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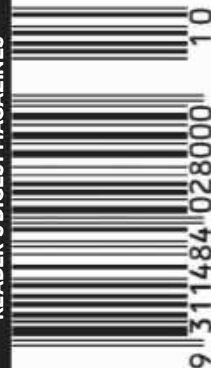


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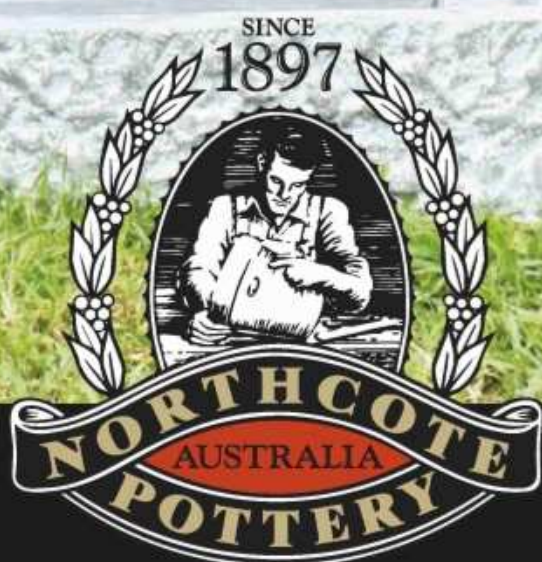
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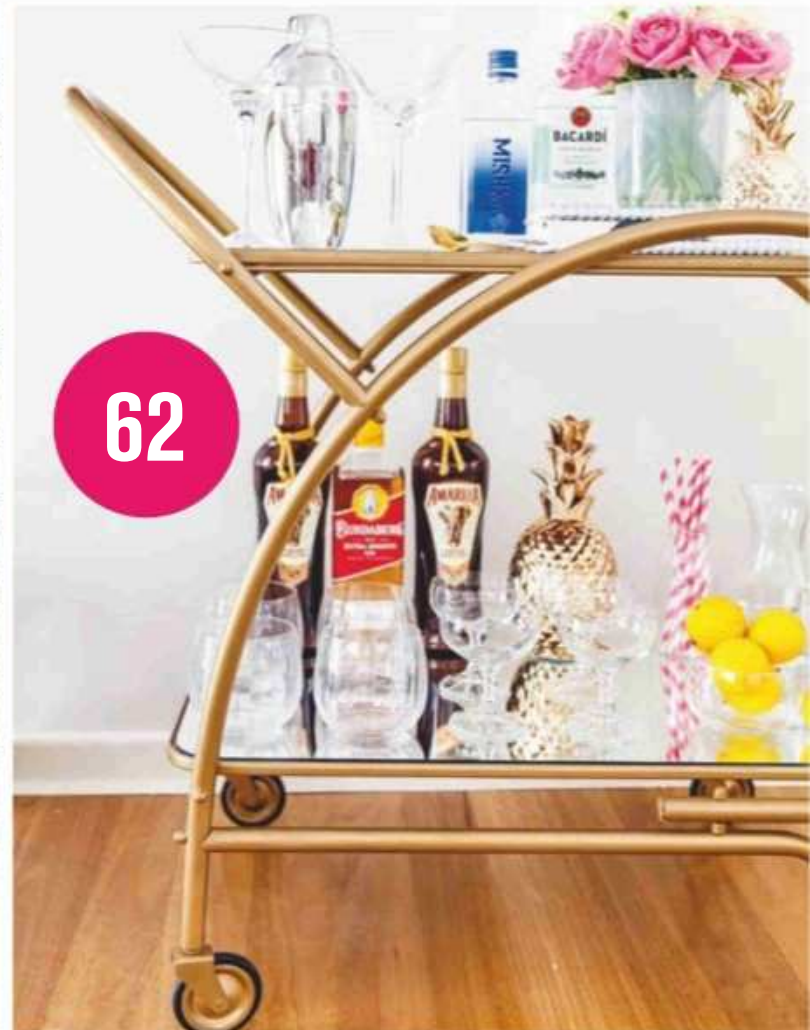
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OCTOBER ISSUE



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Editor's LETTER



As the temperature heats up, it's time to venture outdoors and check out the havoc that has been wreaked on our lawns and gardens during winter.

If your patch of green is looking decidedly less than lush, don't despair. Our ultimate lawn care guide, starting on page 106, will soon have it back to its soft and springy best. (And don't miss our feature on edgers and trimmers on page 148 to be sure you're equipped with the best tools for the job.)

The great outdoors

Still on outdoor living, we reveal the secrets to brilliant landscape design (page 30), how to create a stylish and usable alfresco room (page 40), and the latest exterior lighting tech (page 122).

And what better way to enjoy your outdoor space than on a swinging day bed? Build your own on page 78!

Behind closed doors

Meanwhile, indoors, we help you restore order and sanity to those

behind-closed-door spaces that can be the stuff of nightmares – wardrobes (page 96) and laundries (page 100). Happy DIYing!

EDITOR
ZOË MEUNIER



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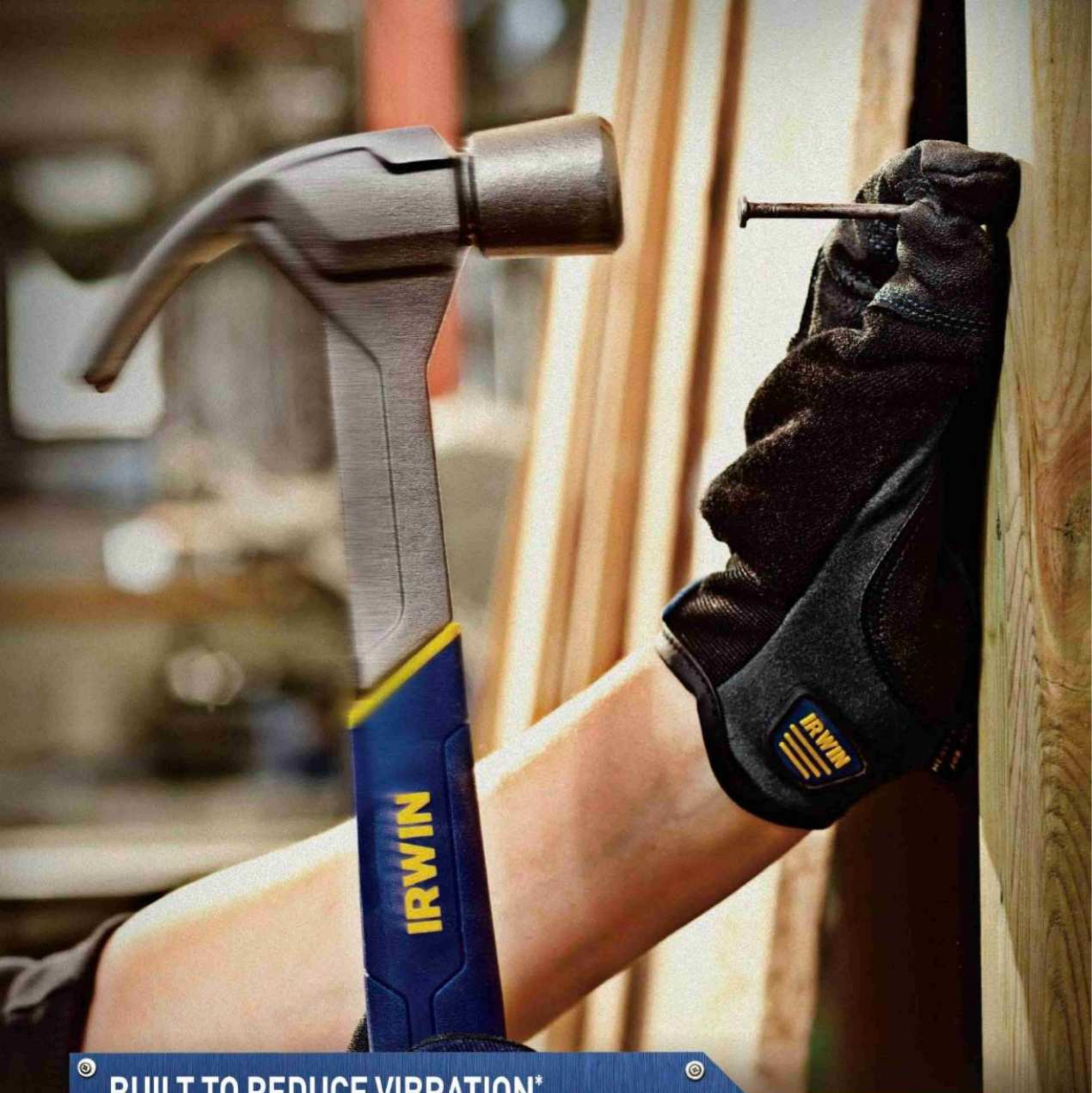
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WORDS JACKIE BRYGEL

She's the co-founder and creative director of a successful boutique renovation company, Three Birds Renovations (threebirdsrenovations.com). But when it came to transforming a dark and somewhat dilapidated 1970s house into her own family's bright modern coastal barn home, Bonnie Hindmarsh knew one thing for certain – she only had herself to please.

'This renovation was a little bit different because it was my place. My husband Nathan pretty much gave me free rein and trusted my design choices,' says Bonnie with a smile. ►



Coast meets country style at this rambling homestead in the Hills District of Sydney.



‘We’re all in that honeymoon stage at the moment. We’re just in love with everything’

‘With Three Birds, we’re up to our ninth renovation in four years. But this is the home we’re planning to stay in and enjoy as a family for a long, long time. As a result, the choices needed to be timeless and have longevity, which is actually the way I design most houses.’

Over 14 months, Bonnie oversaw the extensive transformation of the Sydney Hills District home, nestled within lush greenery on a sprawling two-hectare allotment. And despite at least one rather significant hiccup along the renovation way, the result is exactly as Bonnie envisaged.

Most importantly, the house perfectly suits Bonnie, Nathan and their four young sons. Even the clan’s pair of British bulldogs have wasted no time making the stylish abode their home. ►



Green is seen from virtually every aspect of the home’s interior.



Building a deck in a bush fire zone

To achieve the look of a beach house in the bush, the owner of this new house used HardieDeck™ for its versatility and clever features.

Having renovated multiple houses in the past, Bonnie Hindmarsh of Three Birds Renovations has used HardieDeck™ frequently to create beautiful outdoor entertaining spaces. When it came to choosing materials for her own family home, she chose HardieDeck™ as it suited her circumstances perfectly. She says, “We had stringent requirements to fulfil, living in a bush fire zone. HardieDeck™ is BAL 40 rated, low-maintenance and looks great.”

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like timber. In addition, HardieDeck™ is deemed non-combustible and is BAL 40 rated, essential in bush fire prone areas such as Bonnie’s home.

HOW BONNIE ACHIEVED THE BEACH HOUSE LOOK

“Our site is 5 acres so we had a lot of space to build, including a large alfresco area. I wanted decking right around the perimeter of our house, wrapping around the pool area and a boardwalk around the side, plus a veranda at the front. HardieDeck™ was the perfect material for the boardwalk because it’s low to the ground with damp conditions*. Real timber would have been susceptible to rotting and warping, but HardieDeck™ fibre-cement is ideal for these conditions.”

Bonnie dreamt of a ‘Modern Coastal Barn’ theme for the design of her new home. She loves white weatherboard exteriors and large timber decks, and wanted to achieve this coastal look even though her house site is in the bush. She clad the exterior with Linea Weatherboards



by James Hardie which works perfectly against the HardieDeck™.

She says, “I love the look of timber, but it was never going to work for a number of reasons. First of all, we couldn’t have timber because we were building in a bush fire zone. Also, because of the large scale of our project, even if we could have used timber it would have been too high maintenance in the long-term to keep staining or painting.”

She continues, “I’m thrilled with the results. Not only do I have my deck in a bush fire zone but it’s so practical and I love how it wraps right around the side of the house, creating a boardwalk from front veranda to the pool deck at the back.” ●

For more information, please visit www.hardiedeck.com.au and review the relevant installation* and technical guides. Copyright ©2018 James Hardie Australia Pty Ltd ABN 12 084 635 558.

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Time for change

Living in the dated brown brick home just as it was for five years, Bonnie and Nathan always knew they would one day tackle a major renovation.

‘It was a tough five years because the house was literally falling apart. There was a huge storm that damaged the property quite significantly, so it was looking a little bit the worse for wear,’ says Bonnie.

‘We held out, though, and I’m glad we did. It was good living there first and seeing exactly where the sun comes in – where it gets hot in summer and stays cool in winter.’

With DJ Building & Construction taking charge of the works, the renovation commenced, while the family lived in a small granny flat on the property.

They resided there a little longer than planned, as the project turned into a far greater undertaking than was originally anticipated.

‘Once we started getting stuck into it and knocking out walls, the builder let us know that the walls were practically

paper thin from termite damage. We ended up knocking down 90% of the home, but we kept a beautiful fireplace and another wall in the dining area with some big old doors. I’m so glad we were able to keep a few features of the home that I really loved,’ says Bonnie. ►

‘It was good living there first and seeing exactly where the sun comes in – where it gets hot in summer and stays cool in winter’

The kitchen and dining area were central to the home’s new layout.

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Bright idea

Drawing inspiration from what she has dubbed a 'modern coastal barn look', Bonnie also knew from the outset that white in all its pure glory would play a starring role.

'As for where I got the concept of 'modern coastal barn' from – who knows?' she laughs. 'But I think it was a mix of my absolutely loving the coast yet being so far away from it, while still wanting to achieve that real holiday feel for my family permanently.'

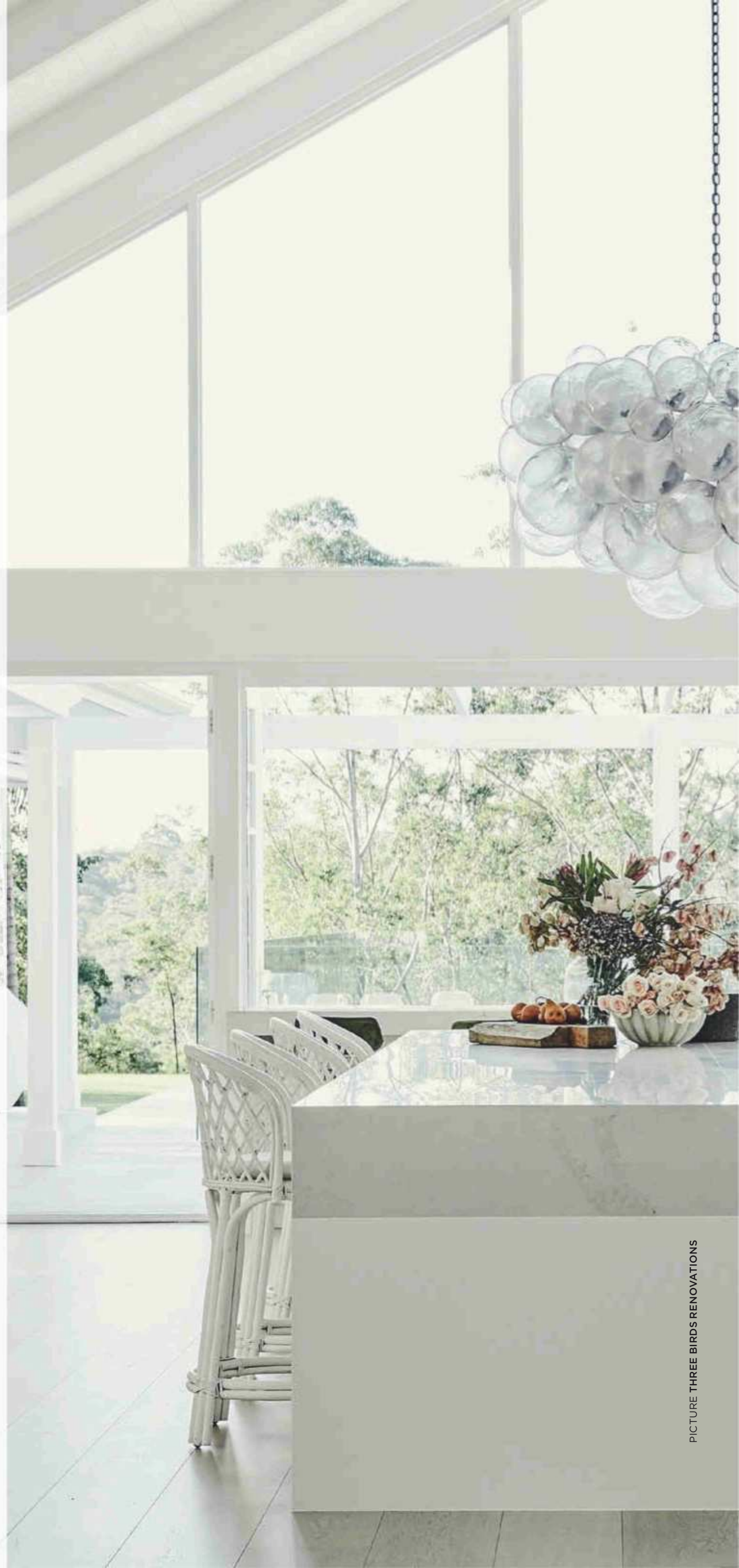


'I wanted to create a home that I love with a lightness and a certain feel to it, but also something that would be really durable for the whole family'

'I've always loved white coastal cottages, as well as that style of big American barns and New Zealand farmhouses – they're just beautiful.'

Interestingly, Bonnie wasn't fazed by the thought of living in a pristine white house with four young boys and two dogs.

'Walls can be wiped down if need be – pretty much everything is washable. The engineered timber floor has a grain through it, so you don't see every scratch, the white sofa in the main living area has machine-washable covers, and the kitchen benchtops are Caesarstone, so it's all very low-maintenance.' ►



PICTURE THREE BIRDS RENOVATIONS



With four boys and two dogs, the all-white theme might be scary. But Bonnie insists everything is washable.

★
'It was important to have height with the ceilings. In the main section of the house, the raked ceilings are about 7m high'

Green highlights indoors keep rooms feeling lush and clean.

PICTURE THREE BIRDS RENOVATIONS

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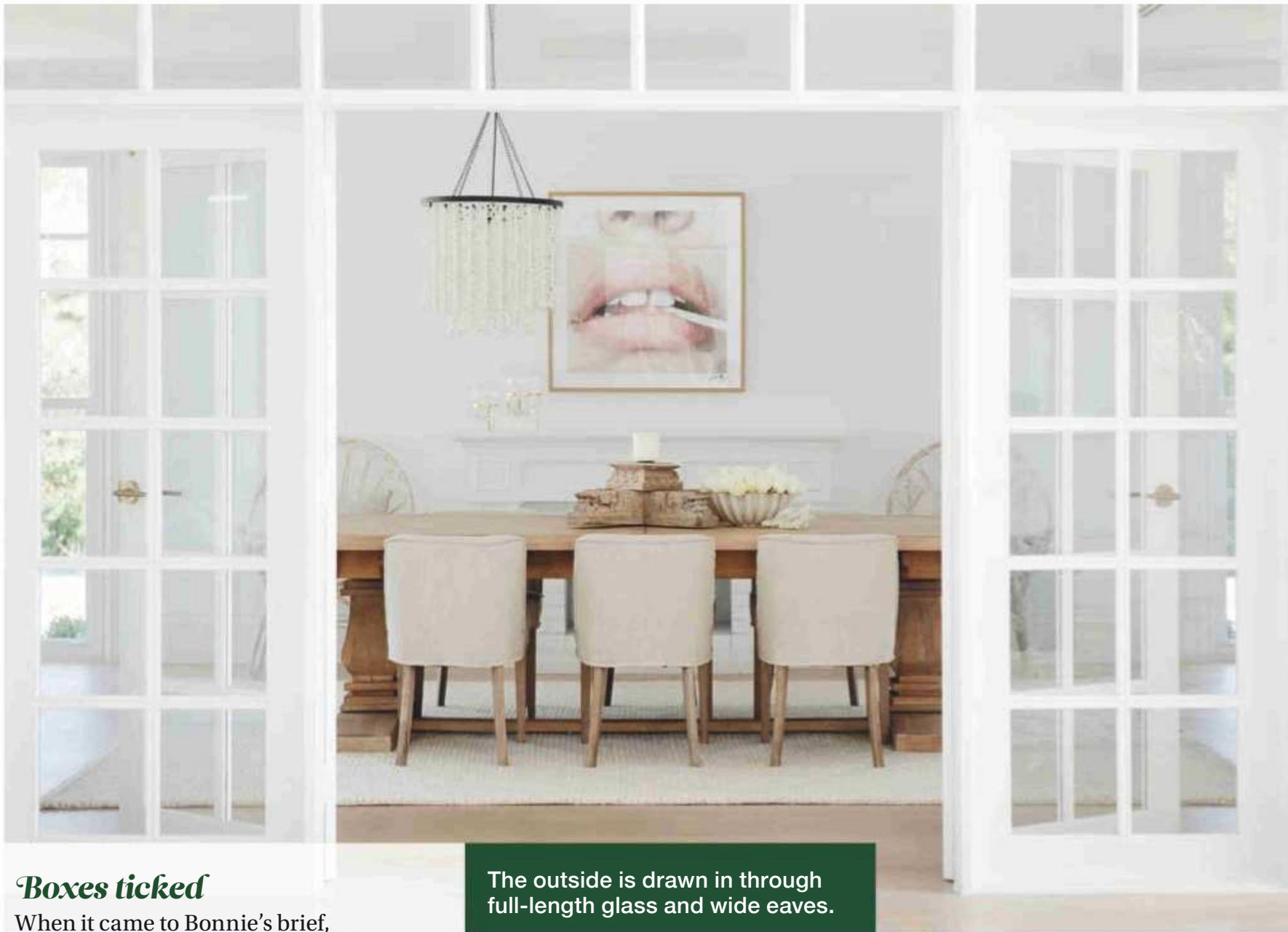
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Boxes ticked

When it came to Bonnie's brief, there were some key non-negotiables. With a growing family, it was important that the home be as open as possible, while still offering intimate spots to cosy up in.

'We had to have really functional entertaining spaces, as we've got a big family and we're always having friends over,' says Bonnie.

'I wanted an open kitchen right in the middle of the house, and it was important that the home be single level to give it that sprawling, rural property feel.'

Also on the wish list was an abundance of natural light and views of the verdant outlook outdoors from almost every room.

'It was important, too, to have height with the ceilings. In the main section of the house, the raked ceilings are about 7m high,' says Bonnie.

'My favourite elements of the house are the indoor and outdoor entertaining areas. We built it for people – for all of our friends and family. It really is the most perfect house for all of us.' ►

The outside is drawn in through full-length glass and wide eaves.





Natural hues and simple patterns complement the elemental palette of the home.



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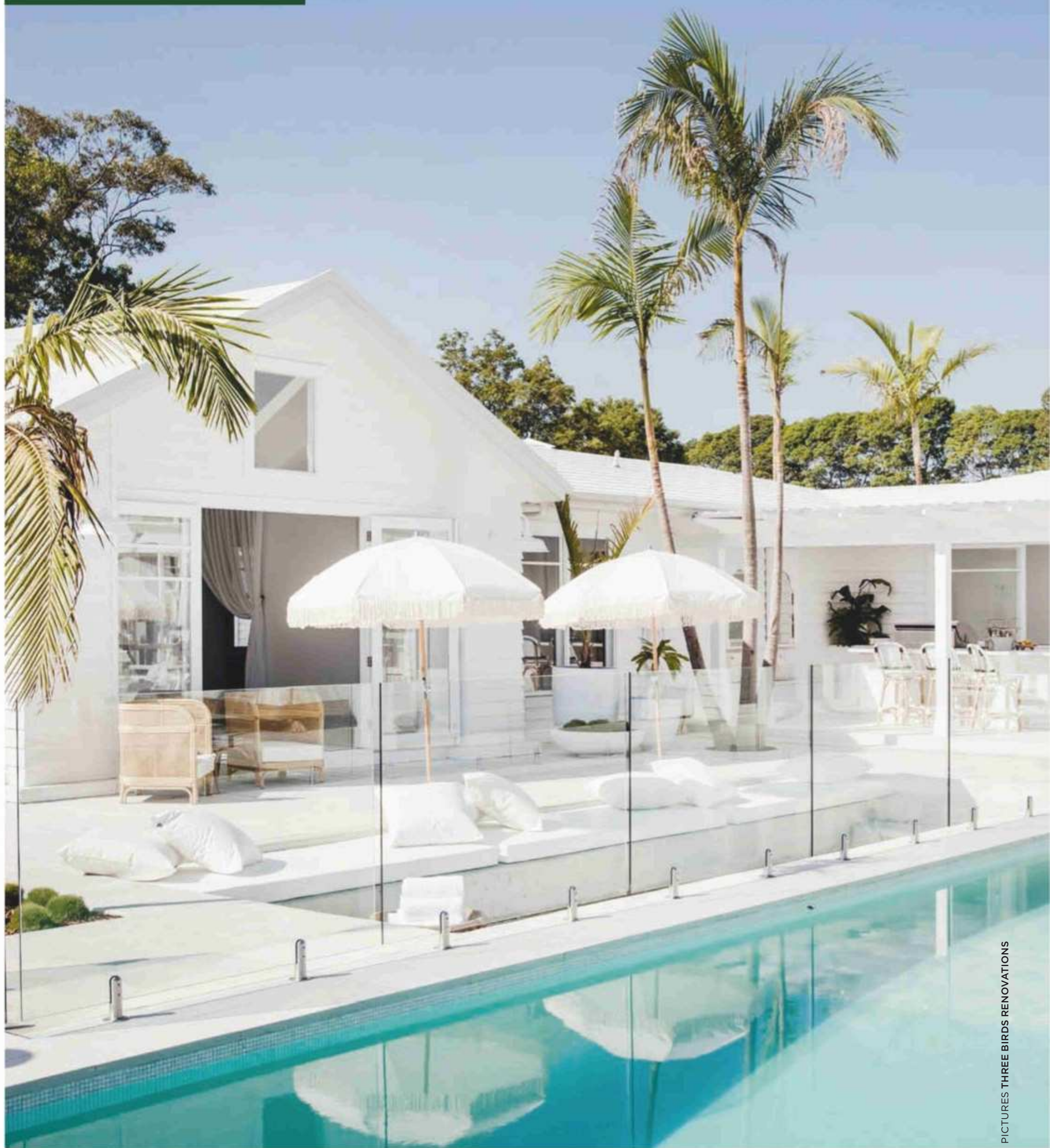


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The pool area gives this large family home a resort feel.



PICTURES THREE BIRDS RENOVATIONS

Get the look...

Bonnie shares her top three tips for achieving a 'modern coastal barn look':

1. Cladding is probably the most important thing. A clad home is both coastal and barn-like.
2. Incorporate beautiful high ceilings where possible.
3. Think white. For this home, I did everything from the ceilings to the walls and cabinetry in Dulux White on White.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Have you always dreamed of renovating your house, but don't know where to begin? Three Birds Renovations has launched The Reno School – a six-week online course that shares the talented trio's savvy expert tips and money-saving advice on everything from defining your vision to finding the right tradies, and also provides access to industry discounts and deals. The course costs \$499.

'There's only so much you can teach over social media, so we created The Reno School to enable us to fully share all of our learnings and help everyone turn their renovating dreams into a reality,' says Three Birds Renovations co-founder and marketing director Lana Taylor. Visit therenoschool.com for more information. ❖



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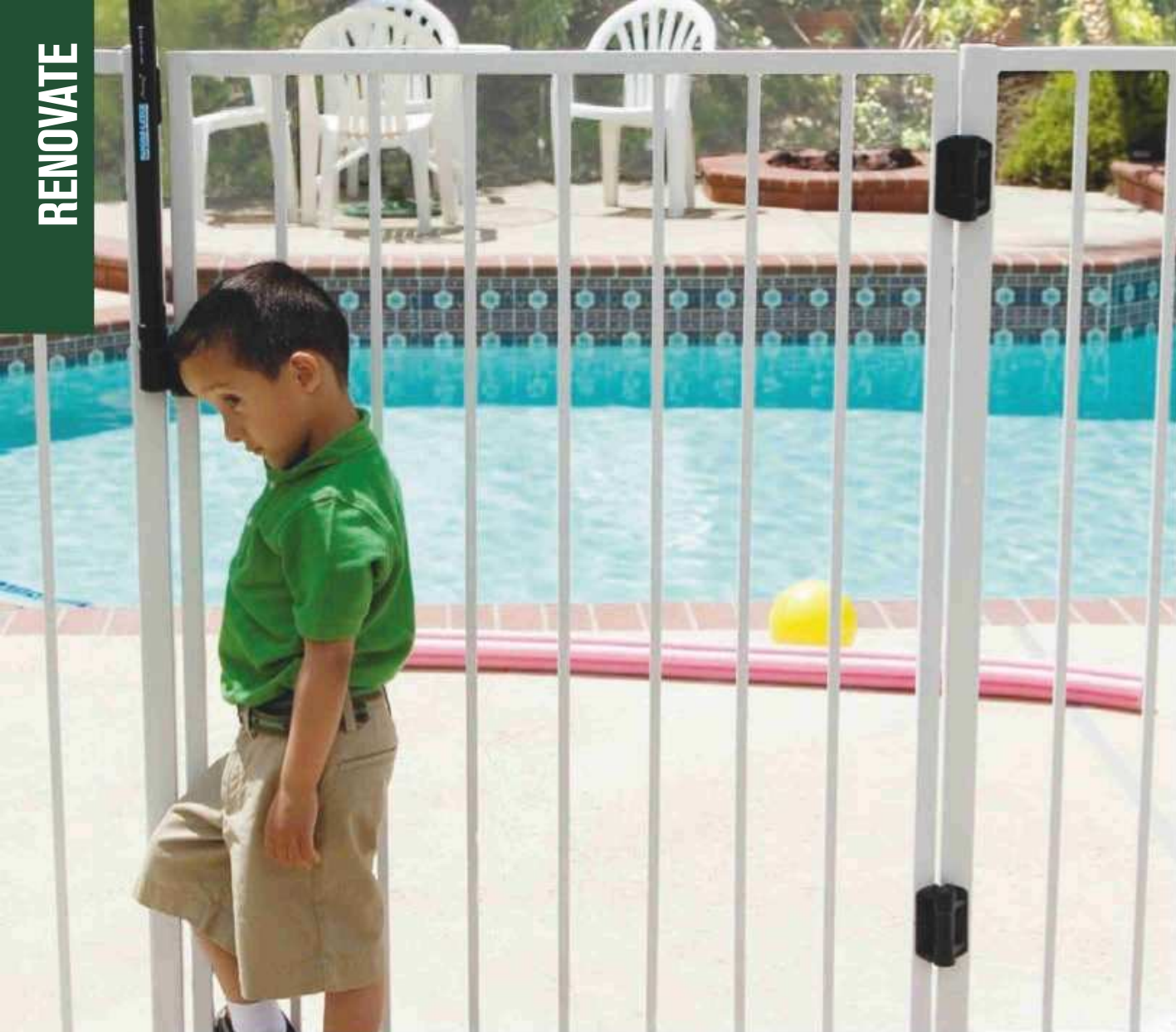
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HOW SAFE IS YOUR GATE?

As the weather warms up, there's no better time to inspect your pool's safety

Faulty gates are the major cause of toddler drownings in backyard pools in Australia, according to Kids Alive founder and former Australian Olympic swimming coach Laurie Lawrence.

Citing a 2015 report into backyard child drownings, Laurie says, 'The report explained that out of 32 fenced pools that were investigated, almost all had one or more faults that could potentially allow a child to access the pool area.'

The gate was identified as the weakest link, with a faulty gate or latch mechanism identified as the child's likely access point to the pool area in 21 cases in which a child drowned.

'That's terrible ... and preventable,'

says Laurie, who adds that another common problem is that pool gates are often propped open by older children and adults, providing unauthorised toddler access to the pool area.

While stressing that nothing can replace adult supervision when it comes to protecting toddlers around pools, Laurie advocates a new Australian innovation that will contribute significantly to the safety and efficacy of pool gates.

'I've long been a supporter of the Australian-made MagnaLatch magnetic pool gate latch,' Laurie says. 'It was a game changer when it came out over 20 years ago, and I know it has saved many, many lives during that time.'



The company behind MagnaLatch, D&D Technologies, have now released the MagnaLatch Alert with built-in alarm in direct response to the issue of gates being propped open, and Laurie reckons it's another turning point.

'Every time a gate is entered, a single, distinctive beep sounds, notifying parents that someone is entering the pool area,' he explains.

'If the gate is held open for more than 15 seconds the alarm siren will ramp up, and so the gate has to be closed to stop the alarm. I think this is a remarkable breakthrough for child safety in Australia and around the world. It's a combined latch and alarm in one, and it simply screws on to your gate.' ♦



DO THE 5

Along with gate safety, Laurie Lawrence (above) advocates five crucial steps for keeping kids alive this pool season.

- Fence the pool
- Shut the gate
- Teach your kids to swim - it's great
- Supervise - watch your mate
- Learn how to resuscitate



Another Aussie Icon

The original, magnetic child safety gate latch



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GREAT *estate*

Smart landscape design makes the most of every corner of your outdoor space

WORDS JOHANNA LEGGATT

There is often a large gulf between what we would like our outdoor spaces to look like – sculpted, manicured, blooming – and how they appear in real life.

Unless you're a natural green thumb or have hired professional help, it's easy to let the weeds push through the garden beds or to turn a blind eye to the plant that has collapsed in on itself in quiet protest, desperate for a feed.

But the good news is it doesn't cost much to overhaul your outdoor space and you don't need to spend hours on end tending to your plants and herbs.

All you need to do is get a few basics of landscape design right. ►

ASK FOR HELP

All of *Handyman's* experts agree that you need to put some careful thought into your outdoor space, and this means seeking out those in the know.

Horticulturist and Victa ambassador Adam Woodhams suggests readers get acquainted with workshop.com.au, a friendly online forum for sharing gardening and landscaping tips.

'It's a great resource for people to read about other people's gardening queries and share your own, and it's done in a really open and respectful manner,' says Adam.

Landscape architect and owner of trades directory Renovating Mums, Marissa Towndrow, recommends visiting your local nursery or Bunnings for advice on the right kinds of plants that will work in your area.

'I would also advise people to hire a landscape architect to do a concept design first,' says Marissa.

'These cost between \$250 and \$500, and will present a full list of the best plants for your outdoor area.'

Marissa's last point is crucial, according to Adam.

'People will often fall for what I call the 'cute puppy syndrome', where they see a plant they like and they just have to have it,' says Adam.

'But they don't realise what it's going to grow into – how big or how suitable it will be for their space.'

CURATE THE SPACE

Another common mistake many people make is to treat the outdoor space like an interior decorating scheme, says Adam.

'They will place plants where they would *like* them to go, without thinking whether this works in terms of flow and how certain areas are used,' he says.

Start by planning out the bigger structures you wish to incorporate, such as an arbour or a particular area of paving, and then work your way down to smaller inclusions from there.

DIY TIP

While you're working out what to plant, use plenty of mulch in the garden beds. Mulch conserves moisture and keeps weeds down.



Orientate your spaces according to the sun's position at various times of the day

'If you want to put in a hedge, for example, that would be one of your first considerations, because a hedge can change the shading and the light in the garden. The bigger choices influence the smaller ones,' says Adam.

When planning, it's important to focus on practicalities as much as aesthetics, explains Marissa.

'Consider if there is space for the children to kick balls and make mud pies, and if there is space for growing

vegetables and herbs, as well as room for the family pet,' says Marissa.

'You also need to consider the requirements for drying the washing, housing gardening tools and storing rubbish bins.'

Don't forget to properly orientate your spaces so that you know where the sun is at various parts of the day; this way you allow for shaded as well as open areas. Make sure you also allow for differences between winter and summer sun. ►

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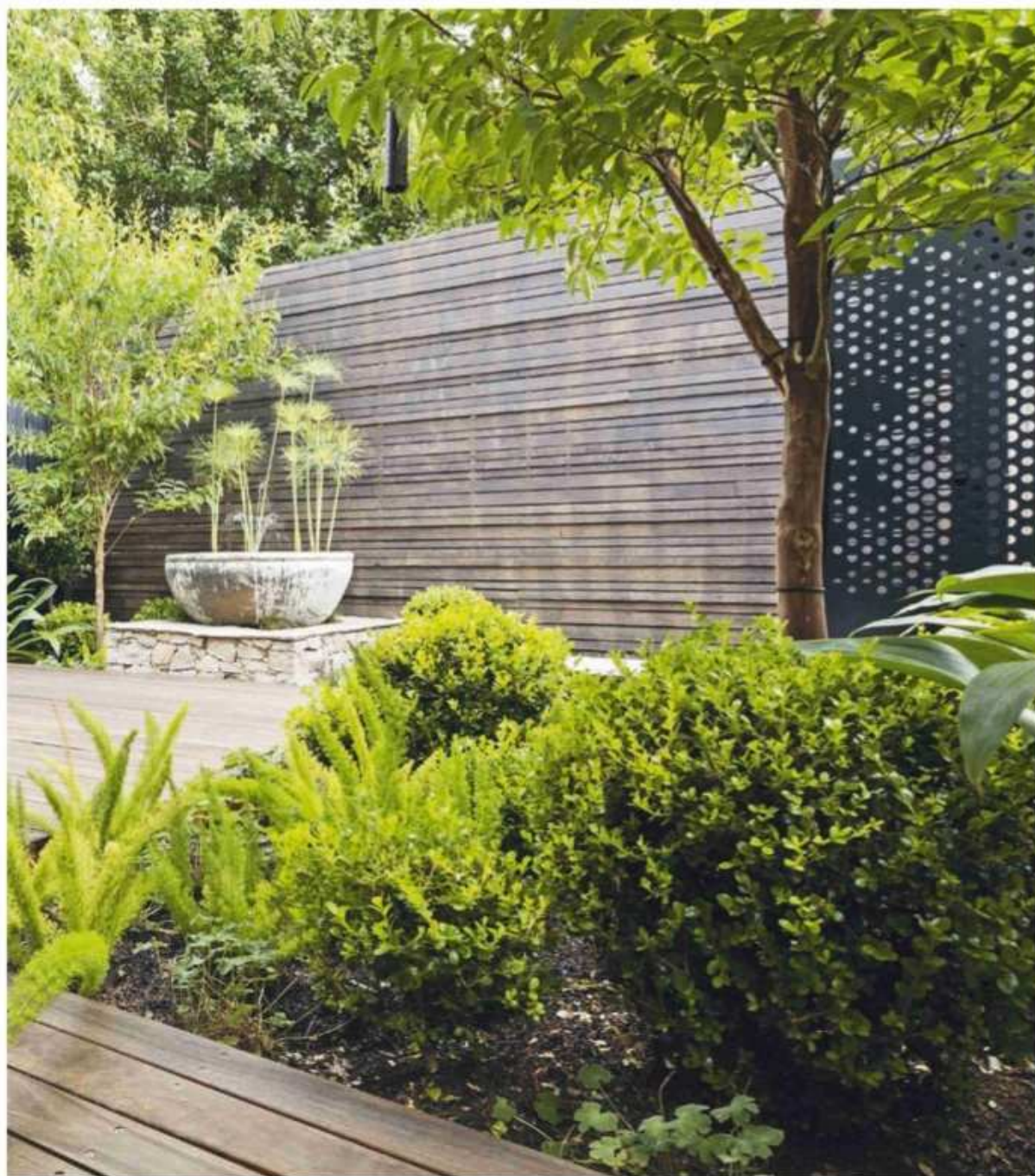


✿
'If you're not sure what plants to choose, go for a wander
up your street and see what is growing successfully
in your neighbours' gardens'

PICTURE GETTY IMAGES RIGHT LISA ELLIS GARDENS



For instant wow factor, start with a few big statement plants.



PLANTING KNOW-HOW

Another big consideration for DIYers is how to create enough privacy.

Lisa Ellis, of Lisa Ellis Gardens in Melbourne, suggests planting evergreen hedges as screens.

‘They’re great at blocking out eyesores and ensuring plenty of privacy with a sense of seclusion,’ she says.

Adam is a big fan of non-invasive clumping bamboo as a screen.

‘Bamboo gets a bad rap because some varieties can go wild and take over garden beds, but the clumping bamboo is very restrained and can provide a 3m-tall, solid green screen in less than two years,’ he says.

‘I can’t think of another plant that can do that.’

Adam suggests spending money on a couple of big statement plants, and then

selecting more budget-friendly plants for the rest of the space.

‘It adds a wow factor straightaway,’ he explains.

‘If you’re not sure what plants to choose, go for a wander up your street and see what is growing successfully in your neighbours’ gardens.

‘Soil conditions really do vary from suburb to suburb, so it’s very important to look at the gardens in your immediate area and see what’s thriving.’

Marissa says fake grass has come a long way and now looks very realistic, but she does warn that it can get very hot in summer.

‘Outdoor entertaining areas that are paved or concreted can also be very versatile. You can then use planter boxes and pots to frame and soften these areas,’ says Marissa. ►



A cottage garden will come to life in the warmer months

CREATE A LOOK

Some tried-and-true plants can be called upon to help create a particular style or theme in your outdoor space.

Lisa recommends the following plant selections as a starting-off point for the following styles.

◆ **COTTAGE** Opt for varieties of lavender and perennials such as sedum. Russian sage and pink gaura will also fare well, while dahlias come to life in the late summer and early autumn cottage garden.

◆ **TROPICAL** There is nothing more impressive in a tropical garden than a *strelitzia nicolai*, the large form of the common bird of paradise plant, and they act as great screeners, too. Non-invasive clumping bamboo can also work well, as can numerous types of the gardenia family. Also check out the hardy philodendrons and popular colocasia, also known as elephant ears.

◆ **MEDITERRANEAN** If it's a stunning Mediterranean outdoor area you're after, go mad on the various types of rosemary – which is extremely resilient – as well as some pomegranate and flowering quince bush. You can also grow fruiting lemon and olive trees in pots, but just make sure the pots are large enough for them.

◆ **NATIVE** For lovers of native gardens, Lisa recommends opting for the dwarf eucalyptus, which is both drought-proof and tough as nails. Banksias are another great option; most species prefer an open sunny position and well-drained sandy soil that is low in phosphorus. Acacias, commonly known as wattle trees, are another staple in the native Australian garden, but, as Lisa points out, they often have shorter lifespans of between seven and 15 years. ►



First decide on your garden theme, then choose your plants.



PICTURES (LEFT) FLUID LANDSCAPE DESIGN (TOP) LISA ELLIS GARDENS



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DIY TIP

When outdoor space is limited, use potted plants to create borders to distinguish different zones in your garden.

THE ART OF THE INTEGRATED GARDEN

While some of us will always have an enduring love for a particular style of garden, Adam says it's more popular these days for people to mix and match.

'People are feeling much more comfortable about simply expressing themselves and not worrying about following a certain style,' he says.

The merging of indoors and outdoors is another big trend.

'As our blocks have become smaller in recent years, so have our outdoor spaces. So what we're seeing now is the complete integration of the inside and outdoor environment,' says Adam.

'The outdoor space is no longer this bolted-on separate area, but a seamless space where you almost can't tell if you're indoors or outdoors.'



Garden areas are seen as an extension of the house

Marissa has noticed a similar trend, with the garden becoming an extension of the house.

'Outdoor furniture is leading the way in this respect, too, and we are seeing the use of outdoor rugs and extensive built-in outdoor kitchens,' says Marissa.

Stackable or bi-fold doors in the kitchen can really open up the space, while servery windows have become popular ways to connect the inside to the outside.

Finally, our landscaped areas are becoming productive pockets of land, with a real focus on growing as much as possible in whatever space we have.

'Space for vegie gardens, even on balconies in high-density living, is becoming popular,' says Marissa.

'People are becoming more sustainable with the design of their outdoor spaces.' ♦

Lines are blurred these days between indoors and outside.



Extend your living space outside for the perfect balance of comfort and nature

WORDS LISA SANDERS

TAKE THE INDOORS OUTDOORS

We live in a great climate. Our night skies are world famous. We are renowned for our love of the great outdoors ... No wonder, then, that the so-called 'outdoor room' has become such a big part of the grand designs of so many Australians.

They may offer a view of the stars, but organising one is not rocket science. An outdoor room can range from a simple bistro

table and two chairs in a cosy courtyard to a house extension complete with roof, walls, fully-equipped kitchen, dining and lounge areas. The most common outdoor rooms sit somewhere between these two extremes.

Ideally, an outdoor room allows you to do the things you love doing inside your house: cooking, eating, relaxing, playing, socialising and even sleeping. Now, where's that day bed? ►

GET CONNECTED

Great outdoor rooms feel like a continuation of your home, even if they're not attached. Ruth Francis, design director of Forever Home Design (foreverhomedesign.com.au), says, 'Modern families like to connect and be together. We want to cook and be able to see everyone and join in, not to be separated.'

'I receive a lot of requests to fix old-style layouts, where the kitchen doesn't connect to the garden or there's a deck and a kitchen, but they're not well linked.'

Even if your outdoor room is under a pergola at the end of the garden, there are ways to connect it to your house. It could be as simple as laying pavers to lead the way and linking its design to that of your home.



THE BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS

Ruth Francis begins any job by asking clients three thought-provoking questions. First of all, what do you love about your outdoor area? Secondly, what annoys you? And lastly, what's missing from it?

'Maybe you love the morning sun, but it gets too hot in the afternoons. You enjoy looking at the trees, but not your neighbours,' Ruth explains.

The other thing to remember is that comfort comes first, just as it does inside. If your outdoor room isn't appealing and comfy, you won't use it.

The other biggie is budget. There are many cost-effective products available, so do your research and work out what you have to spend on each element. You may also need to check building restrictions with your council.

SIZE, SPACE AND FUNCTION

The size of your backyard and purpose of your outdoor room determines its dimensions and what's in it. Draw a plan and test it visually by marking it out on the floor with chalk or tape. Or use a 3D room planning app.

'It's important to have enough space to make your room inviting. People often build decks that are just big enough for the table and chairs with no room to walk around them comfortably,' says Ruth.

When it comes to positioning furniture, Ruth says, 'To be able to relax, most people like to look out at natural surroundings and have their backs protected by something like a wall or fence. It's a primal thing.' ►

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WEATHERING THE ELEMENTS

You don't have to cover your outdoor room but it will protect you from the weather and extend your alfresco lifestyle into the cooler months. There are many options for every budget.

Permanent structures

Purse-friendly choices include DIY pergola kits with powder-coated aluminium frames and polycarbonate roof panels, or aluminium pergola gazebos with sliding retractable shades. Roof systems with adjustable open and close louvres are more expensive but also more versatile. Some have sensors signalling them to close when it rains.

The other choice is a retractable roof that moves back and forth along a lightweight tracking system. They can also be fitted to an existing structure. Ruth Francis says she's even used one for a carport. 'They are often cheaper and some of them are really nicely designed.'

Blinds

Blinds attached to permanent structures or combined with awnings provide extra protection and screen out unwanted views. They also make your room cosier in the cold.



Awnings

'Retractable awnings give you the option of sun or shade and don't require a pergola or structure. Plus, they are

Shade sails and umbrellas

A shade sail instantly turns a simple table and chairs into the next best thing to an outdoor room. For less than \$100, one stable structure and a couple of posts, you can go under cover in style. You can also buy all-weather shade sails.

Umbrellas are still a super-easy way to provide shade, particularly in small spaces. Choose a cantilevered design that moves around with the sun.

easily retro-fitted,' says Ruth. Folding arm awnings are either crank operated or motorised; the more luxurious brands' models come with integrated heaters and lights. When it comes to smart technology, some awnings are not only fitted with sun and wind sensors but they also work with your automation systems, so you don't have to be home to operate them. ►

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LIGHTING THE WAY

The growing popularity of outdoor rooms has led to an avalanche of lighting options. Where do you start?

A well-designed lighting scheme is a balance between functionality and aesthetics.

Adele Locke, director of Mint Lighting Design in Melbourne, says the

first thing to note is that you need a lower level of lighting than inside.

‘If your outdoor area is too brightly lit, you’ll feel like you’re on display when you want to feel relaxed. It’s possible to mix darker zones with slightly brighter areas, but generally the ambience you’re after is cocktail hour in a fantastic bar – an atmosphere that encourages

a relaxing chat. Apart from cooking, there’s no real need for bright lights.

‘It’s important to get the right advice. If you’re renovating it reduces the number of decisions you have to make and ensures the best result,’ she says.

If you don’t get the lighting right, then you’re less likely to want to use your outdoor room.



ADELE'S DOS AND DON'TS TO GET YOUR LIGHTING RIGHT

- ✓ **Do** consider where the light will hit in your outdoor room.
- ✓ **Do** use warm white globes, which are not as stark as cool ones.
- ✓ **Do** keep your outdoor lighting scheme similar to the one inside your house for consistency, but tone it down.
- ✓ **Do** choose lights that won't blind you with their glare. You shouldn't be able to see where the light is coming from. Up and down wall lights are a great option.
- ✓ **Do** your research. Even very low budget lights create a welcoming ambience. Think fairy lights twinkling in trees and festoon lights strung across the garden.
- ✗ **Don't** place a light straight above a barbecue that has a large lid as it can cause shadows when open. Ideally the light should be between the barbecue and the cook. Wall lights work well here.
- ✗ **Don't** use too many cheap diffused down lights as it creates an unpleasant environment. This will result in you not using the lights or your outdoor room as often as you could.
- ✗ **Don't** have ceiling fan blades any closer than 300mm to your down lights as the fan will 'chop up' the light and cause strobing – after all, we want to create a cosy cocktail bar, not a nightclub! ►



ALFRESCO COOKING

You don't have to settle for the lone barbecue in a corner: as long as you have the space, budget and meet any safety requirements, you can have a fully functioning outdoor kitchen.

How you want to use your kitchen will determine the equipment and storage you'll need: think about fridges, burners, smokers and pizza ovens. Divide your outdoor kitchen into the same areas as an indoor kitchen: preparation, cooking and serving. Then consider the materials to use. Tiles on the floor can become slippery, while decking, paving and other flooring can be coated to protect it from grease and food stains.

Other safety considerations include the use of combustible materials, storage of gas bottles, ventilation and insulation between cooking equipment and timber. It is advisable to have a professional help design and make safe your outdoor kitchen.



Electric radiant heaters, such as the 2400W Heatstrip Elegance by Thermofilm, \$745, offer superior technology and style (heatstrip.com.au). ABOVE The outdoor kitchen rules.

STAYING WARM

Heating extends the use of your outdoor room, allowing you to stay out later and longer. And there are lots of options to choose from.

Electric radiant heaters are affordable, effective and economical to run. They can be easily fixed to a wall or ceiling. There's also a huge range of stylish gas heaters for your patio or tabletop. They're mobile and don't require a plug-in power source, which makes them a no-fuss option.

Fire pits and chimeneas are big hits at social gatherings as they provide ambiance and a different kind of outdoor experience – just add blankets, sticks and several bags of marshmallows. You can even use your chimenea as a mini barbecue! For the elegant look of fire without the burn, check out the gas heaters featuring glass and real flames from brands such as Decofire. ❖

THE LIVING ROOM



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SHOULD YOU BUILD A *Granny* FLAT?

They add value, cost less than an apartment to build, and earn good rent. No wonder granny flats are in demand

WORDS JOHANNA LEGGATT PICTURES STUDIO33.COM.AU

There was a time when granny flats were built to house our elders, and their rental yield or capital growth potential was neither here nor there.

But as Australian property prices have shot up in the past two decades, it has been smart thinking to make the most of every square inch of our blocks. And this includes the precious backyard plot where the granny flat sits, according

to director and principal buyers' advocate at Pursuit Property Advisory, Brad Willmott.

'The interesting thing is that granny flats are not so much for putting Granny in these days,' says Brad.

'I've noticed quite a few popping up on real estate sites as rental listings, with a basic one renting for about \$200 a week, and the average being about \$300 a week and sometimes more.'



It's easy, then, to understand the appeal of a granny flat, which these days can be built on-site or trucked in as a prefabricated module or kit-style home.

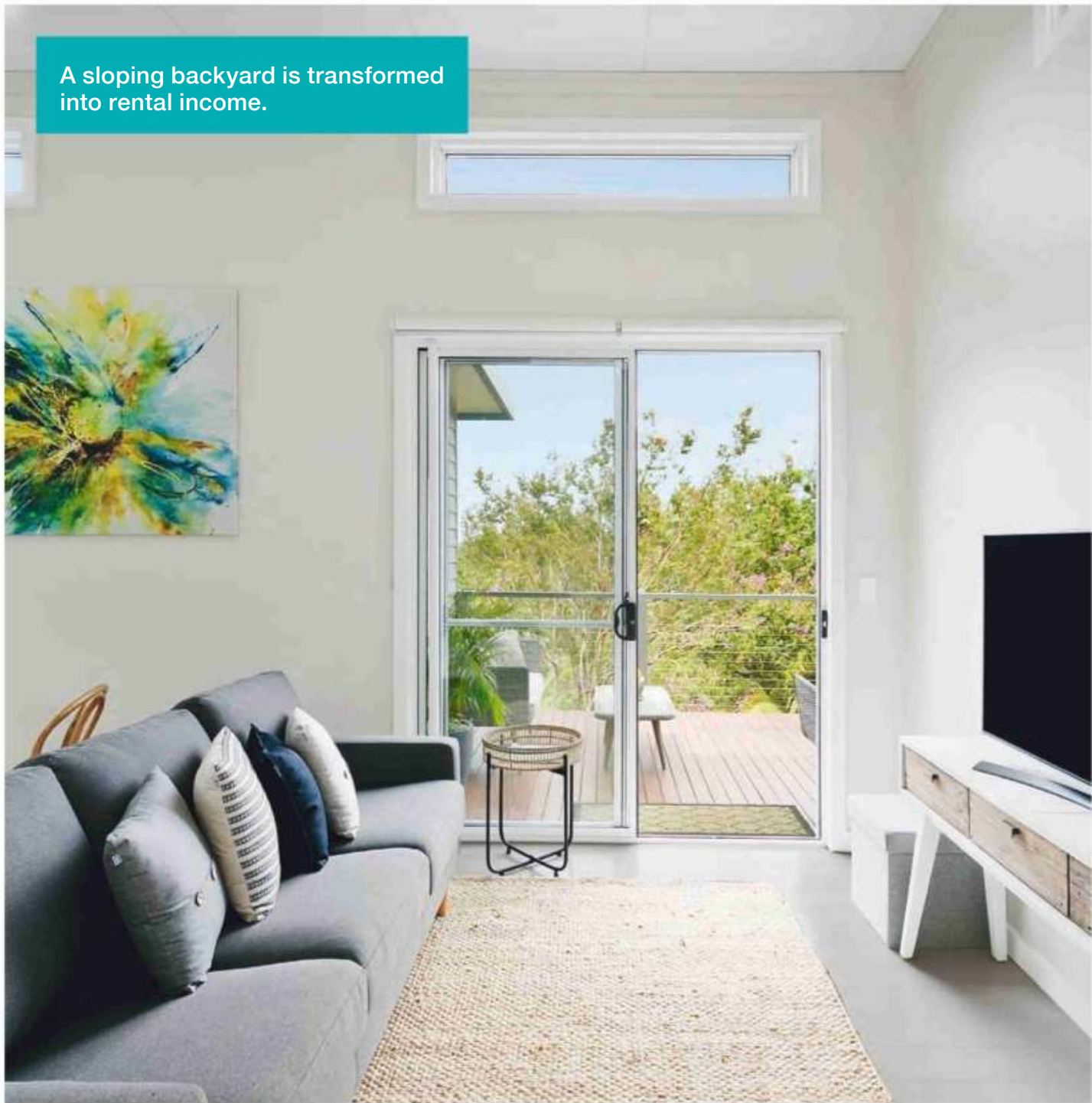
According to Brad, a granny flat can cost between \$80,000 for a basic design with one bedroom to \$150,000 for a more comfortable two-bedroom flat.

'It really appeals to a lot of buyers as it saves them having to go through the planning and build process themselves,

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A sloping backyard is transformed into rental income.

and they have an asset they can potentially rent out,' he says.

Value adding

Rich Harvey, founder of the website PropertyBuyer.com.au and president of the Real Estate Buyers' Agents Association of Australia, says a granny flat can add 10% to your re-sale price.

Property investor and stylist Tiffany Benn, of HART Home Decor, ►



is completing a granny flat in the yard of her Central Coast rental home in NSW.

She and her brother own the property, which is leased to tenants, and Tiffany estimates the new two-bedroom granny flat will earn them an extra \$350 a week.

All up, the granny flat cost \$15,000 for the frame and other building materials, while the fixtures, fittings and building costs set them back \$50,000.

'I feel that \$65,000 is a really fair price for what we're getting. It's a no-brainer to build a granny flat if you have a large backyard,' says Tiffany.

Naturally, both costs and returns vary depending on where you live and the type of granny flat you install – the quality Multidwell granny flats shown on these pages typically cost between \$170,000-\$200,000 to build but generally achieve rental returns of \$650-\$700 per week on Sydney's northern beaches.

Granny flats are particularly attractive in NSW, too, as planning regulations are not as onerous as the traditional council planning processes. In 2009, the NSW Government permitted homeowners with properties larger than 450sqm to build granny flats without council approval – as long as the secondary dwelling was no bigger than 60sqm.



'It's a no-brainer to build a granny flat if you have a large backyard'

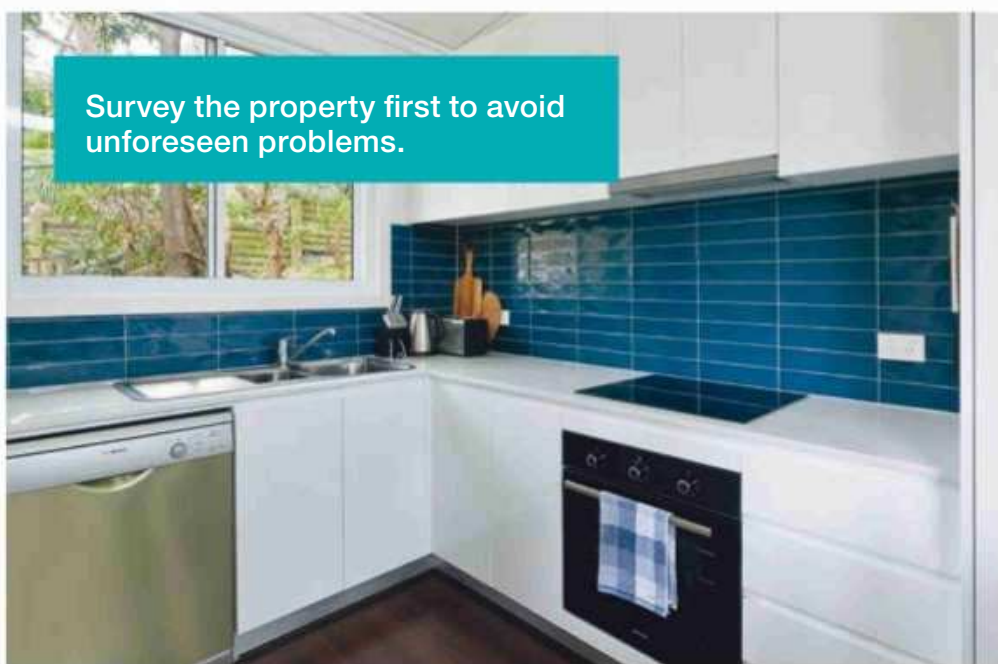
'That really sparked a resurgence of interest in granny flats in NSW and we've since seen them become enormously popular,' says Rich.

Rules and regulations

That doesn't mean, however, that you can knock up any old shack in your back garden and nail up your 'for rent' sign.

Those who are building granny flats in NSW may not need to put their plans to council, but they still need their flat approved by an accredited certifier. The good news is this process takes as little as 10 days if your property is compliant.

In other states and territories, planning overlays and restrictions differ from council to council, but, regardless of where you live, all granny flats must be built to the high construction standards as outlined in the Building Code of Australia.



Survey the property first to avoid unforeseen problems.

Property advisor Brad also points out that if you opt for a modular-style build, make sure that it's not considered a demountable, or a chattel, that belongs to a person rather than the property that it sits on.

'If it is demountable, or considered impermanent, the bank won't add any value to the house for the granny flat as it won't lend against items that are not considered a part of the original property,' he says.

'You can still rent it out and get the yield, but you shouldn't count on any capital growth if council deems it to be a demountable structure.'

Frontline lessons

Like any build, things can and do go wrong on the ground when building a granny flat. Costs blow out, tradies fall through, and important requirements are overlooked.

To help avoid unforeseen hiccups, Tiffany recommends calling a qualified surveyor before sourcing quotes from builders or granny flat suppliers.

'The surveyor will tell you what you can actually fit on your land, how big it can be, and whether or not you can tap into the existing services, such as water and electricity, that are already on the land,' she says.

'That should be your first step.'

Tiffany also warns homeowners not to leave the electricity meter to the last minute: these, as it turns out, can be prohibitively expensive.

'We only applied for ours late in the piece and it turns out they can take weeks,' she says.

'It also cost us something like \$3000, so make sure you budget for it.'

Don't forget to budget for clearing and excavating the land, especially if you have large trees.

'The land could be rocky or you could be on a slope, and these things can add to the overall cost,' Tiffany says. ►



Don't build the flat too big or you may hinder the development and value of your main property.

Be aware

You may be tempted to build as big a granny flat as you can fit on your land, but this could devalue your original property, says Brad.

'If it takes up too much of your backyard then buyers may be put off because they can't put a swimming pool in, for example, or build the type of deck they want,' he says.

Also, if you plan to rent out the flat after it is built, make sure that you allow your tenants plenty of privacy.

'Ideally you will have a separate entrance for them – also, ensure that your backyard is separate and sealed off from the flat,' he says.

A final word of warning if you're renovating a pre-existing granny flat: there is also the issue of safety with aged buildings.

'A lot of the old granny flats were made with asbestos sheeting,' says Brad.

'If the sheeting isn't disturbed then it shouldn't be a worry, but seek advice if you're making any alterations at all.'



The lead-based paints of yesteryear can also spell problems for small children, says Brad.

'They were used a lot in the 1980s and if kids scratch at the paint it can cause them problems,' he says.

'These are things to be aware of with the older granny flats.' ♦



This movable granny flat, from Backyard Pods Australia, rests on skids.

DIY movable buildings

Not everyone is permitted to have an additional permanent structure in the backyard. This is where DIY movable building kits from Backyard Pods Australia can be helpful. Pod kits up to 8m long can be supplied with skids instead of foundation piers. The skids can be anchored but later the building can be moved to another location. This suitability for relocation could satisfy rules for a Dependent Person's Unit in Victoria, or it may pass as a backyard accommodation, office or studio in areas where it could be restricted if it wasn't movable without disassembly. Visit backyardpods.com.au.

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Tween to Teen

ROOM REVAMP

for under \$500

Cherie Barber shows you how to make over a bedroom for your maturing teen – without breaking the budget

WORDS AND PICTURES CHERIE BARBER

During the time of growth in maturity and personality from tween to teenage years, how your teen styles their bedroom is just as important in expressing their newfound tastes as the clothes they wear. But this personal style overhaul doesn't have to come at a prohibitive cost.

With a combination of creativity and clever ideas, renovation expert

Cherie Barber shows how it's possible to transform a space in less than a day, and all for under \$500.

To transform 11-year-old Ava's pastel-coloured room into a modern, tropical-themed paradise, Cherie recommends upcycling as much furniture as possible.

'Pretty much anything that's still in good shape is a candidate for upcycling,' she says. 'It's just a matter of choosing



Cherie Barber and Ava proudly show off the new study area.

Before

After

A place to work and a place to relax – and guess who's feeling all grown up?

the old timers you'd really like to see reinvented in a fresh colour or design. Look for on-trend retro pieces, bland pine furniture, interesting shapes or just an old favourite that needs new personality. And it's not just timber that scrubs up well. Plastic, metal, fibreglass ... you can pretty much find a paint for any surface.'

When it comes to planning the perfect teen bedroom, Cherie says it's essential to provide a space to study and to store all the associated paraphernalia, such as books and computer gear.

'If space allows, it's great to include a lounging area where they can hang out with friends – and install blackout blinds for the endless hours teenagers spend sleeping!'



Here Cherie explains her step-by-step process to achieve the ultimate tween-to-teen bedroom makeover.

1 SINGLE TO DOUBLE

Kicking off the bedroom overhaul was the all-important move from a single to a double bed. After finding an old metal bed frame at a local garage sale, Cherie used White Knight's spray paint Squirts in Gloss Fuschia to inject some colour. As a two-in-one primer and paint, Squirts is easy to apply and bonds well to a multitude of surfaces. ►

A double-bed frame picked up from a garage sale gets a facelift.



Clever respraying gave the desk new life in Lemon Yellow.



Stencil art in soft pinks created a tropical design theme.



2 ADD A TROPICAL PUNCH

Cherie then brought the tropical theme to Ava's existing desktop and chair by spray painting them with White Knight Squirts in Lemon Yellow.

'The most effective way to avoid overspray when spray painting is to be as targeted as possible with your painting,' advises Cherie. 'For best results, hold the can approximately 15-20cm from the surface and apply in sweeping, steady strokes, overlapping the previous stroke by about 50%. Safeguard all your surrounding surfaces with drop sheets or big pieces of cardboard. A great tip is to use a large cardboard box as a spray booth for smaller items.'

As an easy way to enliven Ava's wardrobe doors, Cherie used White Knight Strokes to paint on flamingo shapes using stencils she found online. 'The pretty pink tone is ideal to further integrate the tropical theme.'

3 MESSAGE BOARD

To help with their busy schooling and social lives, teenagers need somewhere to scribble notes. Chalkboard paint provides a hard-wearing finish that transforms surfaces into a fun and functional surface for writing. Cherie

picked up a piece of melamine and painted it with White Knight's Chalkboard Paint in Black for the perfect message board.

4 THE FINAL TOUCHES

By upcycling Ava's pre-loved pieces, Cherie managed to stick to the budget yet create a completely new space fit for any teenager. With the addition of a range of tropical-themed decor items such as bedsheets, wall pictures and pineapple cushion,

Cherie's stylish and affordable bedroom upgrade was completed.

'When combining bold colours, my number one tip is 'less is more'. Go with a painted feature wall or a striking wallpaper, rather than immersing a whole room in a punchy colour your teen might soon tire of,' Cherie says. 'Complementary colours harmonise. Restricting your bold colours to accessories like doona covers, cushions and art means they can easily change with your teenager's fickle tastes.' ♦

CHERIE'S BUDGET BREAKDOWN

ITEM	PRICE PER ITEM	QTY	TOTAL
White Knight Squirts	\$7.80	4	\$31.20
White Knight Strokes	\$10	1	\$10
White Knight Chalkboard Paint	\$14.10	1	\$14.10
Acapulco chair	\$39	1	\$39
Light box with letters	\$15	1	\$15
A3 frames	\$20	3	\$60
Majgull curtains	\$59	1	\$59
Wall clock	\$35	1	\$35
Round Daisy jute rug	\$60	1	\$60
Cushions	\$22	4	\$88
Bookcases on wall	\$19	3	\$57
MDF for chalkboard	\$20	1	\$20
Total makeover cost			\$488.30

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AS SEEN ON
THE LIVING ROOM
FRIDAY, 7.30PM

Barn door

Teen's DOMAIN

The Living Room's
Barry Du Bois
transforms a
home office into
a cool bedroom



Left, from left: Andrew, Gabriella, Sonja and Barry are all smiles at the changes.

For teenager Gabriella, it had been a dream to move out of her small, old-fashioned bedroom and into a modern-style retreat – she had literally outgrown her old space. Parents Sonja and Andrew had been thinking about moving her into the home office for a couple of years, but they had put it off because they didn't have the skills or design ideas to do it.

Enter *The Living Room* reno guru Barry Du Bois, on hand to devise a clever plan to repurpose the office. By creating bespoke sliding barn doors, he would transform the built-in cupboard into a multi-purpose wardrobe and study nook.

Combining this with a funky feature wall, he planned to create the perfect hangout for Gabriella and her friends.



Before





Feature wall

THE FEATURE WALL

Barry decided on a vivid print to bring some colour into the bedroom. For this he went to the website Create A Wall, which allows you to pick a design from your favourite print or photo and order it (createawall.com.au). It arrives with adhesive already added to the backing, and you can trim it to fit any wall size.

This had a stunning effect in the room. Because the feature wall was so eye-catching, the rest of the room was kept neutral with a few subtle pops of light pink.

And there it was – an instant hit with a young lady proud of her new space.

After

Barry shows what a little imagination can do in limited space.



THE PREP

The first job was to get the room prepped for painting. The old built-in was to be divided in half to create a study nook and wardrobe storage. That meant the old veneer doors had to go; their hinges left marks and holes that needed to be filled. Tradie's Bog did the trick – just enough to mix up on a bit of waste cardboard, add the hardener, and apply with a putty knife. Once it turned hard, it was sanded and sealed.

The timber varnish on the trim in the room got a coat of three-in-one

undercoat to help bind the new paint to it. Barry chose a fresh white colour for the walls, and the room got an immediate lift.

THE BESPOKE BARN DOOR

The special feature of this room was to be the sliding barn door. Barry picked up two standard doors from Bunnings. He wrapped some trim around the outside and lay a trim diagonally across the centre to create a faux crosspiece.

To hide the gap between the doors, he glued and nailed a piece of timber down the centre – which would also work as a handle. He then added some screws to make sure the timber stayed in place. The two doors were then glued together, using straps to hold them in place for a few hours. Extra screws for added support were fixed around the frame and the faux crosspiece of timber

Wardrobe storage is lean and clean.



was adhered to it as well. Once it was fast, the whole door got a coat of paint.

When that dried, Barry was ready to attach the track along the top of the cavity and the rollers to the tops of the doors. He marked up their positions, then drilled some pilot holes so he could fasten the rail to the wall and the rollers to the door.

Once everything was secure, the barn door went up without a hitch. ✦

UPCYCLE A

Drinks Trolley

Transform a second-hand
drinks trolley find
into a chic
entertainer's delight

PROJECT AND PICTURES MELISSA DARR

Get more DIY from Melissa
Follow her blog thewhimsicalwife.com

Before



After

From drab to absolutely fab in
a few simple steps.

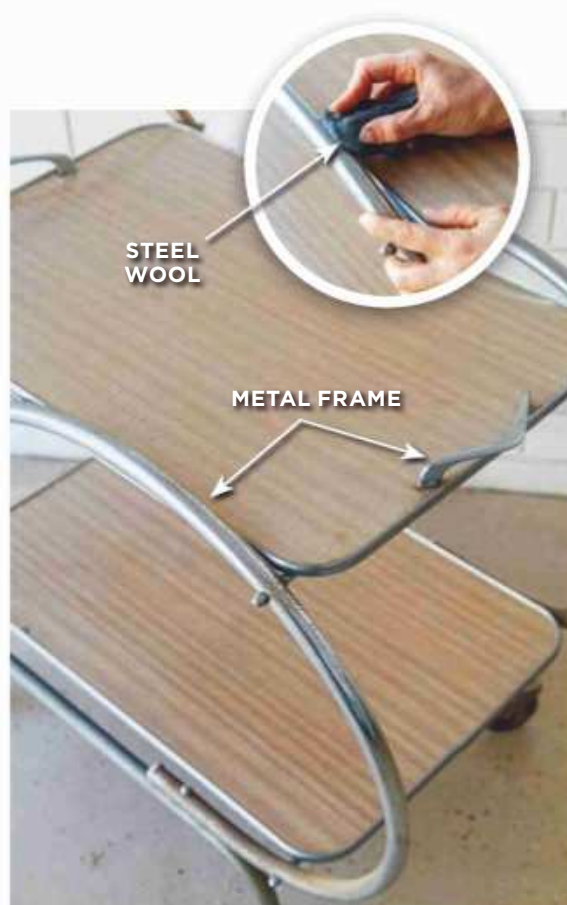
Picked up for a bargain from an online classifieds page by blogger Melissa Darr, this tired old drinks trolley was dated and slightly daggy but the bones of the piece had serious potential.

All it needed was a simple clean-up and coat of paint to make it shiny and new again, while the addition of mirrors onto the tray surfaces transformed it from good to gorgeous. Melissa used a local business to custom-make the mirrors to fit.

This project is perfect for the novice DIYer to complete over a weekend and requires minimal materials.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Grade 0000 steel wool
- Masking tape
- Metal primer spray paint
- Bright gold spray paint
- Mirrors (custom-made)
- Window & glass silicone



1 Prepare to paint

Scrub the metal frame of the trolley using the steel wool to remove any grime or rust. Wipe the whole trolley with a damp rag to remove any dirt or dust. Remove the handles and wheels and tape up any areas that need protecting from paint.

2 Paint the trolley

Set the frame and accessories on a flat, well-ventilated surface, preferably outside where overspray won't cause a problem. Spray all metal surfaces using the metal primer. Let this dry for an hour before repeating with a second coat. Again, allow to completely dry.



3 Reassemble the trolley

Once the primer has completely dried, apply two coats of gold spray paint, allowing at least an hour's drying time between coats. Once all pieces have dried, reassemble the trolley. Wipe over the trays with a damp cloth.

4 Fix the mirrors

Apply small amounts of Parafix Window & Glass Silicone to the tops of each tray. Line the custom-made mirrors up over the top of the tray and gently press down, making sure the mirror is evenly set onto the tray top.

5 Accessorise

Repeat this process with the second mirror on the second tray. Wipe off any finger marks with a soft cloth. Place your as-new drinks trolley in the perfect entertainers' corner of your home. Fill with your favourite drinks selection. ♦



ON WITH THE Show

WORDS MARC MCEVOY

Set up a home-theatre entertainment system to suit your needs and budget

We've come a long way since the old days of TV when everyone gathered around together to watch their favourite show on a grainy screen.

No longer are we bound by TV schedules: with today's streaming services and fast download times, we can watch what we want, when we want.

Nor do we have to head to the movies for a truly cinematic experience. The astonishing quality of today's ultra high-definition TVs and their sound systems makes it an affordable option

to set up an impressive home cinema for a great shared experience.

Home-theatre expert Rod Easdown (rodeasdown.com.au) says it's best to have a dedicated space in your home, preferably with favourable acoustics. 'Every room is different when it comes to sound,' says Rod.

Of course, the amount you're prepared to spend makes a difference. It can cost from \$1000 for a basic set-up to more than \$250,000 for a sound system alone! But even on a tight budget, you can entertain at home in style. Here's how.

TV SCREENS

Ultra high-definition TVs that use a technology called OLED (organic light-emitting diode) are the best screens on the market, says Rod. Ultra high-definition is also called 4K.

The current standard for high definition (HD) is 1080p, measured by the number of vertical pixels. 4K measures the horizontal pixels instead, and any 4K TV will have a resolution of at least 3840 x 2160. The result is a picture with about four times as many pixels as a standard 1080p HDTV.

'OLEDs are head and shoulders

VIEWING TIP

Buy a first-class 4K BluRay player for about \$300-\$400 to watch DVDs. For streaming, use an Apple TV (second generation). It's one of the few that provides every catch-up service.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The best way to choose a TV is to look at them instore next to each other.

'You're buying picture quality. Look at them side by side so you can compare the screens,' says Rod.

Be sure to check out the screen when it is showing fast movement to make sure there's no blurring.

'This is important when watching sport and action films. Also, look for nice balanced colours and beware of any seepage of colour.'

Do this by looking at the edge of someone's clothing in a scene and checking whether its colour bleeds into the object next to it. If it does, don't buy that TV. ►

above LED TVs, which were known as the best money could buy; but they let light seep through the blacks. OLEDs don't, so the image has superior contrast,' says Rod Easdown.

This technology is also great for gaming, where the bad guys are always lurking in the shadows, he says. 'You can see detail that you can't see with LEDs.'

LG, Sony and Panasonic are all selling OLED screens. Samsung is making its own version, QLED, but it is just a premium LED model, not OLED technology.

'All OLEDs come out of the one factory run by LG, but this will change as OLEDs take over. Each manufacturer puts its own electronics in its TVs and that can have an effect, but it's hard to tell the difference between them,' says Rod.

The most popular TV size now is 55 to 65 inches (diagonal length of the screen), but the old rule of sitting twice as far away from the screen as the length of the diagonal no longer applies: 'With 4K you just have to be far enough away to see the entire screen comfortably,' says Rod.

SOUND SYSTEMS

Sound is 50% of the home-theatre experience, which makes it just as important as the visual quality of the screen. But screens are so thin now that manufacturers can install only tiny speakers that favour the high end of sound.

‘Never rely on the TV sound,’ says Rod. ‘Even premium TVs sound raspy.’

Rod suggests adding a soundbar, at least: ‘Position a good soundbar under the screen and it will improve sound 100%. Connect the TV to a good hi-fi or home-theatre system with five speakers or seven speakers and the difference is like chalk and cheese.’

Sound improves not only because you’re surrounded. ‘It’s the fact that proper speakers and soundbars have bigger drivers that give you a full range of sound,’ says Rod.

Soundbars are the cheapest sound alternative and usually include a couple of angled speakers in the one unit. Some come with a subwoofer for added bass.

For a stereo sound, you can add a left and a right speaker through a receiver. But to achieve surround sound, you need to add extra speakers with a 5.1 system. This includes a subwoofer (which is the .1), and five other speakers: a centre speaker under or over the screen, a left and right speaker on each side of the screen, and a left and right speaker on each side of the viewer. A 7.1 system adds two more left and right speakers behind the viewer and introduces an extra sound dimension.

Sound systems can be bought this way as home-theatre packages or as individual speakers; some include wireless Bluetooth connection.

For an atmospheric sound experience, Rod suggests installing a 7.1.2 or 7.1.4 system, which includes two or four overhead speakers in your ceiling. This creates an immersive sound experience from Dolby Atmos sound technology.

WHAT IS DOLBY ATMOS?

Dolby Atmos is an audio format for creating and playing back multi-channel film soundtracks. It is new to home theatre but is popular in movie theatres.

It gives movie sound a more 3D effect and is now used in Blue Ray DVDs. Netflix is also streaming Dolby Atmos sound with Atmos-recorded movies.

The format takes conventional 5.1- and 7.1-channel surround set-ups to another level by using ceiling speakers to create a ‘height’ layer of sound above the listener. This overhead sound extends the height of your system’s soundstage.

It needs a receiver capable of decoding the Dolby Atmos soundtracks. For overhead speakers you’ll need flush-mount in-ceiling speakers that are the best acoustical

In-ceiling speakers provide the full sound from Dolby Atmos.

match for your five surround speakers. Rod says he watched the film *Everest* recently with Dolby Atmos in which a helicopter enters a scene. ‘The sound of the chopper flying over my head was like it was actually in the room,’ he says.



PICTURES GETTY IMAGES

3 HOME-THEATRE SET-UPS

BUDGET

SCREEN The big brands all deliver, but consider Panasonic's 55" FX700 4K Ultra HD Smart LED LCD TV, \$1595 (panasonic.com/au).

SOUND Choose between Sonos Wireless Playbar Soundbar, \$995 (sonos.com.au), and JBL 3.1 4K Ultra HD Soundbar with Wireless Subwoofer, \$699 (jbl.com.au).



Panasonic 55" FX700 4K Ultra HD LED LCD Smart TV, \$1595.



Sonos Wireless Playbar Soundbar System, \$995.



JBL 3.1 4K Ultra HD Soundbar with Wireless Subwoofer, \$699.

MID-RANGE

SCREEN Sony, LG and Panasonic make OLED TVs but the best buy now is arguably the Panasonic 55" 4K OLED Ultra HD Smart TV, \$2995 (panasonic.com/au).

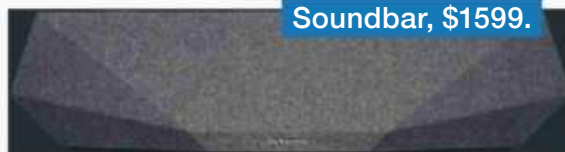
SOUND Pick between KEF LS50 Wireless Speakers, \$3500 a pair (au.kef.com); or Dynaudio Music 7 Soundbar, \$1599 (busisoft.com.au). For surround sound, go with the Klipsch Reference Theatre Pack, \$1599 (qualifi.com.au).



Panasonic 55" 4K OLED Ultra HD Smart TV, \$2995.



KEF LS50 Wireless Speakers, \$3500 a pair.



Dynaudio Music 7 Soundbar, \$1599.



Klipsch Reference Quintet Theatre Pack, \$1599.

LUXURY

SCREEN There are plenty of bargains among the big brands for LEDs. Try a Samsung NU7100 75" LED, \$2995 (samsung.com.au); or check out an LG 75" SK80, \$5295 (lg.com/au). Or go all out and get a Panasonic TH77EZ1000U 77" 4K OLED TV, \$21,999 (panasonic.com/au).

SOUND Be moved by a Marantz 9.2-channel receiver (with Dolby Atmos), \$4190 (qualifi.com.au); and speakers by Focal, Triangle, B&W, Yamaha, Dynaudio or whatever sounds best to you. ►



Panasonic 77" 4K OLED TV, \$19,999.



Marantz SR7012 9.2 Channel Receiver with Dolby Atmos, \$4190.

Dynaudio Contour 60 Speakers, \$14,999.





PROJECTORS

Home-theatre projector systems have come a long way. They provide a bigger image than TVs, with screen sizes more than 100" providing good quality pictures. The projector is usually attached to the ceiling and a motorised screen rolls up when not in use.

The advantages are that they create a big-screen cinema experience,

cost less than HDTVs, take up less space and are easy to install. The disadvantages are that most are not as sharp as a TV screen, may need a dark room for the best image, and require servicing. If there is a smoker in the house, the servicing might need to be more frequent and could cost you an expensive new bulb each year.

HOW TO SET UP A HOME THEATRE

Whether you have a dedicated room for a home theatre or, like most people, plan to use a furnished lounge room, you can take steps to get the best out of your home theatre. Rod Easdown points out that every room has different acoustics but, if you want professional sound, you should ask experts to install acoustic panels, which are not cheap.

Screen

Position the screen at a comfortable viewing level using a stand on a flat surface or a wall mount.

Surfaces

Hard surfaces, such as bare walls, timber floors, glass doors and windows, can distort sound by accentuating the high range, says Rod. Place carpet or a rug over timber floors, hang curtains over glass, and keep framed pictures on walls – along with the furniture in the room, they will help absorb sound.

Speakers

A soundbar should be positioned directly in line with the screen, pointing in the same direction, either under (preferably) or over it.

If you have separate speakers, the centre speaker goes directly under or over the screen, while the left and right speakers, placed on either side of the screen, should be angled at ear level to direct sound to the sweet spot: the viewing position.

If you have two extra side speakers for surround sound, these should be above ear level, angled down at the viewer. Ceiling speakers for the Dolby Atmos effect should also be on either side of the viewer.

Keep the seating at least 50cm from the wall behind you so you have space for rear speakers to be effective. If you have a subwoofer, place it under the screen in the middle up against the wall, or to the side if the TV is in the way.

Top picks



Crest Medium Full Motion TV Wall Mount, \$149. crest.com.au



Antsig 3m Gold Heavy Duty HDMI Cable, about \$26. bunnings.com.au



Crest Universal Projector Ceiling Mount, \$102. crest.com.au



Antsig 3m TV Lead, about \$8. bunnings.com.au



Crest TV Safety Strap, \$20. crest.com.au

HOW TO MOUNT YOUR TV

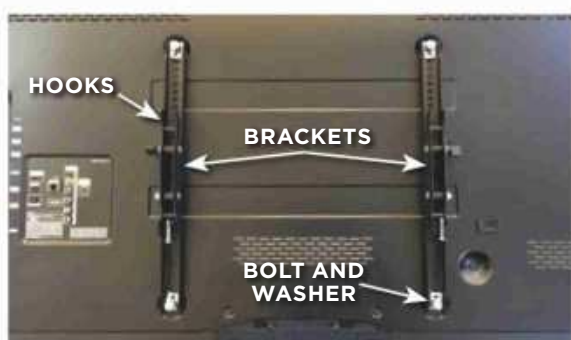


When Graem moved in with Denise, he brought his large-screen TV with him. Denise hated all the space it took up on her vintage credenza – and only agreed the TV (and Graem) could stay if the screen was mounted on the wall.

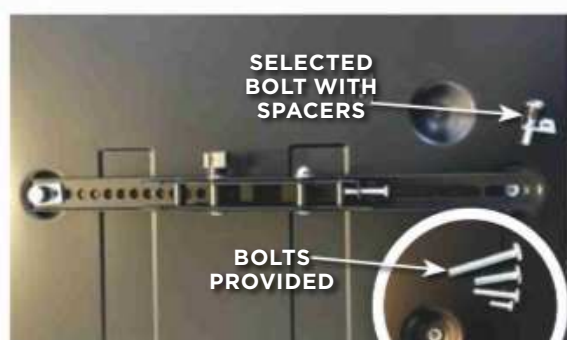
Two years later, Graem finally did some basic research and realised how

easy it was to DIY a wall mount from the Crest range (crest.com.au).

A Crest wall mount system, available from Bunnings, comes with a selection of fasteners for the brackets that attach to the back of the screen. In this model, those brackets have hooks that hang over a frame that is secured to the wall, in this case plaster over bricks.



1 Size up the hook brackets
Flatscreen TVs have screw holes in the back for wall-mounting. First, select the right size bolt from the ones provided in the pack; use the spacers for a firm fit. But don't force them in beyond their depth or you may damage the TV.



2 Fasten the hooks
The size of bolt you choose will depend on the model of the TV. This Samsung took the shortest bolt with the biggest width, using two small spacers. It was all provided in the kit. Configure the best combination for your system.



3 Position the wall frame
Measure the depth from the hooks to the bottom of the screen to determine the best position for the frame on the wall. Clip the spirit level on to the frame to ensure it is level, then mark where the four holes are to be drilled.



4 Drill the holes
Use a nail punch to mark the precise centre of each hole, to ensure the accurate placement of the masonry drill. Attach a 10mm masonry bit to a hammer drill, then bore four holes to a depth of 60mm.

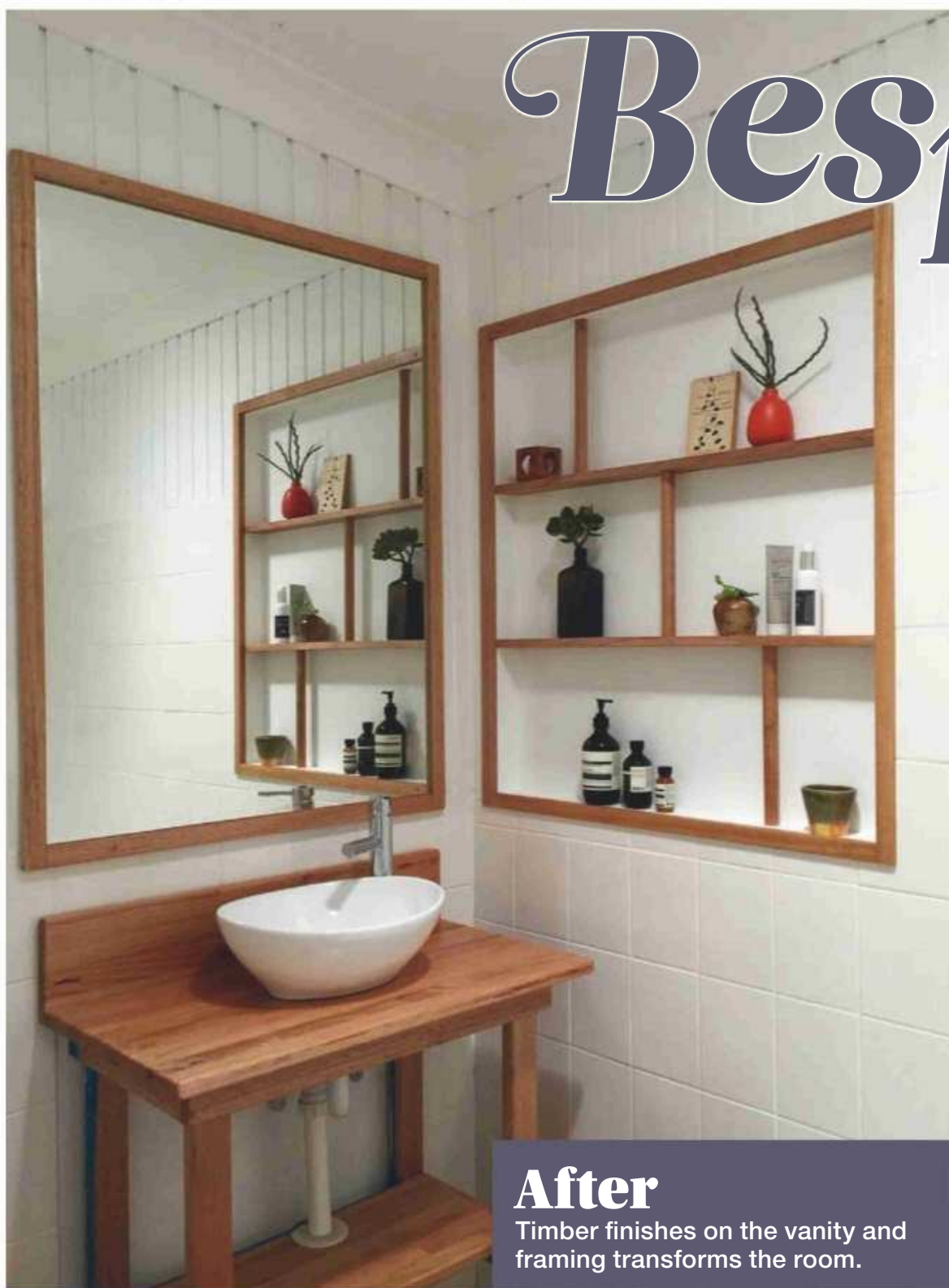


5 Fasten the wall frame
Clear the holes of dust using a vacuum and insert the four wall plugs provided, tapping them with a hammer to secure them neatly inside. Thread the bolts and fix the frame firmly to the wall using a socket wrench.



6 Hang the TV
Reconnect the cabling to the back of the TV screen, then deploy a two-person lift to position the TV on the wall mount. Do this by slipping the hooks on the back of the screen over the top lip of the frame on the wall. Too easy. ♦

Bespoke BATHROOM on a budget



After

Timber finishes on the vanity and framing transforms the room.



Before

DIY specialist and furniture maker Natasha Dickins upgrades a bathroom by adding custom timber features

Bathrooms more than 20 years old tend to feel dated, regardless of how clean they are. With this entire house getting ready for a major refurb, this area needed a temporary spruce-up to make it more usable for a year or so.

A budget of \$1000 and a couple of DIY days were all that was needed to transform it into a more practical space – and add specially handcrafted timber elements for warmth and interest.

The makeover plan was to address several problem areas.

- ◆ The shabby vanity was too big for the space. Replacing it with a smaller, more elegant table with a shiny new sink and mixer makes it modern again.
- ◆ The odd placement of the mirrors was explained when they were removed from the wall to reveal a former window. One mirror was repurposed with a simple timber frame and rehung.
- ◆ The hidden window cavity was the perfect size for display shelving to make up for losing the vanity drawers and shower caddy while continuing the handcrafted theme.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Timber
- Mitre saw, handsaw
- Drill/driver
- Bits, countersink bits, Forstner bit
- Galvanised screws, adhesive
- Galvanised brackets
- Bar clamps, F clamps
- Timber filler
- Sandpaper, sanding block, orbital sander
- Varnish, mini roller, paintbrushes
- Painter's tape
- Anti-mould paint
- Bathroom fittings

PICTURES NATASHA DICKINS/LITTLE RED INDUSTRIES

BUILD A *vanity table*



After

Tasmanian oak is a hardwood with pale grain that can easily handle moisture if it's sealed well.

Two oak panels of 1200 x 600 x 18mm thick was more than enough timber to cut a tabletop of 850 x 450mm, a splashback of 850 x 200mm, and a base shelf of 750 x 350mm. The frame is made using 7m of DAR 65 x 19mm Tasmanian oak. When assembled it's 750mm wide and just under 400mm deep.

This vanity table is designed to come together like a flatpack, with the top attached using brackets and the base shelf simply resting on the base rails so it can be easily removed. Use a countersink bit when predrilling all screw holes.

Have the table completely finished, with plenty of time for the varnish to dry, plus the basin, plug and mixer ready for the plumber to install.

TIP This table is just over 820mm high, which is lower than a kitchen bench but standard for a bathroom worktop.



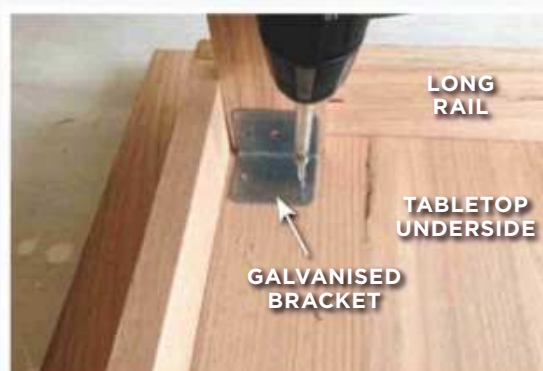
1 Make the apron

Cut two pieces of Tasmanian oak to 750mm and two pieces to 360mm, then butt the short sides against the long ones. Predrill (countersink) two holes into each join and then secure with 40mm screws.



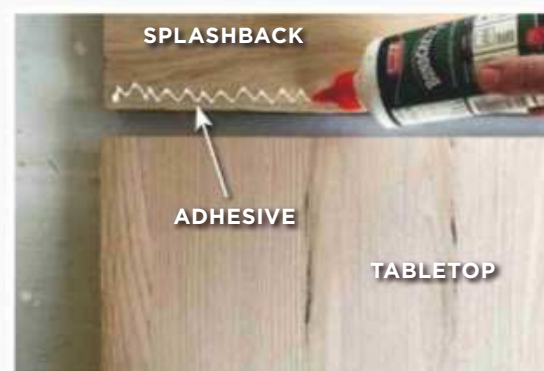
2 Attach the legs and rails

Cut four legs to 800mm and two base rails to 322mm. Position the legs inside the apron, against the long sides. Secure with two 30mm screws. Position the base rails inside the legs, 300mm from the floor, and secure with 40mm screws.



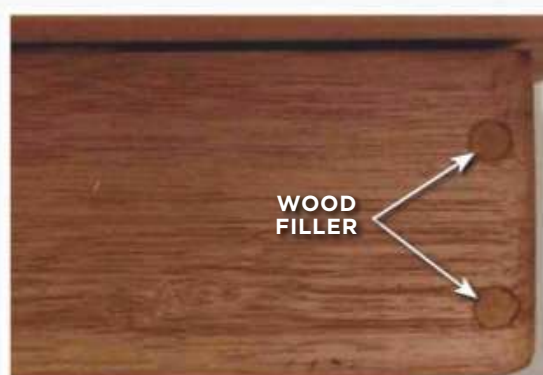
3 Attach the top to the frame

Turn the pre-cut tabletop upside down to position the frame 50mm from the front and sides and flush with the back, using four 50 x 50mm galvanised brackets with 15mm-long screws to attach the top.



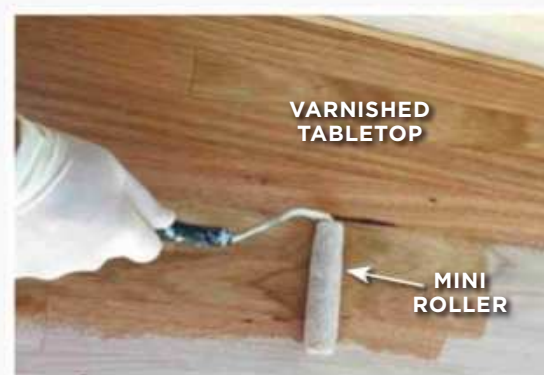
4 Secure the splashback

Dry fit the splashback to the back edge of the tabletop. Countersink along the base edge, then apply Bondcrete adhesive, clamp and secure using 40mm screws. Let dry.



5 Sand all over

Cover the holes with Timbermate Wood Filler in Oak and let dry. Drop in the base shelf to sit on top of the base rails. Sand all over with 180-grit abrasive paper, rounding over the edges and corners; then finish all over with 240-grit.



6 Apply the sealer

Remove dust with a damp cloth, then apply three coats of Monocel Gold Clear Timber Varnish in Satin using a mini roller with microfibre cover, leaving to dry between coats. Finish with a fourth coat over the tabletop, splashback and base shelf for extra protection. ►

REPURPOSE A *mirror*



1 To take down a large wall-mounted mirror, pop the screw caps off and remove the screws with a drill, working upwards from the base and calling in an extra pair of hands to prevent it from falling. **TIP** Keep the mirror intact. This mirror had a slimline aluminium frame with support brackets at the back.

2 Choose a round-edge moulding wide enough to cover the aluminium frame, such as Porta 40 x 8mm Tasmanian oak round-edge coverstrap moulding. Then cut the timber to fit around the perimeter of the mirror, keeping it flush with the inside of the existing frame. **TIP** Use butt joints at the intersections as it adds more strength to the frame than mitre cuts.



Before

3 Working on a flat surface, apply Bondcrete adhesive to the moulding. Position it over the existing frame, then clamp and leave to dry.

4 From the back, check the edge of the mirror to determine the position of the screws. From the front, countersink through the timber and aluminium frame, avoiding the mirror.

5 Position the mirror in the bathroom, checking it will attach to studs on at least two sides, then secure it to the wall using 60mm screws. **TIP** Cover the holes with Timbermate Wood Filler in Oak and leave to dry.

6 Use painter's tape to mask around the mirror, then lightly hand-sand over the filler and around the new frame using 180-grit abrasive paper.

7 Use a mini roller with microfibre cover to apply three coats of Monocel Gold Clear Timber Varnish in Satin, leaving to dry between coats.



Apply adhesive and clamp the border over the existing frame.

MAKE RECESSED *shelving*

Removing the mirrors revealed a hidden window cavity, which was the perfect spot to install display shelving.

The dimensions of your shelving will differ, but the key is to buy lengths of DAR pine that will sit flush to the bathroom wall once plywood backing is installed in the cavity. In this case, 90mm pine fitted with a 7mm-thick plywood back. The shelf is finished in the same specialised anti-mould paint that we used on the bathroom wall for a seamless look. The timber shelves are made from 65 x 18mm Tasmanian oak with 25mm Tasmanian oak dowel supports, both sealed with Monocel Gold Clear Timber Varnish in Satin.



After



1 Make the frame

Measure up a frame to go inside the cavity. Countersink and secure with two 40mm screws for each join.



2 Make the backing

Use the frame to mark out and cut the plywood backing, then paint the outside back to protect against mould.



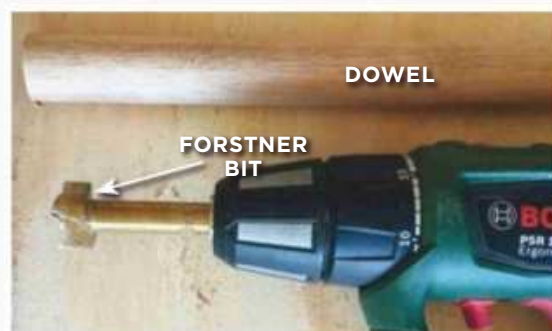
3 Attach the backing

Attach the backing to the frame by countersinking and securing around the edges with 25mm screws.



4 Design the shelves

Devise the setout of your shelves, cutting three lengths of Tasmanian oak to fit snugly inside the frame. Working from the base, one section at a time, cut the dowel supports to fit as you go.



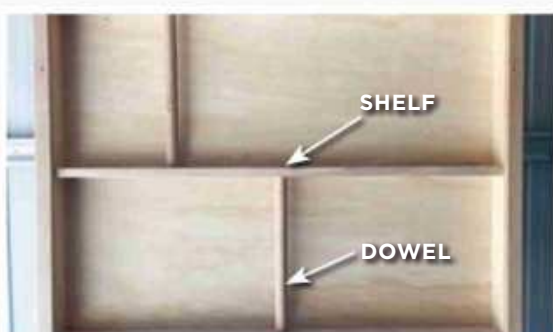
5 Secure the first shelf

Use a 25mm Forstner bit with a drill to make 4mm-deep recessed holes to hold the dowel at the bottom and top. Apply adhesive, then position the shelf above, fitting it snugly into the frame.



6 Secure the second shelf

Cut the dowel to fit the next shelf, make the recessed holes at the top and bottom, and position the shelf without adding adhesive. Measure the top dowel support to fit, make the recessed holes, apply adhesive and assemble.



7 Square the shelves

Measure and adjust the shelves as needed until square. Allow to dry.



8 Varnish the shelves

Remove shelving from the frame. Lightly sand all over. Apply three coats of varnish.



9 Paint the frame

Paint the frame with the same paint as the bathroom walls, applying two coats.



10 Reattach the shelves

Reposition the shelves in the frame, attaching the shelves to the frame with 40mm screws, measuring both ends from the base to ensure they're straight.



11 Attach the frame moulding

Cut 30 x 19mm picture frame moulding to fit around the frame. Countersink the screw holes, varnish, allow to dry, then attach to the frame with 25mm screws.

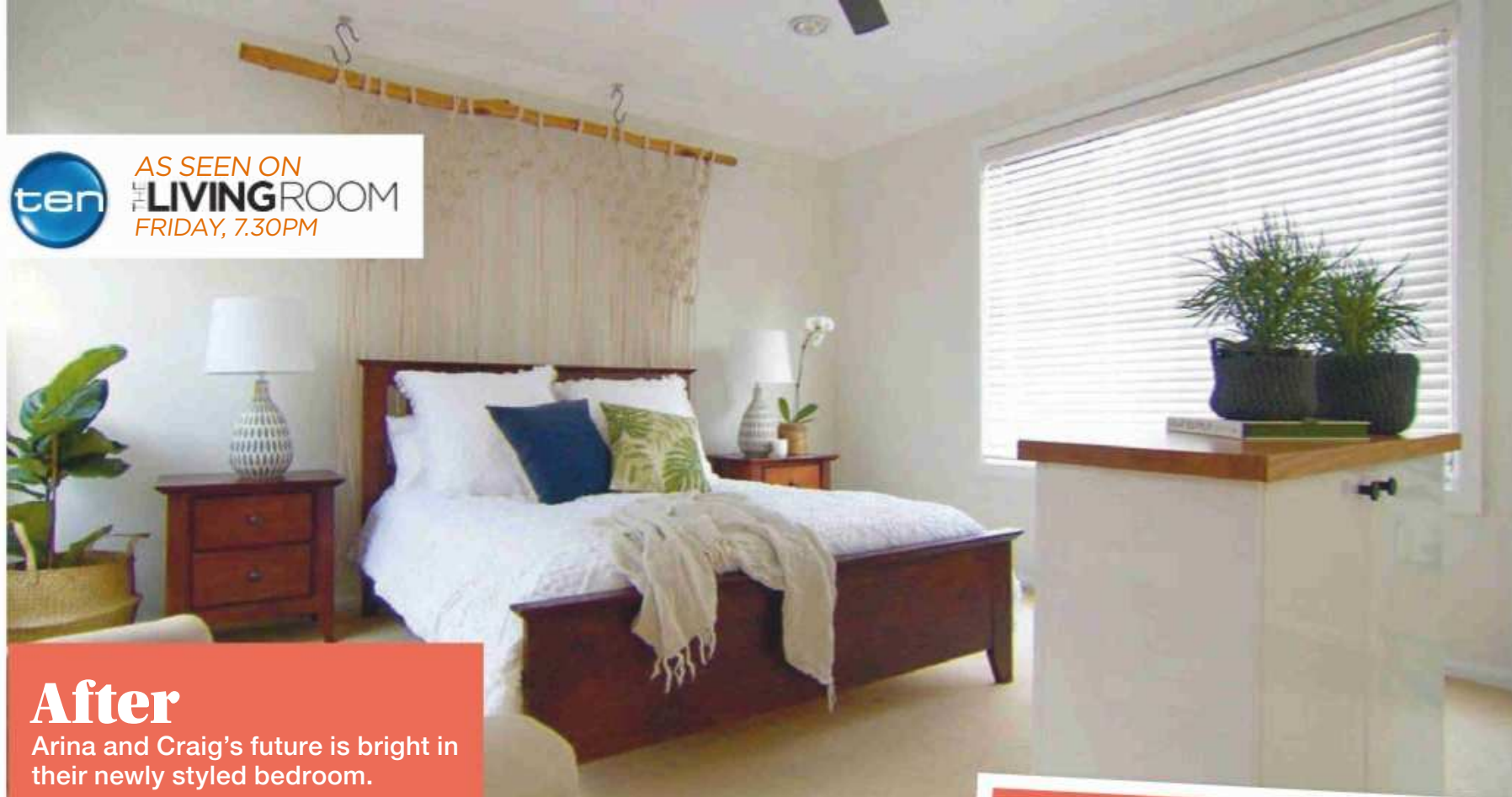


12 Finish off

Position the shelving in the cavity, securing it to the framework using 60mm screws. Cover screw holes with filler, sand and touch up with wall paint. ♦



AS SEEN ON
THE LIVING ROOM
FRIDAY, 7.30PM



After

Arina and Craig's future is bright in their newly styled bedroom.

ENSUITE SALVATION

The Living Room's
Barry Du Bois
creates a new
master suite, with
all the extras

Arina and Craig's brick veneer house was built back in the 1960s – so it was always going to require a lot of renovation work to improve it and make it more functional. Parents to baby Lara, they plan to expand their family, and they continue to enjoy visits from family and friends, so the most obvious change was to add a second bathroom to the house.

Their current master bedroom was built as an extension by the previous owners, and was joined to the main house by another smaller room, which

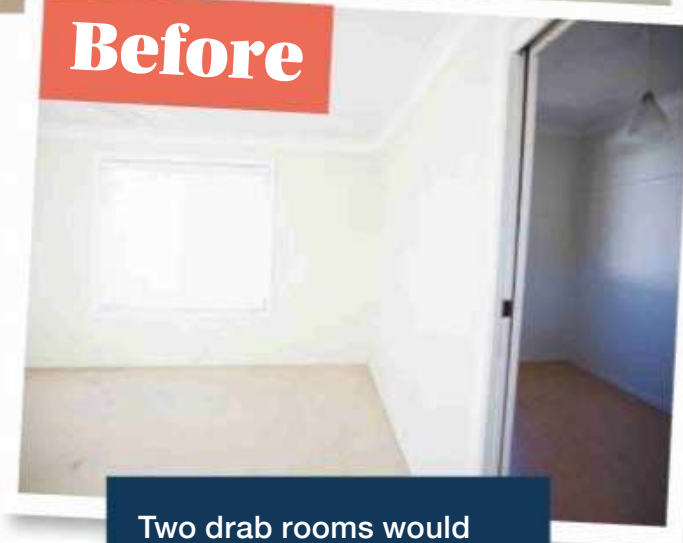


they had been using as a walk-in wardrobe. They knew that they could better utilise the space if they turned the two rooms into a master suite, but they were struggling to come up with a way to do it. Barry Du Bois and *The Living Room* team came to the rescue.

THE PLAN

Barry's idea was to use this space to its full potential – starting by dividing the makeshift 'wardrobe' into a brand new ensuite on one side and a new walk-in

Before



Two drab rooms would turn into one master suite.

wardrobe with plenty of storage on the other. He would also add a storage island in the revamped master bedroom.

Fortunately the house sits on risers above the ground, making plumbing in the new bathroom much easier.

The first job was to rip up the floor to install the new plumbing. Once the ensuite floor was put down, Barry erected a three-quarter high wall to separate the ensuite and walk-in. Leaving the top of the wall open allows light to filter through the two spaces.

THE ENSUITE

'Your best friend in a wet area like this ensuite is natural light and ventilation and the best way to do that is with a skylight,' explains Barry.

The VELUX skylight Barry installed is solar-powered and has in-built sensors that will automatically shut the window if it starts to rain. Not only does it help



After

The skylight and vent in the ensuite keeps things light and airy.

to create extra light and airflow, it also prevents any mould build-up, keeping the bathroom more hygienic.

Classic white tiles were selected for the ensuite walls to reflect the light and make the room appear bigger, while large floor tiles meant less grout lines for a seamless finish. Barry chose a floating vanity to add to the illusion of space, while modern black tapware stood out against the white and complemented the grain of the timber vanity top.



The solar-powered VELUX skylight is easily controlled.



Barry builds the bathroom from the ground up; Kyal installs the wardrobe system.

THE BEDROOM

In the master bedroom, the walls and ceiling were painted in the same shade (Taubmans Alpaca White) to give the room a contemporary look.

Barry then reconfigured the bedroom and built a storage island beyond the end of the bed to avoid having furniture pushed up against walls, which can really close in a space.

‘What I wanted to do was give you an opportunity to maybe have a TV stand here, which I’ve wired up, but also more storage space,’ he told Arina and Craig.

‘This creates not just a transient zone but also a very usable space.’

THE WARDROBE

Craig and Arina’s makeshift wardrobe had taken up too much space. A new wardrobe with sliding doors tidied the area up, while also providing an entranceway into the master bedroom.

The Flexi Storage Sliding Wardrobe was perfect for this job. It was easy to put together, but Barry called in DIY expert Kyal Demmrich to assemble it in the chosen location.

And that was it: job done. An entire new master bedroom with ensuite and walk-in wardrobe. Thanks, team! ♦

Find it at Bunnings

PLAN YOUR DREAM BATHROOM

Embarking on a bathroom reno is exciting but it can be hard to try and visualise what fixtures, fittings and tiles will work together best.

When planning your new bathroom, think about what does and doesn't work in your existing space and measure and map where your new elements will go.

Creating a mood board or scrapbook of your desired fittings and accessories can help you get a feel for the end result.

A neutral palette, offset by the warmth of timber, allows you to be more daring with patterns, textures and tapware.

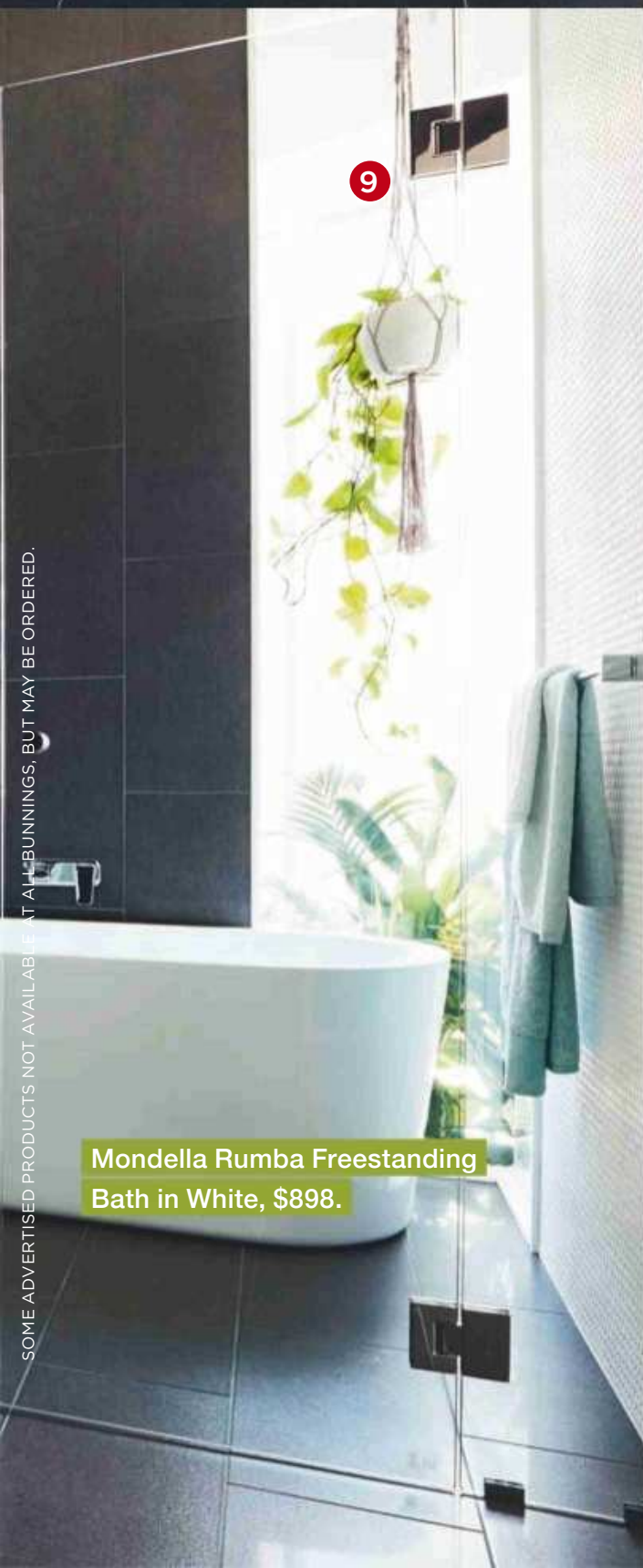
Finally, be sure to enlist the aid of a licensed plumber to install all fixings that have water running through them.

▶ WATCH THE VIDEO
How to install a bathroom mirror
at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice

LOOK 1

- 1 Cibo Design Outline Mirror with White Border, \$159.
- 2 Wet By Home Design Chevron Soap Dish, \$6.
- 3 Wet By Home Design Chevron Soap Dispenser, \$6.50.
- 4 Methven WELS 4-Star Waipori Sink Mixer, \$399.
- 5 Cibo Design 1200mm Glee Wall Hung Vanity in Oak, \$1200.
- 6 Methven WELS 3-Star Waipori Satinjet Rail Shower, \$288.
- 7 Methven Waipori Shower Mixer, \$244.
- 8 D'Lucci Glass Frameless Shower Panel, \$199.
- 9 D'Lucci Glass Frameless Shower Panel Door Kit, \$269.
- 10 Cibo Design 1200mm Glee Wall Hung Vanity in White, \$1200.

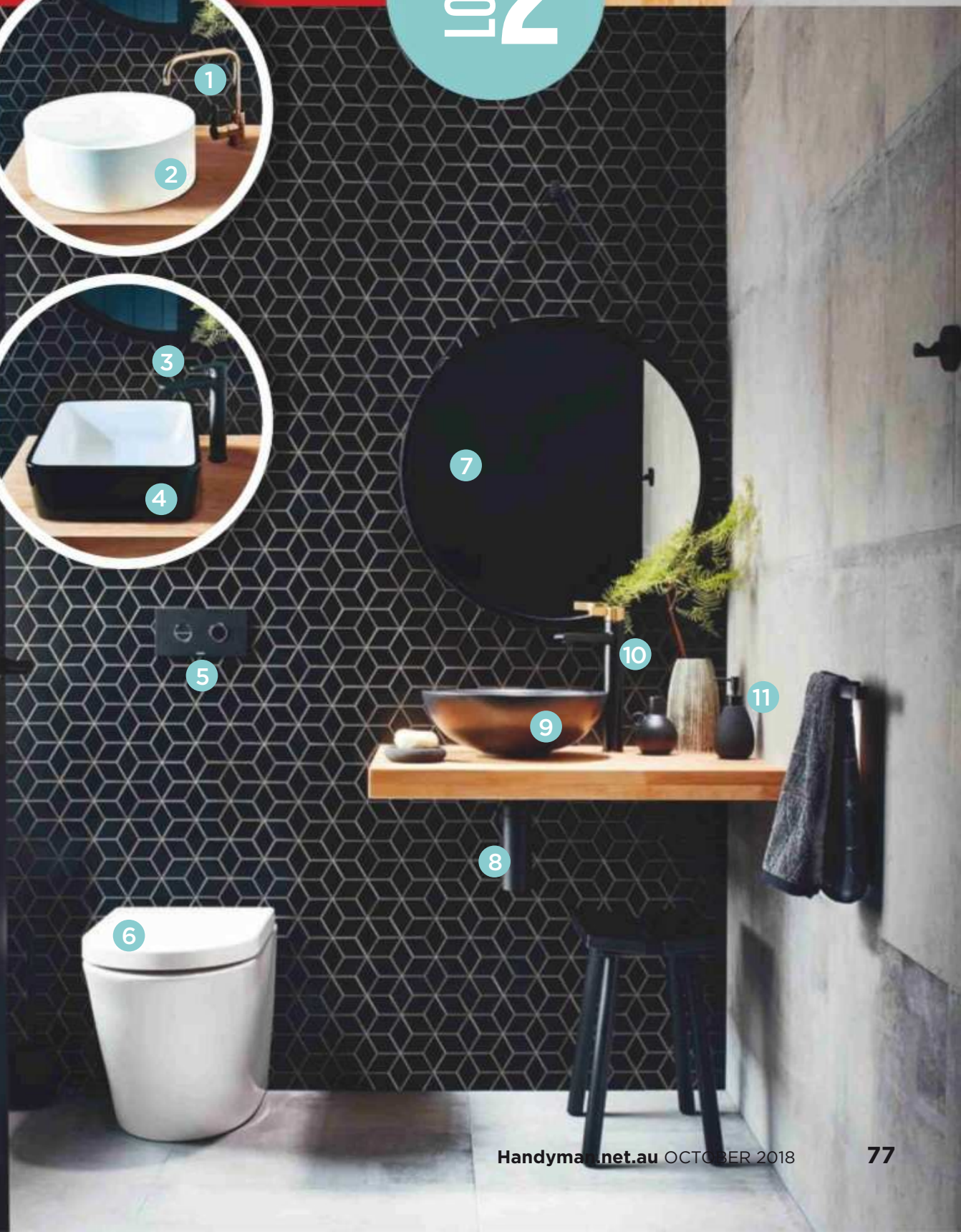




Mondella Rumba Freestanding Bath in White, \$898.

- 1 Caroma WELS 4-Star 7.5L/min Jade Sink Mixer in Rose Gold, \$229.
- 2 D'Lucci Stone Round Countertop Basin in White, \$175.
- 3 Caroma WELS 5-Star 6L/min Jade Tower Basin Mixer in Matte Black, \$209.
- 4 Cibo Design Vivid Square Countertop Basin in Black and White, \$306.
- 5 Caroma Invisi II Round Dual Flush Plate and Buttons in Matte Black, \$268.
- 6 Caroma Urbane Wall-Faced Invisi II Toilet Suite with Arc Soft-Close Seat, \$1206.
- 7 Wet By Home Design 70cm Hanging Round Mirror in Matte Black, \$79.
- 8 Mondella Resonance Round Bottle Trap in Matte Black, \$89.
- 9 Mondella Vivace Matte Black Basin, \$169.
- 10 Dorf WELS 5-Star 6L/min Ren Tower Basin Mixer in Black & Copper, \$299.
- 11 Wet By Home Design Urbane Soap Dispenser, \$11.

LOOK 2





Swinging DAY BED

Build a Hamptons-style day bed perfect
for whiling away a lazy afternoon

PROJECT AND PICTURES STUART SCOTT



Don't we all love a little luxury? And what is more luxurious than reclining on a gently swinging day bed on a lazy afternoon with a good book or your special someone. Sound good? If you have the location, and a day or two to spare, for just a modest outlay you can build this beautiful day bed and enjoy that kind of comfort for years to come.

Our structure was designed around a standard king single mattress, which can be sourced easily and cheaply. This size is enough for two to stretch out on and relax in comfort. The broad arms are ideal for resting a cuppa, glass of something fizzy, or even a snack plate.

Best of all, we employed easily obtained materials and simple construction techniques, so anyone with even moderate handyman skills and a few tools can have a go. Woodhouse Weatherproof timber was used. This is an engineered pine that is easy to work with, structurally very sound and will withstand whatever the elements throw at it. It is available at your local Bunnings.

When it comes to hanging the finished day bed, you can either modify an existing structure or build a dedicated frame or pergola. The bed itself with mattress weighs approximately 80kg. With two adults on board, this could be as much as 300kg. We reinforced an existing awning by adding an additional beam to carry the extra weight; some knee braces were added to post-beam junctions to give extra stability to the entire structure.

If you are in any doubt about the integrity of the structure, seek advice on the design, reinforcement and bracing of the frame that will carry the new day bed.

Finally, the Suntuf polycarbonate roofing on our pergola was extended by 900mm to provide weather protection for the day bed. This was done by extending the existing rafters with 1.8m lengths of 90 x 42 Weatherproof. We simply lapped the first 900mm of the extension and screwed it to the existing rafters with batten screws and added an additional outside batten to fix the polycarbonate to. ►



Stuart

EXPERT SECRETS

Don't save sheckles on shackles! Play it safe: the ones we used are rated to support 2000kg.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Drop saw/compound mitre saw, jigsaw
- Drill/driver, brad nailer
- Tape measure, screwdrivers
- Orbital sander
- Preservative, filler, primer
- Exterior paint, sprayer



A QUICK WORD ON METHOD

The general method of assembling the bed was to clamp the work securely before fixing joints, and/or tack the work with glue and brads before checking for square and then fixing more securely with batten screws.

When fixing with batten screws, it is important to first drill 4.5mm pilot holes. In some cases, particularly when fixing material close to its ends, it is also advisable to countersink the hole and drill 6mm clearance holes through the material being fixed in order to avoid splits. Don't overtighten the screws!

MATERIALS

- WH WEATHERPROOF
 - 88 x 88 x 2.4m x 3
 - 66 x 42 x 2.4m x 1
 - 42 x 42 x 5.4m x 3
 - 42 x 31 x 5.4m x 3
 - 42 x 18 x 5.4m x 2
 - 116 x 18 x 5.4m x 1
 - 90 x 42 x 2.4m x 1
- Zenith 8mm bow shackles x 6
- Pinnacle 6mm galvanised welded chain x 8m
- Zenith 9.5 x 148 x 25mm eye bolts x 4
- Zenith M12 x 130mm TP cup head bolts x 4
- Carinya 190 x 190 x 40 x 3mm reinforcing brackets (top) x 2
- Carinya 250 x 75 x 5mm reinforcing plates (bed) x 4

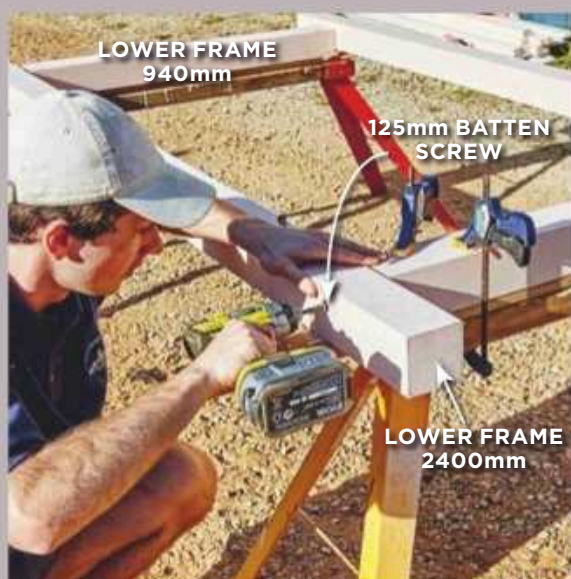
CUTTING LIST

DAY BED	MATERIAL (WH Weatherproof)	LENGTH (mm)	QUANTITY
Lower frame	88 x 88	2400 + 2 x 940	2
Lower centre brace	66 x 42	855	1
Ledgers	42 x 42	1855	2
Seat slats	42 x 31	940	11
Arm slats	42 x 18	425	8
Back slats	42 x 18	560 (7° end bevel)	11
Lower support caps	42 x 42	940	2
Arm supports	42 x 42	1110	2
Upper/lower back supports	42 x 42	2150	2
Arm posts	42 x 42	1110	2
Back posts	42 x 42	425	2
Arms	116 x 18	1160	2
Back cap	90 x 42	2200	1

FASTENERS

Batten screws	14g-10 x 75mm
Batten screws	14g-10 x 50mm
Brad nails	64mm Gal
Brad nails	50mm Gal
PVA adhesive	

BUILD THE DAY BED



1 Assemble the lower frame

Cut the lower frame sections to length ensuring your cuts are square and accurate. Loose assemble the frame and clamp the work securely, ensuring the frame is square. Drill 4.5mm pilot holes and countersink to a depth of around 40mm before securing with two 125mm batten screws at each butt joint.



TIP After Woodhouse Weatherproof timber has been cut, it is important to refinish the exposed areas in order to maintain the integrity of the material and ensure that the structure remains weatherproof and will last for years. Simply apply a wood preservative to the cut and then refinish with a quality wood primer.



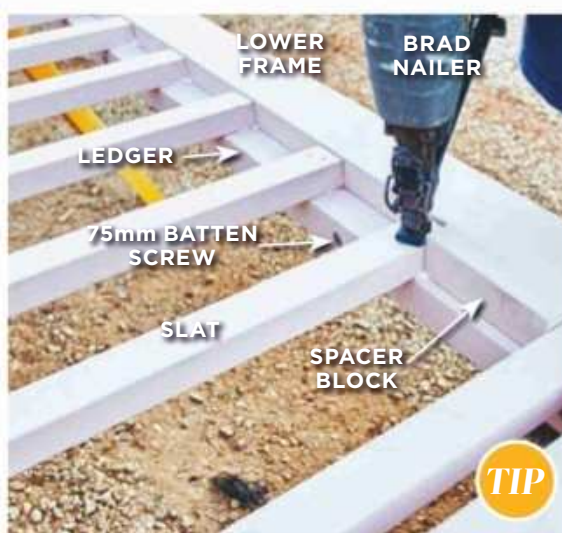
3 Attach back posts and upper and lower supports

Cut the back posts and supports to length. Apply adhesive and tack the back posts in place square to and flush with the bottom of the frame and 140mm from the ends. Fix the lower support with batten screws flush with posts. Notch the upper support to fit around the posts and fix with glue and batten screws. Check the posts are square and fix off with 2 batten screws to the lower frame and 1 screw to the lower support. **TIP** When performing repetitive cutting on your drop saw, set up a stop at the required length. Most saw stands have a mechanism that makes this quick, easy and accurate. ►



2 Cut and fix the ledgers, slats and lower brace

Cut the ledgers to length. Mark the frame 36mm below the top and fix the ledgers with 5 x 75mm batten screws after drilling 4.5mm pilot holes. Cut seat slats to length and fix with 3 x 64mm brad nails and PVA adhesive at each end. Flip, cut the brace, and fix lengthways



down the centre to the frame ends with batten screws, and to the slats with brads and adhesive.

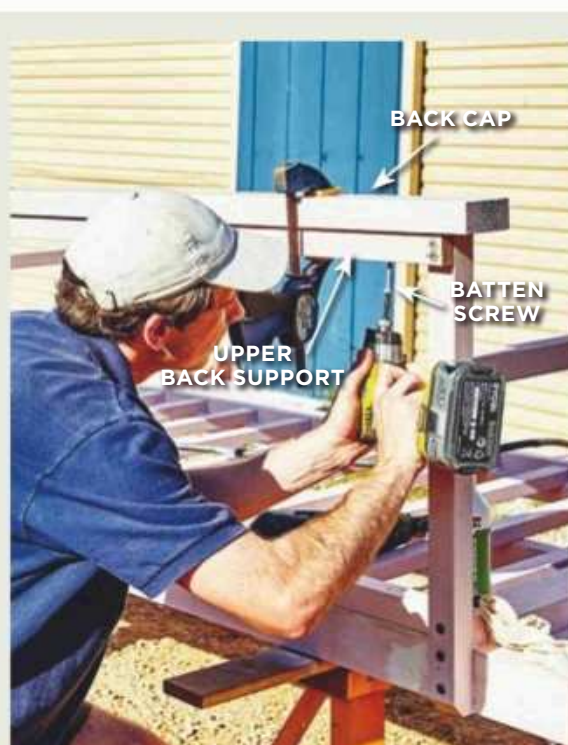
TIP When repeat fixing the base and back slats, cut spacer blocks to ensure your work is consistent and tidy. Beware of accumulating errors: a few millimetres here and there can add up to glaring errors if allowed to accumulate.

BUILD THE DAY BED



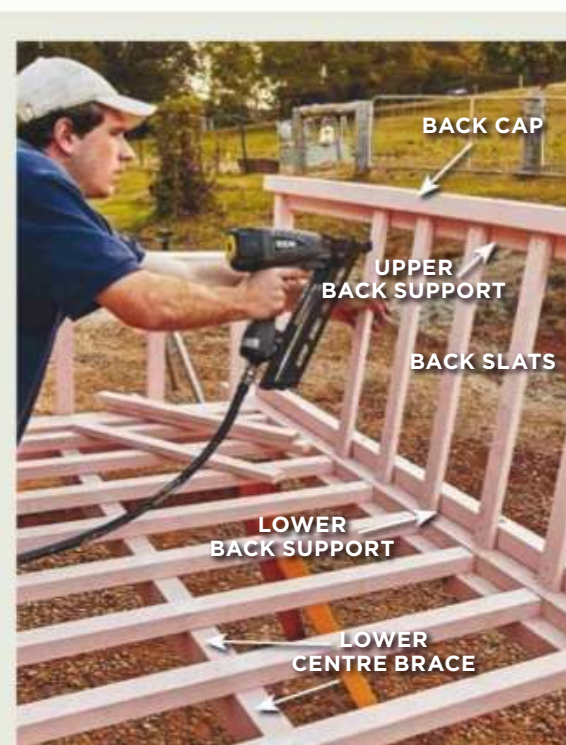
4 Attach arm posts and arm supports

Cut the arm posts and arm supports to length. Fix the lower arm support flush with the bottom of the lower frame with adhesive and brads. Fix the arm posts flush against the frame and lower supports with adhesive and brads. Fix the upper arm support to the inside of the arm post and back post (flush at the back) with adhesive, brads and a batten screw.



5 Fix back cap, arms and back and side slats

Cut the back cap and arms to length. Fix the back cap to back support from below with adhesive and batten screws. Fix the arms with adhesive and brads



after notching to fit around back posts. Cut the back and side slats and fix with adhesive and brads at regular intervals. (Note: back slats have a 7° bevel on the ends to sit flush against the lower frame and back cap.)



6 Fill, sand and paint

Fill all brad holes and screw heads with a good quality exterior filler. Allow to dry and sand smooth. Sand exposed hard cuts (eg arm, back cap and frame

ends) to a soft edge and refinish with preservative and primer. Give the entire bed a light sand before finishing with at least two coats of a premium gloss or semi-gloss exterior paint. ►

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HANG YOUR NEW DAY BED



Fix a reinforcing bracket to the underside of the frame at each corner. Drill 10mm holes through both frame and bracket 70mm and 200mm from ends. At 70mm, insert eye bolts, and at 200mm, fix with cup head bolts. Secure the chain to the bed with shackles.

We reinforced our existing 185 x 42mm outside beam with a second 185 x 42mm beam. The new beam was fixed to the existing beam through 42mm spacer blocks with cup head bolts at 600mm intervals and seated to the inside of the existing posts.

The anchor points for the bed were reinforced with a T bracket front and back and an additional spacer block adjacent to the anchor points. The T brackets were bolted through both beams with hex head bolts. The lower hex head bolt was used to swing the bed via chain and shackles.

This assembly was further braced and reinforced with knee braces to stabilise lateral movement of the structure and keep it safe.

DYNAMICS AND BALANCE

A gentle back-and-forward rocking motion is more comfortable than a side-to-side movement. This will also be less inclined to knock into adjacent items or structures and place less strain on your supporting structures. We set out anchor points 200mm wider at the beam than at the bed. This has the effect of correcting any sideways movement.

When hanging, we allowed an extra chain link on the back chains, which inclines the bed slightly backwards. This, along with a 5mm depression between slats and frame, discourages the mattress from sliding off the seat and makes the bed more

DIY TIP

If at all uncertain about the integrity of your structure, or the steps needed to reinforce it, you must seek engineering advice.

comfortable for reclining on.

Some common sense is required. While eight adults may be able to squeeze onto the bed, it is not advisable to do so. Likewise, swinging an 80kg bed with a 100kg load on board like a playground swing is likely to be dangerous and could result in possible injury. ❖



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*Source; YouGov Galaxy research for Catalyst 2018



Find it at Bunnings

DINING OUT

Update your outdoor settings in time for summer entertaining

Gathering with family and friends around the barbecue on a lovely sunny day is one of the great pleasures of outdoor entertainment. And what better way to make it special than to be comfortable in a stylish outdoor setting.

With the weather warming up, now is the time to update your outdoor furniture and barbecue area. Here is a range of settings that not only look great but are made from materials that will withstand exposure to sun, wind and rain.

They include sturdy timber dinner settings with UV-protected cushions as well as weather-resistant resin-wicker tub chairs with a teak table.

For added flair, check out the contemporary powder-coated aluminium tables and chairs or the two- and three-seater lounges also made from resin wicker.

For barbecuing, there are a range of options including a reliable four-burner with a wok side-burner or an impressive six-burner kitchen with a granite benchtop, stainless steel sink and heaps of storage space. ♦



Mimosa 7-piece Coral Bay Aluminium Bar Setting, \$863.



Fiametta 191 x 133 x 84cm Barbecue Pizza Oven, \$1299.



- 1 Matador 6-burner Hooded Boss Barbecue Kitchen, \$2650.
- 2 Mimosa 250 x 100 x 75cm Infinity Teak Timber Table, \$1499.
- 3 Mimosa Waiheke Tub Chair, \$199.



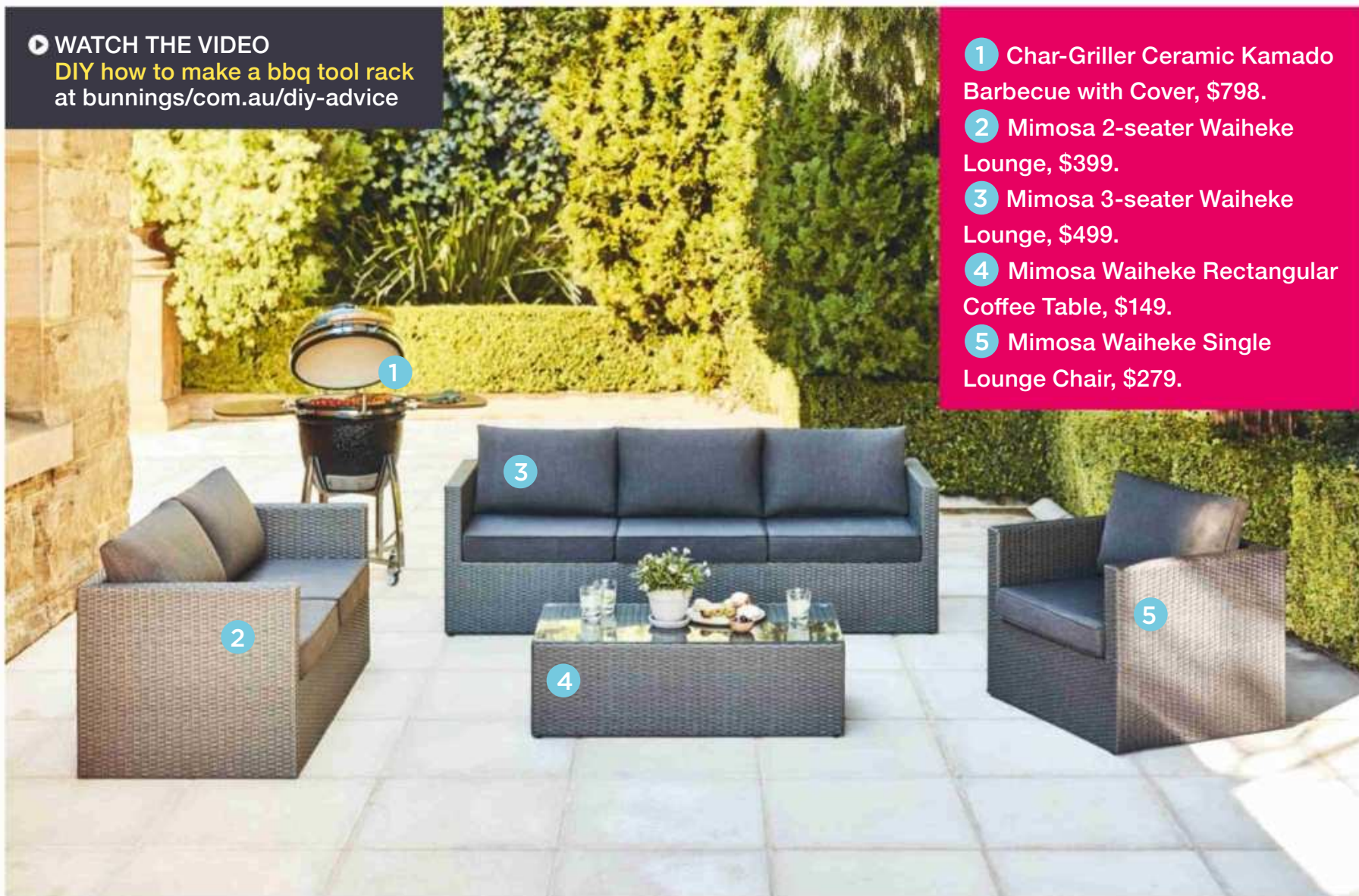
Mimosa Coral Bay Corner Lounge, \$1799.



- 1 Beefeater 4-burner Hooded Discovery Barbecue, \$599.
- 2 Mimosa 9-piece Timber Avani Setting, \$1499.
- 3 Mimosa Timber Avani Daybed with Grey Cushions, \$549.



▶ WATCH THE VIDEO
 DIY how to make a bbq tool rack
 at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



- 1 Char-Griller Ceramic Kamado Barbecue with Cover, \$798.
- 2 Mimosa 2-seater Waiheke Lounge, \$399.
- 3 Mimosa 3-seater Waiheke Lounge, \$499.
- 4 Mimosa Waiheke Rectangular Coffee Table, \$149.
- 5 Mimosa Waiheke Single Lounge Chair, \$279.

SOME ADVERTISED PRODUCTS NOT AVAILABLE AT ALL BUNNINGS STORES, BUT MAY BE ORDERED.

BUILD A PALLET PLAY TENT



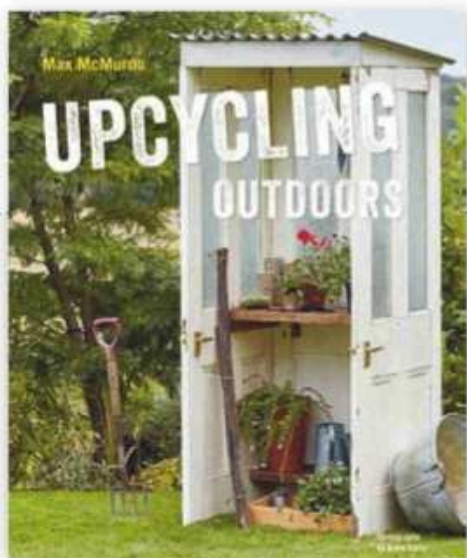
Upcycling expert Max McMurdo shows how to build a fun play tent out of recycled pallets

Upycling isn't just for adults – in fact being creative with junk really brings out the child in me! When I was growing up I'm pretty sure I spent my entire school holidays building dens.

The joy of this design is that you can create a magical space in your garden or a den for the kids using just two identical pallets, some fabric or a bed sheet, a hammer and nails. The joy of using pallets the same size is that the wood is already the right length so you don't even need to cut anything! That means

you can get the kids involved. What could be better than helping your children create their own teepee out of reclaimed materials and then watching them making it their own, enjoying the great outdoors with their friends.

Of course, if you're a big kid like me you might consider creating a larger, adult-sized teepee using more than two pallets and a couple of bed sheets. To add a real magical sense of fairytale glamour, dress with lots of scatter cushions, some soft throws and a string of battery-operated lights. ►



This is an edited extract from *Upcycling Outdoors* by Max McMurdo (Murdoch Books, \$40). Photography by Brent Darby.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 2 pallets of the same size
- Old bedsheet or large length of fabric





1 Break up a pallet

Separate the wood on your pallet using either a pallet breaker or a hammer and breaker bar. Remove the nails by hammering them back through (you may have to straighten them first).



2 Mark A frames

To create a safe, strong structure you will need an A frame at each end. Mark a spot one pallet-board width down from the top of a board to create a good overlap.



SAFETY TIP

Make sure that all old nails are removed and any really rough pallet wood is sanded smooth.

3 Attach end pieces to base

Line up the two marked spots and nail the pallet pieces together to create an A frame for each end. Nail the bottoms to the corners of the pallet base.



4 Attach top rail

To give additional strength to the structure and to support the fabric cover, nail a cross bar into place where the A frames cross.



5 Secure cover

Measure, mark and cut your fabric to size. Throw over the cross bar and secure with nails at the bottom, pulling the fabric taut.



6 Make cosy

Dress the interior with cushions and throws. Fairy lights can add glamour. ❖

MAKE A PALLET PHOTO FRAME

DIY enthusiast and owner of Le'Pallet Enterprise, Rylie Mayfosh, is an expert at making items out of pallets. Here, he shares his tips and a simple photo frame project.

'This is a great little DIY project that's so straightforward you can try at home with the kids,' he says. 'It will leave your friends saying, 'Wow ... how?''



WHAT YOU NEED

- Laser-printed photo
- Pallet timber
- Mod Podge Photo Transfer Medium
- Mod Podge Matte Finish
- Plastic sheet or scrap surface
- Foam brush
- Rubber roller or card
- Soft cloth, damp cloth
- Orbital sander
- Fine-grit sandpaper
- Scissors, string

1 2 3



1 Print your photo

Print your photo using a laser printer (not inkjet printer) onto regular document paper (not photo paper). Be sure to print it in reverse so that when the photo is transferred, it won't come out back-to-front. This is especially important if it has writing on it. If you don't have a laser printer at home, any printing store can do this for less than a dollar. Cut around the photo.



2 Make the pallet frame

Measure your photo and add an extra 30mm to each side to give you the dimensions of the pallet frame. Cut your pallet pieces to length using a drop saw, then apply timber adhesive along the edges and secure together. Add two thin strips of bracing to the back to make the frame sit off the wall. Give your frame a light sand with an orbital sander to ensure there are no lumps and bumps.



3 Apply the photo transfer

Place the photo right-side up onto a plastic sheet or scrap surface. Use a foam brush to spread the Mod Podge Photo Transfer Medium all over, leaving no gaps or excess paste. Place the photo right-side down on the pallet frame, using your hand to work it from the middle out towards the edges. Remove any bubbles using a rubber roller, card or soft cloth. Allow to dry for 24 hours.

HOW TO DISMANTLE A PALLET

Depending on the finish you are going for, there are a few ways of dismantling a pallet.

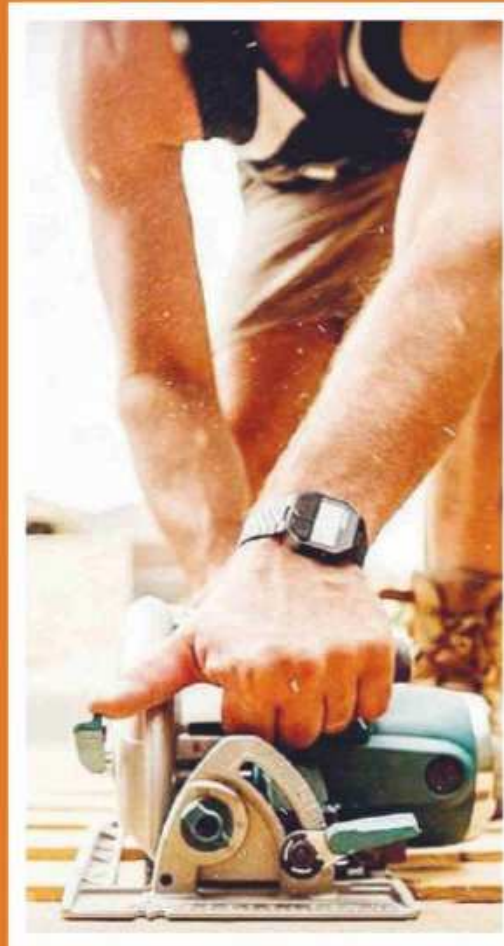
- To give it the original rustic look, you can leave the nail heads in by using a reciprocating saw, cutting down the side of the pallet where it attaches to the beams.



- You can also use a circular saw. Cut down both sides just inside the nail line, then prise off the slats with a claw bar.



- My favourite dismantling method is using this pallet-buster I had made up. It's not only easy on my back (I have recently undergone major surgery), but it keeps the whole plank from splitting when pulling up nails, making every piece usable.



RYLIE'S PALLET PROJECT TIPS

♦ **FIND** suitable pallets around building sites, industrial areas, at Bunnings and on Gumtree. Remember the rule, though: if it's not yours, ask before taking.

♦ **CHOOSE** the right pallets for the best results. Look for pallets that are clean and free of stains or spill marks – you don't know what may have been spilled on them! Report pallets stamped with the letters MB. Methyl bromide is a toxic fumigant, now banned in Australia.

♦ **FINAL TIP:** Just get out there and have fun. The rustic pallet look has become popular over the years and, with plenty more years ahead, the right project is waiting for you. ♦



4 Remove the paper backing

Place a damp cloth over the paper. When the image starts to appear, rub your thumb in a circular motion over the damp paper, gently peeling it up to reveal the image on the timber. Work slowly to avoid peeling through the image. If necessary, change to rubbing with a soft cloth if this is more effective in removing the paper without scratching the image.



5 Finishing details

To finish the project, use fine-grit sandpaper to sand back the edges of the image for a rustic look. Using a foam brush, seal the image with Mod Podge Matte Finish and leave to dry. You can leave the timber edging raw or play around with some rustic stain effect. Add a piece of string across the back and you're ready to hang this unique pallet photo frame on the wall.

BUILD A

Find it at Bunnings

PALLET HERB PLANTER

DIY TIP

Make sure you use a pallet that has been heat treated so it will be safe for growing food.

Here's how to recycle an old wooden pallet into a rustic planter, perfect for growing herbs in any outdoor space.

Your herb planter can be built to any size. In this case, one pallet supplied

enough timber to make a top box, base box, feet, supports and spacers.

Use a tape measure, pencil and square to measure and mark the timber, then use a drop saw or handsaw to cut the timber to size.

CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE mm	No
Top box front and back	750 x 90	2
Top box sides	300 x 90	2
Top box base	750 x 90	2
Bottom box front and back	750 x 145	2
Bottom box sides	300 x 145	2
Bottom box base	750 x 145	2
Feet	300 x 90 x 50	2
Supports	500 x 90	2
Spacers	150 x 90	2

WHAT YOU NEED

- Pallet
- Herbs, potting mix, weed mat
- Hammer, pliers
- Nails, screws, nail gun
- Drop saw, handsaw
- Measuring tape, pencil
- Wrecking bar
- Set square
- Dust mask, ear muffs, safety glasses

1 2 3



1 Dismantle the pallet

Use a wrecking bar to lever the timber slats from the frame of the pallet and cut the pieces to size. Remove any nails with a hammer and pliers.



2 Assemble the box frames

Put on your ear muffs and safety glasses. Line up the fronts, backs and sides of each box so that the edges are flush, and secure with the nail gun.



3 Put on the base

Line up the base pieces on each box frame, leaving a gap between the timber so that the soil drains well. Use the nail gun to attach the base to each box.

▶ WATCH THE VIDEO
D.I.Y. pallet herb planter
at bunnings.com.au/diy-advice



DIY TIP

The feet will elevate the planter, help with drainage and keep the base dry so it doesn't rot.



4 Attach the feet

Use the heavy rail from the pallet for the feet. Line up the cut pieces on the base of the bottom box and secure in position using the nail gun.



5 Secure the supports

Attach a support to the bottom box sides and secure. Attach a spacer to each support to sit on top of the bottom box side, to take the weight of the top box.



6 Insert the top box

Slide the top box between the supports and secure with a nail gun. Line both boxes with weed mat, add potting mix and plant your favourite herbs. ♦



After



Before



EASY *wardrobe revamp*

WORDS AND PHOTOS ZOË MEUNIER

Transform a dated and dysfunctional built-in wardrobe with new sliding doors and simple storage

Not only was this built-in wardrobe outdated and ineffective, with its brassy gold-framed mirrored doors that were stiff and clunky to manoeuvre, it also had minimal internal storage beyond a hanging rod and high shelves.

Temporary measures had been put in place in the form of hanging shelves and old wire drawers, but these were too deep for the wardrobe cavity and had to be accessed sideways, making them highly impractical.

With Matisse, the room's owner,

being a petite five-year-old who couldn't reach the hanging shelves without a stool (and without pulling out all the contents), it was high time for a simple, practical and inexpensive solution.

Help was at hand with the installation of Multistore sliding mirrored doors and door tracks.

At 2010mm high, the doors fit a standard built-in wardrobe opening, and come in three standard widths, although it's also possible to get doors custom built to suit specific needs. Their sliding tracks also come in a variety

of lengths, as well as double or triple track options, and can easily be cut to size with a hacksaw.

Also installed were two four-drawer wardrobe organisers. These easy-to-install flatpack units come in a variety of sizes and configurations, but for this fairly small wardrobe, a four-drawer unit was the perfect fit as it still allowed for ample hanging space above.

Removing the old doors and tracks and replacing them with new ones took less than half an hour, while assembling the two wardrobe organisers was a

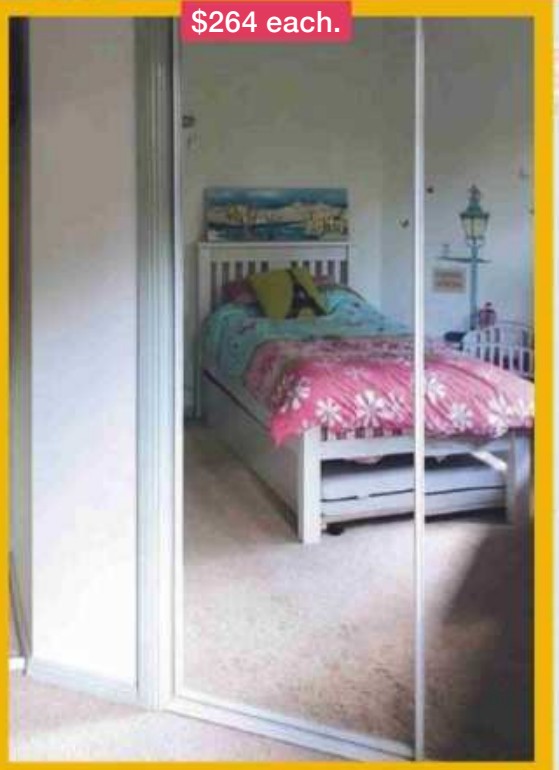
Multistore 1800mm Wardrobe Sliding Two-door Track, \$82.

Replacing the old doors and tracks took less than half an hour

straightforward task following the enclosed instructions. Convincing Matisse to part with some beloved clothes she'd grown out of took a little more time, but the final result was an easy-to-use, stylish and functional new wardrobe space that left everyone wondering why they hadn't put it in sooner. ♦



Multistore 745 x 608 x 430mm Maxi Ultra Wardrobe Organiser, \$264 each.



Multistore 2010 x 810mm Ultra Glide Sliding Wardrobe Mirror Door, \$307 each.



Find it at Bunnings

STORAGE SAVIOURS

There's a perfect wardrobe or storage solution whatever your space

Imagine a wardrobe where you can easily find the outfit you're after and accessories to match, where clothes aren't piled on the floor or fall on you as you open the door. A well-designed and functional wardrobe will make getting dressed in the morning much more relaxed and efficient.

There's a range of wardrobe options to suit the size and look of any room. Choose an open layout – ideal for a walk-in robe – or opt for a freestanding wardrobe, which is perfect for renters,

as it can easily be taken with you when you move. Select a finish to match the style of your home, such as White or Dark Coco.

Maximise storage potential by choosing the right layout for your needs. Customise the interior with gliding drawers, pull-out baskets, hanging rails or deep shelves, which can be adjusted as your requirements change over time.

You'll end up with a smart storage solution that will keep your bedroom space nice and organised. ♦

- 1** Multistore 2000 x 608 x 450mm 2 Shelf and 4 Jumbo Basket Wardrobe Insert, \$511.
- 2** Multistore 2000 x 750 x 450mm White 2 x Hanging Rail Wardrobe Insert, \$274.
- 3** Multistore 2000 x 800 x 450mm Corner Wardrobe Shelving Insert, \$511.
- 4** Multistore 2000 x 608 x 450mm Wardrobe Insert with 4 Adjustable Shelves, \$265.
- 5** Multistore 2000 x 608 x 450mm White Wardrobe Insert with 2 Adjustable Shelves and 4 Jumbo Drawers, \$399.

SOME ADVERTISED PRODUCTS NOT AVAILABLE AT ALL BUNNINGS STORES, BUT MAY BE ORDERED



- 1 StorEase Mini Rail Full Front Basket in White, \$25.
- 2 StorEase Mini Rail Open Front Basket in White, \$20.
- 3 StorEase Mini Rail Clothes Hook, \$5.
- 4 StorEase Mini Rail Cleaning Station in White, \$29.
- 5 Clever Cube 370 x 330 x 330mm Insert in Ember Black, \$9.25 each.
- 6 Multistore 1495 x 608 x 430mm Maxi Ultra H2 Wardrobe Organiser in Dark Coco, \$395.
- 7 Multistore 608 x 550 x 430mm 2 Shelves Wardrobe Organiser in Dark Coco, \$172.
- 8 Multistore 1495 x 430 x 250mm Shoe Tower Wardrobe Organiser in Dark Coco, \$224.
- 9 Multistore 6550 x 608 x 430mm 2 Shelves Wardrobe Organiser in Dark Coco, \$172.

▶ Watch the video
How to install a wardrobe insert unit
at [bunnings.com.au/diy-advice](https://www.bunnings.com.au/diy-advice)



- 1 Bedford 2000 x 1790 x 595mm Three-door Wardrobe Unit, \$335.
- 2 Bedford 593 x 1875 x 35mm Wardrobe Mirror Door, \$148.
- 3 Bedford 1900 x 595 x 35mm Wardrobe White Door, \$113.
- 4 Bedford 2000 x 1200 x 595mm

- Two-door Wardrobe White Unit, \$229.
- 5 Bedford 575 x 445 x 16mm Wardrobe Shelf Unit, \$46.50 for pack of 2.
- 6 Bedford 123mm Wardrobe Solutions Narrow Drawer, \$34.
- 7 Bedford 252mm Wardrobe Solutions Deep Drawer, \$36.



Revamp a
compact laundry
to make the best
use of your space

LAUNDRY MAKEOVER

PROJECT AND PICTURES
STUART SCOTT



This laundry area had been poorly designed. There was no sense of order about its use of space; it was a frustrating area to work in and storage was minimal. But the great news is that fixing a problem area like this needn't be difficult or expensive.

Melamine particle board is readily available, inexpensive and ideal for building new dedicated spaces within an existing cupboard space. But it won't tolerate getting wet, so it was fixed 10mm off the floor, well clear of spills.

We allowed 900 x 600mm for the washing machine and 800 x 600mm for the dryer. Power points were added in these positions and the water supply was moved to suit the new layout. Tradies were called in for this, of course.

While you have the electrician there, consider future-proofing by adding an extra power point in a strategic area, like the roof cavity. Our dryer was ducted to the outside via a simple 100mm flexible duct and vent, but longer distances may require an in-line fan.

Shelves and pull-out baskets were then installed and hooks added to hang awkward items such as the ironing board and vacuum cleaner.

When working in such a confined space, building the various cabinets and

and installing the appliances requires a bit of trial and error and strategic thinking. For example, some assembly was done outside and some inside. Architraves and doorjambs needed to be removed to allow assembled cabinets to be fitted.

Old houses – and quite a few new ones – can be a bit out of plumb here and there, so be aware of this. Allow clearance space so that your cabinets will fit easily with a bit of wriggle room, then screw through packers into the studs to fix in position. This will make your life a lot easier.

For this project, the internal measurement was 1300mm, and the cabinets were built to 1270mm to allow for some significant vagaries in the internal dimensions. Simple trims and gap fillers took care of the reveals and provided a neat professional finish.

Finally, organising all of that storage left enough room to put in a stylish timber benchtop with matching splashback to give the whole area a roomier and more luxurious finish.

Now when those cupboard doors are opened, instead of being confronted with an unruly mess, a well-organised environment is revealed that is a pleasure to work in. ►



Tradies are required for plumbing and electrics – the rest is DIY.



WHAT YOU NEED

- 3600 x 595 x 16mm white melamine shelving x 3
- 2400 x 595 x 16mm white predrilled melamine shelving x 1
- Interbuild 2200 x 600 x 26mm Acacia Laminated Panel
- SpecRite 1800 x 405 x 18mm Acacia Oiled Panel
- SpecRite 1200 x 405 x 18mm Acacia Oiled Panel
- Flexi Storage White Sliding Basket Frame x 4
- Flexi Storage 350mm White Wire Shelf Bracket x 8
- Flexi Storage 762mm White Double Slot Wall Strip x 2
- Flexi Storage 85mm White 1 Runner Mesh Basket x 1
- Flexi Storage 185mm White 2 Runner Mesh Basket x 2
- Flexi Storage 285mm White 3 Runner Mesh Basket x 1
- 10g x 50mm chipboard screws
- 10g x 60mm chipboard screws
- 6g x 25mm timber screws
- 65mm brad nails
- Reinforced 50 x 50 x 20 x 5mm angle brackets
- Circular saw
- Jigsaw
- Clamps
- Straightedge
- Driver/drill or impact driver, drill bits
- Tape measure
- Broad chisel
- Wrecking bar
- Hammer
- Spirit level



Plan ahead

Plan the build and book tradies early so they're not holding up your work while you are waiting for them. It's also smart to think about future-proofing by adding other power or water points for possible applications down the track, such as an outdoor shower, air vents or additional lighting.

CUTTING LIST

UPPER CABINET

PART	SIZE (mm)	NO
Predrilled melamine		
Sides	800 x 595 x 16	3
Melamine		
Top and base	1270 x 595 x 16	2
Back rails	1238 x 120 x 16	2
Shelves	617 x 595 x 16	2

LOWER CABINET

PART	SIZE (mm)	NO
Melamine		
Sides, back and false back	880 x 595 x 16	4
Top and base	1290 x 595 x 16	2

BENCHTOP AND SPLASHBACK

PART	SIZE (mm)	NO
2200 acacia laminated panel		
Benchtop	1300 x 600 x 26	1
1800mm acacia oiled panel		
Splashback rear	595 x 350 x 18	1
1200mm acacia oiled panel		
Splashback sides	595 x 350 x 18	2

1 Remove the existing structure

Demolish and remove the existing structure using a broad chisel, wrecking bar and hammer. Mark the position of the studs and work your leverage over them to avoid breaking the wall sheeting. Use blocks to protect the walls and gain more leverage with the bar. When clear, mark up the walls with the new layout, including dimensions and alterations to services.



SAFETY TIP

Old bathrooms and laundries can be lined with asbestos sheet. If unsure, take precautions and have it checked by a professional.



2 Cut the cabinet components

Clamp each melamine piece to a straightedge, then cut each piece to length using a circular saw. The back rails of the upper cabinet need to be ripped and the centre side needs a 120 x 16mm notch cut at the top and base to allow for the back rails.

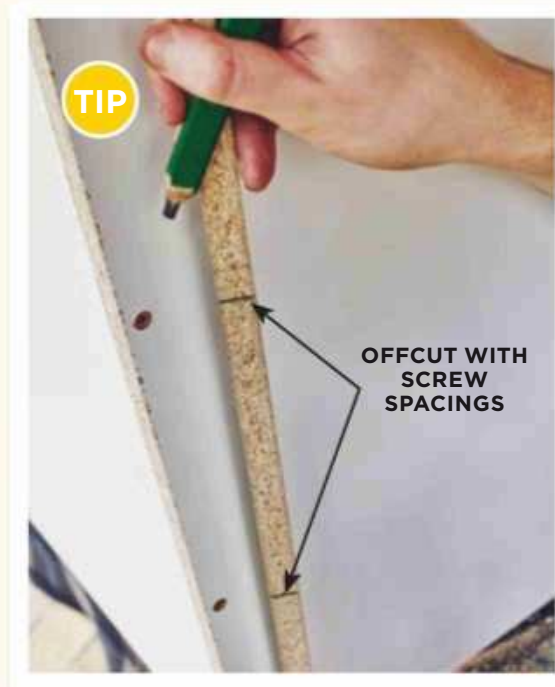
TIP For cleaner cuts, buy a blade with a higher tooth count: 60t, 80t and even 100t are available, and some come with lower hook angles.

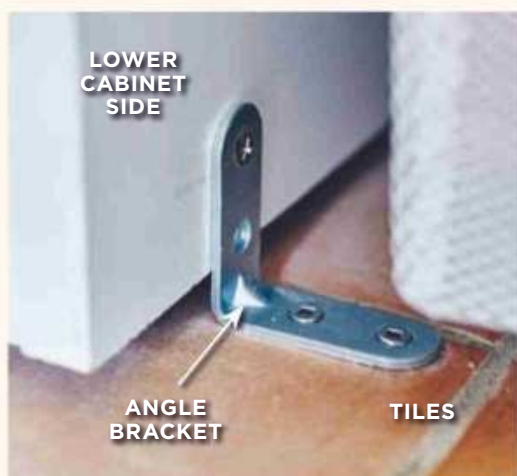


3 Assemble the components

Mark the screw positions and drill 3mm pilot holes. Butt join the components, then, using a driver, secure with 4 of the 50mm screws per join, countersinking the screw heads flush with or just below the surface and keeping the screws perpendicular to the surface. Don't overdrive the screws.

TIP Mark an offcut with the screw spacings so you can quickly transfer these measurements to all the cabinet components. ►





4 Install the cabinets

Pack the lower cabinet in position, ensuring it is level, then secure it to the studs through the back and side with 60mm screws. Secure the sides at the front of the base to the tiles with angle brackets, using a plug and galvanised screws. Secure the upper right side to the studs with angle brackets.

Prop and pack the assembled upper cabinet level in position and secure by screwing through cabinet and packers to studs and rafters.



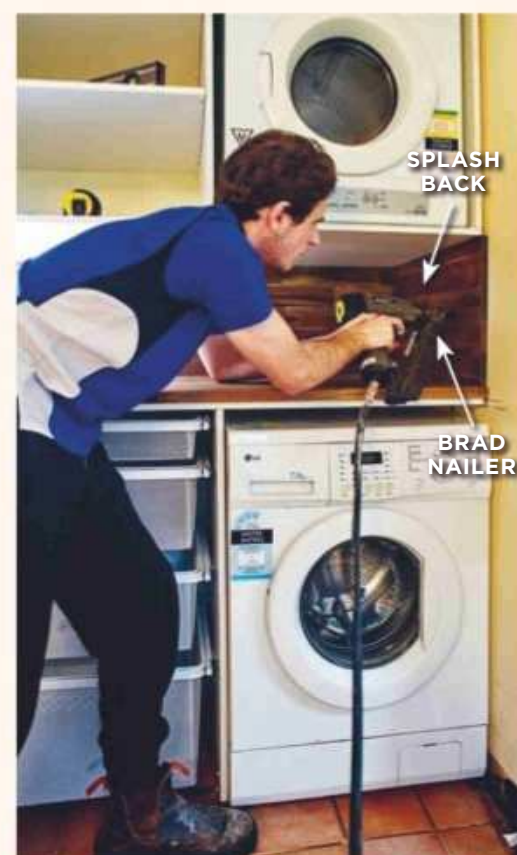
5 Install the pull-out baskets

Secure two vertical battens 475mm from the front of the lower cabinet through the outside of cabinet on the machine side (to conceal the screws). Secure the false back to the battens with 50mm screws. Attach the double slot wall brackets flush to the top and sides. The Flexi Storage system is designed for a slightly wider opening, so this will require a little gentle persuasion when assembling components. Slide in the baskets and ensure smooth movement.



6 Fit the benchtop and splashbacks

Measure the benchtop panel and cut to size using a circular saw. Secure with a 10mm overhang at the front and screw in position from underneath with 25mm timber screws. Cut the splashback rear and sides to sit flush to the wall and secure with brad nails. Trim, fill and paint as necessary for a professional look.



TIP Use a laser measuring device and a carpenter's square to achieve accurate cuts and a neater finish. ❖



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We love our lawns. They are the venue for much of our outdoor recreation. We use them to play with the kids or pets, for relaxation, and as living welcome mats.

As suburban land blocks have become smaller, our outdoor space has becoming even more valuable to us. Which means making the most of our grassed areas.

There are a few misconceptions about lawns: that they take too much time to look after, or that you need to be a fanatic to have a beautiful grassed surface. In fact, caring for a lawn is simple. A small effort invested now to get your lawn up to scratch will reap rewards all the way through summer.

LAWN LIFE

A lush lawn can be a feature of any home – and spring is the time to get it sorted

WORDS AND PICTURES
ADAM WOODHAMS

SPRING LAWN CARE

There are three main objectives when it comes to spring lawn care: repairing winter damage, getting it into condition as fast as possible, and preparing it for the long hot summer ahead.

1 Damage control

No matter where you live there's one simple fact – winter takes a toll on your lawn. The combination of cold, perhaps even frosty, conditions, short daylight hours and winter weeds can leave your lawn looking very lacklustre.

♦ **TIDY UP** Give the lawn a vigorous raking with a spring-tined leaf rake. This will collect loose material like leaves and twigs and it will also strip out dead grass from the turf thatch. You'll be surprised how fresh the lawn will look afterwards.

♦ **TRIM BACK** Prune plants that are reducing the amount of sunlight falling on your lawn. Overhanging greenery is the most common cause of dead or thin areas around the edges of the lawn.

♦ **REJUVENATE** If there are bare patches in high-wear areas, such as at the bottom of stairs, use a garden fork to open up the soil to air and water penetration. Bare patches in the middle of the lawn are probably caused by winter weeds that have now died back, so again, open the soil up gently. A lawn that is thin all over has probably reacted to a chilly winter. In all of these situations you can over-sow with a suitable lawn-seed blend to thicken up your lawn. But make sure you mow first or you will suck up all the seed!

♦ **PATCH IT** If a bare spot is beyond over-sowing, then simply replace it with a roll or two of new turf. ►



PATCH A BARE SPOT



1 Prepare the area

Define the area with a spade and remove the remains of the grass. Use a fork to break up any compacted soil to a depth of at least 5cm. Remove the top 2cm layer of soil, including any roots or rocks, and level off with a rake.



2 Condition the soil

Spread a layer of bagged lawn soil. If the area is high in clay, add some gypsum and coarse washed sand. Bring this to level with the surrounding soil, pressing down to remove any air pockets, and smooth off with a rake.



3 Position the new grass

Lay the new turf, gently walking on it to maximise root contact with the soil. Water in well with a seaweed solution. Keep the area moist, not wet, until new grass starts to knit with the surrounding area. Avoid foot traffic until it's established.

Prune like a pro

The DeWalt Flexvolt brushless chainsaw, \$499, is designed with durability, reliability and efficiency in mind. Its brushless technology makes it lightweight but powerful enough for all your landscaping needs. dewalt.com.au





2 Fast fixes

Get your lawn looking fab fast with these simple fixes.

- ♦ **MOW** Raking the lawn will give it a good tidy-up, but the first mow of spring takes it one step further. It will remove the grass tips browned off from cold conditions and stimulate new growth.
- ♦ **FEED** Fertiliser is essential. Lawns are often very nutrient depleted at this time of year, but a slow-release lawn fertiliser will keep them greening for several months. The average lawn will only take around 10 minutes to feed.

Some hose-on formulations and even fast green-up options will have your lawn looking green in days, not weeks.

- ♦ **SOIL** Don't forget your soil! It is packed full of beneficial microorganisms – everything from earthworms to microbes – that help convert the nutrients from fertiliser into elements which are more easily taken up by the grass. Soil needs feeding, too, so apply an organically fortified product when you feed the lawn or use a hose-on seaweed solution every few weeks.

3 Summer-proofing

Let's face it – you want to spend the summer *enjoying* your lawn, not working on it. Well, that's easy to do if you follow a few simple guidelines now and into the warmer weather.

♦ **FEED, FEED, FEED** Fertilising doesn't just green up the lawn, it builds a healthy root system that is better able to tolerate hot conditions, especially if you're feeding the soil as well. So as things warm up and dry out, your lawn looks better for longer.

♦ **WATER WISELY – PART 1** A quick sprinkle can actually do your lawn more harm than good, as it can become shallow-rooted and more vulnerable to damage from hot, dry conditions. It is better to water less frequently but more deeply. Use a quality sprinkler with a timer on your tap, and run it slowly to allow water to penetrate to a greater depth. Look for a sprinkler that has a large droplet size, as this will provide better distribution and less loss to wind.

♦ **WATER WISELY – PART 2** When soil becomes very dry it can actually repel water. This means that rain and water from sprinklers may just run off and not penetrate into the soil. Luckily, this is easy to overcome. Apply a quality soil wetter over your lawn and water will easily penetrate deep into the soil. This encourages deeper roots, saves water and reduces run-off. It also makes fertilising more efficient as nutrients aren't lost with run-off water. ►

Fertile ground

Richgro Rock Mineral Fertiliser and Soil Improver, \$19.98, is an organic, slow release fertiliser which stimulates microbial activity for highly improved soil health and plant vitality.
richgro.com.au





IRRIGATION CONTROL AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Smart irrigation controllers play an enormous role in helping everyday households save water, while reducing the costs, time and effort spent maintaining residential lawns and garden beds.

PROJECT

Automating Your Watering with a BTX8 Outdoor 8 Zone Controller



STEP 1: Choose an outdoor location to mount your controller, be sure to leave enough space for electrical conduit and connections. Place the box at eye level and screw into a suitable wall or fence.

Tip: It may be easier to take the controller box off the wall while setting up the system. The BTX8 built in transformer takes power from 240v down to a safe low voltage of 24v, which is what the solenoid valves run off.



STEP 2: Strip down the end of a multi-core cable with wire cutters to expose the different colours. Screw each wire into the relevant zone ensuring the black wire is wired into the common terminal, and the red wire into the master terminal. All the other wires can be screwed into the active terminals. Mount the unit back into position.

Tip: Common wire brings power to the whole system. Active wires control each solenoid valve, or zone, you want to activate.



STEP 3: Run the cabling through your garden to the solenoids. Strip it back to expose the different colours before threading them underneath the irrigation box. Connect the black wire to one of the solenoid wires and the colour cables to the other solenoids (doesn't matter which ones) using waterproof Holman gel cap connectors.

Tip: Bury the multi-core cable into the garden once your controller has been set up.



The Australian designed and engineered **BTX8 Outdoor Controller** is the ultimate in sustainable Bluetooth® driven irrigation. Manage how long and often specific zones are watered using the free iGardener™ app on your smartphone. The BTX8 is perfect for state water restrictions, maintaining luscious lawns and pre-scheduling holiday watering.

STEP 4: Download the Holman iGardener™ app. Navigate to Irrigation and press the + button to add your controller. Once your controller is found you are ready to set up your watering schedule. Select 'Zone Management' to begin programming the options to suit your specific gardening requirements.

Tip: Wait until your controller is found. For the security of your watering schedule each unit will only pair with one smartphone.

HOLMAN

For more information
and video resources visit
holmanindustries.com.au/garden-irrigation



\$189

BTX8 Outdoor 8 Zone
Irrigation Controller



\$19.98

25mm Solenoid Valve
with Flow Control



\$26.07

50mm Adjustable
Pop-Up Sprinkler 6 Pack

For the #SMARTGARDENER



Available at
BUNNINGS
warehouse

MOWING TIPS

As spring rolls around, your lawn may not look like it needs a mow but you'll be surprised how much a quick go-over with the mower will freshen it up.

♦ **FIRST TIME, TWO TIMES** To clean the last of the winter debris from your lawn, first run the mower over with the catcher fitted and the height set one or two clicks higher than usual. Follow this with a mower set to mulching mode at the regular height. Think of it as a spring clean.

♦ **DON'T MOW LOW** Longer grass blades can better insulate the roots and the soil. If you scalp your lawn by mowing too low you'll end up with dead patches and give weeds an open door to invade. So what's the right height? Go for 'foot feel'. Take off your shoes and walk around barefoot. You want a lawn that's a little soft but not too springy with grass blades between your toes.

♦ **MOW TO GROW** Mulch-mow over spring and summer. This will help keep your lawn well insulated from temperature extremes and work to retain moisture. Mulch-mowing is also like lightly organically fertilising every time you mow.

DIY TIP

It is better to mow long grass in two or three passes taking a little at a time, with the last pass in mulch-mowing mode.

HOW TO OVER-SOW A THIN LAWN

If your lawn is looking thin all over then the easiest repair technique is to over-sow with a quality lawn seed.

- Select seed that is suitable for your region and situation.
- Look for seed that is blended with starter fertiliser or add a suitable starter fertiliser.
- Don't try to disperse the seed by hand – use a suitable seed spreader.
- Spread seed evenly over the lawn. Walk backwards to keep an eye on coverage as you go.
- Water in immediately and keep the lawn moist, but not wet, until the new seed establishes. In spring this will take between 3–5 weeks.
- Minimise use of the area until the seed is established.
- Mow lightly once the new shoots are clearly above the existing lawn.

A NEW LAWN

When it comes to a major lawn repair, you might find it's more sensible to replace rather than repair. Selecting the right lawn variety is the difference between a good lawn and a great one, so here are a few questions to ask yourself before you begin.

What is your lawn used for? Is it for kids and dogs and backyard footy, or the occasional stroll around? Different lawns tolerate different levels of wear, so it's important that the variety suits your lifestyle.

What are your local conditions?

Do you get frost? Are you near the coast and get salt spray? Are your summers long, hot and dry or your winters cold and wet? These climatic factors need to be considered from the start.

What are your garden conditions?

Is your garden sunny, shady or a bit in-between? Is your soil clay-based, sandy or very shallow? Is the area sloping or flat? How is the drainage? Again, these are deciding issues for selecting a suitable lawn variety and are also indicators of any preparation that may be required before laying new turf.

TIP Remember that the conditions can vary even within your property. Just because a variety performs well out the front, there's no guarantee that it will do the same at the back.



Lawn varieties

This choice used to be pretty simple – a decision between buffalo, kikuyu, couch or fescue. These days the species are still generally the same, but breeding and selection has turned turf production into a fine art. While varieties of soft-leafed buffalo such as Sir Walter and Palmetto remain very popular choices, there are some new kids on the block worth looking at.

Sir Grange is a new form of the fine-leafed grass zoysia. It has very low-maintenance demands and extremely good wear resistance, making it an excellent lawn for a family. It is also highly drought-resistant and 75% shade tolerant.

TifTuf is new hybrid Bermuda grass. It is fine-leafed, making it nice and soft underfoot, yet it's so tough that it is used on sports fields. It has excellent dry tolerance, can take up to 50% shade, and is also low maintenance, meaning it needs less mowing.

For more information on lawn varieties, head to the Lawn Solutions Australia website: lawnsolutionsaustralia.com.au. ►





Did you know?

Grass clippings left on your lawn after mulch-mowing act as a natural fertiliser. Just make sure the pieces are small so they can readily decompose.

MOWER POWER

It wasn't so long ago that the only way to power your mower was with a noisy, smoky two-stroke engine. Today you'll be hard-pushed to find one, as most now utilise more powerful four-stroke engines and, increasingly, super-quiet and efficient battery-driven power plants.



Today's battery mowers compare in price and power to petrol-driven machines

Why go for battery?

Battery mowers are now comparable in price, and in some cases power, to petrol-driven machines. This means that for the average homeowner they are now a viable and smart option. So what are some of the other benefits of a battery-powered mower?

- There is no refilling with flammable fuel, or worry about storing petrol tins.
- It starts at the flick of a switch or press of a button.
- It's generally lighter in weight so easier to manoeuvre, handle and store.
- Storage is more convenient – you can stand it on end, lay it sideways, even hang it up as you don't have to worry about fuel leakage.
- Maintenance requirements are much lower – no spark plugs, air or fuel filters that need regular replacement. Just keep them clean and replace the blades.
- Lower emissions all-round – most are quieter, making them more

comfortable to use and less annoying for neighbours. Plus there's no smoke or fumes.

- It has massively lower levels of vibration so it's not as tiring.
- Some are available as 'skin' only so you can use your existing compatible batteries or only buy the batteries that you require. ►



PICTURE (TOP) GETTY IMAGES

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ADAM'S PICKS



To keep your mower in top condition, clean it thoroughly at least twice a year

With its rugged finish, this brushless mower looks built for work. Front and rear handles make it easy to move around, plus it has an 18" cutting capacity and a fully foldable handle to make it easy to store upright.



DeWalt 18V brushless mower, \$799.
dewalt.com.au

With futuristic looks, this mower is packed with high-tech and handy features. Its 14" cut and 30-minute runtime make it ideal for small to medium-sized lawns, plus its batteries can be shared across the extensive One+ power tool range, making it even more flexible and convenient.

Ryobi One+ 18V mower, \$399.
ryobi.com.au



With a weight of just 12kg and a cutting width of 13", this twin-battery mower is perfect for smaller lawns, and the batteries are also compatible with other tools in the Power X Change range.

Ozito 18V Power X Change mower, \$249.
ozito.com.au



This self-propelled mower takes battery mowing to new levels of comfort and convenience. The wide 20" cut gets the lawn done faster, and as it's self-propelled it takes the hard work out of pushing a mower.

Ryobi 36V self-propelled mower, \$749.
ryobi.com.au



The AEG 58V brushless mower is a top-shelf mower with a host of features – 18" cut, steel deck, 50L catcher and smart load-sensing technology, so power is conserved by reducing the output when the blade-load is lower.

AEG 58V brushless mower, \$399.
aegpowertools.com.au



This compact powerhouse mower gives you premium quality for the smaller lawn. Designed for Australian conditions, it boasts features such as a 16" cut, professional-style fabric-sided catcher and a convenient, balanced carry handle.

Victa V-Force 40V mower, \$499.
victa.com.au



With the features and power of a petrol motor, this is perfect for even larger lawns. The 21" cut gets through the grass fast and the pressed steel deck is ideal for Australian conditions. It comes with two batteries, which take 30 minutes to charge, so you can mow non-stop. ❖

Victa 82V mower, \$799.
victa.com.au



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HOLD YOUR Water

Capture rainwater at your place to save money, your garden and even the planet

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

In the last few generations our attitude to rainwater has evolved. As urbanisation accelerated across Australia, water was seen as a nuisance to be diverted rather than an asset to be preserved. Vast stormwater systems were installed to ensure water was disposed of as efficiently as possible. But rewind back to the 1950s and beyond: most homes had water storage tanks, as this free bounty was treasured and used both outdoors and in.

Things have changed dramatically in the last decade. Rainwater tanks are a standard part of most new builds and are often a condition of approval in larger renovations, especially where roof area is being increased. We've also become smarter with how we use water.

Here's how to get water-smart at your place, whether it's for a retro-fit or a new build.

HOW MUCH WATER?

You may be surprised at just how much water can be collected from the roof of your home. In a perfect situation of 100% collection and capture, 1mm of rain on 1sqm of roof equals 1L of water. In a real-world system you can obviously never have 100% capture, as you'll lose water to over-splash on gutters and the like, but the volume of water that may be captured and stored can be enormous.

As an example: if you have 100sqm of connectable roof (about the size of a modest two-bedroom home) and your average rainfall is 750mm (around Melbourne's annual amount), you have 75,000L of water falling on your roof every year. Capturing just 75% of this would give you over 56,000L of water for use – enough to fill an average-size backyard swimming pool. ►





The benefits of capturing and storing rainwater extend beyond the garden.

Did you know

All tank openings must be suitably sealed by screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering.

HOW CAN I USE HARVESTED WATER?

Your stored water can be used to:

- Water the garden
- Wash cars, caravans and boats
- Top up the pool
- Supply the washing machine
- Supply toilets
- Provide drinking water when filtered (check with your local water authority or Council).

WHAT YOU NEED

A rainwater harvesting system uses your roof gutters and downpipes to control the flow of water. Pipes are then added to divert the water to a tank or tanks where it's stored for later use.

All collection systems should be fitted with some form of 'first-flush diversion' device. This is a component situated between the roof output and the tank input. It will take the first run of water from your roof and direct it away from the tank to prevent leaves, dirt, debris and any other unwanted material from entering your tank and contaminating your tank water or catching in your pump device.

An overflow system should connect your tanks to the stormwater or a

suitable discharge point to prevent overflows around the tank.

In most cases, a demand pump is connected to the tank to provide a normal level of water pressure to the taps – it stays on standby and only turns on when a tap is opened. If stored water is being used for essential applications such as supplying toilets or the washing machine, then the pump will also be connected to the mains water supply when available. If the tank comes close to empty, the pump will automatically switch to mains water.

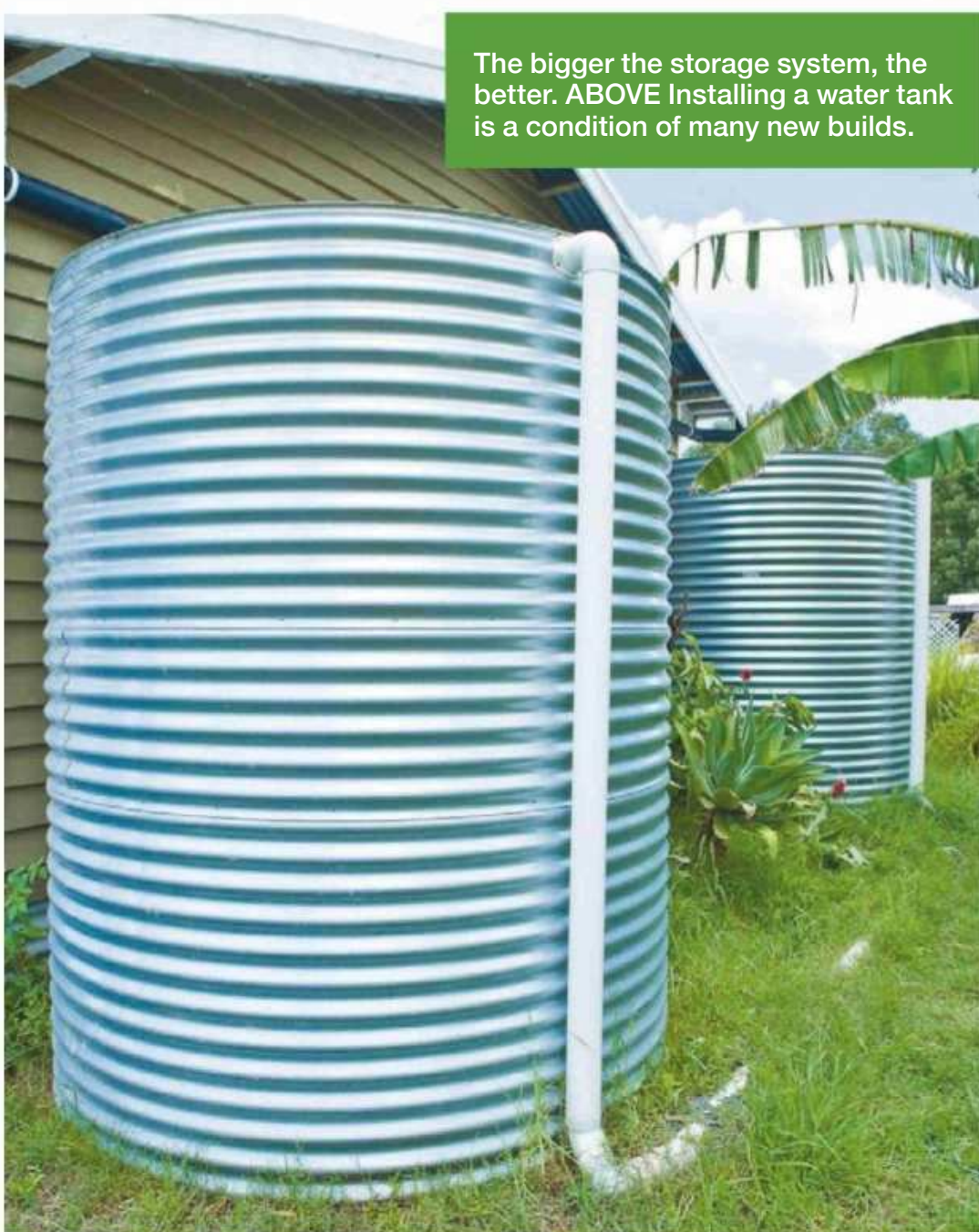
The opening of all tanks must be suitably sealed by screens to prevent mosquitoes and other nuisance insects from entering.

HOW BIG A TANK?

Rain doesn't fall regularly throughout the year, which means the best system is one that can handle big downpours and store enough water to see you through dry times. As a rule of thumb, the bigger the storage system the better.

Tanks should be the largest possible size that still suits your budget and any physical or aesthetic restrictions.

- If only used for garden and occasional other outdoor uses, 5000L is considered the minimum.
- If using indoors too, then 10,000L would be the minimum capacity.
- A smaller tank, such as 1000 or 2000L, would be suitable if you only needed to water one area of your garden, such as a vegie patch.



The bigger the storage system, the better. ABOVE Installing a water tank is a condition of many new builds.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Capturing and using rainwater has many sustainable advantages. Some are within your property, others are part of a bigger picture.

Having a quality water storage and supply system means you will be less reliant on mains or town supply. This saves you money, especially as water supply costs will only increase.

It also decreases the burden on local infrastructure – lower water demands and lower use of stormwater systems.

In our suburbs, stormwater is generally channelled into pipes and then rushes into local creeks at high velocity. This has the potential to cause serious damage to fragile zones and can contribute to flash-flooding. By capturing water you're helping to reduce this damaging environmental impact.

You'll be able to water during times of water restrictions, so your garden remains a green oasis when all around is suffering. This means your garden is more likely to provide food, water and shelter for local wildlife and your home will stay cooler thanks to the consistent vegetation cover.

TANK LOCATION

Here are some handy figures when you are thinking about adding water tanks:

- 1000L of water is 1cbm in volume.
- This weighs 1 tonne.
- This means that a 10,000L tank needs over 10cbm of space and a base capable of carrying a variable load of more than 10 tonnes.

For this reason, a tank can't be placed just anywhere. It needs a base that is consistently firm, stable and level across the entire area.

A gravel base needs to have solid compacted soil beneath it.

Concrete bases need to be suitably reinforced and at least 75mm thick.

A base of premade concrete flags must sit on compacted ground as well as a layer of compressed road base or suitable substrate, just as you would for a paved driveway. ►

CAN I INSTALL MY OWN TANK?

A moderately handy person should be able to prepare a site and position a steel or poly tank without any major problems, but talk first with your plumber to make sure your connections will be in the correct positions.

But, when it comes to installing and hooking up the collection and input pipes, this has to be done by a suitably qualified person.

Connecting your system to the town water and plumbing into a house connection can also only legally be done by a licenced plumber.

Any wiring required to connect the pump will need a licensed electrician.



A charged-line connection system runs pipes underground. ABOVE The base must be stable and level.

TANK CONNECTIONS

When your tank is in position, it will always need to have its maximum fill line lower than the gutter height so that water can always flow into it.

There are two main ways your tank can be plumbed to your gutters.

- Gravity-fed systems use exposed pipes that are connected via a system that has a fall towards the tank, so water naturally flows to the tank.
- Charged-line systems have pipes that drop down like regular downpipes but are generally run underground before rising up again at the tank input. Part of the underground section remains filled with water, so that when the next run of water arrives, it pushes this water onwards and then upwards. The pipes are therefore always 'charged'.

At the side of a house, this looks like a conventional downpipe system connected to stormwater, and therefore a lot easier on the eye.

TANK MATERIALS

Not so long ago the only choice you had to make when choosing a water tank was its capacity – its material was galvanised steel, corrugated and round.

How times have changed. Today's tanks are available in designer colours, shapes and capacities to suit every conceivable need. You'll find they're made from a few different materials, too.

Steel is still the most popular choice for tanks as corrugated steel is robust and reliable. But today's steel tanks are a far cry from the old galvanised ones. They can be supplied in a large variety of colours from the Colorbond range, so they can be colour matched to roofing, gutters and downpipes or other decor schemes.

Steel tanks are also available in standard and designer profiles as well as different sizes to suit space restrictions, whether to complement the house design or to just disappear into the background. Custom-sized tanks can also be ordered from many manufacturers. Quality steel tanks have a food-grade lining so they are safe for drinking water. And you can, of course, still get them in a classic galvanised finish.

Poly tanks are made from tough, UV-stabilised, food-grade polyethylene. They are lightweight and easy to install. You'll find them available in a huge range of colours and in a broad selection of sizes and shapes. They are also readily and economically available in very large capacities, such as 50,000L. However, customisation options (beyond colour) are very limited.

Concrete tanks are most often used for in-ground installations. These tanks are extremely long-lasting and tough. Owing to the heavy equipment involved to install them, they are generally installed at house construction time rather than as a retro-fitting project. ♦

Did you know?

Steel is still the most popular choice for tanks as it is the most robust and reliable material.

Water Management Solutions
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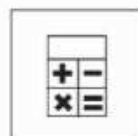
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Light up the night

Bring your yard to life after the sun sets with clever outdoor lighting design ►

PICTURE FLUID LANDSCAPE DESIGN/BLUE POPPY PHOTOGRAPHY



Light is organised

OSRAM LED T8 tubes

As important as storage, LIGHT is crucial for staying organised and keeping spaces like the garage functional. OSRAM LED T8 tubes are the quick and easy alternative to T8 fluorescent tubes.

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As the days get longer and the weather turns balmy, we're starting to enjoy our outdoor spaces with greater frequency. A strategically illuminated backyard, balcony or deck is not only much more inviting and aesthetically pleasing, it's also much safer and makes for a more secure home.

New technological advances mean the range of outdoor lighting has never been greater, as smartphone-powered LED systems and solar options offer user-friendly methods to transform your dark yard into a beautifully lit, entertainer's paradise.

All in the planning

When starting an outdoor lighting design from scratch, careful and proper planning is essential.

'Always map out a plan for your garden before you start, ensuring that key features are highlighted, and important pathways are well lit,' says Mark Harries, lighting expert at Holman. 'Utilise path lights along walkways, and deck lights are the perfect option for patios or staircases.'

Mark advises that special consideration be given to the positioning of lights to achieve the desired mood and practicalities.

'Point spotlights away from people's eyes, so they reflect off a wall or a tree and bring features to life. Make use of highly reflective surfaces such as painted walls so that the

maximum amount of light is dispersed.

'Position your lights to deliver soft lighting across the area where people will gather. You may also choose to concentrate light on any working area, such as the barbecue or where people will be eating.'

SAFETY TIP

While solar lights and 12V lights can be installed DIY, 240V lights must be installed by a licensed electrician.

Get smart

Like many products, outdoor lights have embraced the tech age, with Bluetooth technology allowing many new lighting systems to be powered remotely from a smartphone app.

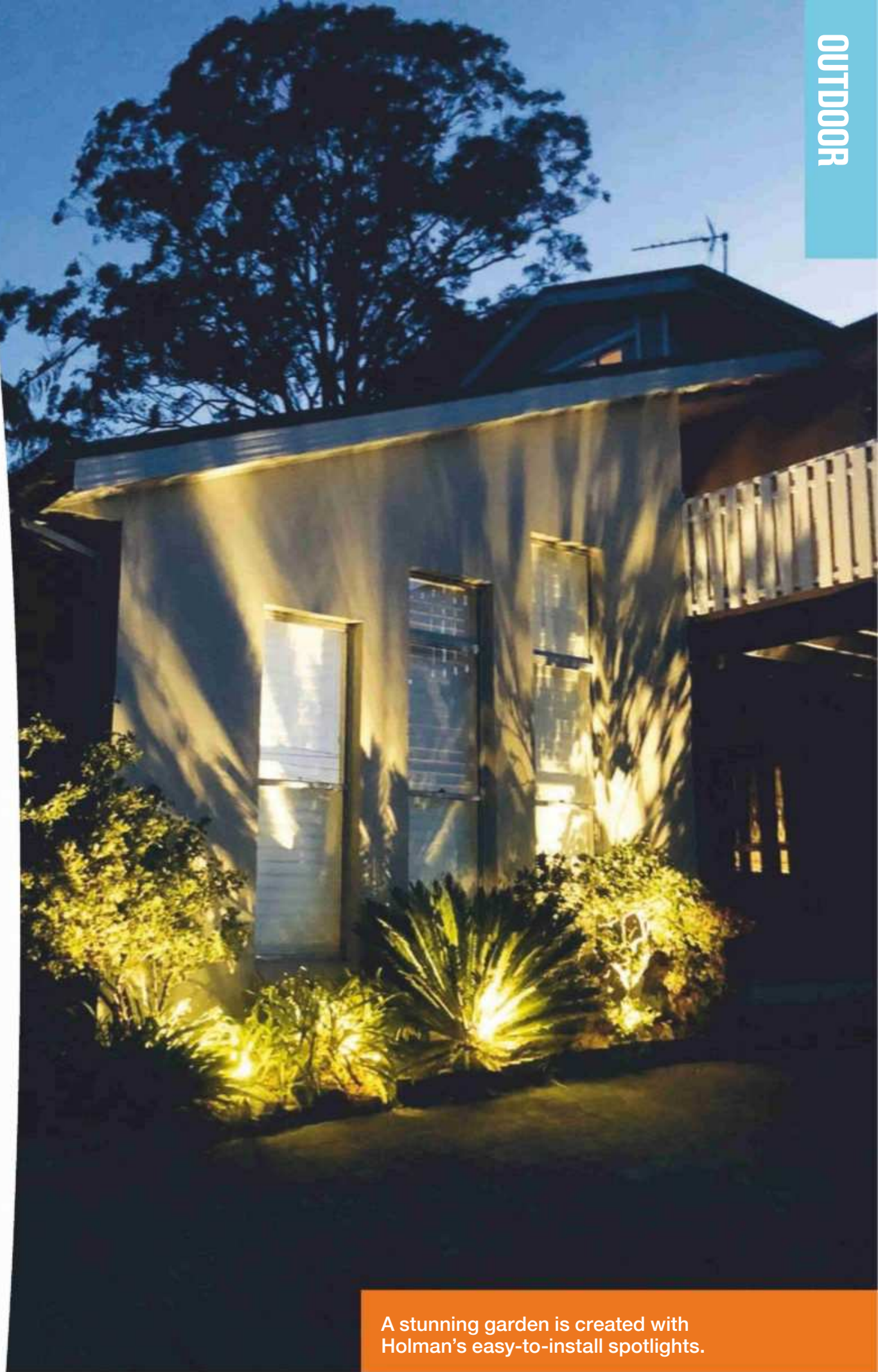
‘Holman’s smartphone app enables you to complete all the programming from your smartphone such as setting a timer, saving favourite colours and creating personalised lighting scenes,’ says Mark. ‘Great new features are added to the app with updates on an ongoing basis.’



Spotlight on style

To illuminate outdoor features, use a 12V lighting system to strategically position lights around your yard.

A brilliant way to get started is with the Holman Spotlight Starter Kit, (\$190, holmanindustries.com.au). With an IP67 water-resistance rating, it includes four warm white spotlights, cables and a Bluetooth Lightsource controller. As shown in the pictures below, setup involves simply connecting the spotlights to the SAFE-T cable system, downloading the iGardener app on your phone and attaching the stakes into the ground where desired. The results are nothing short of dramatic. ►

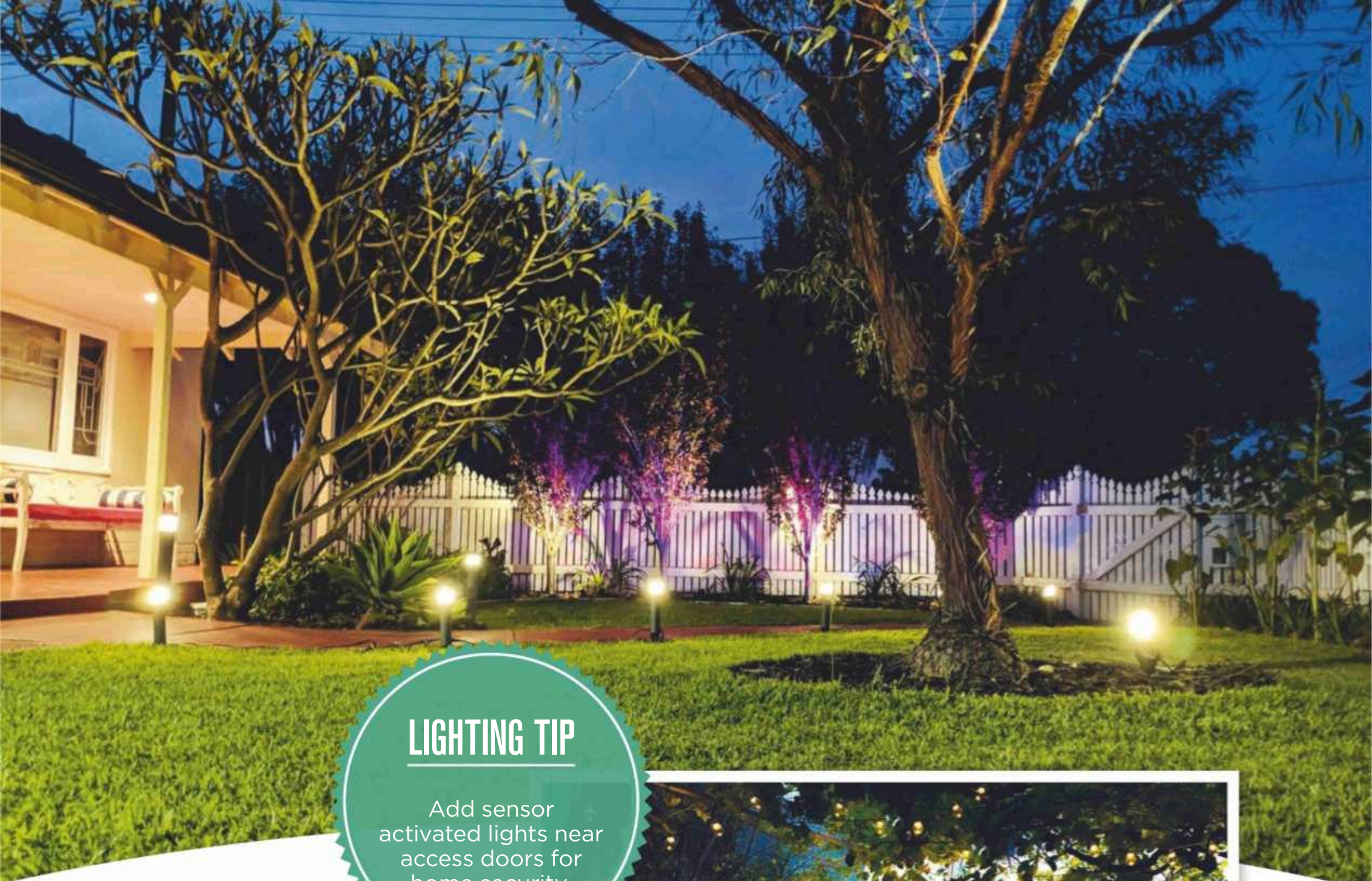


A stunning garden is created with Holman’s easy-to-install spotlights.



Holman Spotlight Starter Kit, \$190. holmanindustries.com.au





LIGHTING TIP

Add sensor activated lights near access doors for home security.

Lighting types

For spaces that have multiple uses, consider light layering. This means you'll be able to easily change your lighting from practical to atmospheric with the flick of a switch. Whatever lighting style or mood you're after, they will be a combination of three different types – ambient, task or accent.

- ◆ **AMBIENT LIGHTING** should illuminate the entire space. In an outdoor area this could include a ceiling light, the light from a ceiling fan, a large spotlight, several downlights or well-spaced wall lights.

- ◆ **TASK LIGHTING** does just what its name suggests – it illuminates areas where you are performing a specific task. For example, this may be a clip-on barbecue light, downlights above a servery or a pendant hanging over an outdoor dining table.

- ◆ **ACCENT LIGHTING** provides a bit of drama and interest. These lights highlight the features that you want

to stand out and can make a space feel warm and inviting.

When creating accent lighting, look for beautiful trees that can be uplit, areas of lush green or colourful foliage, or features of interest such as a sculpture, fountain or pond that can be highlighted with spotlights.

Colour your world

When choosing your lighting scheme, don't limit your colour palette to various shades of white. Coloured lights are an effective way to create different effects

and moods in your yard. Yellows and reds add warmth, green boosts the colour of your plants, and white or blue can make an area seem fresh and cool.

'White lights are the best option for visibility, and coloured lights are best for adding character,' says Holman's Mark. 'Our coloured lights have a red, green and blue LED, which means they can make any colour on the spectrum. Plus, the app has a great selection of pre-programmed special effects to make the lights change over time. The possibilities are endless.'



Divine decks

Decks are hubs for entertaining and relaxing, which means suitable lighting is essential to continue enjoying your deck after dark. For a professional-looking finish, install deck lights underneath railings or in the decking boards.

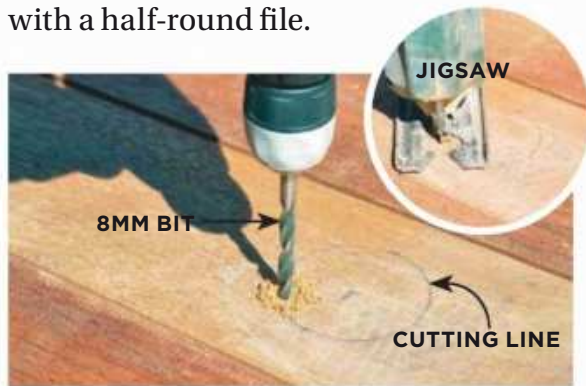
Fitting deck lights

These deck lights are powered by a solar panel, although the method of installation is similar for all deck lights.

1 Mark the setout by positioning the solar lights along the deck in the centre of the board at equal intervals, then draw around the base of each light.



2 Cut the hole by drilling a starter hole in the deck with an 8mm bit, then cutting along the line with a jigsaw. Clean up any rough edges with a half-round file.



3 Switch on the lights by pushing the button underneath, then slot them into the holes. The sensor will turn on the lights automatically at night.



DEALING WITH MOISTURE

Factor in the elements when working with lights outside.

♦ **OUTDOOR BULBS** sometimes burst because of moisture or changes in temperature. Turn off power at the main switchboard, using a circuit tester to check.

To remove the bulb from the light, reach into the metal base with needle-nose pliers and open them as fully as possible, twisting to remove the bulb.

♦ **EXTENSION CORDS** for outdoor use are well-insulated and waterproof but the socket is not. It is essential to waterproof the

connection between the plug and socket for safety.

To waterproof where the two lines connect, the easiest option is to encase the plug and socket in a box designed to house and safely insulate the connection.

♦ **CHECK THE IP RATING** of your outdoor lighting. The first digit in an IP rating refers to how dustproof a fitting is; the second digit refers to how waterproof a fitting is. High-end outdoor lighting will be IP rated 67 or 68, however a rating of 44 will be suitable for general outdoor use though preferably not exposed directly to heavy rain. ♦



SHINE A LIGHT ON SMART SAVINGS

Choosing LED lights is a wise investment. These Osram 10W 240V 800lm Daylight LED Flood Lights, \$39, offer energy savings of up to 90% compared to halogen lamp flood lights, are IP65 rated for outdoor use and are impact resistant.

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What's new

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Create smoky barbecue flavours cooking with wood pellets in a Pit Boss Pellet Grill & Smoker, \$699.



Store all your gardening tools and equipment in a lockable Lifetime Vertical Shed, \$399.



Enjoy outdoor barbecuing with friends and family using a Matador Radiant Kettle Barbecue, \$299.



Ensure your deck boards stay in perfect line using Macsim 4mm Deck Spacers, \$9.50 for a pack of 100.

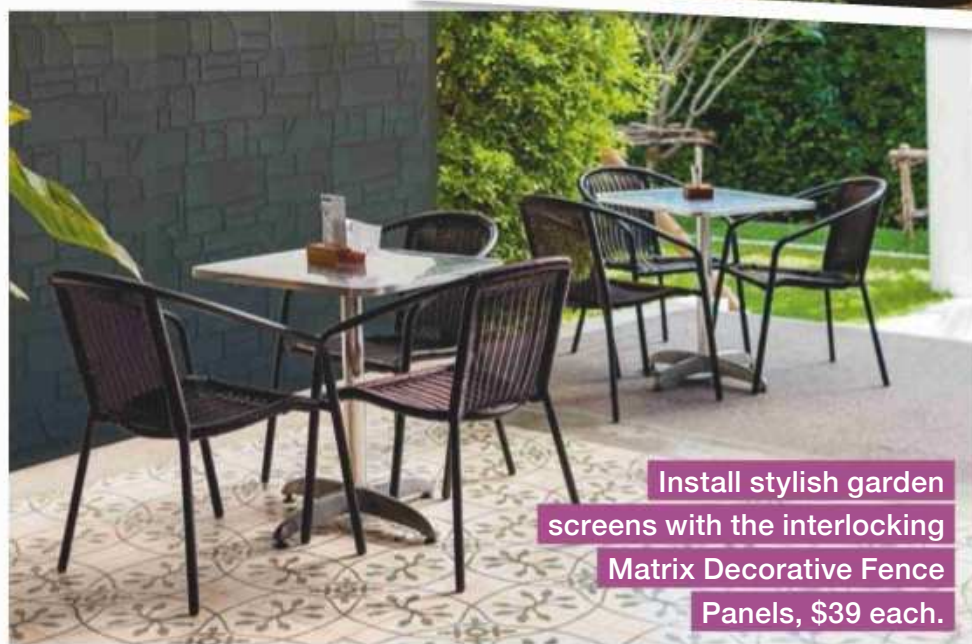
Build an outdoor deck with Macsim Torx Drive Stainless Steel 10G-10 X 50mm Decking Screws, \$46 for pack of 500.



Boost soil and lawn health with Munns Professional Organic Lawn Fertiliser, \$23.98 for 5kg.



Create a feature space in your garden using a Tuscan Path 1800 x 900mm Moroccan Screen Panel, \$99. Other patterns also available.

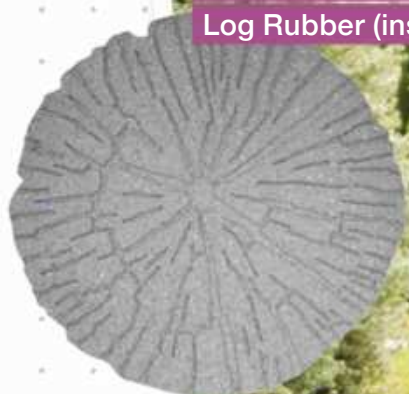


Install stylish garden screens with the interlocking Matrix Decorative Fence Panels, \$39 each.

Make a garden walkway with a Tuscan Path 450 x 450mm River Pebble Rubber Stepping Stone, \$15.98. Other designs include Butterfly Rubber, Geo Rubber and Cracked Log Rubber (inset). ❖



Control multiple garden insect pests with Baythroid Advanced Insect Killer for Gardens, \$24.98 for 50ml concentrate.



Decorate pathways and gardens with the Verve Pebble LED Solar Decorative Light, \$24.90 for set of 5.



Light up your entrances and patios at night with a Verve Avon Solar LED Wall Light, \$19.90.



Prevent falling or tripping at night by installing Carmi 5 Lumens LED Solar Set of Lights, \$12.90 for pack of 4.



Use sunlight to power these Verve LED solar lights:

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2. Kesi Vintage Globe LED Solar Decorative Light, \$12.90.
3. Kola Vintage Globe LED Solar Decorative Light, \$12.90.
4. Koba Vintage Globe LED Solar Decorative Light, \$14.90. ❖

What's trending

Workshop Talk & Tips

Join the discussion



WHAT IS THE BEST D.I.Y ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

'Measure twice. Cut once. I've learned this the hard way. A few times.' @She_Skills

'Wrap paintbrushes in plastic cling wrap between coats rather than washing in water.' @Kermit

'This is a good one I reckon. If you've ever stripped a screw, try using a rubber band for grip.' @MartyH

WORKSHOP MEMBER PROFILE

'As a kid I was always tinkering, trying to see how things worked,' recalls Workshop member Ron Rowe. 'I guess I am lucky - I was given the chance to develop mechanical skills and given formal training.'

Ron left school and started working at just 14, performing the menial task of gluing sponges together for just \$15 a week. But, fortunately, he soon got the opportunity to learn mechanical engineering and gain 'interesting knowledge and skills'.

Ron would later go on to have a career in the army, study electrical/electronic design, and then start sharing all he knew as a teacher.

While now 68 and retired, Ron still loves learning. 'I love building on my knowledge and skills. Most mechanical engineers I know can turn their hand to just about any task given.'

These days Ron spends as much time as possible in his well-equipped



workshop at his home in the north-east suburbs of Melbourne. He's also frequently found at the local Men's Shed where he's been developing his woodworking skills.

Examples of the beautiful handiwork Ron has shared with the Workshop community include a wooden scooter, rocking horse, student desk and wedding wagon. Bigger projects he has tackled include a patio and a Japanese-style garden bridge he built in his backyard.

SHARE YOUR PICS



@gwizard



@Leon3758



@Wayne

PICTURE (TOP) GETTY IMAGES



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.

MAKE A HOOP CHANDELIER

Find it at Bunnings

This DIY light looks great during the day and magical at night. All it takes to build is a length of irrigation tube, some rope, fairy lights and adhesives – all bought inexpensively from Bunnings. It throws a soft, gentle radiant glow that is perfect for moody verandahs or outdoor barbecue areas.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Scissors, duct tape
- Fairy lights and batteries
- Glue, glue gun
- Irrigation tube
- Rope
- S hook

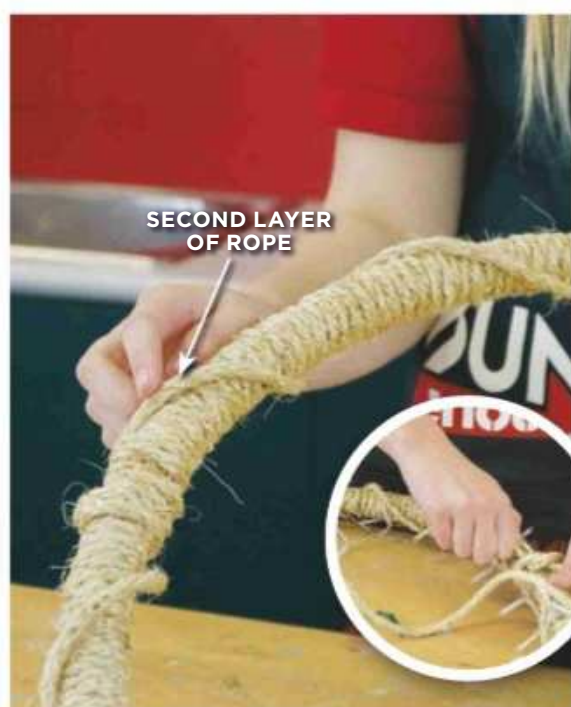


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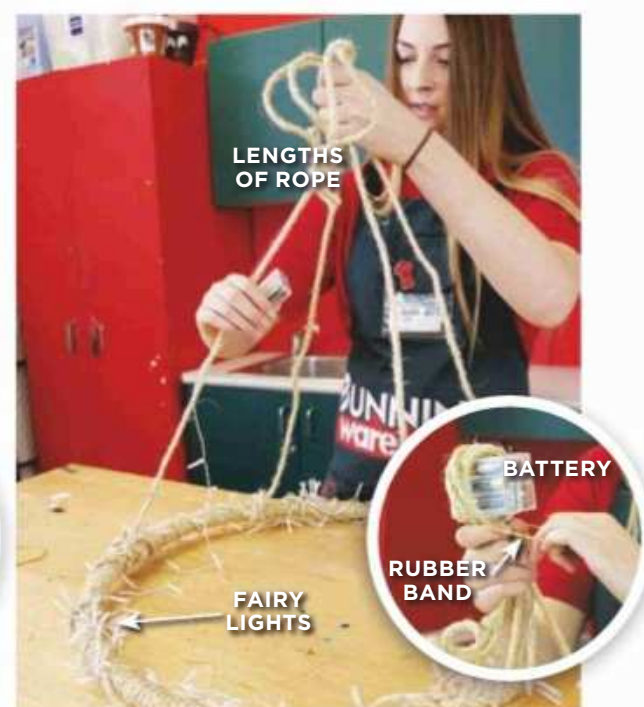
1 Prepare the tube

Cut the irrigation tube to around 1.8m in length. Join the ends to create a ring using duct tape. Then bind the tube with rope in an even progression until you have wrapped the rope all the way around the hoop, using spots of glue to fasten the rope to the tube.



2 Decorate the chandelier

Add a second decorative layer of rope, adding detail and variety. Prepare four even lengths of rope, each around 1.5m long. Tie the lengths of rope to the hoop, spacing them as evenly as possible so your chandelier will be level when hung.



3 Add the lights

Drape your fairy lights over the hoop and around the rope ties in an attractive way. Loop the top of the rope around the battery pack and secure it with a rubber band. Then simply slide on the S hook through the rope end and hang the chandelier. ♦

Handyman BUYER'S GUIDE

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

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This Month

It's time to get to work planting and maintaining the spring backyard

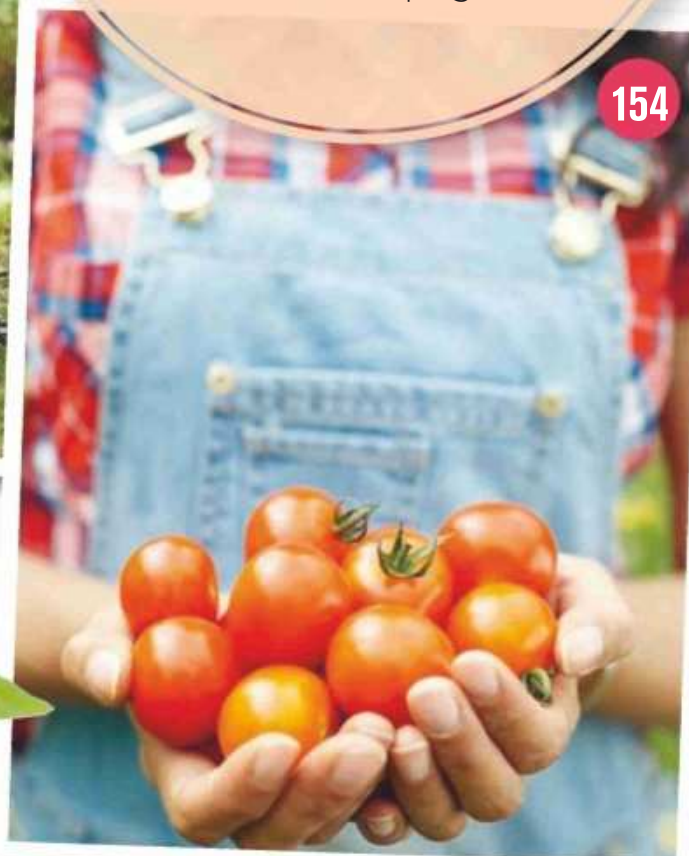
143



Do now

- ◆ **KEEP** your lawn looking trim and tidy with our guide to trimmers and edgers, page 143.
- ◆ **CREATE** a stunning foliage garden with the perfect layering of lovely leaves, page 149.
- ◆ **PLANT** juicy tomatoes to enjoy in healthy salads or as a snack, page 154.

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149



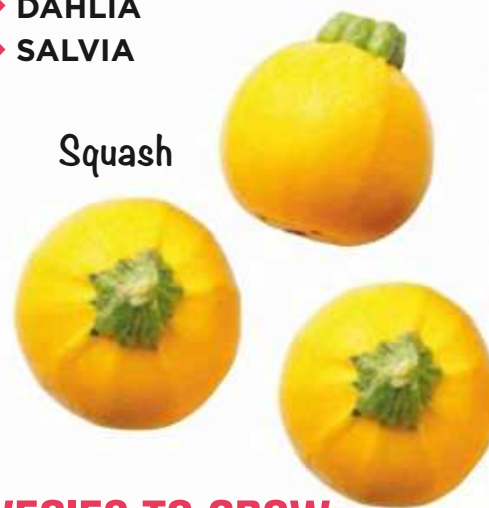
Dahlia

FLOWERS TO SOW

Grow these plants for a display of flowers from just 12 weeks.

- ◆ **AGERATUM**
- ◆ **CELOSIA**
- ◆ **MARIGOLD**
- ◆ **DAHLIA**
- ◆ **SALVIA**

Squash



VEGIES TO GROW

Add these to your vegetable patch for bountiful crops from early summer.

- ◆ **CLIMBING BEANS**
- ◆ **RADISH**
- ◆ **CUCUMBERS**
- ◆ **SQUASH**
- ◆ **ZUCCHINI**





Hydrangea 'Magical Revolution'



WHAT'S IN COLOUR

Nothing like your average hydrangea, the beautiful 'Magical Revolution' is a game-changing flower that offers five months of continuous flowering – one of the longest flowering periods of any on the market.

In spring, the tight flower buds start to unfurl their first flush of colour – either blue or pink depending on the soil pH. As the weather gets warmer, the flowers begin a magical colour transformation through to red, creating a stunning display perfectly timed for Christmas. As summer gives way to autumn, the flowers transform again into a gorgeous deep burgundy.

'Magical Revolution' has compact and robust stems that bear flowers close to the foliage, making a neat and shapely plant, well suited to patio pots, small gardens and path edges.

Bring the whole plant indoors as the perfect table-topper for summer entertaining and enjoy watching the colour change day by day. When flowering has finished in autumn, place the plant outside for winter to give it some cold nights and set the whole cycle going again for the following year.

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



BOOK CLUB

Slow Down And Grow Something (Murdoch Books, \$40) offers a blueprint for growing nourishing, sustainable food right in the heart of the city, according to horticulturalist and Urban Grower founder Byron Smith and cook Tess Robinson.

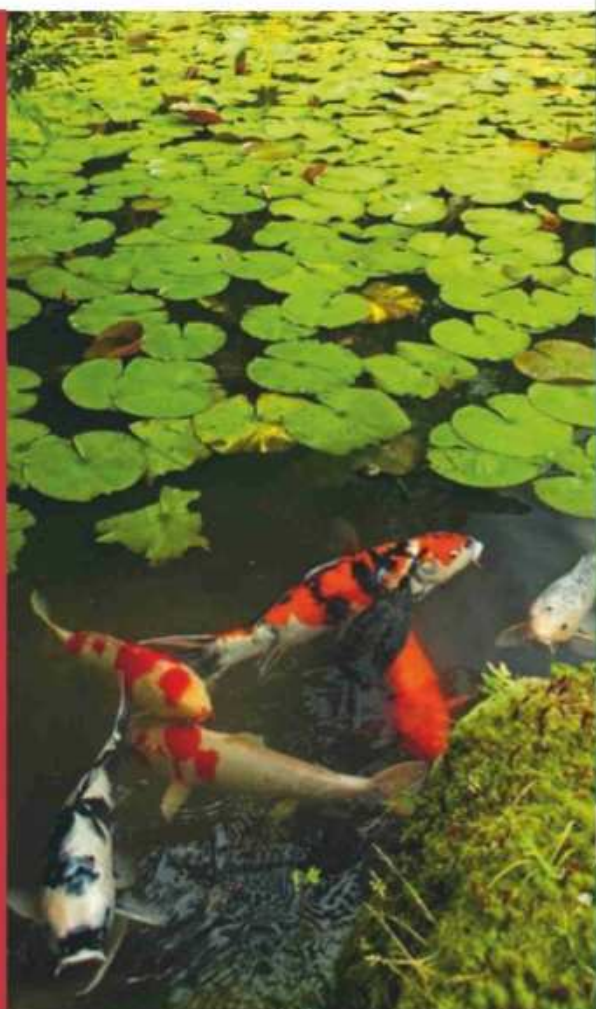
From cultivating edibles from seed or seedling, or raising chickens and keeping bees, to navigating delicate microclimates and balancing biodiversity, this book shows you how to nurture and harvest green space of any size while living the dream of a back-to-nature lifestyle at a relaxed pace.

Stylishly photographed and jam-packed with recipes, expert advice and a seasonal growing guide, one passion clearly shines in this book: now is the right time to go slow and grow. ►

TO-DO LIST

Here are some jobs to get cracking onto this month.

- ◆ **TAKE** leaf or stem cuttings from cacti and succulents and pot them up.
- ◆ **SUPPORT** tall perennials by staking them and also tie in climbing plants.
- ◆ **CLEAN** ponds of weed.
- ◆ **KEEP** vegetable beds regularly weeded and mulch ready for warmer weather.
- ◆ **APPLY** a soil wetter to established beds.
- ◆ **DIVIDE** and re-pot cymbidium orchids.
- ◆ **CHECK** ornamental plants for pests and use a spray to treat.
- ◆ **AERATE** around grass roots in lawns by spiking with a fork.





THINNING OUTDOOR SEEDLINGS

Edibles and annuals planted directly into beds need thinning when the seedlings are about 30mm high to leave space for the remaining young plants to develop.

1 PULL UP surplus seedlings, pressing firmly with your fingers around the seedlings to be retained so they are not disturbed.

2 DESTROY THINNEd surplus seedlings because they can attract pests and cause diseases to spread in the garden bed.

3 THIN ANNUALS again when they are large enough to handle using a seed label or kitchen fork. Water well after thinning.



TIP

Remove seedlings with an onion hoe.

TRANSPORT WITH EASE

Tidying up the garden in time for summer can be arduous work. Take away the strain and invest in a quality wheelbarrow from Sherlock.

The new 100L load capacity Sherlock wheelbarrow will save you those extra trips around the garden. Its sturdy construction and choice of steel or poly tray is ideal for carrying everything from heavy fill to mulch and clippings. With comfort handles, supportive shock board and a pneumatic tyre on a steel rim, you're in for a smooth ride.

Released exclusively through Bunnings outlets, the Sherlock 100L wheelbarrow retails for \$128. It's time to give back pain the push. ♦

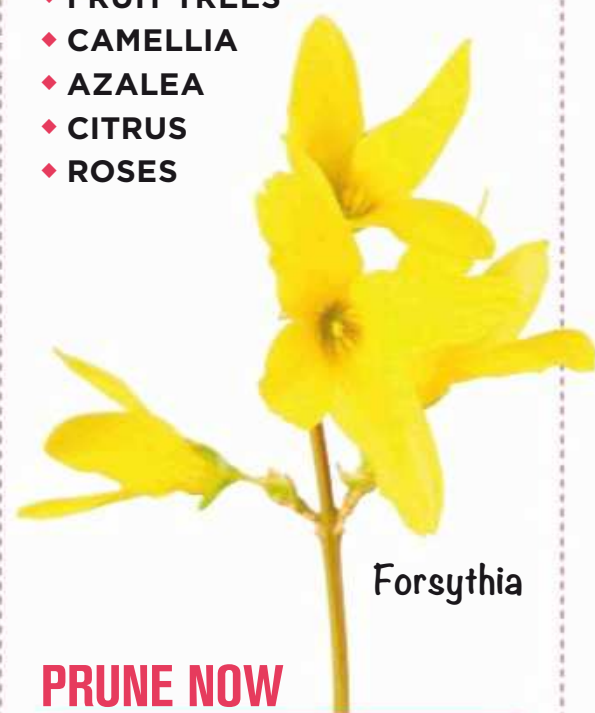


Azalea

FEED NOW

Give new plants and those in spring growth a boost.

- ♦ FRUIT TREES
- ♦ CAMELLIA
- ♦ AZALEA
- ♦ CITRUS
- ♦ ROSES



Forsythia

PRUNE NOW

Deadhead and give shrubs a light trim after flowering.

- ♦ FORSYTHIA
- ♦ FLOWERING PEACH
- ♦ OLEANDER
- ♦ ACACIA
- ♦ HIBISCUS



Fennel

HARVEST NOW

Bring in those vegies and greens that were sown in winter.

- ♦ SILVERBEET
- ♦ ASPARAGUS
- ♦ BEETROOT
- ♦ CABBAGE
- ♦ FENNEL

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OCTOBER

What's on this month

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6

[SAT]

7

[SUN]

SPRING D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

Follow our expert D.I.Y. tips to make the most of the new spring season.



13

[SAT]

14

[SUN]

GARDENING D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

Learn how to create a beautiful and healthy garden.



20

[SAT]

21

[SUN]

DECKING D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

Everything you need to know about installing and maintaining a deck.



27

[SAT]

28

[SUN]

OUTDOOR PROJECT D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS

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DONNA
TEAM MEMBER

OUTDOOR PROJECT D.I.Y. WORKSHOPS



27

[SAT]

28

[SUN]

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CUTTING EDGES

Choose the right tool for
trimming your lawn borders
and garden hedges

WORDS MARC MCEVOY

A tidy lawn and garden takes work. Mowing, fertilising and watering are important, but to create a neat landscape that increases the kerb appeal of your home, you must trim your edges and hedges, and those tasks require the right tools.

A mower will cut a large area of grass but it isn't effective for those last few centimetres of growth at the edges of fences and walls or around tree trunks or other objects. Here, you need a line trimmer to create sharp boundaries. And to achieve a clean line between the lawn and a path or garden bed, you

need a lawn edger. It will leave a neater separation than a trimmer.

Hedges also need to be trimmed to create neat fence-line boundaries or backdrop foliage as well as promote growth in your garden.

The choice among trimmers and edgers also comes down to electric or petrol-driven. Electric devices can be either corded and run by mains power, or cordless with rechargeable batteries.

Cordless trimmers and edgers give you unrestricted movement. Petrol devices are noisier, heavier and emit fumes, but they have more grunt. ►

LINE TRIMMERS

ELECTRIC

All line trimmers operate with a nylon line in a hub that spins at a rapid rate at the end of a shaft to cut through grass and weeds. The rotation is controlled by a variable speed trigger.

The line will have to be replaced as it wears out. Depending on the model, this is done either manually or automatically.

Corded electric line trimmers, which run on mains power, require an extension cord to reach your work site. They are similar in power to a petrol-driven trimmer while being lighter. They are also relatively inexpensive, easier to start than petrol models, and quieter to use.

Light-duty devices can have the motor mounted at the cutting end of the shaft, but more powerful trimmers have a motor mounted at operator height and a bent shaft.

Line trimmers are usually intended for lighter work than brushcutters.



A mains power line trimmer needs a cord, but is quiet and easy to start.



Battery-powered trimmers can roam over large areas.

SAFETY TIP

Wear steel-capped boots and safety glasses when using edgers or trimmers as debris can be flicked at high speed towards the user.

CORDLESS

To avoid restricted movement while trimming, cordless models are a good option. They operate in the same way as corded electric devices but run on a rechargeable battery instead of mains power.

Recent advances in lithium-ion batteries have greatly increased their capacity, so that a cordless trimmer with a heavy duty 4.0Ah battery can run for up to an hour on one charge.

The best, most powerful ones for home use are 18-volt models. Without a cord, they are convenient and easily manoeuvrable.

PETROL

Powered by either a two-stroke or four-stroke motor, petrol line trimmers have more power than electric models. They come in dual-handle units and have either a straight or bent shaft to vary the cutting angle.

Petrol-driven models, which are usually more expensive than electric models, are great for trimming areas that are too big for trimmers with extension cords.

A four-stroke version is heavier than a two-stroke, but it is more powerful and emits fewer fumes. Petrol trimmers require more maintenance than electric models, including oil, filter and spark plug changes. Two-stroke models run on a mix of oil and petrol. This produces a smoky exhaust, which makes them harsh on the environment.

DIY TIP

Avoid ringbarking trees or bushes with a line trimmer by hand-weeding the grass up to 10cm around the base.

Brushcutters pack plenty of power for serious tasks.

BRUSHCUTTERS

These are the stronger cousins of line trimmers. They have an X- or Y-shaped steel blade instead of a nylon cord and are designed for heavy-duty applications, such as clearing thick, long grass that might include weeds, shrubs and small trees.

Brushcutters spin a blade parallel to the ground in a hub driven by an electric or petrol-driven motor on the end of a shaft.

The electric cutters can be corded or cordless with rechargeable batteries, and the petrol models come with two- or four-stroke engines.

Brushcutters can be a bit heavier and harder to manoeuvre than line trimmers, so they often come with a harness and adjustable dual handle or bicycle-style double-grip handle for extended use. ►

PICTURES (BACKGROUND, ABOVE) GETTY IMAGES

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EDGERS

If you have a lot of lawn bordered by hard surfaces and you want to create precise, neat edges along paths and other walkways that look like they have been done by a professional, use an edger.

Edgers are cutting devices powered by electric or petrol engines guided by wheels connected to a push handle. The cutting mechanism is a spinning steel blade that rotates vertically, creating a clean separation between the lawn and the edge. They generally come with adjustable height levels.



Petrol-powered edgers help you achieve a pro's finish.

While cordless 18V electric models are great for average-sized yards, it might be worth investing in the more powerful 36V models or petrol-driven devices if you have a lot of concrete paths crisscrossing your lawn or lines of pavers enclosing the grass. Check for a marking on the blade cover that helps you follow the correct line.

An edger will also create a gap between your lawn and garden that prevents grass roots from invading your flowers. It helps define different areas of your garden.

MANUAL

Manual edgers have been around a long time. The most common type has a hardened-steel star-wheel blade on the end of a handle. Pushing rotates the star-wheel blade and produces a cutting action.

They are inexpensive and simple to use but require considerable physical effort to produce a neat, precise edge between your lawn and path or other firm edge.

Other types include a steel cutting wheel attached to a drum on a handle that works like a star-wheel edger, and a half-moon steel edger on a long handle, which cuts edges when you manoeuvre it from side to side.



Star-wheel and half-moon edgers require physical effort.



HEDGE TRIMMERS

Hedges form barriers and boundaries between your home and the street or a neighbour's property, as well as backdrops for your floral displays.

The most common hedges can be easily shaped with hedge trimmers. Maintaining them this way not only controls their appearance but it inspires new growth where you want it.

You can use hand shears for trimming, but if your hedge is large, save your strength and use a petrol-driven or electric trimmer. The electric devices come in corded or cordless models, but you must take extra care with corded trimmers to avoid severing the cord.

Trimmers that are powered by rechargeable batteries are easier to use in hard-to-reach places. ♦



Battery-operated hedge trimmers are convenient and safe for domestic use.

Top picks



Ryobi One+ 18V 5.0Ah
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\$229. ryobi.com.au



Cyclone Half
Moon Edger, \$50.
cyclone.com.au

DeWALT 54V XR FlexVolt Li-Ion
Cordless Brushless Line Trimmer,
excluding battery, \$381.
dewalt.com.au



Cyclone Rotary Turf Edger,
\$55. cyclone.com.au



Ryobi 52cc 2-stroke
Petrol Bike Handle
Brushcutter, \$329.
ryobi.com.au

Ozito 18V Hedge Trimmer
Kit, \$89. ozito.com.au



Ozito 25.4cc Full Crank Petrol
Edger, \$198. ozito.com.au



Victa 25.4cc Swift-Start
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FOCUS ON *Foliage*

Bring pizzazz to your garden with
some bold or colourful leaves

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Leaves are one of the most significant aspects of garden design. Big, bold, small or strappy – hard-working foliage plants create contrast and inject interest. They also keep their ornamental value all year, while the more commonly perceived star attractions of the garden, flowers, are transient with the seasons.

The popularity of foliage in modern gardens revolves around its enormous variation. Leaves come in a choice

of colours and have any number of different textures and structures. The enormous array of leaf shapes and compositions can look stunning. They can also be variegated, double or single coloured, and they can smell good, too.

Foliage is particularly important in small gardens as it can help to unify the selection of plants into a cohesive design. We show you how to zhoosh up your garden with a focus on foliage. ►

DESIGN IDEAS

- ♦ **SHAPE** Placing plants with different leaf shapes next to each other brings out the best in both of them. Put large rounded leaves next to both strap-like leaves and deeply divided foliage.
- ♦ **HEIGHT** Tall ornamental grasses make arresting accents.
- ♦ **COLOUR** Different tints and shades of green foliage – from lime green to cool blues and dark purplish green – create a stylish relaxed look.
- ♦ **CONTRAST** Use green foliage for the main composition and accentuate with coloured

varieties. Purple leaves look stunning placed next to light green ones. Or use silver foliage as a point of difference.

- ♦ **TEXTURE** Variegated foliage in striped, dappled or multicolour patterns creates an eye-catching display.
- ♦ **FORM** Architectural and strappy foliage can look arresting in large pots.
- ♦ **POSITION** Grow epiphytic bromeliads on fences, tree branches, trunks and stumps, or tall ferns and palms. You can fix them to walls or use them to decorate a screen.

FRAGRANT LEAVES

The appeal of plants to the sense of smell is among the strongest of a garden's delights. And while flowers are most often associated with perfume, many leaves are just as fragrant. Plant scented leaves near pathways, entrances or steps so you can touch them as you pass.

What to grow

Lemon myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*) is a small tree that reaches a height of around 6m, and has strongly scented leaves that can be used in cooking. It can also be clipped as a hedge.

Scented-leafed geraniums (*Pelargonium cultivars*) release a strong fragrance when touched, which makes them popular in gardens for the visually impaired. Combine them with lavender and rosemary in sunny garden beds.

Lemon verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*) has, as its name suggests, lemon-scented leaves. And there are a variety of scents among the mints.



Lemon Verbena

COLOURFUL LEAVES

You can create some interesting leaf compositions when coloured leaves are mixed in among the green.

What to grow

The red, green, pink and yellow leaves of coleus rival those found in any flower. Grow coleus where it gets morning sun in frost-free areas and pinch it back to create a more bushy habit.

Give beefsteak plant (*Iresine herbstii*) some sun so that its brilliant purple-red leaves retain their colour. The purple leaves of *Alternanthera dentata* can be clipped to make an attractive hedge.

Acalypha, aglaeomena, caladium, croton, rex begonia, maranta and calathea all have species or cultivars with large or colourful leaves that look good in garden beds or pots in frost-free areas.

The many different cordyline, flax and yucca cultivars are also contenders for inclusion because of their strappy leaves and range of sumptuous colours.

Large-leafed cannas have tropical flair. The burgundy, red, pink, yellow and deep green leaves of the Tropicana cultivar make a dramatic display, while Black has deep purple leaves and Gold has leaves with green and gold stripes.



Varied form, colour, shape and height strike a stunning note in this garden. TOP RIGHT Spectacular beehive ginger.



GARDEN TIP

Foliage forms the substance of a garden and holds everything together when there are no flowers.

TROPICAL TREATS

Gingers and heliconias are iconic tropical and subtropical perennial plants with large, vibrant leaves that make eye-catching architectural statements. And the bonus is their flamboyant flowers.

What to grow

Blue ginger (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*) has large canna-like leaves and intense blue flowers. Beehive gingers from the *Zingibar* variety produce 120cm high lush foliage and spectacular flowers.

Shell ginger (*Alpinia zerembut*) has exotic tropical-looking foliage and spectacular hanging flowers. It will grow outside the tropics if given a warm, frost-free spot.

Torch ginger (*Etlingera elatior*) displays beautiful red flowers that resemble waratahs. They shine among dark-green tropical-looking foliage.

Heliconias, like gingers, have large tropical leaves and dazzling exotic-looking flowers that are either erect or pendulous. There are many different species and cultivars. These heat lovers like regular watering, a feeding in spring with a complete fertiliser, and protection from wind. ►



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ARCHITECTURAL FOLIAGE

Some plants have very distinctive, architecturally shaped forms. It may be the texture, size or boldness of the leaves, or the shape of the plant itself. Plants with bold forms can draw the eye as much as garden ornaments when distributed throughout the garden.

Use them on their own as a focal point, as feature plants in courtyards or in pots on balconies.

What to grow

Large-leafed acanthus makes an impact and will grow in sun or semi-shade. The large rosette of grey-leaved *Agave attenuata* looks stunning in sunny garden beds and pots. Taro leaves, especially the dark-leaved cultivar Black Magic, create a lush tropical look, while the large grey leaves of cardoon and globe artichoke make an impact.

Philodendron 'Xanadu' has beautiful large, architecturally shaped leaves, as does bird's nest fern (*Asplenium nidus*). Both grow well in morning sun and Xanadu will tolerate full sun.

BROMELIADS

The leaves of the bromeliad are striped, spotted or brightly coloured, so they offer great landscaping possibilities.

Group bromeliads together in pots of various heights to make permanent eye-catching colour statements in shades of red, burgundy, pink, silver and purple, mixed with tones of green.

When planted in the ground, bromeliads must have good drainage. You can simply plant the bromeliad in a pot into the ground, with the rim raised above the soil level. A combination of half potting mix and half orchid mix is ideal for bromeliads in containers.

What to grow

There is a huge choice of rosette-shaped bromeliad species and cultivars with different leaf markings and colours among the neoregelia, guzmania and aechmea varieties.

The wonderful maroon-leaved *Alcantarea imperialis* 'Rubra' has a rosette that can reach a span of 1.5m. It takes ten years to produce its tall 2.5m flower spike and is more sun tolerant than many bromeliads. Just as stunning is *Vriesea hieroglyphica*, which has shiny green leaves marked with dark, hieroglyphic-like cross bands.

DESIGN TIP

Use the strappy leaves of tall architectural grasses, colourful flax or lomandra next to large leaves.

Contrast strong forms and shapes. **BELOW** Bold bromeliads.



PICTURES CHERYL MADDOCKS

SUCCULENTS

The foliage of succulents can look stunning in garden beds and pots. They look good throughout the year, feature an enormous variety of leaf shapes and sizes and are low maintenance.

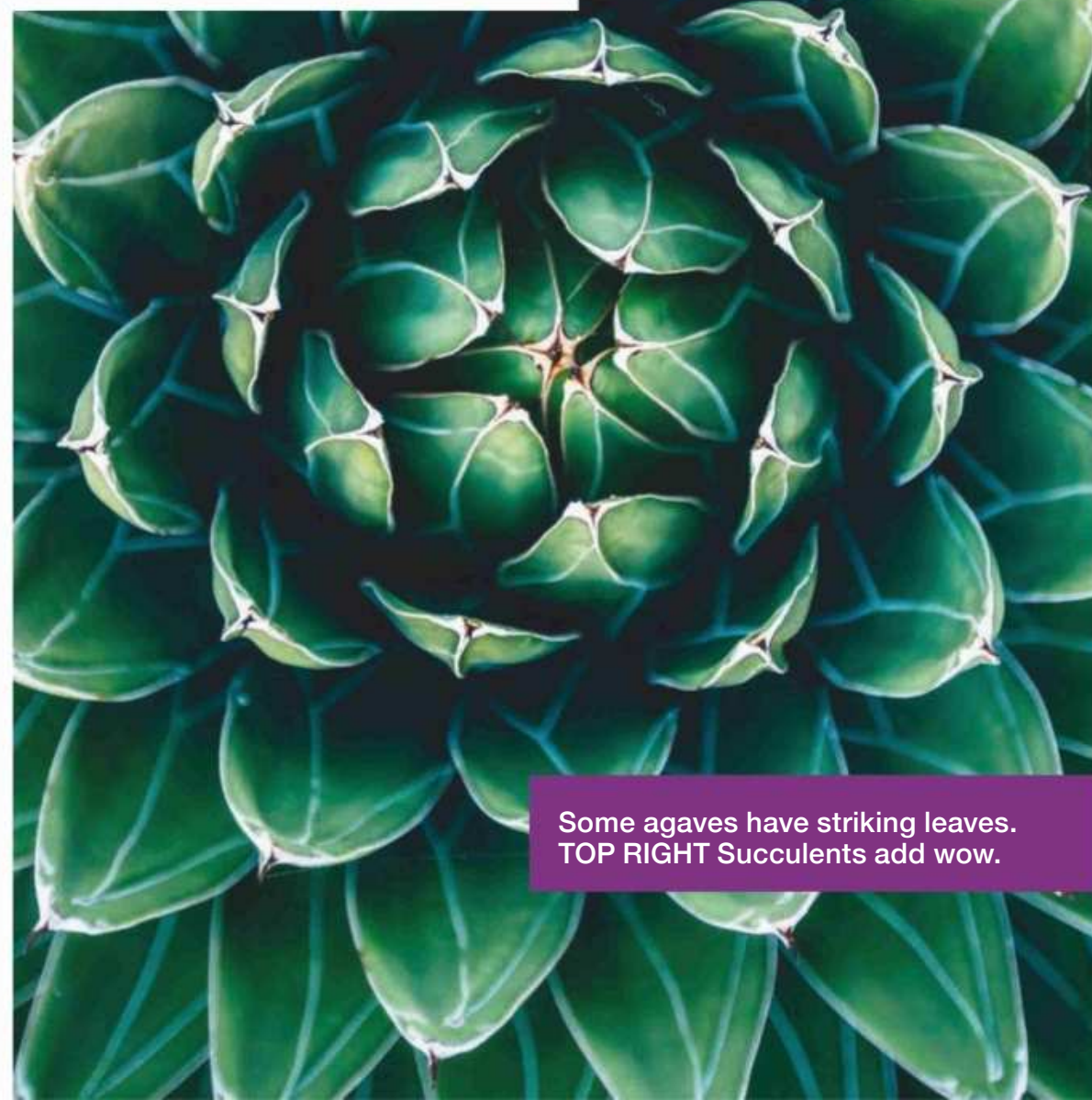
Succulents are perfect for time-poor gardeners because potted ones won't die if you are occasionally too busy to water them and those in garden beds can easily survive on rainwater alone.

You can use low-growing succulents as frontline border plants in beds or taller ones as features.

What to grow

Large agaves and aloes look good in garden beds and large pots. Clumps of aeoniums also make architectural statements in pots and garden beds. The reddish-black rosettes of *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' are standouts, as are the huge green rosettes of *Aeonium undulatum*. *Cotyledon orbiculata* is valued for its striking grey leaves and Echeveria cultivars come in many different shades and shapes and are perfect for pots.

Stay tuned for more on succulents in next month's issue of *Handyman*. ♦



Some agaves have striking leaves.
TOP RIGHT Succulents add wow.



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Juicy, plump TOMATOES

Experience the delicious difference
of home-grown tomatoes

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

If you want to appreciate the perfect tomato taste, you have to grow your own. The good news is that now is the perfect time to plant them. Garden centres are full of tomato seedlings and there's an even greater choice of varieties if you grow from seed. Tomatoes produce a high yield for the space they occupy and grow equally well in containers and garden beds. Here's how. ►

DIY TIP

In temperate climates you can increase your harvest by sowing an early crop in August and a late crop in November, meaning you'll be picking tomatoes for about five months.

HOW TO GROW

Tomatoes are easy to grow but to prevent fungal disease, avoid planting them in the same spot you used last year. If you don't have a dedicated vegetable garden, simply pop the odd tomato plant throughout your flowerbeds or grow them in pots.

♦ **POSITION** tomatoes in the sunniest spot available in your garden, as full sun is crucial for a good crop. Protection from wind is also essential.

♦ **PREPARE** the soil by adding organic matter such as compost, old chicken manure or Yates Dynamic Lifter to the soil and dig one-third of a cup of complete plant food per square metre into the garden bed one week before planting. Use a pH kit to determine if your soil is acidic, and add some dolomite or liquid lime to the soil prior to planting if so. An alkaline soil also helps prevent blossom end rot.

♦ **PLANT** the seedlings 50-60cm apart. Tomatoes, unlike other vegetables, like to have their stems planted deeply.



Pinch or cut off the lower set of leaves and place the seedling in the ground about halfway down the stem. The plant will put roots out all down its stem, giving it a more developed root system so it can absorb more water and nutrients. To prevent transplant shock, water in newly planted seedlings with Seasol Seaweed Solution.

♦ **STAKE** when you plant the seedling and not later on, when you might damage the root system. Place the stake 10cm away from the stem and, as the tomatoes grow, tie them to the stake for support. The soft and stretchy texture of old pantyhose make perfect

plant ties. Tomato cages can also be used for support.

♦ **MULCH** around the seedlings with straw, lucerne hay or sugar cane mulch to help retain soil moisture.

♦ **WATER** regularly and deeply as erratic watering causes tomatoes to split. To prevent disease, water around the base of the plants rather than overhead.

♦ **FEED** when the first flower truss appears with a soluble plant food such as Yates Thrive Soluble Flower & Fruit plant food or a high-potash fertiliser.

♦ **PICK** tomatoes from the vine when they are ripe. Cut the stalk but leave the green calyx attached.

DIY TIP

At the end of the season as the leaves die, whole plants can be removed from the soil and hung on a warm wall to allow the remaining green fruits to ripen.

PLANT IN POTS

If you live in an apartment or have a small garden, it is easy to grow tomatoes in large pots or raised planters like VegTrug (vegtrug.com), which can also protect against crop damage from pests.

Cherry tomatoes grow especially well in containers and produce good yields of small fruit. You can also cascade them out of hanging baskets.

Small bushy tomatoes like Patio Roma, with its small plum-shaped fruit, and Tumbler Red, with its small cherry fruit, are perfect for pots.

- ♦ **CHOOSE** a large pot that is around 400-500mm with good drainage. A plastic pot is a good choice as it retains more moisture than a terracotta pot.
- ♦ **FILL** the pot with quality potting mix like Scotts Osmocote Plus Organics Vegetable & Herb Mix.
- ♦ **INSERT** a stake or tomato cage in the pot if you are growing a tall tomato.
- ♦ **MAKE** a hole in the potting mix and plant your seedling. Firm the mix gently around the seedling and water in with a seaweed solution.
- ♦ **ADD** lucerne hay as mulch around the seedling.
- ♦ **WATER** regularly as pots dry out faster than garden beds. Daily watering is often needed during summer.
- ♦ **FEED** regularly with a fertiliser formulated for flowers and fruit. ►



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SOW SEED

Growing from seed gives you a much larger choice of tomato varieties. If you sow seed successively from now until December you will have an abundance of tomatoes ripening at different times for a longer harvest.

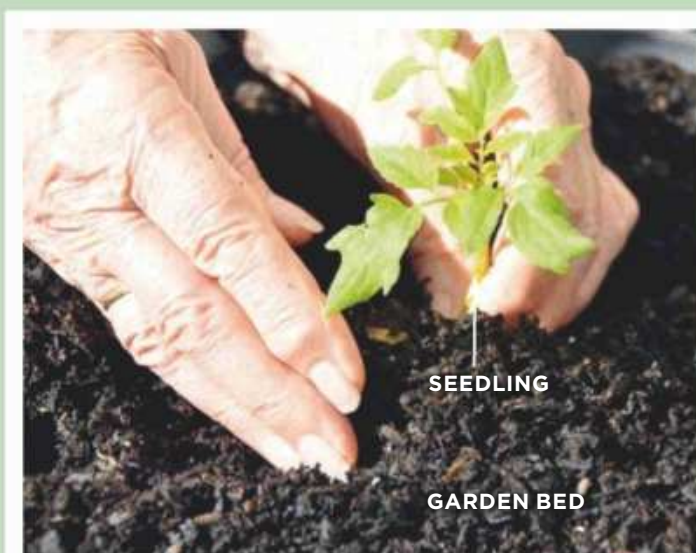
1 Sow the seeds

Fill any small pot or Jiffy Peat Pot with potting mix. Add a seed and cover with a layer of mix. Place the pot in a warm, well-lit position. Wrap in clear plastic to provide warmth but take it off as soon as the seeds germinate. Water with a mist spray.



2 Harden the seedlings

When the seedlings are about 75mm high, put the pot in a sunnier spot to harden up. Transplant to the garden or a larger pot when they are about 100mm high.



GARDEN TIP

Tomato plants grafted onto disease-resistant stock can be planted in the same spot each year, making them good choices for small areas. They are not planted deeply so plant the seedling at the same level in the soil as in the pot.

COMMON PROBLEMS

The best way to prevent disease, unless you are growing grafted tomatoes, is not to plant tomatoes in the same spot you planted them last year. If you do find your plant shows any of these symptoms, here's how to fix it.



SYMPTOM Fruit splits as it begins to ripen.

CAUSE Too much watering or heavy rain after a dry period.

FIX IT Water regularly and deeply, especially during dry periods, at ground level.



SYMPTOM The bottom of fruit becomes sunken and turns black.

CAUSE Blossom end rot, a common environmental problem, caused by lack of calcium together with irregular watering.

FIX IT Add soluble lime and water regularly and deeply.



SYMPTOM Holes appear in fruit and young growth has been eaten.

CAUSE Fruit worm or tomato caterpillar.

FIX IT Apply Yates Tomato and Vegetable Dust when you first notice them.



KITCHEN TIP

Tomatoes are versatile for cooks: use them in pastas, curries, stews, pizzas, risottos, soups, salads and sauces.



SYMPTOM Lower green leaves turn a dull grey and eventually become brown and papery.

CAUSE Yellowish tomato russet mites that are small and difficult to see.

FIX IT Apply some Yates Nature's Way Insect & Mite Killer Natrasoap Spray.



SYMPTOM Lower leaves wilt and dry out and eventually the whole plant dies.

CAUSE Verticillium Wilt, a soil-inhabiting fungus that enters through the root hairs.

FIX IT Remove and destroy infected plants. Do not plant members of the Solanaceae family in the same spot for at least three years.



SYMPTOM Tiny holes appear in fruit.

CAUSE Fruit flies lay eggs under the fruit skin and the hatching larvae feed their way to the centre, causing the fruit to rot.

FIX IT Use a fruit fly bait early in the season to detect fruit fly. Destroy infested fruit and do not add them to compost. ♦



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Handyman

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