter 16" 125cc Cut and Catch Lawn Mower, \$299, is affordable and ideal for small lawns (bunnings.com.au).



Mow large lawns faster with the Honda 21" Self-propelling Mower, \$799. It features Mow-Safe engine brake technology for safer mowing at home (powerequipment.honda.com.au).



For serious battery mowing, the Victa 82V Wide Cut Mulch or Catch Lawn Mower Kit, \$799, features a powerful 1200W motor and wide 21" cut for large lawns.



The Ryobi One+ 18V Lawn Mower Console, \$329, features a 14" cut and is ideal for small to medium yards (ryobi.com.au).

With a wide 38" cut, the Victa VRX Lawn Tractor, \$2549, is designed for riding and handles large blocks with ease.



For large lawns with narrow access, the Masport Mini Rider, \$1698, with a 24" cut is an excellent choice (masport.com.au).

Tidy up the yard

Tackle these jobs now to get your outdoor spaces ready for summer

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

After a few months of staying cosy indoors, you could be forgiven for allowing your outdoor spaces to end up needing a bit of a tidy-up.

Don't despair. Getting your yard ready for summer doesn't take too much time. In fact, devoting a little time and effort to it now means you'll spend more of the warmer months chilling out instead of working out.

When it comes to knocking outdoor spaces into shape, the adage of divide and conquer often works best.

Think of the work you have to do, either by area or by type. For example, divide it into cleaning decks and paths, getting the lawn sorted out, or managing your garden beds.

This way, you can compile all the tasks into an easy checklist that will be a breeze to finish.

Slippery surfaces

Many surfaces, including paths, decks and outdoor furniture, can become dangerously slippery or just plain mucky in cool weather, as dampness tends to sit, not evaporate. This results in algae, moss and ingrained staining.

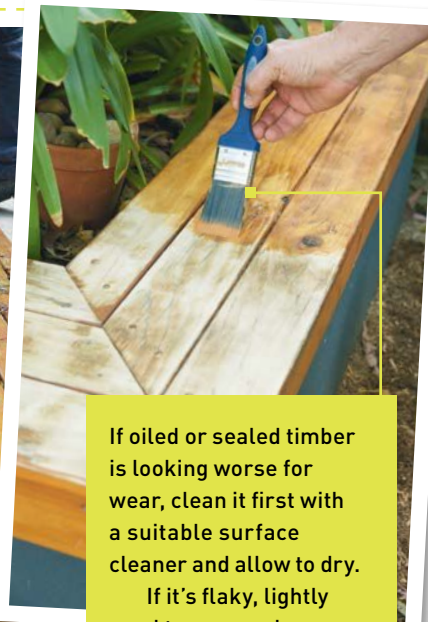
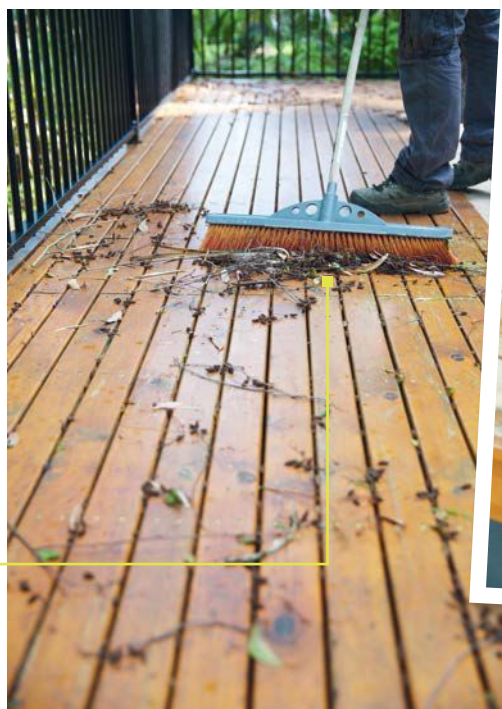
Cleaning surfaces not only improves aesthetics but can also make outdoor spaces safer.

Timber

Outdoor furniture, decks and other exposed timber can be due for a freshen-up at this time of year.

Timber that has been treated with oils or oil-like stains will often need treatment every couple of years, especially if it has been exposed to lots of wear or weather, or both.

When decks and other timber surfaces dry, clear them with a broom or blower to determine whether they require more extensive cleaning or re-oiling.



If oiled or sealed timber is looking worse for wear, clean it first with a suitable surface cleaner and allow to dry.

If it's flaky, lightly sand to remove loose material, dust off and give it a coat or two of an oil or timber treatment.

PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS (TOP) ISTOCK

DIY TIP

Check that all the screws and nuts in your outdoor timber furniture are tight, as they can loosen after exposure to weather.

Cleaning paths

For areas that have become slippery or mossy, apply a penetrating surface cleaner before washing off. For heavy moss, use a stiff brush first. It may then require scrubbing to remove completely.

➤ **REMOVE** ingrained dirt from most surfaces quickly and easily without needing chemical treatment by using a pressure cleaner.

➤ **APPLY** a suitable path weeder or herbicide in paving to get rid of weeds in the cracks. Always apply at the recommended rates. ➤

Pruning

The chances are your garden has sprung back to life after its winter slumber. This means that a tidy-up and some simple maintenance tasks will be in order.

Most of the work you do now will not need to be repeated for many months or even for another year.



Trim into shape

At this time of year, pruning is essential to keep your garden neat and tidy and ensure quality growth and flowering as the seasons roll on.

It's also good practice to feed with a premium controlled-release fertiliser as a part of your spring tidy-up.

Knock hedges into shape with a quick haircut. Smaller hedges and shrubs are easy enough to trim with a conventional pair of hedging shears, but for large hedges, consider investing in battery hedge pruners.

Be on the lookout for crossing branches on trees and shrubs, which rub, causing damage to the branch and leading to poor performance or further damage from pests and diseases.



Fix rubbing problems by removing either the least desirable or the branch that is the most damaged. Just make sure you cut it off near the main trunk.

Hedges and shrubs that flower in winter and spring, such as camellias, can start shooting with the new-season's growth shortly after flowering.

Give them a light haircut to remove any spent flowers and to encourage bushiness. This will also improve next year's flowering.



Don't waste garden clippings. Add them to the compost heap or run them through a shredder. You can then use them on the garden as mulch.



Many fruit trees and roses are grown on vigorous, disease-resistant root understock. It is common for this understock to start shooting in spring.

If allowed to grow, it will dominate and your plant will die back.

This is easily avoided by pruning off the rogue shoot close to the trunk.



As summer approaches, your garden has two main enemies – water loss and weeds. Beat both by mulching your garden beds.

For small gardens, you can buy bags or bales of mulch, but for large spaces, talk to your local bulk landscape supplier.



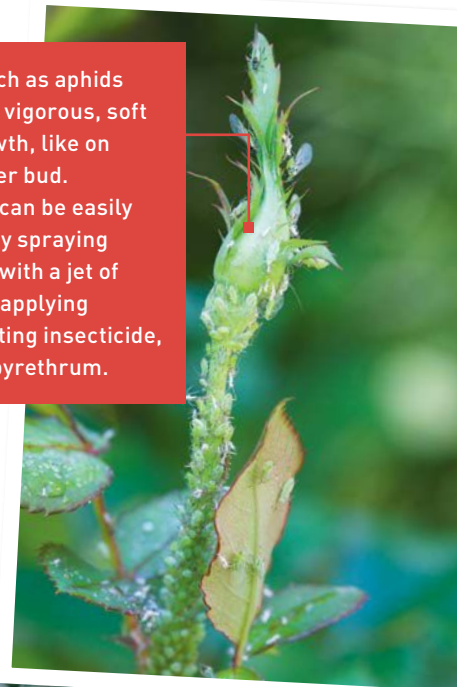
Pest watch

When tidying up, don't forget to keep an eye out for pests and weeds, and deal with them promptly.

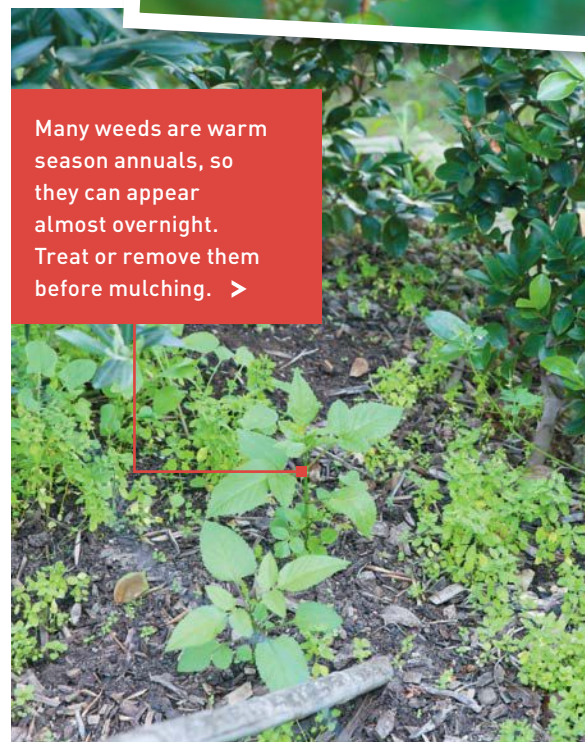
Weeds can rob your plants of much-needed moisture and nutrients, and pests can damage plants and carry harmful plant diseases.

Pests such as aphids thrive on vigorous, soft new growth, like on this flower bud.

They can be easily treated by spraying them off with a jet of water or applying a fast-acting insecticide, such as pyrethrum.



Many weeds are warm season annuals, so they can appear almost overnight. Treat or remove them before mulching. ➤





Move heavier loads around the yard, such as soil and rocks, with a sturdy wheelbarrow.

Make your garden tidy-up easier and more efficient by using a cart to transport materials.

Carrying loads

Moving stuff around your garden can be one of the most demanding, awkward and potentially dangerous tasks you can do. But there is an easy way to make these jobs quick, easy and safe – add wheels.

Wheelbarrows and carts are best for carrying rocks, soil and clippings, while trolleys are ideal for moving large potted plants. Just make sure you strap on taller objects so they don't fall off.

If you need to change levels, have a difficult slope to negotiate or steps to go up and down, then invest in a foldout aluminium ramp. 🚧



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cyclone.com.au



Sherlock 80L Garden Poly Tray Wheelbarrow, \$119.
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Kärcher K2 1400W Waterblaster, \$198.
kaercher.com.au





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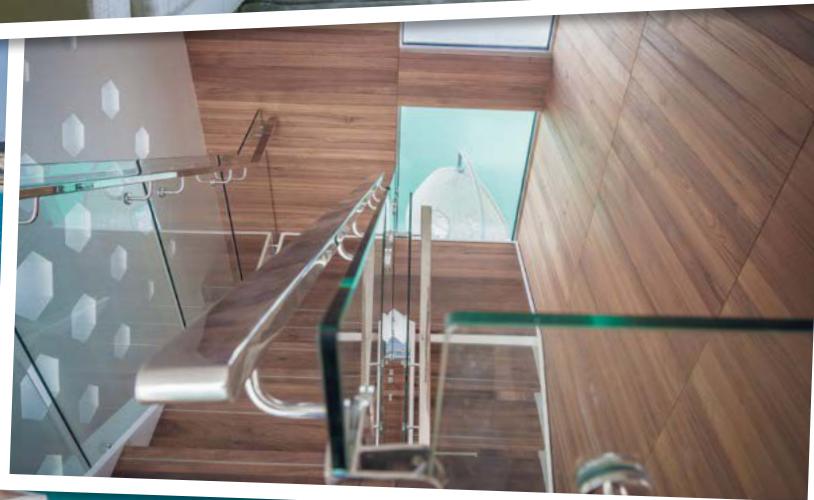
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UNDERWATER

LIVING *IN* FLOATING HOMES

Relax on an exotic houseboat with all the mod cons in the heart of Dubai's stunning artificial islands project





The upper floors have outdoor areas for relaxing and entertaining. ABOVE A central stairwell links the three levels.

Houseboats tend to attract those seeking adventure and escape. Occupants can be surrounded by a turquoise sea while lazing all day on a sun-drenched deck and falling asleep to the gentle lapping of water.

Imagine having all that and throwing in a glass-bottomed spa, outdoor climate-controlled areas, home automation and a submerged bedroom with an underwater view.

That's what the Kleindienst Group (kleindienst.ae) in the United Arab Emirates is offering with its 42 Floating Seahorse houseboats moored near The Heart of Europe islands, which are in Dubai's artificial islands project, The World. ➤



The houseboats are holiday retreats aimed at marine and yachting enthusiasts



Floor-to-ceiling windows enhance the main bedroom.

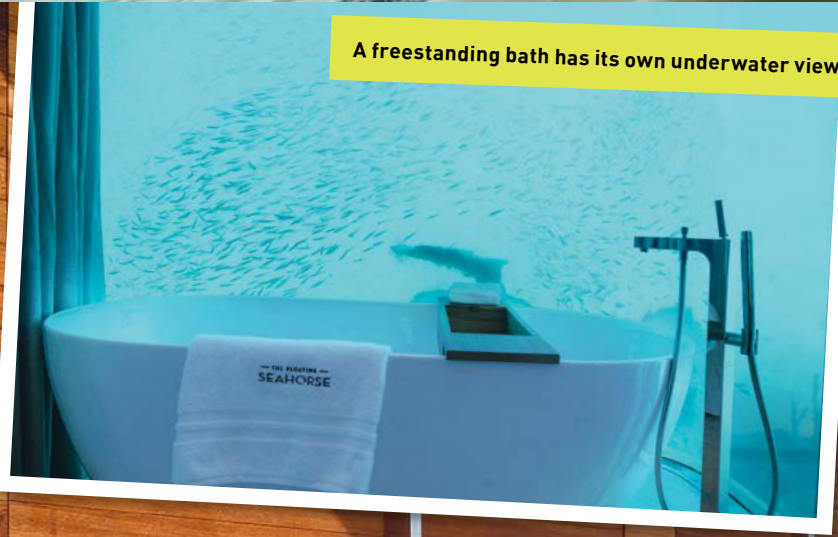
Family friendly

Aimed at families, the houseboats are partially submerged. They are anchored and do not have motors for moving around.

They comprise three sections, including an underwater level, a main floor and an upper deck.

The master bedroom, which has an ensuite, is on the underwater level and has a freestanding bath and floor-to-ceiling windows.

The upper deck has a mini bar, a day bed, a glass-bottomed spa, which acts as a skylight for the living room below, and an outdoor shower.



A freestanding bath has its own underwater view.



Outdoor areas can be used for lounging in the sun or enjoying alfresco dining.



ABOVE A kitchenette serves a compact dining area.
LEFT Houseboat owners have their own private view of Dubai and the surrounding Persian Gulf, with turquoise water that's great for swimming and diving.

Protected environment

An artificial coral reef is being built where the houseboats are docked, creating a protected environment for local marine life, including seahorses, and ensuring stunning views for the occupants.

If you want to take a dip in the Persian Gulf, just dive into the sea from the main level, which has a kitchenette and, in the larger houseboats, a second bedroom.

But Floating Seahorse homes are not cheap and the Kleindienst Group has already sold 35. The units cost from about \$2.3 million, but each can be tailored with fittings to suit individual needs. 🌊

★
 Each houseboat is moored in Dubai's The Heart of Europe islands, which represents countries and regions

Handyman BUYER'S GUIDE

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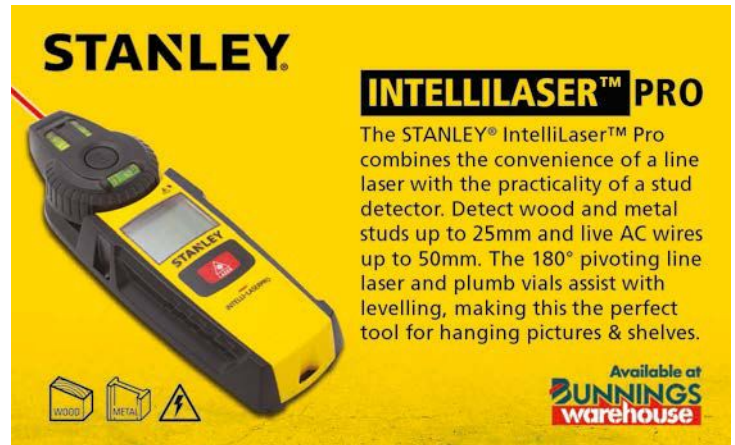
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This month

With spring in full swing, there is a lot to plant and harvest



- ## Do now
- ✦ **GROW** a garden to attract birds and beneficial insects, page 122.
 - ✦ **FIND** out how to plant a tree the right way, page 129.
 - ✦ **FILL** your garden with lovely fragrant flowers, page 134.
 - ✦ **PLANT** leafy greens and vegies for summer salads, page 139.

Flowers to sow

For blooms from 12 weeks, get these seeds in the ground.

- ✦ **AMARANTHUS**
- ✦ **COREOPSIS**
- ✦ **GAZANIA**
- ✦ **IMPATIENS**
- ✦ **ZINNIA**



Impatiens

Vegies to grow

Add these to your vegie patch for crops from early summer.

- ✦ **DWARF BEANS**
- ✦ **BETROOT**
- ✦ **CABBAGE**
- ✦ **CAPSICUM**
- ✦ **SILVERBEET**

Cabbage



WHAT'S IN COLOUR

Abelia 'Kaleidoscope'

✦ **ABELIA 'KALEIDOSCOPE'** adds interest to the garden during the seasons with its ever-changing foliage colour from yellow through bright orange to a striking fiery red.

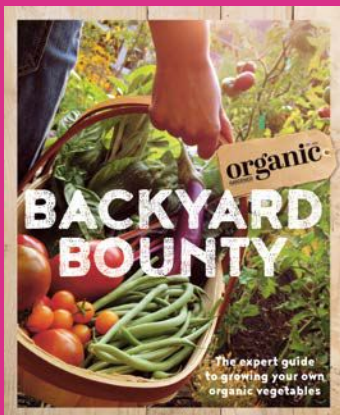
In spring, new variegated growth appears bright yellow with a lime-green centre and by late spring, 'Kaleidoscope' is covered with pink buds that open to pretty white flowers that continue well into autumn.

This low-maintenance ornamental variety grows up to 70cm high and spreads to 90cm. It is ideal as informal hedging or can be mass-planted for a striking effect in garden beds.

Give 'Kaleidoscope' a spot in full sun in well-drained soil. A light prune during early spring and an application of a slow-release fertiliser is advised. If using as a hedging plant, it will need a regular light trim to keep it in shape.

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

BOOK CLUB



Backyard Bounty by Penny Woodward (\$35, ABC Books) is a practical guide on what you need to know about growing vegetables organically.

It shows you how to get started, prepare your patch, make compost and beat pests and diseases the natural way.

There's also an A-Z of popular vegies and a month-by-month planting and growing guide.

To-do list

Start getting the garden ready for summer.

- ✓ **CHECK** for snails and slugs, which love tender new growth.
- ✓ **TAKE** stem or leaf cuttings from cacti and succulents to pot up.
- ✓ **ADD** mulch to garden beds in preparation for the hot months.

- ✓ **PLANT** up new ponds and clear existing ones of weeds and algae in temperate zones.
- ✓ **IMPROVE** aeration in lawns around the grass roots by spiking with a garden fork.
- ✓ **PICK** the flowers and deadhead lavender to shape the plant. >

DIVIDE BASIL

When you buy basil at the nursery, it is ready for re-potting in individual pots or transplanting into a garden bed to give the plant room to grow.

To divide basil, water the plant well, then after a few hours, gently tap the base of the pot to remove the plant.

If the basil is drooping, water daily until it is standing upright again, then remove from the pot and divide.

TIP Basil requires full sun and moist conditions to flourish.



1 Divide the rootball

Put the basil plant on a flat surface and use a sharp knife to carefully slice the rootball into 2-3 segments, keeping as much soil around the roots as possible.



2 Pot the basil

Partially fill pots large enough for the roots to grow with a premium potting mix. Add the segments, then backfill with mix. Position in a sunny location and water well.



Boost growth

Keep plants growing well and improve the structure of soil with the natural Richgro Rock Mineral Fertiliser & Soil Improver, \$20 for 5kg (richgro.com.au).

This non-leaching three-month slow-release fertiliser stimulates microbial activity, which is essential to plant and soil health. It also helps guard against diseases. 🍄



Feed now

Give these plants a boost with an application of fertiliser.

- + NEW ROSES
- + CHRYSANTHEMUM
- + AZALEA
- + CAMELLIA
- + CITRUS

Rose



Harvest now

Bring in the crops grown over the winter months.

- + ASPARAGUS
- + BROCCOLI
- + FENNEL
- + PEAS
- + SPINACH

Broccoli



Prune now

Deadhead and lightly trim these shrubs and trees after flowering.

- + FORSYTHIA
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- + FLOWERING PEACH
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Hibiscus



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CREATURE COMFORTS

Make your garden a safe haven for birds, bees and butterflies

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS

Providing shelter in your garden for birds, butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects can reap rewards for you and wildlife alike.

By growing plants organically that are attractive to wildlife, you can create green corridors.

While one garden is only a small part of the environment, it's still

significant, and several gardens grouped together contribute greatly.

And the birds, butterflies, bees and other insects your garden attracts will find their way into other nearby gardens, and vice versa.

Adapting your garden to provide the right conditions for wildlife is easier than you may think.



Cheryl

EXPERT SECRETS

Help stop birds colliding into your windows by partially drawing blinds and curtains.



Place a birdbath in view of the house to enjoy the show.

DIY TIP

Use wildlife-friendly nets when the trees are fruiting so you still attract the birds but stop them eating the fruit.



How to bring in the birds

Birds introduce movement, colour and sounds into your garden that change with the seasons, as different species come and go.

Simply providing food, shelter and water will entice them.

➤ **FOOD** Birds feed on nectar, pollen, seeds, fruit and insects.

So plant indigenous nectar-rich trees and shrubs to attract both the honeyeaters and the small insects that they feed on.

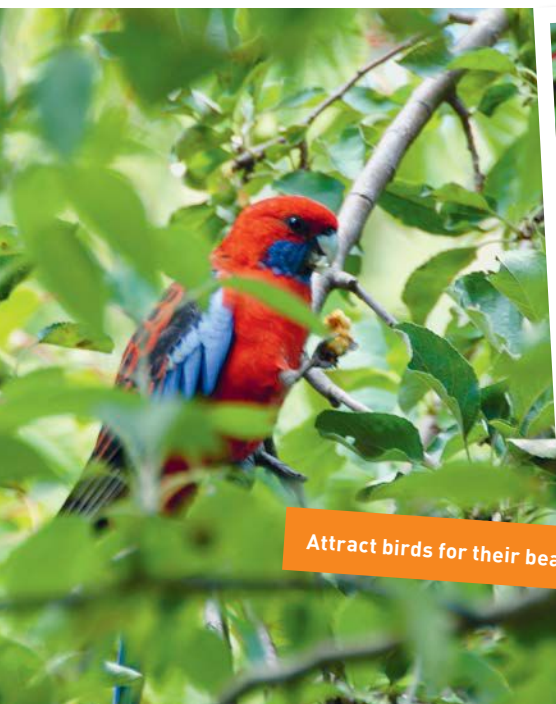
➤ **WATER** Lure birds with a regular source of water. A birdbath or bowl will give them water for drinking and bathing. Birds enjoy bathing, as it helps them keep their feathers in good condition.

Don't place birdbaths out in the open, as small birds feel safer when there is protective shrubbery nearby. Also, avoid placing them low to the ground for protection from cats.

➤ **SHELTER** Trees and shrubs offer vantage points from which birds can survey your garden to ensure there are no dangers or predators lurking there. Trees provide the overstorey, while shrubs make a good understorey.

Shrubs with dense foliage provide refuge and nesting spots for small birds.

Hollow branches also make good nesting places. You can emulate these natural habitats by positioning sections of hollow logs or nesting boxes in large trees or shrubs. ➤



Attract birds for their beautiful seasonal birdsong.





Butterflies love a sunny garden that catches the morning light.



Attracting butterflies

Butterflies love a sun-filled garden, especially one with morning sun. Attract them by growing brightly coloured flowers with masses of small, nectar-rich blooms on a single stem so they can rest and feed in one sitting.

Choose simple flowers, as they are easier for butterflies to negotiate than complicated double flowers.

Cottage gardens with their massed old-fashioned annual and perennial plantings are very enticing.

➤ **GROW** Ageratum, alyssum, buddleia, bottlebrush, calendula, candy tuft, catnip, cineraria, citrus, cleome, coneflower, coreopsis, echium, gazania, gaillardia, heliotrope, lavender, sedum, rosemary, rudbeckia, salvia, scabiosa, snapdragon, sunflower, verbena, wallflower, marigold and zinnia.

Butterflies

Gorgeous, delicate butterflies are like gardeners – they love flowers.

Think of flowers as advertising banners for butterfly fast food. Nectar gives butterflies energy as they carry pollen from flower to flower.

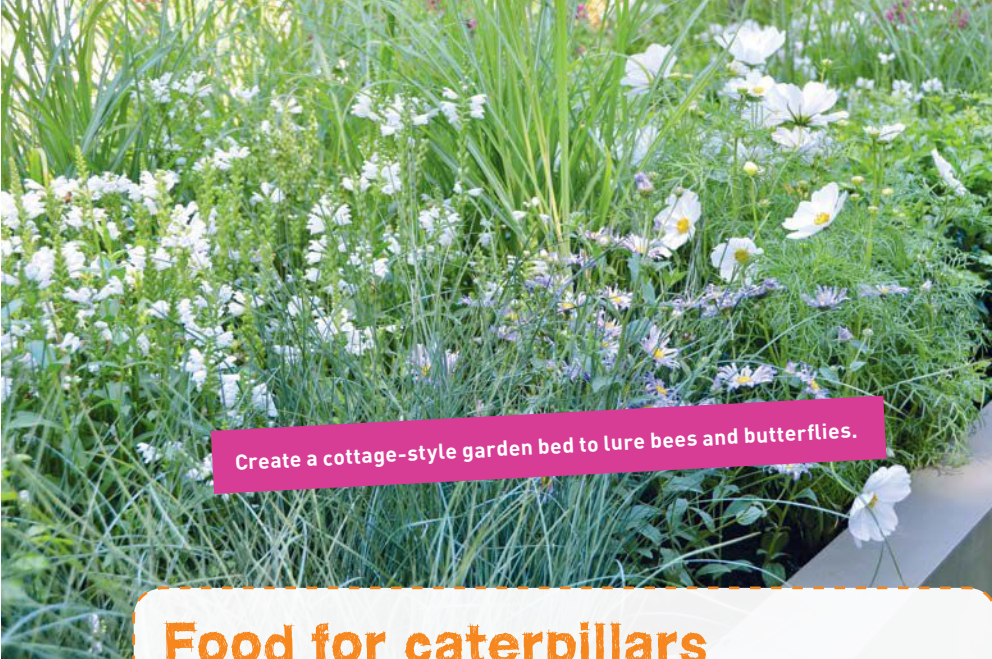
But their habitats are threatened by land-clearing and the loss of native grasses to pasture in farming areas.

Pesticides are harmful to them, and herbicides, especially those sprayed on roadside plants, destroy many native grasses used by butterflies for nesting.

Encouraging butterflies into your garden is as simple as planting the right flowers for nectar and the right plants as a food source for their larvae.

Small flower heads on a single stem are ideal.





Create a cottage-style garden bed to lure bees and butterflies.

Food for caterpillars

To produce butterflies, you need to offer food for growing caterpillars. Some butterflies will only lay their eggs on a particular plant, while others make use of a wide range.

An untidy garden has advantages, as many butterflies depend on weeds to lay their eggs. So think twice before removing that dandelion, and leave

soft lawn grasses unmown to attract the common brown butterfly.

Milkweed attracts the monarch or wanderer butterfly, while the flower heads of clover produce nectar for smaller butterflies.

Native grasses also make good host plants in which many butterflies will lay their eggs.



Tolerating caterpillars will provide you with butterflies.



Caterpillar care

Think carefully before you squash that caterpillar in your garden, since you're actually killing a butterfly as well.

Many gardeners prevent this metamorphosis from taking place in order to save their plants.

But the caterpillars that eat your edible plants are not native.

Native caterpillars mostly eat ornamental plants, and new leaves will soon follow. Consider it as a bit of summer pruning, for a good cause. ➤

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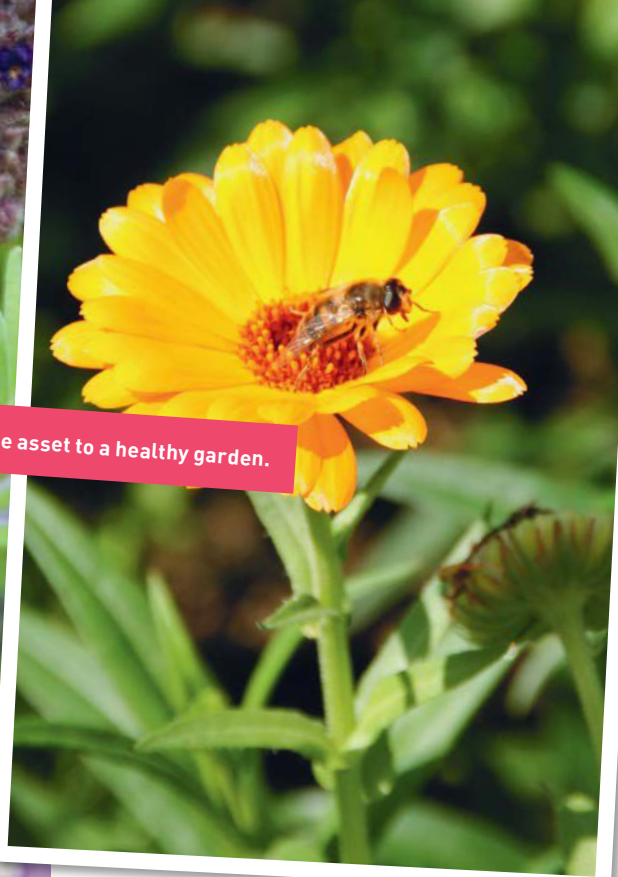


The hard-working bee is a valuable asset to a healthy garden.

DIY TIP

A mulch of leaf litter and twigs makes a home for beetles and worms – a source of food for birds, lizards and other animals.

Bees



As they pollinate our agricultural crops and the fruit, flowers and vegetables in our gardens, bees are crucial to our continued life on earth.

But they are in decline across the globe and their extinction will have ramifications for our food supply.

A reduction in the use of pesticides in the garden will help.



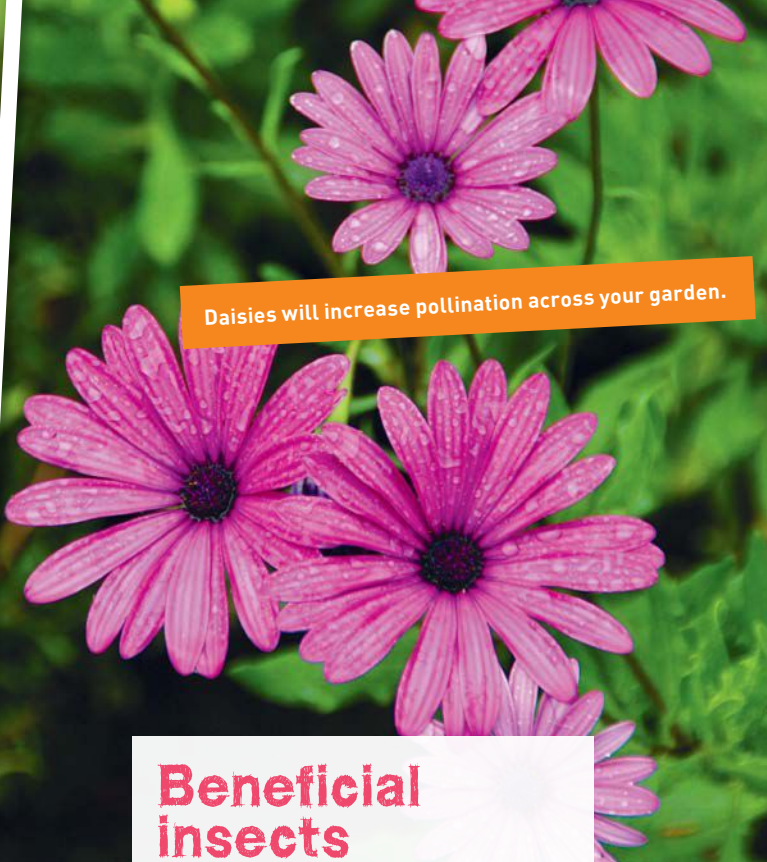
Foxglove 'Ruby Glow' is a plentiful larder for bees.

Be bee friendly

What can you do as a gardener to make your garden bee friendly? When controlling damaging insects like scale and aphids, spray them with a natural insecticide such as Eco Organic Garden Hippo Enhanced Eco-oil, which also attracts beneficial insects.

➤ **GROW** Abelia, sedum, hardenbergia, apple blossom, baeckea, eucalyptus,

blueberry, bee balm, bottlebrush, brachyscome, buddleia, calendula, gaura, grevillea, salvia, nasturtium, lavender, leptospermum, rosemary, hakea, westringia, zinnia, plants in the daisy family (Asteraceae) and culinary herbs such as basil, borage, mint, thyme, sage, hyssop, lemon balm and savory.



Daisies will increase pollination across your garden.

Beneficial insects

Lots of plants loved by butterflies and bees are also loved by beneficial pest-eating insects that you want to entice into your garden.

Many beneficial insects prefer small, abundant flowers, such as those of the daisy family (Asteraceae). These are an excellent source of pollen and nectar for parasitic wasps, hoverflies, lacewings, assassin bugs and ladybirds.

They also like plants in the carrot family (Apiaceae) and mint family (Lamiaceae), which produce clusters of many small, two-lipped flowers.

✚ **GROW** Marigold, cosmos, aster, sunflower, coreopsis, tansy, sweet marjoram, coneflower, basil, thyme, mint, sage, lavender, lemon balm, oregano, catmint, bergamot, dill, fennel and Queen Anne's lace. 🌱



Foxglove Ruby Glow



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PLANT *A* TREE

Follow our guide to guarantee your young tree grows into a striking healthy specimen

WORDS ADAM WOODHAMS

A tree makes a fabulous feature in your garden and it is an investment for the future that generations ahead can enjoy. If it is a fruiting tree, you're including something extra special.

Unfortunately, many people have poor experiences when they plant

a tree, finding that growth is sluggish and performance is poor. Or worse, the tree slowly dies.

But you don't need a degree in horticulture to plant a tree the right way. You just need to follow a few simple steps and be up for digging a hole, then you're set for success. ➤



Choose the variety

The most important steps are those you take before you even break ground – deciding where the tree is to go and selecting a variety to suit the location.

Sometimes it's easy, a nice sunny spot with even light all day. Other times it's not, with heavy morning shade, blazing afternoon sun, dappled light or windy and exposed conditions making it a bit of a challenge.

The tree you choose has to be right for the location or the outcome won't match your expectations. So you may need to rethink your tree wishlist.

Ask a horticulturist at your local nursery or garden centre for advice if you have a difficult spot, and use care when sourcing information online. It may be from overseas and not relevant to our climate, or the author may not have the necessary experience.

Ensuring you choose the right tree for the location is essential.

Growing a tree in a lawn

There is a bit of a garden myth about not planting trees in lawns. This has come about for a few reasons.

When the grass is allowed to grow up to the trunk, it causes maintenance problems and the trunk can be cut by a whipper snipper. This results in the tree being ringbarked and dying.

The grass can also die back due to shade and the tree taking moisture.

These can all be avoided by allowing adequate room under the tree and keeping this area mulched. As the tree grows, you'll most likely have to make this area larger.

This will avoid the problems caused by competition between the grass and the tree, protect tree roots from compaction and keep things looking neat, too.



Add a border to give definition and reduce the likelihood of grass running into the mulch.

PICTURES (LEFT) ALAMY (RIGHT) ADAM WOODHAMS

Staking for success

A new potted tree often has just one stake to hold it during transport and at the nursery, which needs removing.

➤ **HOW TO STAKE** When a tree is unstaked or badly staked, the rootball rocks, breaking fine roots and slowing down establishment.

Experts consider two or three stakes to be ideal – two at opposite sides or three in a triangular pattern. A tree can't develop a natural range of movement in response to wind with just a single stake.

➤ **HOW TO TIE** The material used should be at least 3cm wide and breathable so moisture doesn't build up underneath, causing rot.

A tree needs to develop trunk wood, which holds it upright against prevailing winds and gravity.

If held too tightly, especially to one stake, it will flop or snap when the ties are removed. If too loose, it will suffer root damage during the critical establishment phase. The best approach is to run one tie from each stake, leaving room for movement.

➤ **REMOVING STAKES** When the tree is established, the stakes should be removed. This takes 3-6 months, depending on the tree type, climate and soil. Look for lots of new foliage.

Cut off the ties first, then pull the stakes straight up, don't rock them.



Stakes should be three-quarters the tree height once hammered in.

Enrich the soil

Once you've selected the site and the right tree, it's time to get planting. The key to success is in the groundwork.

Improving the soil is critical, but you must do so to suit both the type of tree and the existing soil.

A citrus being planted in sandy soil will benefit from a 50/50 mix of the existing soil and compost, while a banksia going into regular garden soil will do better if drainage is improved by blending through coarse, washed river sand.

The general information on the plant label should provide guidance for the plant you are buying.

Any soil additives must be blended through to an even consistency, and remember that some soils won't require any additional improvements. ➤



Coping with clay

Digging into clay can cause major problems with plant roots becoming waterlogged after rainy periods. This is a situation most trees won't tolerate.

If you find a heavy clay layer exists, create a raised planting mound with new soil or build a raised planter bed. If you have fragmented clay in your soil, add a clay breaker at planting time.

PLANT THE TREE



1 Prepare the planting hole

Dilute a seaweed solution in a bucket of water and soak the plant. If planting in grass, use a spade to cut the perimeter of the hole at least twice as wide as the pot. Cut across the area to divide it into blade-width strips, then slide the blade under the grass following the cut lines to remove the strips.



2 Dig the hole

Break up the soil to the planting depth, which should be a little deeper than the pot height. To add soil improver, remove the soil from the hole and put in a pile or a wheelbarrow, then blend through the improver.

TIP Add a six-month, controlled-release fertiliser to avoid burning the roots.



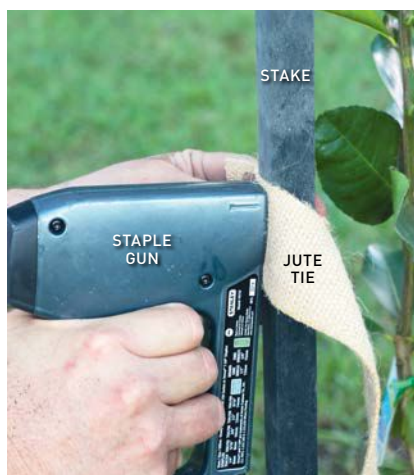
3 Position the plant

Lift the potted plant from the bucket of seaweed solution and allow to drain. Check the depth of the planting hole against the height of the pot, then gently remove the pot from the plant. Position the plant in the centre of the hole, supporting it in an upright position as you backfill around it.



4 Add the soil

When the hole is about three-quarters full, gently push down the soil, but don't compact it. The aim is to remove large air pockets. Fill the hole, ensuring the plant will sit at the same level as it was in the pot. Use the remaining soil to form a 50mm high dam wall around the edge to create a watering dish.



5 Stake the plant

Carefully hammer in two stakes to equal height at opposite sides of the trunk just outside the rootball of the tree, avoiding damaging the roots. Cut two lengths of tree tie, then loop each around the trunk and one stake, leaving 20-30mm of movement in each tie. Secure with a staple gun.



6 Add mulch

Pull out the original stake. Water with the diluted seaweed solution from the soaking bucket. Mulch with a layer of lucerne hay at least 50mm thick, leaving about 50mm clear around the trunk and mulching to the edge of the planting area. Water well, ensuring the mulch is thoroughly soaked. ❗

Keep your new tree moist but not wet for the first month or two.

What you need

- Bucket
- Seaweed-based liquid organic fertiliser
- Digging spade
- Soil improver
- Controlled-release fertiliser
- 2-3 stakes
- Staple gun
- Hammer
- Jute ties
- Lucerne hay

PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

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THE PROMISE OF PERFUME

Position plants and flowers so you can enjoy their unique scents

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

The appeal of plants to the sense of smell is among the main delights offered by a garden, and there are different ways to use perfumed plants.

You can position them between non-fragranced plants to stop the scents mingling. Or you can mix similar aromas to create a scent pocket.

They can be put close to doors, windows and seats and placed in outdoor entertaining areas, on balconies and alongside pathways.

Allow fragrant climbing plants to ramble up walls, trees, pergolas and fences. Also place perfumed plants in raised beds to keep the fragrances closer to nose level.



Did you know?

Research has found that some scents can help us relax emotionally and physically. For a little more balance, head for the basil, lavender or roses. To calm yourself, sit among lemon balm, chamomile, clary sage or marjoram. For stimulation, rub a few rosemary leaves on your forehead. And if you just want to relax, fill the garden with basil, jasmine, roses and citrus.

PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS



Sweet-smelling blooms

➤ **POTTED ANNUALS** Place pots filled with perfumed flowering annuals in courtyards and on balconies.

Plant scented stock or low-growing sweet alyssum, which makes a great fragrant groundcover when mixed with taller plants.

With flowering tobacco, you can enjoy a stronger perfume at night and there is nothing more fragrant than a pot full of sweet peas.

Plant in a premium potting mix and feed regularly with a soluble plant food for flowers. Mulch with

lucerne hay or sugar cane to help retain moisture in the soil.

Check if the pot needs watering daily, especially during summer. Always water before and after adding fertiliser. Deadhead regularly.

➤ **SEASONAL SCENTS** Just as most gardeners aim to have flowers in their garden throughout the seasons, this should be the aim with perfume.

Consider the flowering period when choosing scented plants. With careful selection, you can extend your fragrances across the seasons.

Flowering tobacco



Rosemary



Sweet pea



Fragrant foliage

The leaves, not the flowers, of many plants are strongly perfumed. Position them near pathways or seats so you can touch them and smell their scent.

Scented-leaved geraniums (*Pelargonium* cultivars) release a strong fragrance when touched, which makes them popular in gardens for the visually impaired.

The leaves of lavender, rosemary, lemon balm, artemisia and lemon verbena all have seductive aromas. ➤

WHAT TO PLANT

Gardenia

The creamy white flowers of gardenia have an exquisite scent.

Give it a spot with morning sun but with protection from the hot afternoon sun.

Plant in rich cool, slightly acidic soil. Mulch in spring and summer with compost or cow manure and top with lucerne hay or sugar cane. Feed in late spring with a fertiliser for flowers and fruit.

✚ **FLOWERS** in late spring and summer.

Daphne

Renowned for its fragrance, *Daphne odora* is a small evergreen shrub with glossy leaves and star-shaped pink and purple flowers.

Position in morning sun only in well-drained, slightly acidic soil and mulch around the roots to keep the soil cool.

✚ **FLOWERS** in winter.

Rose

Perfumed roses, especially old-fashioned roses, are a must. Usually sold bare-rooted in winter, you can buy them in pots in spring and summer.

Position in full sun in rich soil and feed in early spring and summer with a fertiliser for roses. Mulch with lucerne hay.

✚ **FLOWERS** in spring, summer and autumn.

Star jasmine

Trachelospermum jasminoides is an evergreen climber with strongly perfumed white flowers.

Position star jasmine in the sun or semi-shade and plant in free-draining soil. Feed in spring and summer with a three-month, controlled-release fertiliser. Star jasmine likes a frost-free climate.

✚ **FLOWERS** in late spring and summer.

Frangipani

The heady fragrance of frangipani will fill a garden. These deciduous trees have dark-green, shiny leaves and white, deep-yellow or pink flowers, depending on the cultivar or species.

Give it a position in full sun in well-drained soil with protection from cool winds. Frangipani likes a frost-free climate.

✚ **FLOWERS** in summer.



Orange Jessamine

A tall evergreen shrub, *Murraya paniculata* produces its strongly scented white flowers among dark-green foliage.

Give it a sunny position in free-draining soil in a frost-free climate. Feed in spring and summer and prune regularly.

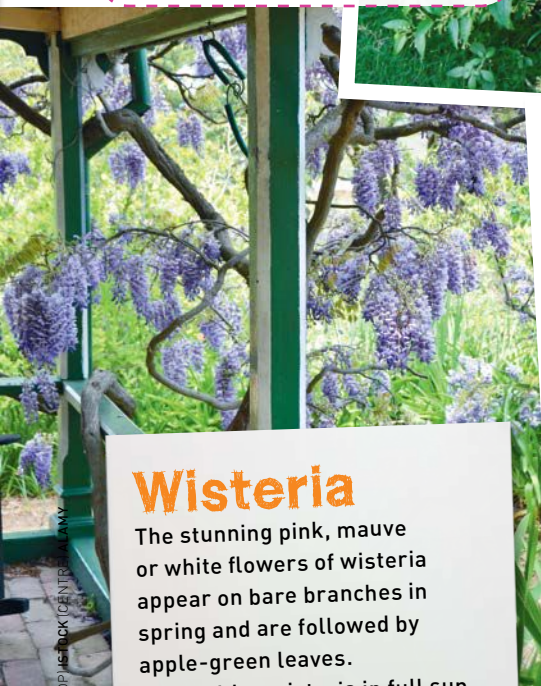
✚ FLOWERS in spring.

Night-scented Jessamine

Cestrum nocturnum is rather an ordinary-looking shrub until night falls, when its yellow-lemon blooms release a sweet, earthy scent.

Give it a sunny, wind-protected spot in well-drained soil. It likes a frost-free climate.

✚ FLOWERS in summer and autumn.



Wisteria

The stunning pink, mauve or white flowers of wisteria appear on bare branches in spring and are followed by apple-green leaves.

Position wisteria in full sun in well-drained soil that has been enriched with compost or cow manure.

✚ FLOWERS in spring.



Lilac

The sweet old-fashioned scent of lilac will invade the garden and the flowers are great for picking. This deciduous shrub has flowers in shades of lilac, mauve, white, claret red or purple.

Position in full sun and plant in moist but well-drained soil enriched with organic matter.

Lilac grows best in a cool climate.

✚ FLOWERS in spring. ✂

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Grow your own salads

Plant these edibles to serve the freshest spring and summer fare

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Nothing is more convenient, tastier or rewarding than being able to pick salad vegetables straight from your garden.

Leafy greens, capsicum, celery, cucumber and beetroot all grow well during the warm seasons. And if you start from seed, you can choose from a large range of varieties.

They will all grow well in pots on a balcony or in a courtyard as well, so you don't have to miss out if you're short on garden space. ➤



Give your salad greens lots of sun and water regularly.





Help them thrive

Give salad vegies the right conditions and you'll be harvesting for months.

- ✚ **SUN** is essential. At least six hours of sunlight a day is required.
- ✚ **SOIL** should be free-draining, dug to the depth of your spade and enriched with organic matter such as compost, poultry manure or cow manure or Yates Dynamic Lifter. This adds structure to the soil, helps retain water and slowly releases nutrients.
- ✚ **WATER** regularly to ensure the plants grow steadily and the leaves and fruit are succulent. Keep the soil

damp but not wet. Depending on the weather, you'll probably need to water every day or two.

- ✚ **MULCH** to conserve moisture, prevent weed growth by restricting light to the surface of the soil and modify soil temperatures by cooling or warming it.

Use biodegradable organic mulches such as lucerne hay, pea straw or sugar cane that will break down and add beneficial matter to the soil. This in turn improves the soil texture, which will increase the water- and nutrient-holding capacity of the soil.



Check regularly for snails, slugs and caterpillars, which will love your salad vegies as much as you

Potting up

Salad greens grow well in troughs, large bowls or pots in a sunny spot.

Modular raised vegetable beds work well in small spaces and are ideal for salad vegetables. Made from steel or wood, they're available in different heights and shapes.

They're great if you're renting, as you can take the bed if you move.

- ✚ **START** with a good potting mix such as Scotts Pure Organic Premium Potting & Planting Mix.
- ✚ **FEED** potted salad vegies fortnightly with a soluble plant food.
- ✚ **WATER** regularly. Daily watering, especially on hot days, is often needed for container-grown salad greens.



Leaves generally form the basis of a salad, from mild lettuce leaves to stronger-flavoured greens such as rocket, mizuna, watercress and red-veined sorrel.



Rocket

Peppery rocket leaves are at their best when picked young.

Try Johnsons Seeds World Kitchen Rocket Wasabi with its crisp leaves and spicy horseradish taste.

- ✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow, which will germinate in 7-10 days. In summer, give the plants shade from the hot afternoon sun to prevent them bolting to seed.



GROW a bucketful of lettuce on a balcony or in a courtyard. Plant loose-leaf lettuce varieties, then pick the leaves as needed.



1 SELECT a galvanised metal bucket, about 25cm wide, then drill at least three holes in the base for drainage. Partially fill with a premium potting mix.



2 PLANT about four seedlings 100mm apart, then backfill with potting mix. Water in and place the bucket in a sunny position. Feed frequently.

Lettuces

Easy to grow, there are many varieties of lettuces with a diversity of leaf shapes and colours. These varieties can be divided into four types.

BUTTERHEAD lettuces, such as 'Green Mignonette', 'Buttercrunch' and 'Brown Mignonette' have a loose centre of leaves and can be picked whole or leaf-by-leaf.

COS or Romaine doesn't have a definite centre, as the leaves grow from a long central stem. It is popular in Caesar salads.

LOOSE-LEAF varieties can be constantly picked without cutting the whole plant. This is why they're also called cut-and-come-again lettuces. Try 'Red Oakleaf', 'Green Oakleaf' and 'Red Coral'.

HEARTING or crisphead lettuces have a cabbage-like or dense heart. Try 'Iceberg' and 'Great Lakes'.

+ GROW Sow lettuce seeds in punnets or directly in the ground where the plants are to grow.

During summer, plant in a position that receives at least six hours of sunlight every day but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun. For crisp tender leaves, water regularly. ➤

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Watercress

This adds a delicious peppery taste to salads and you don't need a pond, as it grows well in containers or damp soil.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds in a self-watering pot or in a garden bed, and make sure the potting mix or soil is always kept moist.

Red-veined sorrel

The lemon-tasting leaves of perennial red-veined sorrel are high in vitamin C and iron.

Use the young leaves in salads and cook the older leaves.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds in a punnet and they will germinate in about 14 days, or you can buy potted plants. It will tolerate part shade.

ADD CRUNCH

Celery, beetroot, capsicum and cucumbers are all easy-to-grow, add crunch to salads and can be grown in a sunny position in large pots or a garden bed.

Capsicum

Also known as peppers, capsicums are green and then turn red, yellow or purple as they mature. They're a good source of vitamin C and can be used raw in salads.

✚ **GROW** Sow seeds directly where the plants are to grow, or plant seedlings. Water regularly and feed monthly with a fertiliser formulated for tomatoes when flowering begins.

They'll be ready to harvest about 10 weeks from sowing.

Mizuna

Mustard-tasting mizuna has deeply serrated leaves. Green salads containing mizuna team well with Asian foods and fish.

✚ **GROW** Sow from seeds sown directly where the plants are to grow and transplant seedlings to 250mm apart when 75mm high. Pick the young leaves as needed.

Leaf celery

Also called Chinese or cutting celery and closely related to wild celery, leaf celery adds a refreshing celery taste to salads.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds directly into pots or garden beds. Frequent picking will encourage more leaves to grow.



PICTURES: CHERYL MADDOCKS

Beetroot

The roots and young leaves can be used in salads.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow and thin the seedlings to 70mm apart when 75mm high.

Two or three seedlings appear from one cluster seed. Transplant one for leaves and the others to reach maturity for their roots.

Feed fortnightly with a soluble plant food. Beetroot is ready to pick about 10 weeks from sowing.

Celery

This vegetable is a great source of magnesium, potassium, fibre and vitamins A, B and C.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds in a punnet and transplant to a pot or bed when the seedlings are 75mm high.

Regular watering is essential. Feed every two weeks to prevent the stems becoming coarse.

The stems will be ready to harvest from 12 weeks. Pick the outside stems as needed.

Cucumber

These come in different shapes and sizes. Pick green varieties for salads when 150-200mm long and apple cucumbers when they reach the size of a tennis ball. Lebanese cucumbers are best picked about 100mm in length.

✚ **GROW** Sow the seeds directly where the plants are to grow. Regular watering is essential.

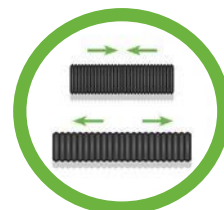
They'll be ready to harvest about eight weeks from sowing. 🍷



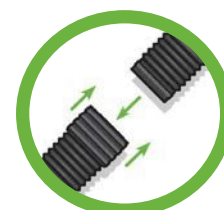
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