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NEW ZEALAND

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36 PAGE SPECIAL

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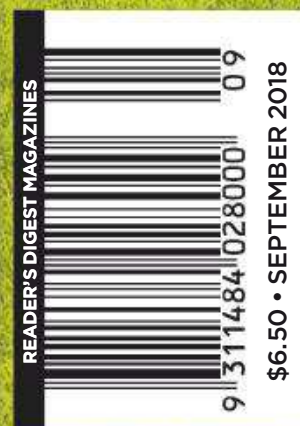
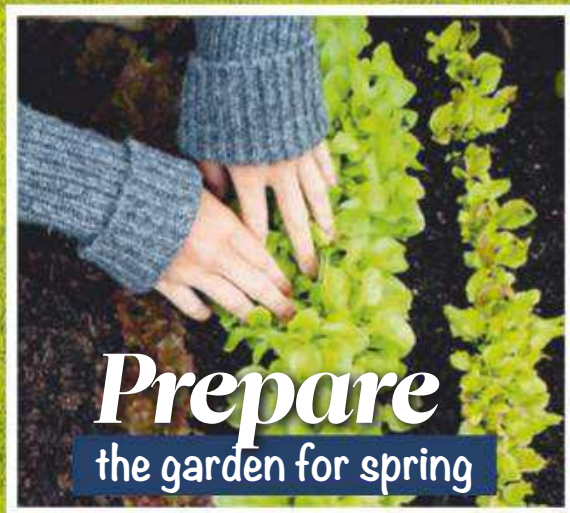
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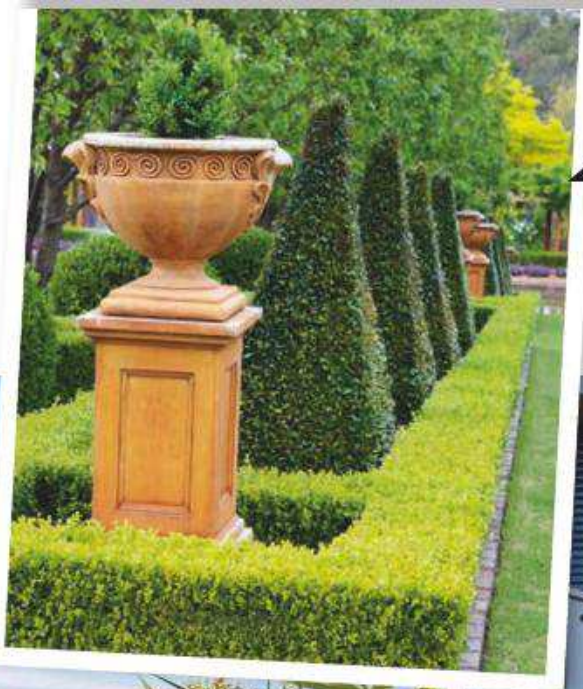
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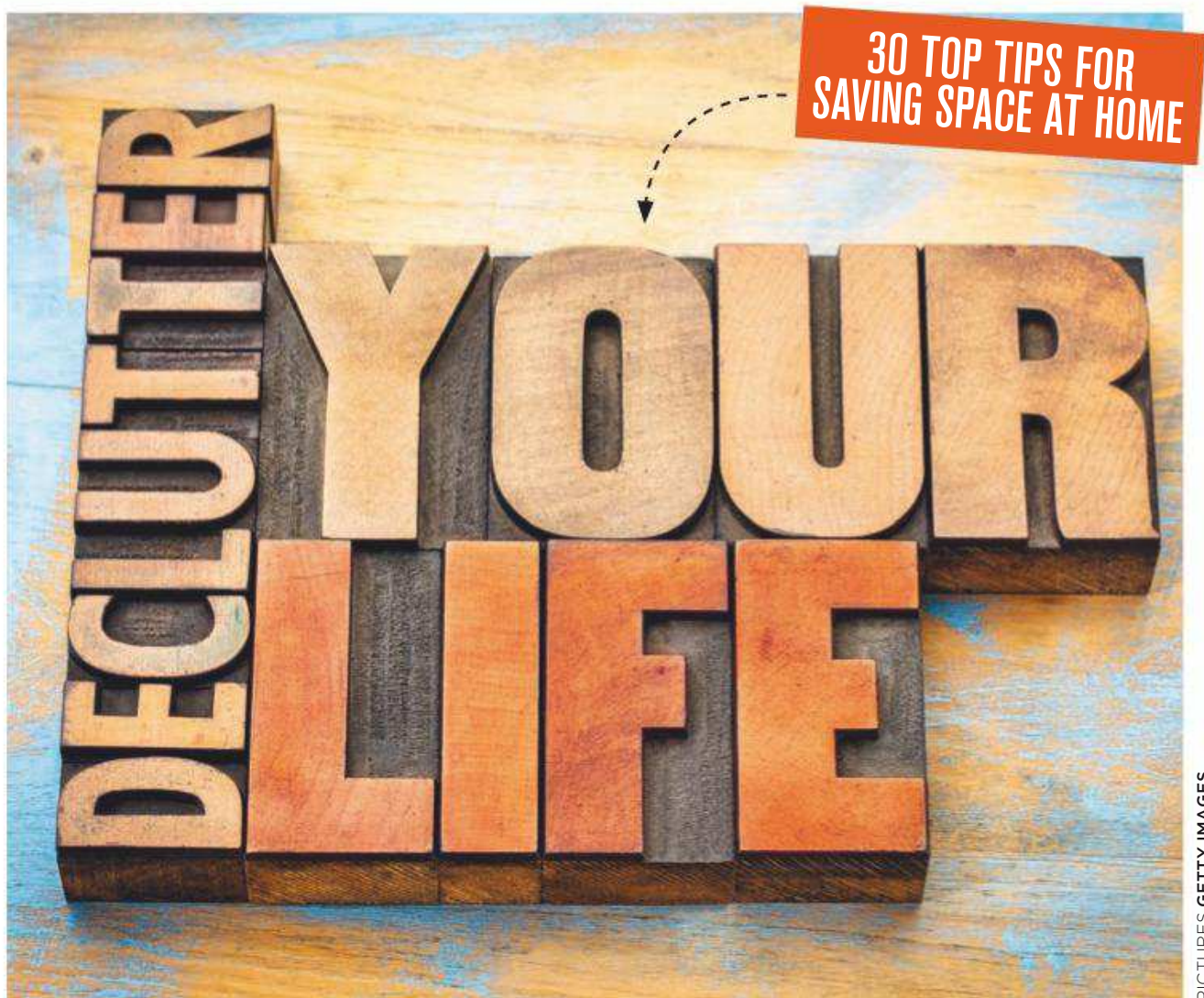
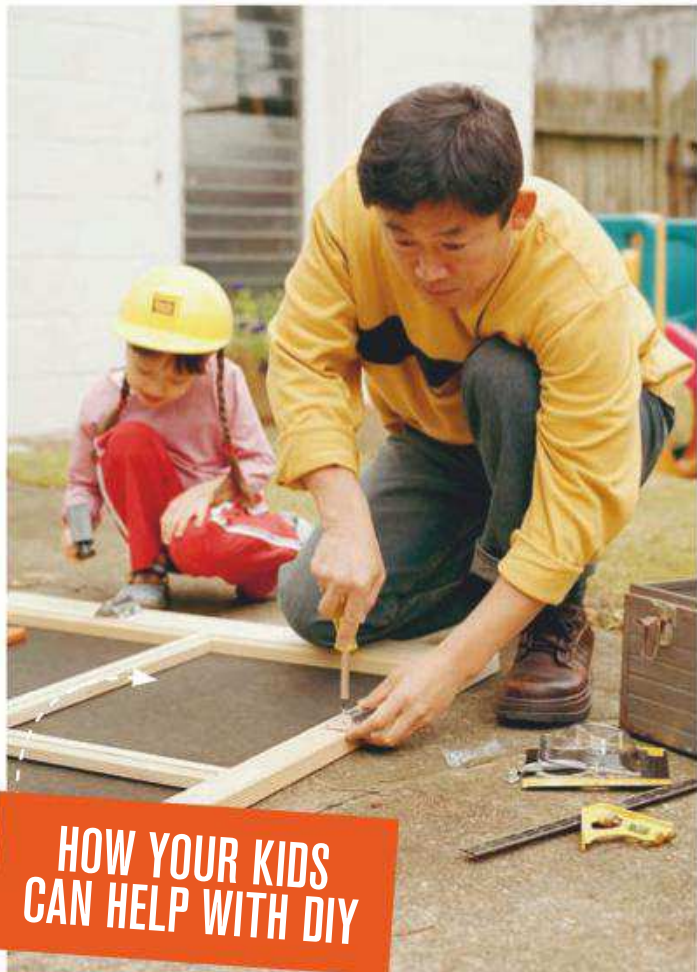
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Editor's LETTER

While most of us spend plenty of time and effort looking after our indoor spaces and backyard entertaining areas, we can sometimes forget about our house frontages. But it's our facades and front yards that create that all-important first impression and set the tone for the rest of our home.

In our kerb appeal special, we have a host of ideas, tips and DIY advice to improve your front of house, whether it's with exterior paint, lighting, clever landscaping or simply upgrading your entrance door, house number or letterbox. It all gets started from page 23, so check it out!

Spring into action

The chilly weather is drawing to a close, so it's time to get the gloves on,

both indoors and out! Our spring cleaning special shows you how to declutter your home and clean all those tricky household items that can easily get put in the too-hard basket. See page 46 to get started.

The beginning of spring is also the ideal time to get outside with a trowel in hand to ensure your yard looks its blooming best as the season progresses. Visit page 105 to learn about those essential gardening tasks.

Happy DIYing!



MANAGING EDITOR
ZOË MEUNIER



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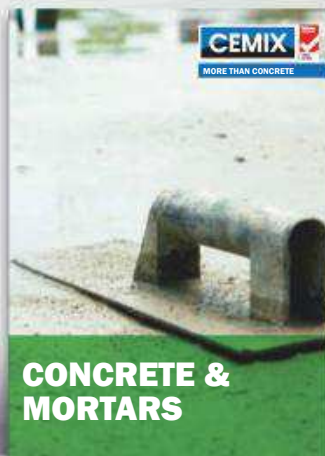
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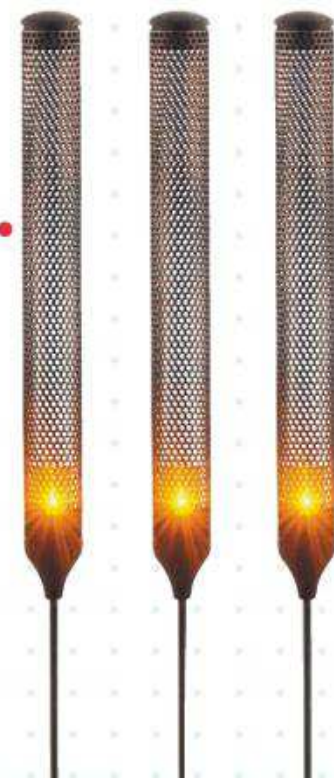
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Tread softly

Eco principles are at the heart
of this stunning cottage renovation

WORDS JOHANNA LEGGATT PICTURES NIKOLE RAMSAY



When married couple Leanne Sette and Scott Thompson purchased an 1890s workers' cottage in Yarraville in Melbourne's inner-west, they figured they would need to do some work on it.

It was a fixer-upper after all, with an outdoor toilet and very few modern comforts. What they didn't realise was the degree of work involved.

'We thought we would make some aesthetic upgrades and rent it out for a while as we planned the renovations,' says Scott, a little ruefully.

'We were cleaning one of the bathrooms to get it ready to rent out and Leanne's feet fell through the floor. It turned out that the floorboards were

rotten. We thought, 'Well, we had better get on with the renovation'.'

YEAR OF DECONSTRUCTION

Both are fans of period architecture – Scott is on the committee for the local historical association – and they wanted to re-use and recycle as much of the original home as possible.

But before the couple could renovate, they needed to strip it back to its bones. This meant that every weekend for almost a year the couple were busy 'deconstructing' the house.

'We had a lot of architects and builders say to us that we should just

bulldoze the place, but we didn't want to do that,' says Scott.

The couple repurposed 1200 recycled red bricks from the rear yard.

'We now have a 3m wall of red bricks as a major feature in the living room that flows outside to the backyard,' says Scott.

'We also moved about 100 pieces of bluestone from the carriageway behind the house and used them to pave the front and side. That almost broke my back.'

Reclaimed pieces of the timber frame, as well as the rotted stumps under the house, were used as a design feature on the new green roof.



Repurposed bricks, beams and tiles make it easy being green.

BEAUTIFULLY ECO

Scott and Leanne wanted theirs to be a sustainable house that was still aesthetically pleasing. So once the couple had stripped the house down to its frame, they turned to boutique design practice Altereco Design to bring their vision to life.

‘A lot of people who build sustainable homes aren’t particularly worried about aesthetics – to them it’s more about performance. But we definitely wanted both,’ says Scott.

Scott and Leanne also drew on Yarraville’s abundance of old workers’ cottages for inspiration.

‘I grew up in the States. When I moved back here, I was really inspired by the local Melbourne architecture. It has a lot of charm,’ says Scott.

‘It’s why we decided to call our house Melbourne Vernacular. Vernacular refers to a style of architecture that is influenced by the local conditions, the local climate and the local people.’ ►





Ceiling joinery
has been expertly
used as an extra
storage shelf

BIG PICTURE FIXES

Some time in the 1970s, the previous owner of the home cladded over the original weatherboard with asbestos sheeting, which Scott and Leanne arranged to be removed.

‘We replaced it with block weatherboards that look great on old cottages and are very Melbourne,’ says Scott.

‘The timber windows had also been replaced with aluminium ones, so we

took out those and put the traditional windows back in.’

Because the couple wanted a traditional look with a dash of contemporary flair, they opted for a black Emu Wire fence and painted the verandah and fence posts black.

‘We then added a bright-green door for attitude,’ says Scott. ‘It makes it stand out a bit.’

When it came time to design the layout, one of the big challenges was

space – or a distinct lack of it. The property is 200sqm overall, with the house itself taking up roughly half of that building envelope.

‘We wanted to get light as far forward as we could into the house with high windows, and to make it look bigger, which is why most rooms have 3.5m-high ceilings,’ says Scott.

‘There is only one room in the house without dual access, which also helps make the rooms feel larger.’



A bathroom opening onto the backyard makes for a bit of luxury.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

On the left side of the hallway as you walk in is Scott and Leanne's large master bedroom, which is opposite the cottage's only other bedroom, now home to their nine-month-old daughter, Georgie. Their master bedroom opens onto a walk-in robe, ensuite and luxurious wet room.

'The wet room features a deep bathtub, very high ceilings, and views up through the highlight window to the green roof outside,' says Scott.

'You can also actually step out to the back garden from the wet room. It's pretty luxurious.

'The shower rose in the wet room extends from one of the original rafter beams we repurposed.'

There is a second bathroom opposite the wet room, as well as a laundry that provides access to the side yard and a retractable drying rack.

Timber flooring was used in the front of the house, while the living quarters are entirely polished concrete.

The bedrooms feature Shaw carpet, which is not only attractive but can also be recycled.

'You call the company and they will take it back to their factory and re-use or recycle it for you,' says Scott. ►





NORTHERN LIGHTS

Luckily for Leanne and Scott, the rear of their home faces north, which means their main living area receives lots of light.

Because space was an issue, the couple installed banquette bench seating that is built into the wall.

‘It opens up an additional metre of space that you would otherwise need in order to walk around a standard table,’ says Scott.

They used local company Cantilever Interiors to design the kitchen, which includes a pull-out pantry and built-in fridge behind a timber door.

‘The benchtop looks like it’s Caesarstone, but it’s made of 75% reclaimed materials,’ says Scott.

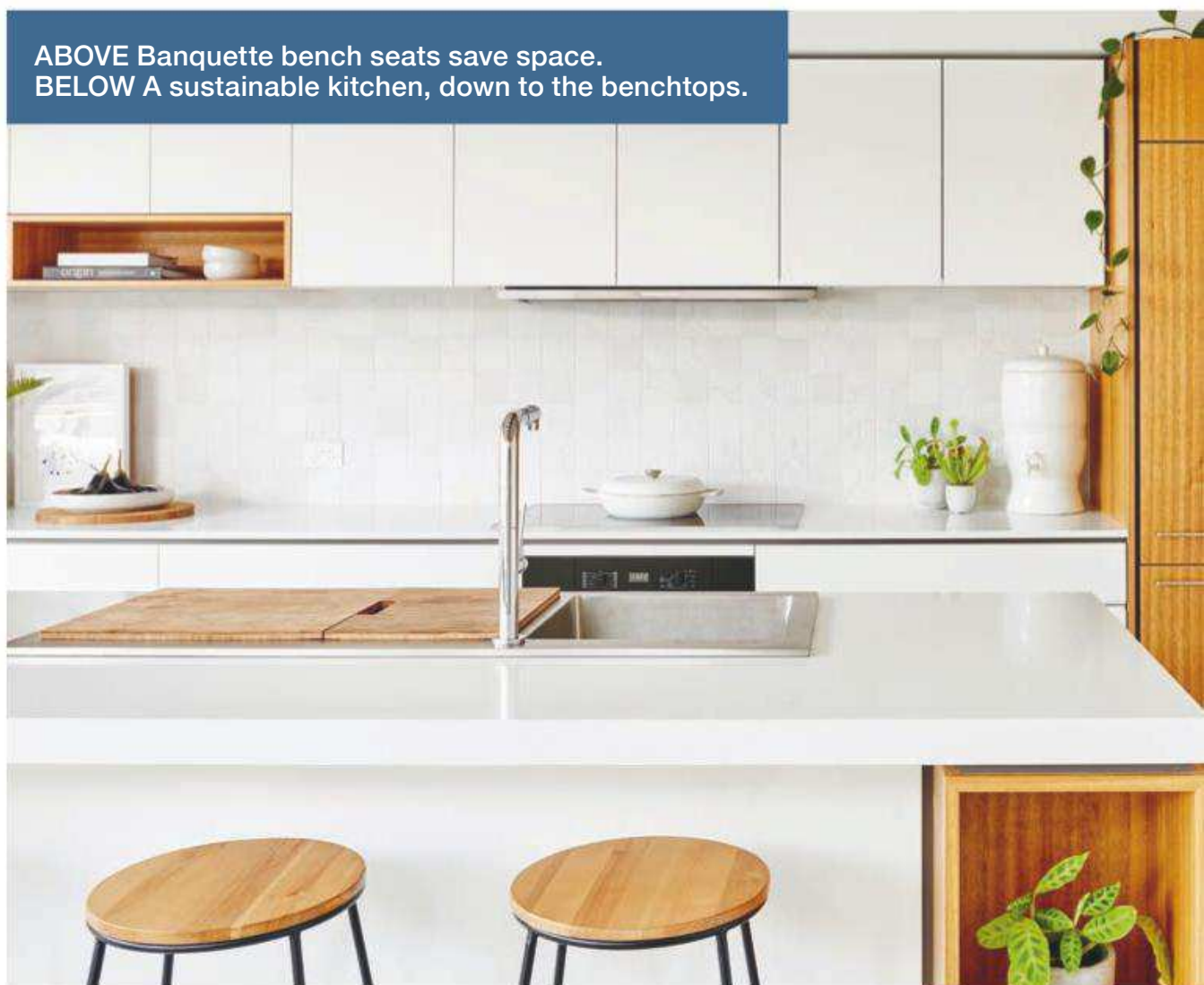
The fridge is small, too, but that suits the couple just fine.

‘We live close to Yarraville village and we shop most days, so that stops us from wasting food,’ says Scott.

Ceiling joinery in the living space has also been expertly used as an extra storage shelf for the couple’s books, while indoor plants have been liberally placed about the house to add warmth.

‘Leanne loves her indoor plants and has a growing collection. You could say that they’re our pets,’ says Scott.

ABOVE Banquette bench seats save space.
BELOW A sustainable kitchen, down to the benchtops.





A green roof on top of the living room is accessed by ladder

LEAN AND GREEN

The small L-shaped garden provided a whole new challenge.

The couple were desperate for a yard for Georgie, but they had very little room to play with. That's where the green roof comes in, a 25sqm plot of land on top of the living room roof that is accessed via an outdoor ladder.



'I'm an avid gardener so I have the vegie patch up there and native plants and grasses,' says Scott.

'Leanne uses it for sunbathing and relaxing. She also takes Georgie up there and lays out the picnic blanket.'

With 14 solar panels on the roof, the house is also very energy-efficient. In fact, for half of the year the home produces more electricity than it uses.

During winter, they use a heat pump which warms water in the afternoon and then heats radiator panels in the home in the evening.

Such is their passion for sustainable

living, the couple now devotes time to teaching others how to build similar homes to theirs.

'Every three months we host sustainable open-house sessions. We also open our home for a range of house and sustainability events across Melbourne,' says Scott.

'It's a great way to help others who want to do what we have done.'

More information on the couple's open-house days, as well as their consultancy practice, is available on their website. Visit melbournevernacular.com.au. ❖



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WORDS SITA SIMONS

Love your home
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We give the interiors of our homes a lot of attention, in styling, furniture and decor – using all the tricks and techniques that make us so houseproud and happy to enter our comfort zones. Even our backyards are now extensions of our living spaces – carefully curated ‘outdoor rooms’.

So why overlook the creative possibilities of the first thing we see – the front garden and facades of our homes? Real estate agents will tell you that it was probably that first impression that strongly influenced you to buy it ... Why ignore it now you own it?

Get your kerb appeal right and you create a home that rewards you every time you see it. Even your neighbours will thank you for it!

Follow these tips and techniques for a fabulous facelift. ►



Create a story with paths, gardens, fences and doors that are cohesive with the style of the home.

Respond to the architecture

Architect Ruth Francis, from Forever Homes (foreverhomes.com.au) in Victoria, says a home should tell a story, and that story starts from the street. She is referring to the shape and style of the home, the front garden and its perimeter, the driveway, the path and front steps, and the fence or garden wall.

‘Sometimes the story from the street to the house is missing and you need to add it, even in character homes,’ says Ruth. ‘It’s so important that the house and its surroundings are cohesive and appealing.’

The design cues for the front garden and the perimeter work best when they reflect the home’s architectural style, no matter when it was built. But that’s not to say you can’t experiment and create a sense of fun.

‘If you take a simple and elegant approach, replicating the lines of the house can work very well. Alternatively, you might want to create contrast and pop against the structure,’ says Ruth.

‘In this case, if you are in a heritage home, look at what others have done around you – and make sure your council will allow you to go against the existing character.’



Did you know?

An inadequate front door and locking system may affect your insurance claim for burglary.



Statement doors create focal points for the design of the home – and instant kerb appeal.

Draw the eye

Just as with interiors, the exterior of a home needs a focal point. Most often this is the front door itself.

‘The front door is key in grounding the house and as a focal point for its street appeal,’ says Ruth. ‘Choices come down to the character of the owners. Brightly painted doors can make fantastic statements, and as they are something you come into contact with numerous times a day, they can be an uplifting element. Or something you constantly wish was different!’

‘From the street, the front door makes a real statement and will always draw the eye. The position of the front door, the front gate, and the access from

the driveway will then determine the structure of the garden.’

Character is a central element of good street appeal. Even if the design of the house and garden is quite formal, you can add personal touches with the letterbox and the front steps, says Ruth.

Fences, though, do tend to work best when in keeping with the architectural style. The materials should reflect the broader surroundings and provide a sense of place and belonging.

‘Ultimately, the appeal from the street and the care and attention given to the details from the front are going to make you feel welcomed home, as well as giving you another perspective looking out from inside,’ says Ruth. ►

A contemporary letterbox will add instant character to the front of your home.



Structure the planting

No matter what the style of home, a front garden needs structure and layers, says Angela Neylon of Joanne Green Landscape And Interior (joannegreen.com.au).

‘Street appeal can live or die with the landscaping to the front. It really does pay to give it some attention. A few simple rules can work in any space and with any character of home,’ says Angela.

Firstly, create a structure. Even if you have a great selection of plants and all the elements are there in theory, it can still look unfinished and messy. Structure is achieved through repetition and mass planting.

‘At street level, layering is important against the vertical structure of a home. This means creating a mixture of trees, shrubs and ground-level planting, and working with the walls or fences. It gives a sense of depth while still looking neat and measured.

‘Maintenance is the next key element. Plants need to be looked after, hedges need to be trimmed. Consider how much effort you are willing to maintain over the long run before committing to an extensively landscaped front garden.’

‘Street appeal can live or die with the landscaping to the front’

Create a sense of depth by structuring the planting.

PICTURE SWELL HOMES/DMAX PHOTOGRAPHY

PICTURE JOANNE GREEN LANDSCAPE AND INTERIOR

Choose the best plants

For a larger suburban streetscape, keep things formal and elegant. The aim is to end up with privacy from the street without introducing the unwelcoming barrier of a hedge.

Plant small trees and shrubs where you want privacy, but leave spaces more open where this is not an issue. If you have room, use smaller deciduous flowering trees such as frangipani or magnolia, or plant citrus trees.

For a smaller urban front garden, you might consider a small tree in a large feature pot, placed in an easily maintained garden bed.

Low-maintenance subtropical gardens are popular at the moment and pairing palms, such as New Zealand's nikau, with ferns is a good option.

To keep things neat and tidy, look at using clipped plants that flower instead of low perimeter hedges. Rhododendron, loropetalum and Indian hawthorn are good options.

For great perfume, plant jasmine or lavender, or plant rosemary as a gift to neighbours and passers-by! ♦



Low-maintenance tropical gardens are very popular.

Did you know?

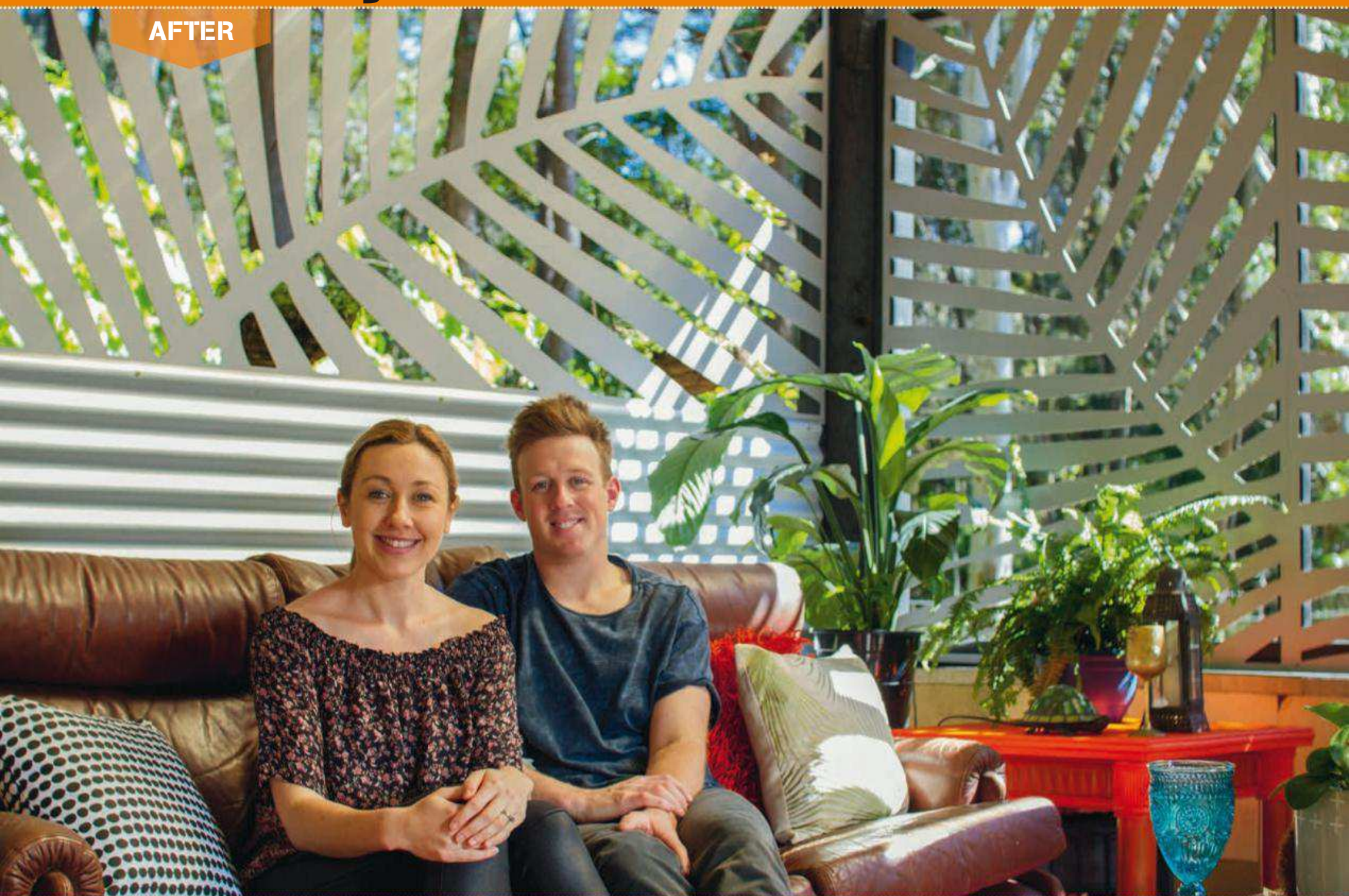
Some city councils allow homeowners, with permission, to plant the verges outside their homes.





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STREET CRED

Renovator Cherie Barber shows how to make a brilliant first impression at your place

WORDS AND PICTURES **CHERIE BARBER**



Walk down any street of any neighbourhood and there'll be one or two houses that will stand out – for the right *or* for the wrong reasons. You just want to make sure yours isn't the one that commands attention because of the scruffy front yard, broken gate, peeling paint and tumbling-down fence.

How your property first presents to visitors sends a vital message about who you are and how much

pride you take in your home. So make sure those important first impressions are positive.

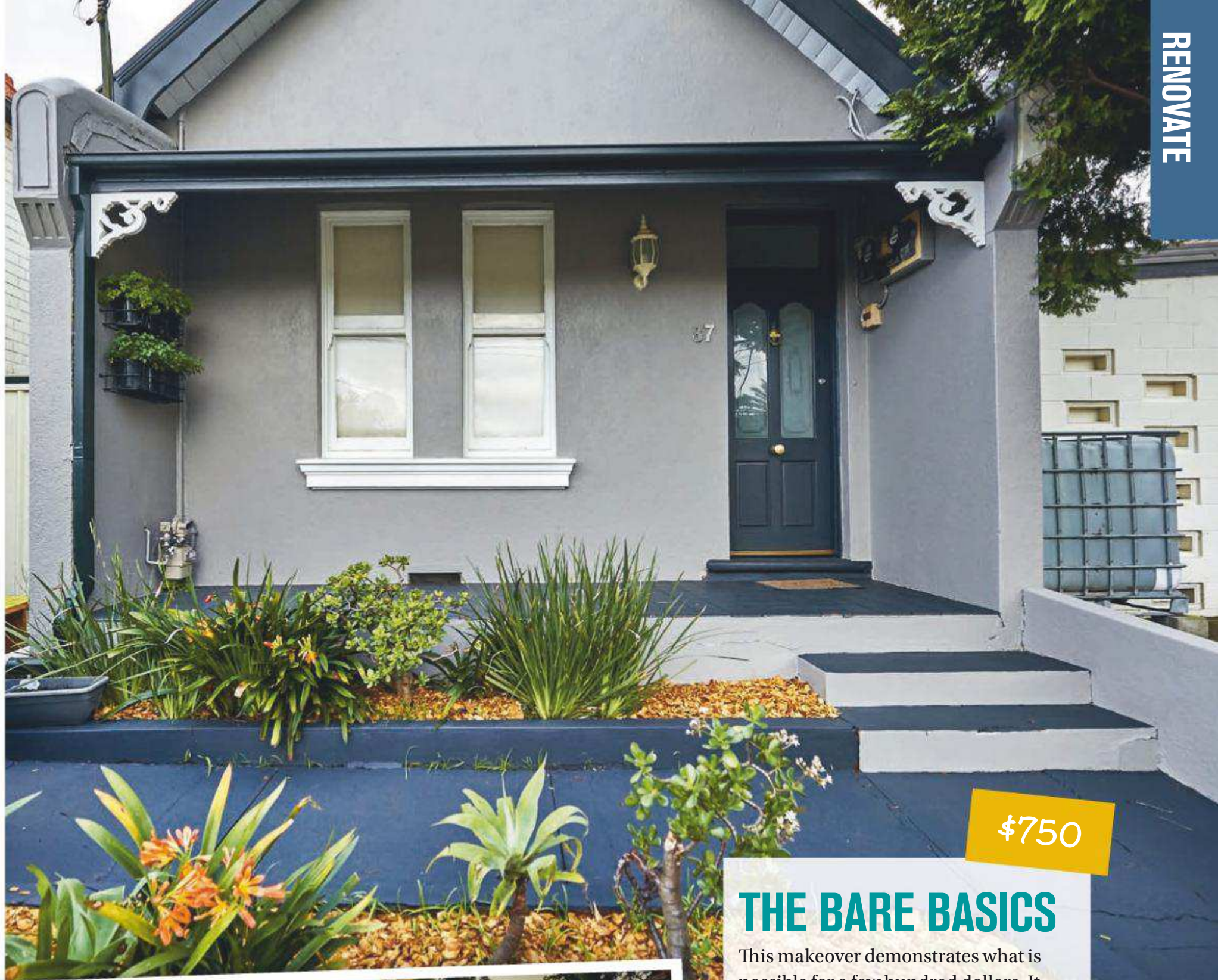
Head-turning kerb appeal can cost a fortune, once you go down the path of elaborate paving and landscaping, lighting, new fencing, a driveway and the full monty on the house itself. But these three projects show what you can do on modest budgets, from simple decluttering, cleaning and painting to a full revamp. ►

Cherie Barber is the reno expert on *The Living Room* and owner of Renovating For Profit (renovatingforprofit.com.au).

After

Paint, lighting, mulch and a vertical herb garden lifted this home.





\$750

THE BARE BASICS

This makeover demonstrates what is possible for a few hundred dollars. It should be within any DIYer's scope.

The facade of this home, in a trendy inner-Sydney suburb, was not an eyesore; it simply needed TLC and some fresh paint colours. Even though the paths had badly deteriorated, there was no budget for new paving – and really no need for anything more than a low-cost weekend makeover.

I simply painted the house in a modern palette of grey, deep blue and white, tidied up the garden, and scattered some cypress woodchips on the garden beds. Paving paint was a quick solution for the cracked paths.

Never forget the small but important details: I replaced the house numbers with large stainless steel numerals, added a new porch light, and installed a vertical herb garden. I'd estimate the \$750 investment added about \$10,500 in value. ►

Before



Before



After

Back to the future with heritage fretwork and balustrading.



\$5300

THE RESTORATION

The facade on this cottage in Sydney's inner-west had lost its heritage appeal. In a pricey neighbourhood dominated by tasteful renovations, it was certainly the odd one out. Again, paint came to the rescue in the form of a modern colour scheme, punctuated by a brightly coloured front door. Using a paint sprayer saved on time and labour costs.

The new timber fretwork and Federation-style balustrading restored the period character that had been stripped away. New plants, a \$140 porch light, and chrome stick-on house numerals completed the makeover.

10 TIPS FOR EXTERIOR MAKEOVERS

1 Never use more than three colours for your facade. That is enough to provide contrast without turning your house into a lollipop.

2 Pay careful attention to surface preparation. Make sure paths, porches and brickwork are completely free of dirt and grime before painting, so fire up that pressure hose. Old timber and metal surfaces will probably need a quick sand to remove any loose paint.

3 Don't go for any fads that will quickly date. Choose a contemporary palette for your exterior, but something that will still look good in 10 years.

4 Never paint your facade in high-gloss paint. It's not the kind of glow you're after. A low-sheen paint will look much smarter.

5 Avoid a mishmash of different eras. Whether your house is a cottage, villa, bungalow, or of some other vintage, play to the strengths of its era.

6 A new front door, or a change of colour for the existing door, can provide that distinctive spark of personality that may be all that's lacking.

7 Give the lawn a boost of fertiliser and see how quickly it bounces back to green and lush over the coming weeks.

8 It's really important to put in the right kind of plants for both the climate you live in and the position in the garden you intend to put them.

9 When updating a facade, especially if it's one you're so familiar with that you may be blind to its faults, stand back and take a long, objective look at exactly what needs repairing, updating and improving. Think about getting a second opinion in case you're missing something.

10 Consider small improvements such as a new letterbox, house numerals, maybe some solar lights for the garden and new furniture for the porch.

\$10,500+

THE TRANSFORMATION

As part of this renovation I added a granny flat to the rear, requiring a separate driveway. But central to a full house transformation of one of my investment properties in Sydney's west was this complete overhaul of the front.

Rendering is never cheap, but it makes a dramatic difference to an ugly house like this. You can always paint over brick, but it never looks as smart as render. A compromise is just to render the front and paint the sides and back the same colour. But in this instance I wanted the best result, so I used tinted acrylic render on all walls at a cost of \$9500.

The backbone of the makeover was completed with front path and steps finished in terracotta tiles and coping (to match the roof), some simple landscaping and extensive fencing. Lights, a new front door and porch accessories were the finishing touches to a radical transformation of what was a genuine ugly duckling. ♦



Before

After

Rendering this ugly duckling transformed the facade.



Pack a style punch by creating a warm and welcoming entrance inside and out

MAKE AN *entrance*

As the saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. And this is certainly true when it comes to property.

By ensuring your home presents its best to the street and immediately beyond the front door, you can set a key focal tone for the rest of the abode.

Whether your style is bold and vibrant or more on the sedate side, be sure to inject plenty of personality, love and perhaps even a little fun into the entrance. In doing so, you'll create a first impression that speaks clearly of you.

As architect Lindsay Douglas of Dig Design, Melbourne, says, 'The choices you make here will inform the design of not just the entry, but also the pathway from the street and then the transition into the house.' ►

WORDS JACKIE BRYGEL



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ENTRANCE & INTERIOR



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A carefully placed pot plant at the entrance is an inviting touch.



Perfect palette

The facade of your home and its hues are at the heart of a beautiful entrance. Remember to consider the era and style of the house before finalising the exterior colour palette.

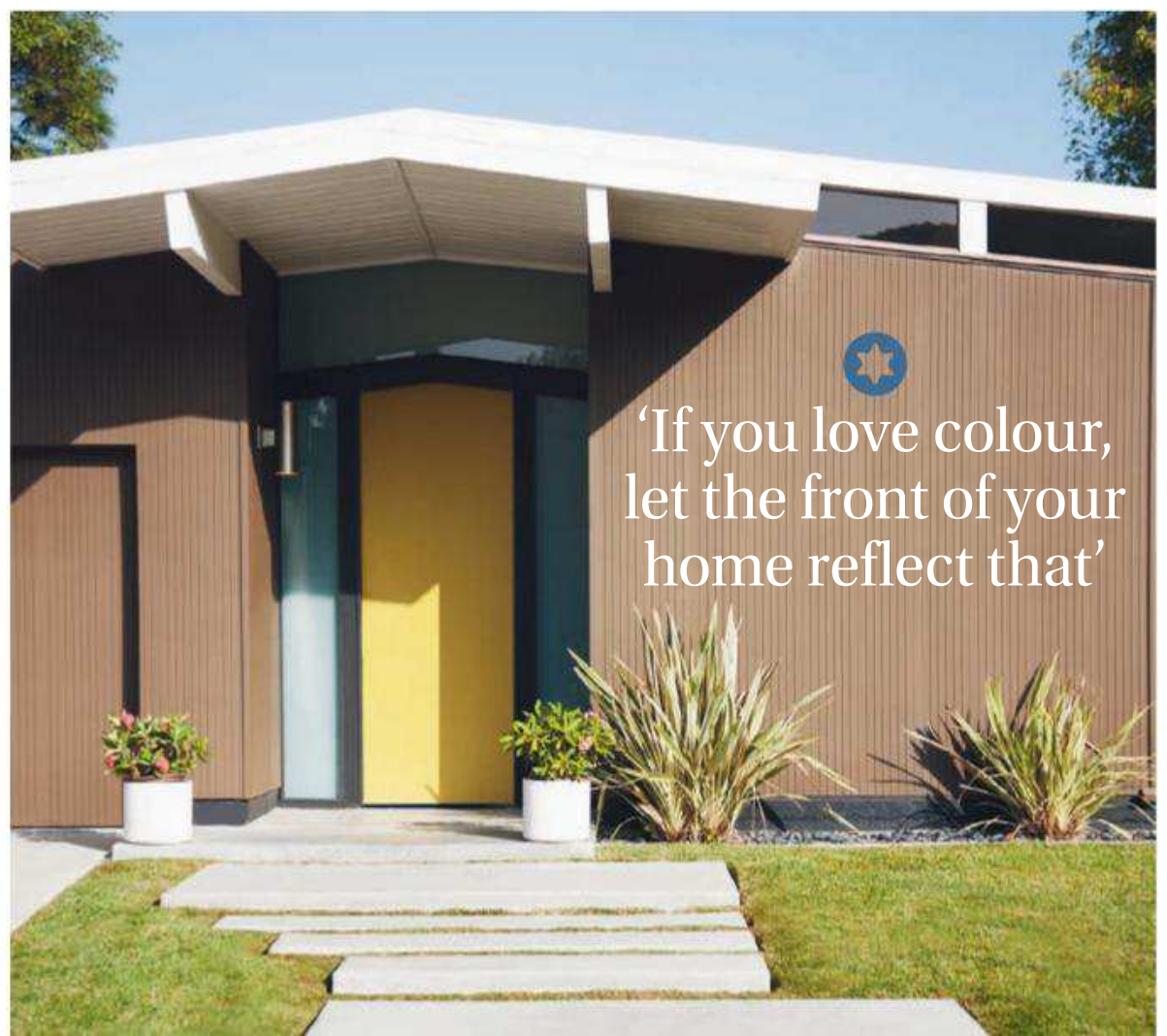
‘If you are a colour lover, be sure to let the front of your home reflect that – not just the inside,’ says Melbourne interior designer Petrina Turner of Petrina Turner Design. ‘If you want to start slowly, think about painting your front door a colour first and keep everything else neutral.’

‘A pale-blush door looks great against a dark facade, while a rich golden mustard adds a bright but earthy touch. Or go all out and pick a gorgeous strong teal or a royal blue.’

‘You don’t have to limit colour to your door – also think letterbox, house number, balustrades, as well as the columns on a verandah.’



A colourfully contrasting front door adds a bright touch.



‘If you love colour, let the front of your home reflect that’

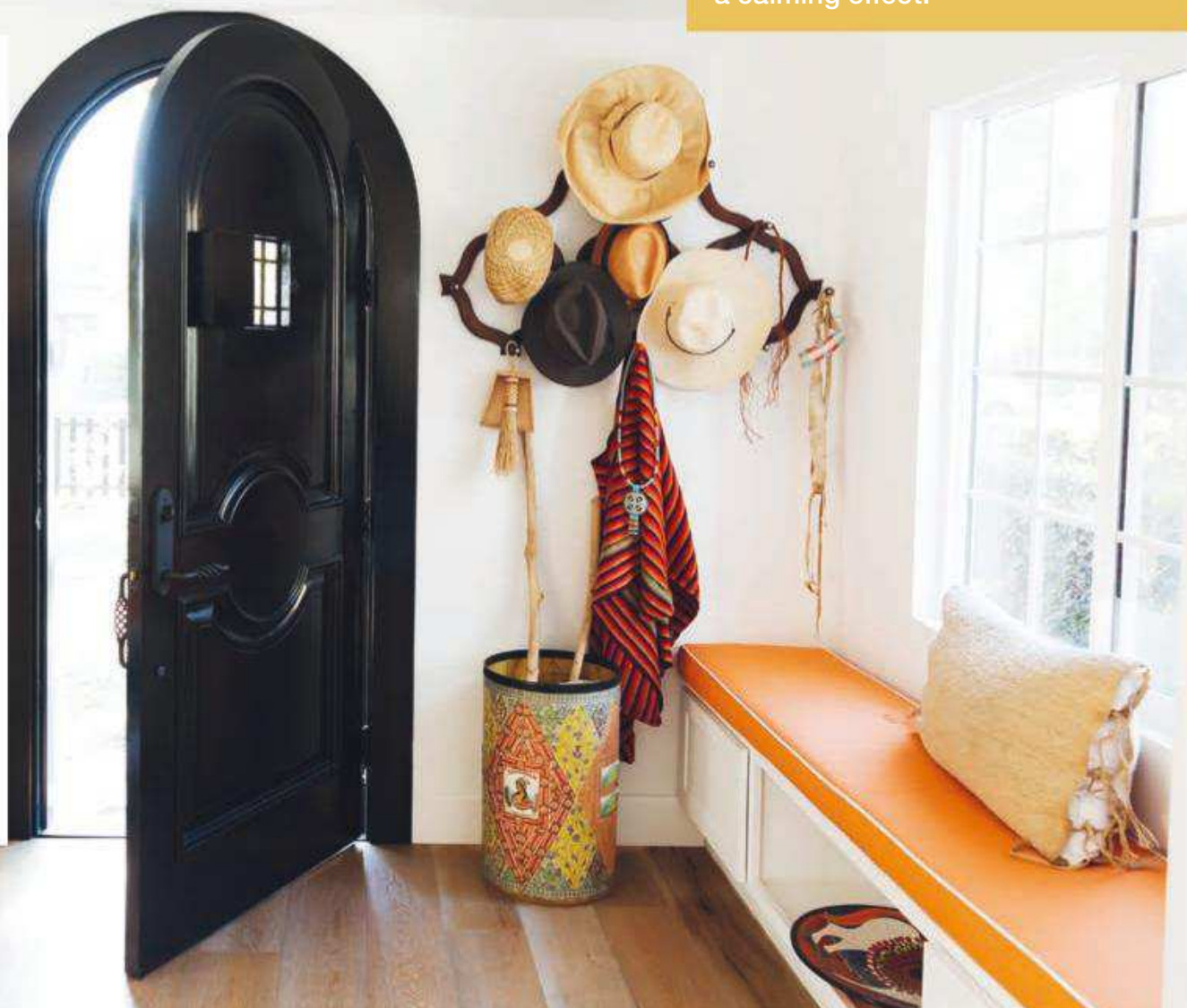
PICTURES GETTY IMAGES

The no-clutter entrance has a calming effect.

Free flow

A clutter-free entrance always wins brownie points. Baskets, hooks and console tables with drawers can provide a place for everyday hallway necessities such as keys, shoes, coats and bags.

‘It’s important to keep the entrance clean and clear,’ says Petrina. ‘From a practical perspective, it makes access in and out easier, especially if you’re bringing in heavy items or your arms are loaded with grocery bags. But it also allows your mind to feel calm when you arrive home.’



Lighting of the entry defines the destination, and says welcome.

Light and shade

Illuminating the external entrance of your home not only creates impact and mood, but is a necessity for safety and security. Take time to consider the plethora of lighting options suitable for outdoor use.

As architect Lindsay Douglas says, ‘Lighting to the front can be handled in a number of ways depending on the effect you’re after. Floodlights can be used to light the facade to create a grand effect, bollard lights can be used to define a journey such as a meandering path, and lighting of the entry can define the destination.’

Adds Petrina, ‘There are some talented designers creating beautiful outdoor lighting in both traditional and contemporary styles, and the finishes available are wonderful. We are no longer limited to a white frosted light. There are other great finishes available such as black anodised metal, brass and amazing coloured glass.’ ►





‘The pathway directs people to the front door, but can also create a journey of approach’

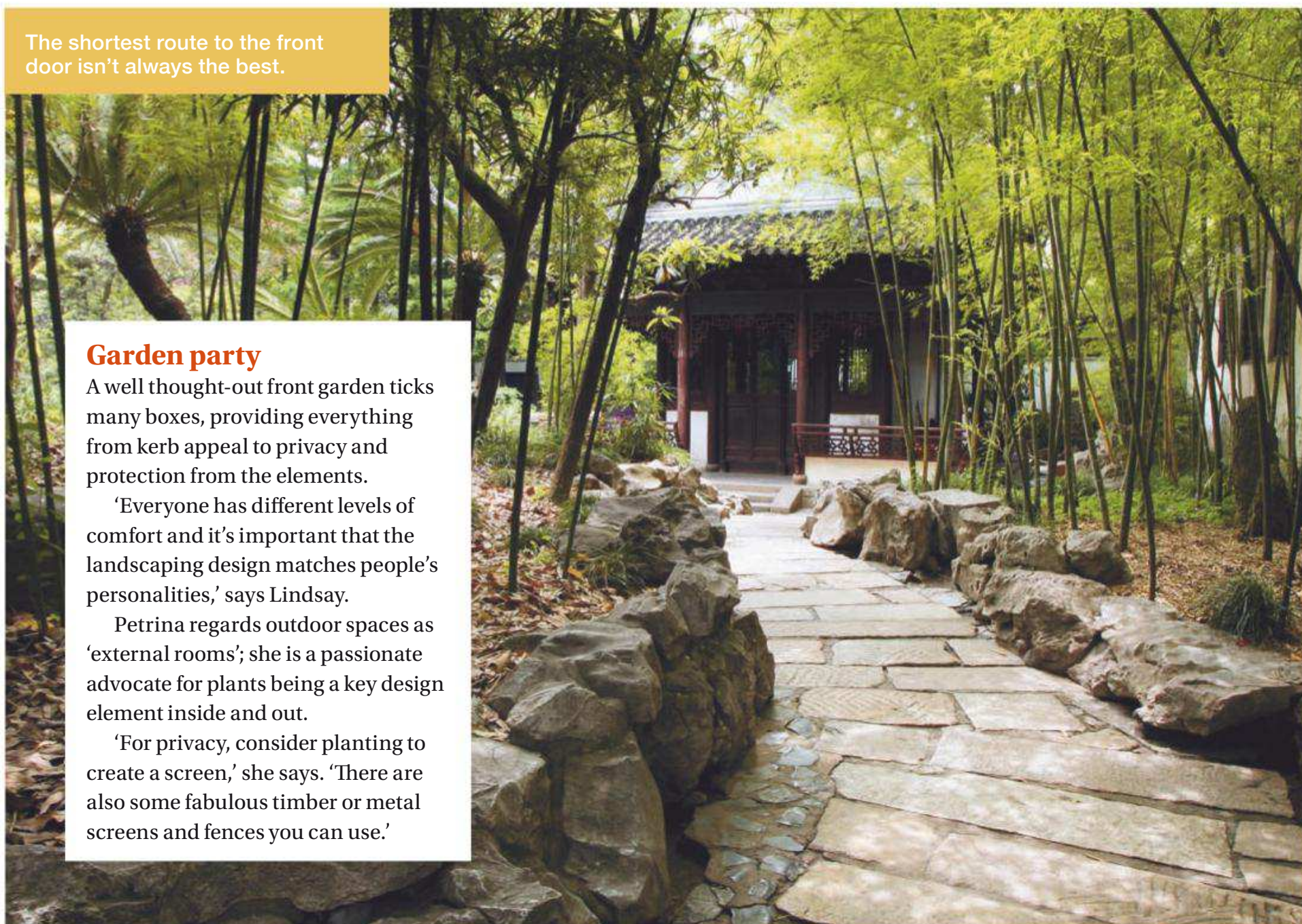
Defining moments

Aim for a seamless connection between the inside and outside of the home for both practical and aesthetic reasons. Create structure and an easy sense of flow to the front door with considered landscaping and paving.

‘Homes can feel impersonal on the outside, as often the focus is purely on the architectural elements,’ says interior designer Petrina. ‘Think about a stone or terrazzo path, and a fabulous front door, either in style or colour. Plants also always create a welcoming feel.’

Architect Lindsay agrees. ‘The front garden is the buffer between public and private space,’ he says. ‘The pathway directs people to the front door, but can also create a journey of approach. It’s often a good idea not to take the most direct route with the path.’

The shortest route to the front door isn’t always the best.



Garden party

A well thought-out front garden ticks many boxes, providing everything from kerb appeal to privacy and protection from the elements.

‘Everyone has different levels of comfort and it’s important that the landscaping design matches people’s personalities,’ says Lindsay.

Petrina regards outdoor spaces as ‘external rooms’; she is a passionate advocate for plants being a key design element inside and out.

‘For privacy, consider planting to create a screen,’ she says. ‘There are also some fabulous timber or metal screens and fences you can use.’



A sunny seating corner on a verandah is a major asset.

Lovely nooks

Does the external entrance to your home include a verandah? If so, consider making the space more versatile by creating a sun-dappled seating corner. Add texture and style to the exterior with furniture pieces that incorporate wicker, natural timber or metal. Most importantly, be sure that the furniture you choose looks as though it belongs among its surrounds.

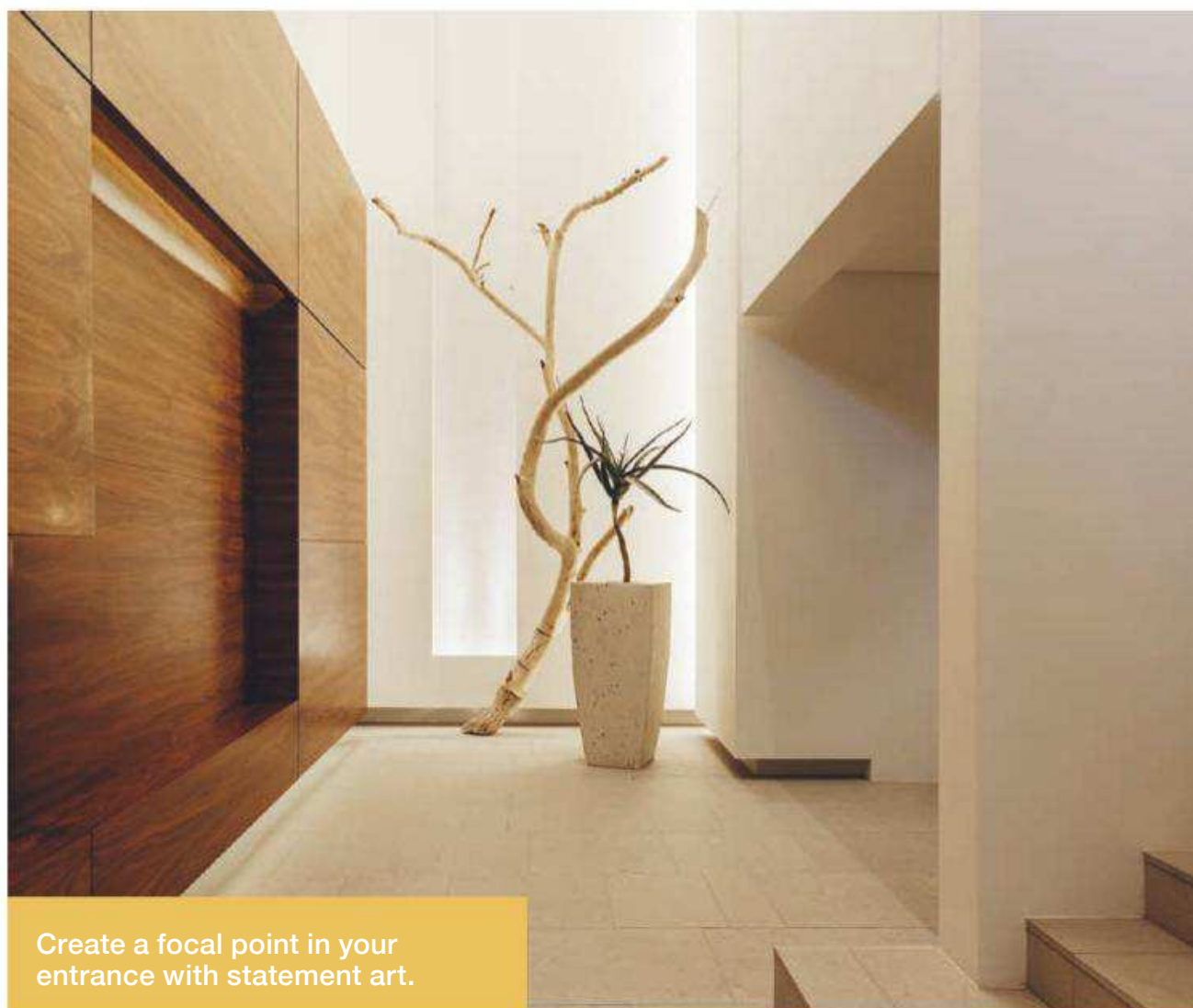
Choosing the most suitable furniture for a hallway is equally important. Ensure the pieces match the style and decor of the entire home.

Don't try to squeeze too much furniture – or too large a piece – into the entry. Half moon-shaped tables can work well by eliminating sharp corners in high-traffic zones, while console tables are also tried and true choices. These can provide the right height under a piece of art or a mirror and be a display place for decorative pieces. Think about adding a bench seat to put on and take off shoes. ♦

Dramatic notes

It can be the big or little things that take a hallway from blah to beautiful. Create a focal point with a statement pendant, an oversized piece of art, a sumptuous rug or a gallery-style wall of framed photos.

'If you love colour and pattern, you might also consider an amazing wallpaper that you see as you walk in the door,' says Petrina. 'The entrance is the best place for a little wow factor.'



Create a focal point in your entrance with statement art.



PICTURES GETTY IMAGES



HOME FRONT

Choose the right front door to make a grand entrance

WORDS MARC MCEVOY

The front door is not just the entry to your home. It provides protection, privacy and it is the first thing your guests see, so it should complement your home's exterior design.

Before buying a front door, ask yourself what purpose it will serve, what material it should be made from, how big a role it should play in security, and whether its design and colour will add kerb appeal to your home.

It is recommended that the front entrance of a home should be a solid-core door. This is for both safety and protection. It is also recommended that you use only shatterproof glass and avoid large panels of glass.

Prices start from about \$300 for a door with a Duracote tempered hardboard face that is ready for painting to more than \$1500 for a classic stile and rail door with crafted glass panels. ►



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Hume Doors 1980 x 810 x 40mm Newington XN2 Unglazed Entrance Door (door hardware not included), \$496. doors.co.nz

TYPES OF DOORS

- ◆ **TIMBER** doors are the traditional entrances for most homes. Solid timber doors are common in older homes. New timber doors can have a timber veneer with an engineered centre, usually a medium density fibreboard (MDF) core, polyboard or honeycomb.
- ◆ **ALUMINIUM** doors are custom-built and powdercoated in a colour, with an insulation core covered by a metal skin. There are many styles, finishes and colours, and they do not rust or need painting.
- ◆ **STEEL** doors are an option if security and durability are the priorities. They have a timber or steel inner frame and the cavities are filled with high-density foam. Most are coated with a baked-on polyester finish, then painted. High-end doors have a weather-resistant vinyl coating or a laminated timber veneer.
- ◆ **FIBREGLASS COMPOSITE** doors suit harsh and humid climates due to their insulation benefits, and are ideal for entrances exposed to weather. The surface mimics the look of timber and can be stained to replicate wood grain.

HOW TO PAINT A FRONT DOOR

Many new doors are primed ready for painting. They are also available with their natural timber finish, such as maple, for staining. Decide what look you are after before installing your door, as it's a lot easier to coat it before you hang it rather than after.

◆ **PAINT** the door before adding the hardware or hinges. Lay it flat for a finish without runs or drips. Paint the panels first using a brush to work it into the corners. Smooth using long strokes in the direction of the grain. Use a foam 150mm roller on the rest of the door to avoid brush marks.

◆ **TO FINISH IN A DAY**, drill a 5mm hole in the base and two at the top. Attach M6 x 75mm coach screws 40mm into the door. Position sawhorses with the door between them. Paint one side, then hold the top two screws to rotate the door on the single base screw.



REVIVE AN OLD DOOR

To restore an old door, remove it from the jamb. Take off the hinges and hardware to prepare the timber for painting. Apply two coats of an oil-based full-gloss enamel for weatherproofing.



1 SCRAPE flaking paint from the front, back and edges, then smooth all over using 120-grit sandpaper.



2 REPAIR dents and scratches with a timber filler, using a two-part epoxy on major damage.



3 SAND the door with 180- to 220-grit sandpaper, using a sanding sponge on shaped areas, then paint.

HOW TO HANG A NEW FRONT DOOR

When buying a new front door, find one that fits into the existing jamb opening. Measure the opening accurately before heading out to shop. A standard solid-core door is 1980mm high, 810mm wide and 40mm thick, but entrances are often of varying sizes. You can have a door manufacturer make one to fit the size of your doorway.

When hanging, it should be fitted with a 10mm gap from the floor, and a gap from the jamb of 3mm on the sides and top to allow for expansion and

WHAT YOU NEED

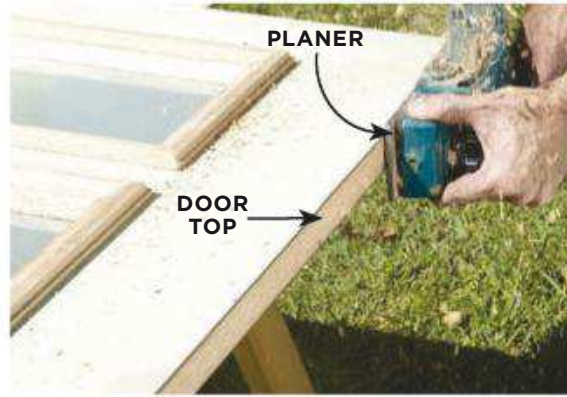
- Builder's square
- Tape measure, pencil
- 2 sawhorses
- Planer, marking gauge
- 25mm chisel
- 100mm butt hinges x 3
- 8g x 40mm timber screws x 24
- Drill, 2mm bit

contraction with weather changes. If the new door is a tight fit, trim it with a circular saw or planer.



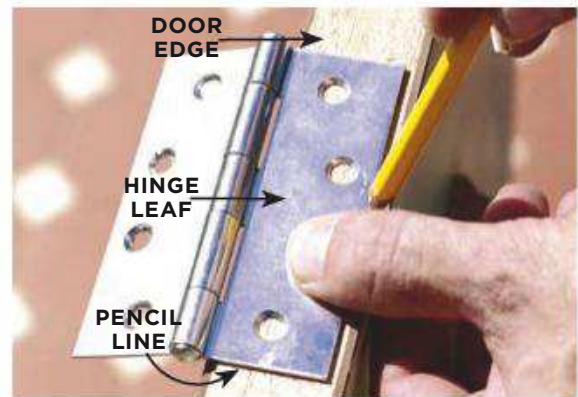
1 Check jamb is square

Use a builder's square to check the corners of the jamb are square. To make adjustments, wedge the door at the top hinge side of the jamb so you can scribe lines down the hinge side of the door and at the top and base.



2 Trim the door to fit

Place the door on sawhorses to trim the top and base using an electric or hand planer to the marked line, planing from the ends to the centre. To trim the sides, place the door on its side and follow the same process.



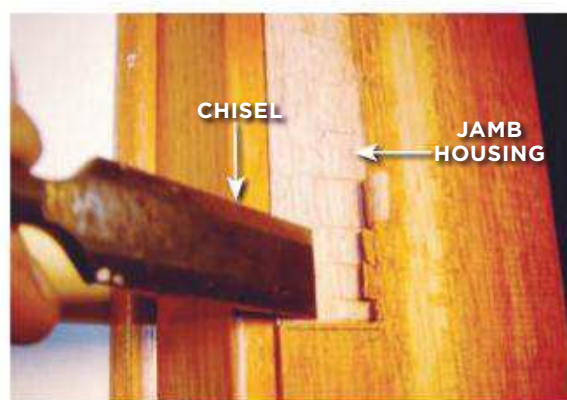
3 Mark the hinges

Position a hinge leaf on the edge of the door 100mm from the top, 150mm from the base and in the centre, marking around it. On the back of the door, scribe a line matching the hinge thickness using a marking gauge at each position.



4 Make hinge housings

Use a 25mm chisel to cut lines 1mm inside the hinge marks to prevent the timber from splitting. Turn the chisel bevel facedown to make close fluted cuts, then pare the waste to the set-out lines. Test, then secure hinges with 8g x 40mm screws.



5 Prepare jamb housings

Wedge the door in the jamb with even gaps so you can mark hinges on the jamb. Use a chisel to cut out the housings, then check the fit.

TIP Drill 2mm pilot holes for screws towards the back of the hinge holes so the screws pull tight into the housing.



6 Hang the door

Position the door at 90° to the jamb, wedging it so the hinges fit in the housings on the jamb. Drill the pilot holes and secure the top and base hinges only with two screws. Test the opening and closing before securing all the hinges with screws. ►



Yale Assure Keyed Digital Deadbolt with Bluetooth, \$331.55. yalelock.co.nz



Yale Look Digital Door Viewer, \$389. yalelock.co.nz

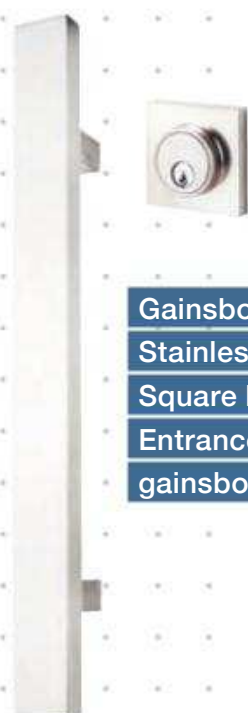


Schlage Polished Brass F Series Gripset Plymouth Single Cylinder, \$200. allegion.co.nz



Schlage Sense Smart Century Deadbolt, \$435.35. allegion.co.nz

Samsung Smart Door Lock with Card Reader Key Tag, \$649. samsung.com



Gainsborough 450mm Stainless Steel Square Pull Handle Entrance Set, \$178.50. gainsboroughhardware.com.au



Sylvan Aloha Entrance Latch Set Satin Chrome Plate, \$242.95. sylvan.co.nz



Samsung Voice-guided Deadbolt Digital Door Lock, \$412.90. samsung.com

LOCKS AND HANDLES

Front doors can be complemented with stylish but functional locks and handles, which come in many designs, including digital devices.

Traditional accessories offering security and style include knob locksets with keys. These often come in deadbolt combination sets for extra protection.

Entrance pull handles can be installed with both key or digital locks.

Digital locks are becoming popular because of their versatility and keyless convenience. For example, the Schlage S-6000 Digital Touchpad Door Lock operates with PIN codes, a fob or card, which are supplied with the device.

The Schlage S-6000 also has a manual override in case of emergency, such as a fire, and includes eight PIN codes allowing temporary access for tradies or guests. ♦



Schlage S-6000 Digital Touchpad Door Lock, \$367. allegion.co.nz



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SPRING

Set goals for the annual deep clean to make your home spotless

WORDS MARC MCEVOY



WHAT YOU NEED

- Plastic cleaning caddy
- Large plastic bucket
- Glass cleaner, timber polish
- General-purpose cleaner
- Heavy-duty degreasing cleaner
- Powdered scouring cleanser
- Lamb's wool duster
- Nylon scrub pad
- Toothbrush, toilet brush
- Stiff 38mm paintbrush
- Window squeegee
- Microfibre cloths
- Rags, cloths, paper towel
- Rubbish bag, apron
- Rubber gloves, safety glasses

SPRUCE-UP

Now spring is here, it's time to rid your home of the dirt, dust and grime that has built up during the colder months.

The annual ritual of spring-cleaning involves decluttering, reorganising, repairing, mopping, scrubbing, wiping, dusting and polishing, which have obvious benefits for the look and feel of your home.

But a clean house also benefits your health and wellbeing. During winter, when your home has been closed up, carpet, furnishings, bedding and curtains have collected airborne bacteria, mould spores, dust mite faeces, pet dander, pollen and pollutants, as well as the everyday dirt, sand and grit that gets brought inside.

A tidy, clean home creates a healthy environment, relieves stress, makes you happier and helps overcome allergies at a time when allergens are rife. You can use commercial cleaners but also try homemade solutions.

Spring-cleaning is a big job and is best organised around goals and schedules. Have a rubbish-removal plan and focus on one room at a time. Begin by decluttering before giving each space a thorough clean.

Start on the living room and bedrooms before tackling the bathroom. Leave the kitchen and laundry last, as they will be the command centre of your cleaning operation. And don't neglect the outdoors, including the deck, kennel and garage. ►



PICTURES GETTY IMAGES

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DECLUTTERING

In a busy household, especially with kids contributing, clutter can creep up on you. The first task of a good spring-clean is to declutter. Professional organiser Jo Carmichael of All Sorted Out (allsortedout.com.au) prepares homes for sale. Here are her top spring-cleaning tips for tidying and organising seven important areas of the home.



1

WARDROBE

Remove any clothes that you no longer wear, whether they're too tight, too big, worn out, dud presents or bad purchases. If they're still in good shape, donate them to charity. Otherwise, throw them out. Deciding what to wear will be easier now.



2

BEDROOM

Clear the tops of the dressing table and chest of drawers. Wipe them clean and only put back things you really enjoy looking at or are going to use. Move books and magazines you've already read to a bookshelf in the living room or give them to a friend. Add a pot plant or flowers.



3

LIVING & FAMILY ROOMS

Move old newspapers and magazines to the paper recycling bin. Collect everything in the living areas that belongs in the bedrooms, study and kitchen and return to those rooms. If it's a sunny day, put scatter cushions in the sun to rejuvenate them. Plump up the sofa cushions, wipe the coffee tables clean of dust, and put out a bowl of fruit or vase of flowers.



KITCHEN

Remove everything from the benchtop and wipe it clean. Give the splashback a scrub to make it sparkle. Return to the bench only essential items, such as the kettle, coffee maker, juicer or toaster. Put everything else in a utility cupboard if you have one.

4

DIY TIP

Wear safety glasses, gloves and a long-sleeve shirt while cleaning to avoid skin contact with acid, bleach and abrasives.

5

UNDER THE SINK

Keep dishwashing detergent, cloths and wipes under the sink, so the benchtop isn't littered. Only keep the current detergent and dishwashing items here. Store any oversupplies elsewhere so this area doesn't get clogged up.



GARAGE

What happened in here? Can you see your car? 'Keep like with like' is the decluttering theme to follow here. Straighten out this multipurpose room by storing tools with tools, sports gear with sports gear – you get the idea. Use plastic bins, a cube cupboard or hooks on the wall to contain the grouped items.

Remember to be ruthless. It is natural to outgrow hobbies and interests, and the gear that came with it. If you haven't been to the snow in the past seven years, those skis are unlikely to be up to par if you decide to hit the mountain. It's better to hire a new pair that suits your current ability. Sell yours online or donate them to charity so someone else can make use of them.

6

MEDICINE CABINET

Tidying up the medicine chest is a winning spring-cleaning task. Tip all items onto the bench and scan each for its use-by date. Set aside the expired items ready to return to your local pharmacy – it is not only safer but more environmentally friendly to dispose of them in this way than with household rubbish. Return any unused or expired

medicines to your pharmacist for safe disposal. To dispose of needles and other sharps, place them in an approved sharps container.

Clean your medicine chest, and organise the meds into groups in small containers, such as first aid, vitamins, cough and cold treatments, pain relief and prescriptions. ►

7



CLEANING DIFFICULT AREAS

We know what you're thinking. Whenever you do your regular cleaning, there are certain unpleasant areas that you put off cleaning if you can because a spot is hard to reach, or a bit fiddly, or particularly grotty ...

Put off no more – it's spring, remember. Time to tackle all those tricky areas that have been escaping your attention and cleaning implements the other 51 weeks of the year.



CEILINGS

Look up: your ceiling needs attention, even if dusting is all that's required. Use a duster with an extension handle to loosen or capture dirt and cobwebs. A long-handled lamb's wool duster or a vacuum with a brush attachment also works well.

If a painted ceiling is dirty, use a sponge mop on an extension handle or stand on a stepladder and use a foam-rubber sponge. Mix 60-90ml of a general-purpose cleaner in 4L of water and wipe the dirty area. Dry with a towel to avoid bead marks.

CEILING FANS

The blades on ceiling fans are very effective surfaces for quietly collecting dust when dormant during winter. Use a stepladder to reach the fan blades so you can wipe their tops thoroughly with a lamb's wool duster.

To remove thicker dust and dirt build-up, mix warm water with a squirt of dishwashing liquid and clean the blades with a sponge or light scourer. Rinse the sponge in clean water and wipe again. Then dry the blades with a clean cloth. Use this process to clean other table and floor fans.



EXHAUST FANS

To clean an exhaust fan, turn the switch off, unplug the fan or disengage the circuit breaker. Remove the fan grill and wash it in warm water and dishwashing detergent, then rinse and dry. For kitchen fans, also wash the filter.

On many models, you can remove the fan and motor by unscrewing the mounting bracket and unplugging the cord. Otherwise, while standing on

a good stepladder, vacuum the blades using the crevice attachment, then wipe them with a damp cloth. Do the same for the housing. Clean the motor and other dusty parts with a stiff paintbrush.

Don't forget the rangehood exhaust fan over your stovetop. These filters collect grime: remove and place in the dishwasher or in a solution of hot water and dishwashing detergent. Don't use ammonia, as this will darken the metal.





CARPETS & RUGS

Carpets and rugs should be cleaned regularly with a vacuum. But to remove ingrained dirt and stains, steam clean them at least once a year – a far more effective, but labour-intensive, treatment.

It's best to clear a room of furniture as far as practical. Then rent a machine (Bunnings have simple-to-operate models that rent for about \$60 for 24 hours). Choose a warm day, ventilate the room, and follow the instructions. Don't walk on the carpet until it's dry. Done!



BLINDS & CURTAINS

Blinds and curtains are notorious for collecting dust.

♦ **VENETIAN BLINDS** Adjust to expose the flat surface and use a brush attachment on your vacuum. Reverse the slats and repeat. Clean unexposed parts with a microfibre duster.

For a final clean, saturate a cloth with methylated spirits, then wrap it around a rubber

spatula and run it along the open slats.

♦ **FABRIC BLINDS** Check if they are washable. If so, take them down and immerse for no more than a minute in a bathtub full of warm water containing ¼ cup of mild dishwashing detergent. Use a soft brush to scrub both sides. Rinse with fresh water and hang up to dry.

♦ **VINYL BLINDS** Wash with a sponge or soft cloth using

a solution of ¼ cup of white vinegar and 1L of warm water.

♦ **CURTAINS** Dust them where they hang using a vacuum with a dusting brush or upholstery attachment. Start at the top and work down. Pay attention to the tops and hems. Hold the curtains taut so they don't get sucked into the nozzle. If they are machine washable, put them in on a delicate cycle. Be gentle when drying them in a machine. It's best to hang them up to dry in the sun. ►



KITCHEN CUPBOARDS

Dust cabinetry with a clean cloth and wipe with a damp cloth. For stains around handles and on doors, use a strong all-purpose household cleaner on cupboards made of plastic laminate, metal or glass. Spray it onto a cloth or sponge, apply to the dirty areas, let it sit for a few minutes, then wipe off with a rinsed cloth or sponge. Buff briefly with a dry cloth.

For timber cupboards, apply dishwashing detergent to a cloth or sponge and rub into the dirty areas. For more serious grime, wash with sugar soap, then go over with a damp cloth, followed by a dry cloth. Use these methods for shelves, too.



TIMBER DECKS

Decks need protection from the elements or they will deteriorate before their time. Sweep them regularly to avoid twig and leaf stains, and remove any piles of organic matter to reduce mildew and rot.

Give the surface a thorough scrub with a deck cleaner such as Cabot's Deck Clean. This prepares the timber

for a new protective coating, such as a stain or decking oil.

To remove stubborn stains and mildew, try 30 Seconds Outdoor Cleaner or use a homemade bleaching solution. Mix 30-90g of oxygen bleach (not chlorine bleach) with 4L of warm water. Apply with a mop or brush; don't scrub. Wait 15-20 minutes for it to soak in, then hose down to remove.

HOW TO REPAIR ROTTEN TIMBER

Rotten windowsills and frames can be patched using a timber hardener and a two-part epoxy filler. The hardener prepares the surface.

The filler can be mixed to set quickly or slowly. It can be shaped

when partially dry to save on sanding time and, once hard, it can be sanded, drilled and painted like the surrounding timber.

Build up the rotten areas in stages if the damage is deep. If you

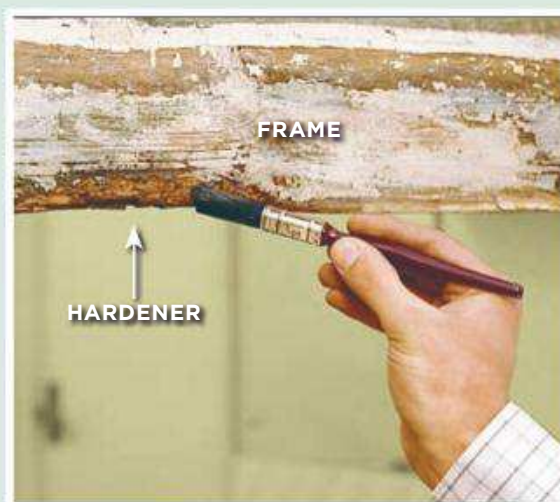
have to reconstruct a corner or a deep hole in the structure, attach a couple of screws first so the filler will have something to grip.

Protect the timber with a coat of preservative before painting.



1 Remove the rot

Use a scraper to remove the paint around the damaged area, then dig out the worst of the rot with a chisel. Use a hot-air gun to dry out any wet timber.



2 Apply timber hardener

Using a small paintbrush, apply the liquid timber hardener until it stops soaking into the timber, then leave it to set for 24 hours.



3 Add epoxy filler

Mix the filler, a little at a time to keep it workable, then apply it with a scraper. Shape with a utility knife before it hardens, then sand when dry. ►



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KENNELS

Pets are fussy about smells, so avoid using a strong chemical cleaner on a kennel. Start by emptying the kennel and giving it a thorough hose out, then scrub it with a bristle brush and an organic cleaner or a simple homemade solution such as:

- 4 tablespoons of lemon extract or lemon juice with 4L of water.
- 1 cup of vinegar with 3 cups of water.

These eco-friendly cleaners will leave your dog's habitat clean and smelling good. Wash the dog's blankets, dry them in the sun, and sprinkle bicarbonate of soda on them to remove bad odours.



DUVETS

A 50:50 feather and down or 100% polyester quilt can be washed using a gentle warm machine wash or by hand. Follow with a warm rinse and reduced or gentle spin. Do not bleach, soak or wring. Line dry over several lines to take the weight, pulling to shape and shaking frequently.

When almost dry, the duvet can be tumble-dried on a warm setting. Two or three tennis balls added to the dryer will help keep the duvet fluffy.

Lamb's wool duvets should be gently handwashed in an approved wool detergent. Squeeze the quilt gently to release dirt. Do not spin dry – always dry on the line.



FLOORS

There are many different types of materials used for floor coverings, but the most common are timber and ceramic tiles.

♦ **TIMBER** Start with damp mopping but use water sparingly. When damp mopping isn't going to do the trick, make up one of these general-purpose cleaners:

- Mix ½ cup of apple cider vinegar in 4L of water.
- Brew tea using 2 teabags per 1L of water (tea's tannins help bring out the natural wood tones).

Dip a soft sponge or cloth in the solution, wring it out and wipe the floor. Buff dry using a cloth.

♦ **CERAMIC TILES** Try damp mopping first. If they need more

work, try one of these solutions:

- 1 capful of methylated spirits in 4L of water.
- 1 tablespoon of borax and 2 tablespoons of ammonia in 4L of water. Make sure you wear gloves, as borax is toxic.

Apply with a mop or an electric-cleaner polisher. Rinse well with clear water.

Clean any stained grout by scrubbing with a toothbrush or nylon scrub pad dipped in a solution of ¼ cup of vinegar and 4L of water. ►

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WALLS

Start by dusting with a lamb's wool duster or a microfibre cloth wrapped around a broom.

To remove spots, rub gently with an art eraser, an eraser pad or a paste made from bicarbonate of soda and water. Use mineral turps or other white spirit on grease and WD-40 on crayon marks. Methylated spirits works well on ink or felt-tip pen marks.

To wash walls that are painted or covered with vinyl wallpaper, try a cleaning solution such as:

- 1 cup of borax and 2 tablespoons of dishwashing detergent in 4L of water.
- 1 cup of ammonia, 1 teaspoon of dishwashing liquid and 4L of water.

Keep the cleaning solution in one bucket and plain water for rinsing in another bucket.

WINDOWS

Always clean the windowsills and frames before the glass. Vacuum to remove loose dirt before wiping with a damp cloth.

Most glass in windows can be cleaned with plain water and newspaper. Start by wiping the glass with a wet sponge, then rubbing it dry using newspaper. Cheap and simple.

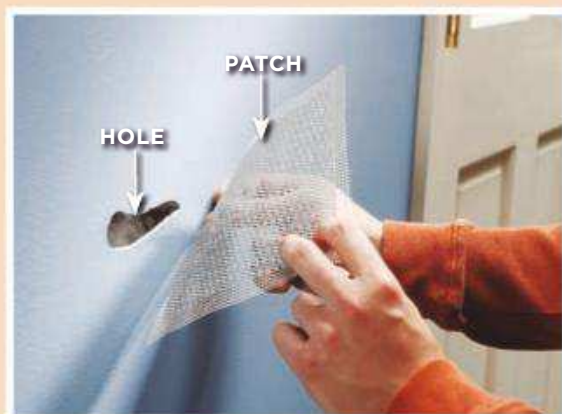
If the glass has grime on it, spray on glass cleaner, wipe off using a sponge, then follow with a window squeegee.

Start at the top and work down to avoid drips. Don't clean in direct sunlight or you might get streaks. Make drying strokes up and down on one side of the window and back and forth on the other so you can tell which side has streaks.



HOW TO PATCH A PLASTERBOARD HOLE

The usual way to cover a large hole, such as a doorknob disaster, is to cut out the damage, insert new plasterboard and reinforcing tape, then smooth it over with joint compound. But here's a shortcut: use an adhesive-backed metal patch – they're cheap and save a few steps. Here's how to use one.



1 Attach the patch

Scrape off any protruding paint or broken plasterboard around the hole. To prepare the area, rough up the surface using a sanding block and remove and dust with a brush. Apply the aluminium and fibreglass patch over the hole – just like a bandage.



2 Apply the compound

Spread joint compound over the patch using a broad tapping knife. Smooth the compound, let it dry, then add another coat. Apply three or four thin, smooth coats, not one thick build-up. Extend each coat a few centimetres beyond the previous coat to form tapering edges.



3 Sand the surface

Sand the dried compound using a 120-grit sanding sponge in a circular motion. If you did a good job of smoothing and tapering the compound, sanding will take just a few minutes and the slight hump on the wall will be invisible after priming and painting. ►

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*Source; YouGov Galaxy research for Catalyst 2018



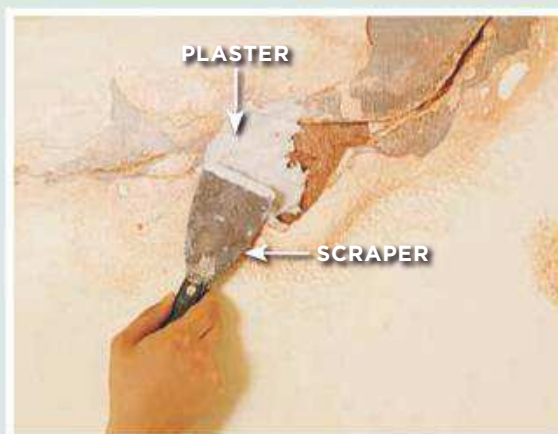
HOW TO REPAIR CRACKS IN PLASTER

Repairing cracks in plaster is a cost-effective way to improve the look of a wall. To repair the wall properly, make sure you prepare the crack and the surrounding surface before applying new plaster.



1 Clean the damage

Remove loose or crumbling plaster with a scraper. Dust out the crack with a clean paintbrush, then spray water lightly to dampen the wall. Wait a few minutes for the plaster to absorb the water, then apply a bonding agent with a paintbrush and leave to dry for 45 minutes.



2 Fill the crack

Mix plaster according to instructions on the pack. Use a scraper to fill the crack from the centre out, to a depth just below the wall surface. Use the edge of the scraper to score a crosshatch pattern on the surface. The next layer of plaster will hold on to this. Let the plaster dry.



3 Sand the surface

Apply a second coat of plaster using a broad knife. Check to ensure the surface is level and that there are no air bubbles. When dry, sand lightly with a sanding block covered with 120-grit sanding paper. Refill indentations, allow to dry, and repeat the sanding. ♦

Get the gear



Sabco Handled
Scrubbing Brush, \$5.50.
bunnings.co.nz



Interworld 9.6L
Plastic Bucket, \$1.
bunnings.co.nz



Oates 20cm
Window Squeegee,
\$11. bunnings.co.nz



Selleys Professional
Sugar Soap, \$4.95 for 1L.
selleys.co.nz



Lynn River Ultra Gloves
Superior Silverlined Large
Blue, \$2.90. lynnriverriver.co.nz

Mr Clean Double Action Scrub,
\$7.35 for a pack of three.
bunnings.co.nz



Ezy Storage Cleaning Caddy,
\$9. ezystorage.com

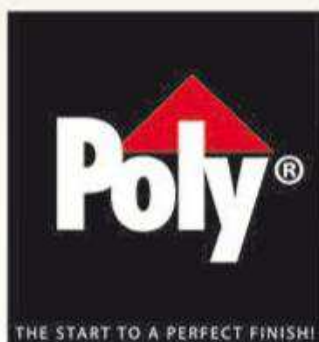


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Refresh a

HUTCH

PROJECT AND PICTURES
MELISSA DARR

This outdated hutch needed only a little TLC to turn it into a stunning modern centrepiece for the family home. With a few straightforward steps – from sanding to painting and adding new fixtures – crafty blogger Melissa Darr transformed this drab piece into a lasting heirloom. For an authentic look, she chose to retain a timber finish on the benchtop and brought out the grain using brown furniture wax. For the finishing touches, Melissa opted for gold knobs and cup pull handles.

Get more DIY from Melissa
Follow her blog thewhimsicalwife.com

After

New paint and fittings turn dull into dramatic.

Before

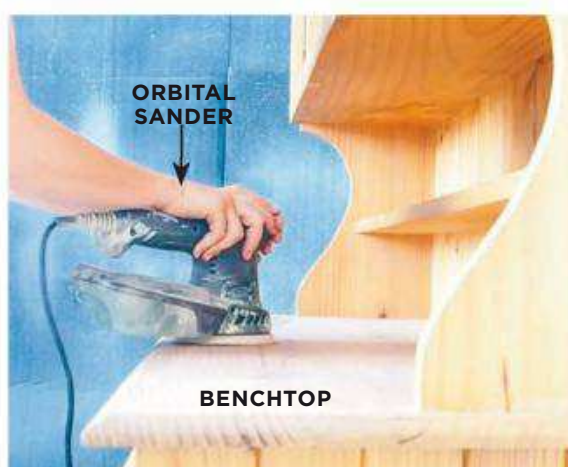
1 2 3

WHAT YOU NEED

- Paint sprayer
- Sealable bags
- 120-grit sandpaper
- Masking tape
- Old newspaper
- Stain-blocking undercoat
- Blue-grey paint
- White paint
- Interior stain
- Screwdriver
- Orbital sander
- 120-grit sanding disc
- Paintbrush
- Furniture wax
- Soft cloths
- 3 knobs
- 3 cup pull handles

1 Prepare the hutch

Remove the old fixtures, together with the hutch doors and drawers, using a screwdriver. Set aside the hinges and screws in sealable bags in order to reattach the doors later. Give the entire hutch, doors and drawers a light sand with 120-grit sandpaper.



2 Sand the benchtop

Use the orbital sander with a 120-grit sanding disc to sand the benchtop all the way back to bare wood. Brush down the entire hutch to remove any loose sanding dust. Mask the benchtop by covering the entire surface with newspaper and securing the edges using masking tape.



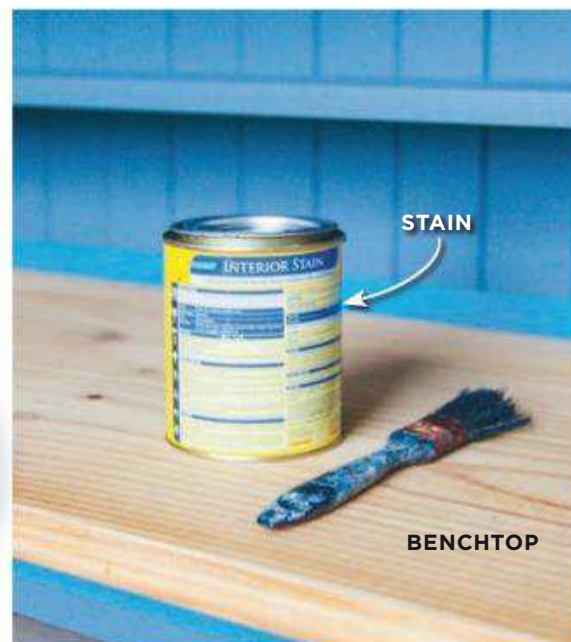
3 Apply the paint

Using the paint sprayer, apply a coat of undercoat over the entire hutch, including the doors and drawers. Once dry, apply a coat of blue-grey paint over the hutch, doors and drawers, but excluding the inside of the upper and lower shelving (some overspray will go onto these areas). Leave to dry for two hours, then apply a second coat.



4 Paint the shelving

Cover the hutch with newspaper and tape, including the outside and the top, but leaving the inside of the upper and lower shelving exposed. Using the paint sprayer, apply two coats of white to the inside of the upper and lower shelving, allowing to dry between coats.



5 Stain the benchtop

Remove the tape and newspaper, then wipe over the benchtop with a damp cloth. Using a paintbrush, apply a coat of stain. Leave it on for 3-5 minutes, then wipe it off with a clean, soft cloth. Allow to dry for two hours before applying a second coat of stain. Leave it for slightly longer until it darkens to the desired result. Wipe off and allow to dry overnight.



6 Finish with wax

Remove the tape and newspaper from the hutch. Use a clean, soft cloth to apply a coat of furniture wax to the stained benchtop. Leave for 5 minutes, then buff with another clean, soft cloth to give a nice sheen. Replace the doors and drawers and attach the new knobs and cup pull handles. ♦

RESTORE A TEAK SIDEBOARD



Transform a worn 1960s furniture item with careful sanding and the right finish

PROJECT AND PICTURES MARC MCEVOY



This Danish sideboard had been sulking like a bruised prize fighter in a corner of a family home for years. Its battle scars included chips, scratches, wine and ink stains, and a broken hinge.

It is a 2050 x 780 x 450mm four-door, three-drawer teak-veneer Chiswell piece made in the 1960s. Danish mid-century

furniture was made popular by companies such as Chiswell and Parker.

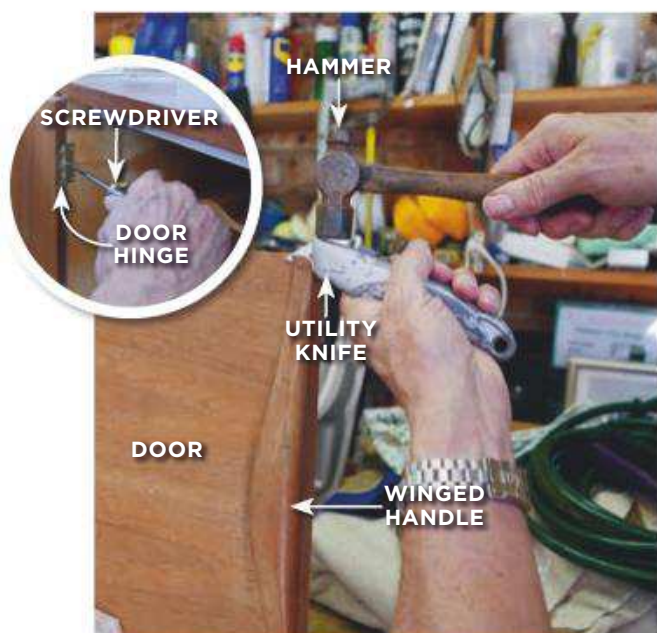
Two doors needed solid-teak winged handle replacements, as one was broken and another was missing. A chance find of an abandoned sideboard on the side of the road provided a perfect match for the winged handles.

A utility knife was used to pry off the old handles, and the surface was sanded by hand to protect the veneer, which is only 2-3mm thick. It was coated with Scandinavian oil, which is mostly tung oil, to lift the grain, and rubbed with carnauba wax to leave a satin sheen.

WHAT YOU NEED

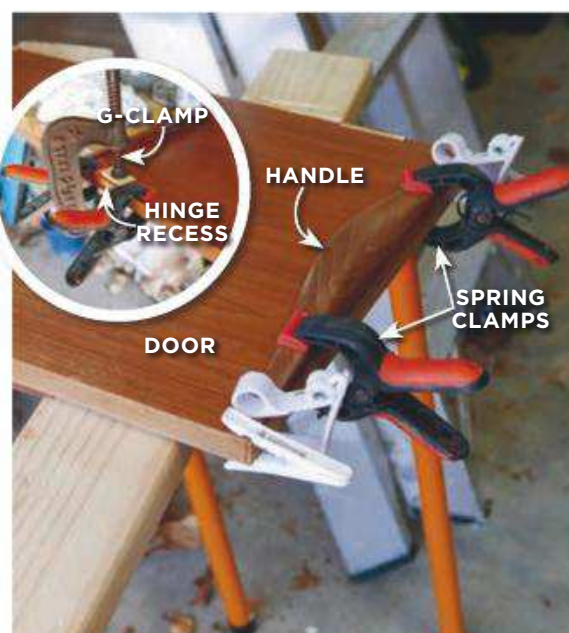
- Flat-head screwdriver
- Utility knife, hammer
- Steel wool (0000 grade)
- Methylated spirits
- Sanding block
- Sandpaper (120, 180, 320 grit)
- Laundry bleach
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Oxalic acid
- Timber putty, putty knife
- PVA adhesive
- Spring clamps, G-clamp
- Scandinavian oil
- Carnauba wax
- Rags, cloths
- Safety glasses
- Dust mask, gloves

1 2 3



1 Prepare the doors

Use a screwdriver to remove the flat-head screws attaching the doors. Remove three drawers. For this project, two handles were removed from the discarded doors with a utility knife and hammer. The handles and their new doors were cleaned with steel wool and methylated spirits, then sanded with, in order, 120-, 180- and 320-grit sandpaper.



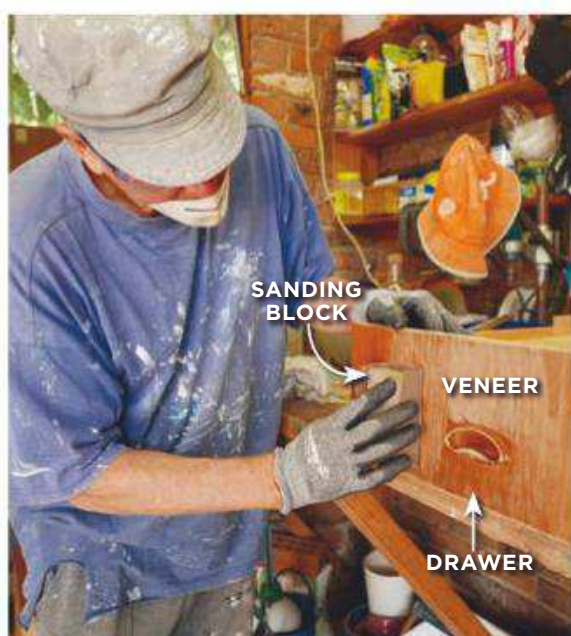
2 Attach new handles

To remove old adhesive from doors, sand it with 120-grit sandpaper and smooth with 180-grit. Lay the doors on a flat surface and attach the new handles with PVA adhesive, securing them with spring clamps and wiping off any excess. Repair the damaged hinge recess with adhesive and a G-clamp. Allow the repaired recess 12 hours to dry.



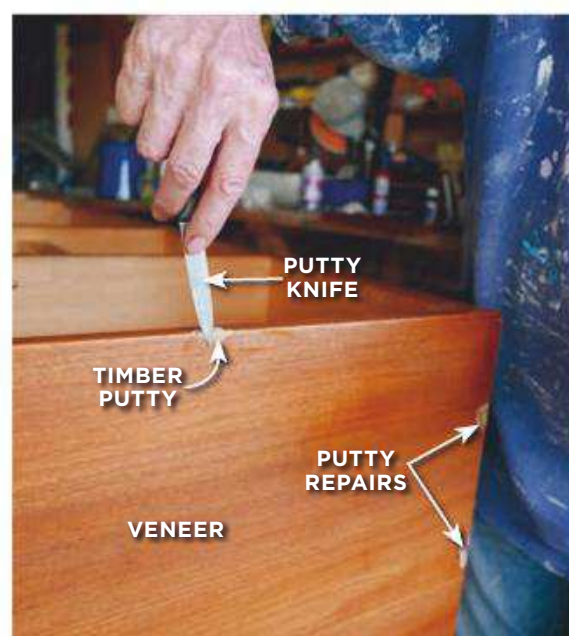
3 Clean the veneer

Lightly sand the surface with 180-grit sandpaper, then clean it with fine steel wool and methylated spirits, using a firm rubbing action. Allow plenty of meths to spread over the surface, then wipe clean with a rag. Also clean the doors and drawer fronts. Repeat this process if the aged patina has collected a lot of grime over the years.



4 Sand the surface

When the veneer has dried from cleaning, use 120-grit sandpaper to remove light scratches and stains. Sand the surface along the grain, including the base, legs, doors and drawer faces. Wipe clean. Repeat with 180-grit sandpaper, then 320-grit, until the surfaces are smooth. Clean all the surfaces with meths and a rag.



5 Repair the holes

For heavy stains, such as ink, dab with laundry bleach or hydrogen peroxide and leave to dry. For black water marks, brush on oxalic acid, leave for 30 minutes, wipe off, then sand lightly again. Repeat if needed. Fill deep scratches and chips with matching timber putty or attach old veneer pieces, securing them to the chipboard substrate with adhesive.



6 Finish the surface

Once dry, sand all repairs. Wipe the surface clean, then apply a coat of Scandinavian oil with a rag, wiping off excess. Let it dry for 12 hours and apply a second coat, removing excess. Allow at least 24 hours for the oil to dry, then rub on carnauba wax with a rag. Wait 20 minutes, then buff with a dry cloth. Refit the drawers and reattach the doors. ♦

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SMALL WONDERS

WORDS MARC MCEVOY



Use an oscillating multifunction tool for tricky jobs in tight spaces

If your next project involves sanding, removing grout, cutting, scraping or even plunge-cutting in very tight spaces, you will make good use of an oscillating multifunction tool.

Also called a multi-tool because of its many uses, an oscillating tool is a popular device among DIY enthusiasts. It operates by moving its attachment side to side at about 20,000 strokes per minute, with an

oscillation of about 3°, which makes the tool vibrate but easy to control.

Its attachments include saw blades, sanding pads and grinding discs. With the right one, it can cut through bolts or just slice through adhesive with minimal damage to the joining surfaces.

Here we show you how to make the most of this tool for specific applications and what to look for when buying one.

HOW TO USE IT

Use an oscillating tool by gently moving it from side to side with uniform pressure. This applies to when you are both sanding and cutting. If uneven pressure is used when sanding, the pad will wear too quickly. For scraping, sanding and cutting, a high oscillation rate is best.

An oscillating tool should be used for plunge cuts only in soft materials, such as plasterboard and timber. ►

WAYS TO USE IT

MAKE PLUNGE CUTS

One of the handiest uses of an oscillating tool is making plunge cuts in materials such as plasterboard, plywood and weatherboard. It's ideal for cutting away a damaged section of a wall as well as making cut-outs for electrical switch plates or multimedia cables.

TIP Rotate the blade to cut perfectly neat, perpendicular corners.



UNDERCUT A DOORJAMB

When installing a new laminate floor or tiling over an existing surface, it is often necessary to trim the base of the doorjamb. Instead of using a handsaw, make the cut with an oscillating tool using a segment blade. Position an offcut of flooring under the blade to use as a guide for aligning the blade at the height required.



DIY TIP

Check for nails, screws or other foreign objects before using a multi-tool to cut material so you don't ruin an attachment that's unsuitable.



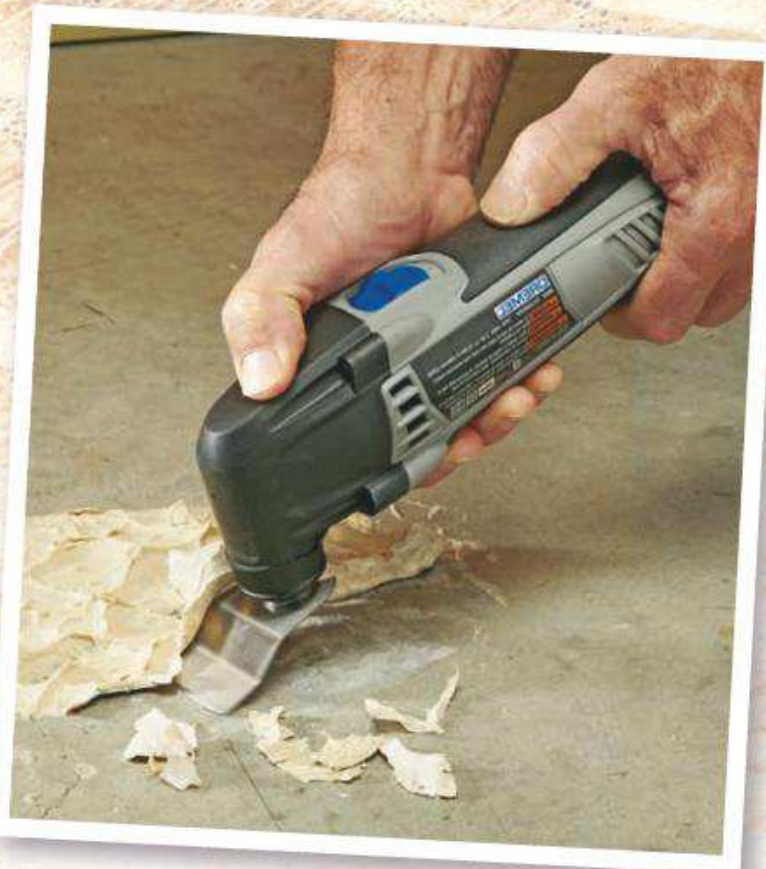
SLICE THROUGH FASTENERS

When replacing weatherboards or wall trim, you may be faced with screws that have seized or corroded, or nails that split the timber when you try to pry it off. The solution is to lever the board out just wide enough to slip in the blade of an oscillating tool, then use a timber and metal blade to cut through the stubborn fasteners.

TIP Protect the adjacent surface with an offcut of sheet metal.

GIVE CHISELS A BREAK

Making flush cuts in small pieces of timber, such as when trimming dowels or cutting packers around a new doorjamb, has usually been done with a sharp chisel. An oscillating tool with a flush cut blade can do the job as precisely without the shock of a hammer blow, thereby avoiding the potential to jar a key component out of alignment.



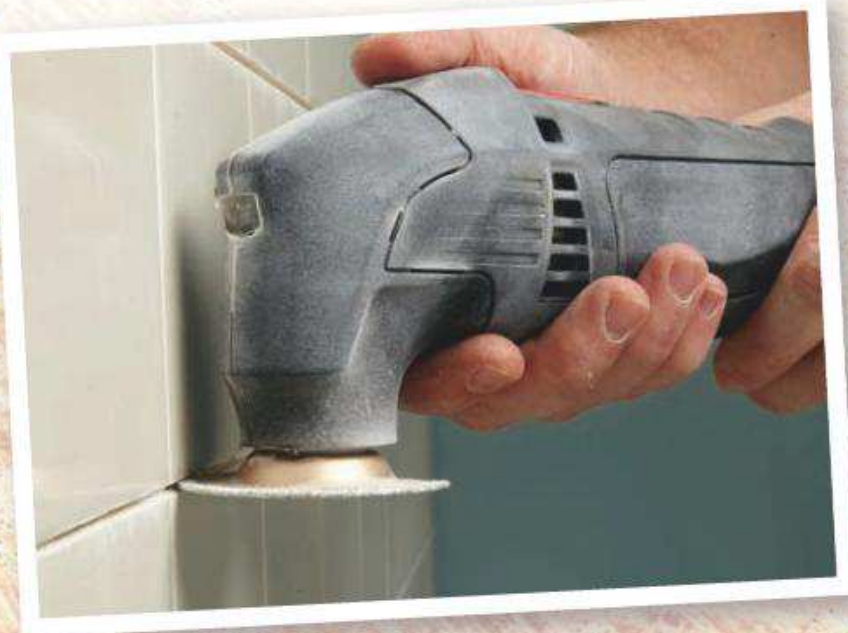
SCRAPE OFF DRIED GUNK

Another invaluable use for this tool is to mount a scraper attachment and prise away dried adhesive, peel up vinyl tiles or strip old silicone. With a chisel accessory, it can even chip off small splashes of dried concrete after a masonry job.

REMOVE GROUT EASILY

Fitted with a carbide grit segment blade, an oscillating tool is great for chewing through old grout. It's faster than using a handheld grout saw and it won't damage tiles or whip up a dust storm.

TIP It's best to use a corded tool for this job as removing grout can take a long time.



ACCESS AWKWARD AREAS

One of the great things about oscillating tools is that they have a very compact working envelope. In other words, the cutting or grinding is highly localised, and situated at the front of the tool. Unlike circular saws or jigsaws, which all need quite a lot of clearance around the actual cutting edge of the blade, oscillating tools can be used unimpeded in a tight spot. ►



The more powerful a tool is, the tougher the jobs it can handle.

If performance is your priority, a corded model is the best choice. It will have a higher amp rating, making it more powerful. But for quick jobs, try the convenience of a cordless model.

Oscillating tools are all similar in shape but vary in balance and how they are held.

Comfort can be a factor due to the vibration from using this tool, so ask to try one out instore with the power cord or battery connected before buying.

MULTI-TOOL BUYING GUIDE

CORDED

Choose a corded oscillating tool if you plan to use it regularly for time-consuming jobs such as grout removal, or if you want to avoid the hassle of recharging the battery after use. The same attachments can be used with both power options, often across brands, as most are mounted using the Bosch Oscillating Interface System (OIS) format.

OCCASIONAL USE

Six-stage speed control and ergonomic design. Comes with an accessory adaptor, six sanding sheets, sanding pad and two blades.



Ryobi 200W
Multi-Tool, \$139.
ryobi.co.nz

REGULAR USE

Robust design with variable speed control. The AutoClic System allows for easy and keyless accessory change in just three seconds.



Bosch 250W
Multi-Tool, \$220.60.
bosch-pt.co.nz

HEAVY USE

With a powerful 320W motor, this tool features soft start and variable speed control, as well as multiple angle settings for accessories.



Makita 320W
Multi-Tool, \$258.
makita.co.nz

CORDLESS

Oscillating tools tend to be used intermittently and are not kept switched on for long periods. As it is the speed of the oscillation that does the work, not the amount of force applied, the battery isn't likely to run out halfway through a job or become overworked. The biggest advantage of a cordless model is manoeuvrability in confined spaces.

OCCASIONAL USE

Lightweight with variable speed control and six accessories. Includes a fast charger.



Ozito 12V Lithium-ion
Multi-Function Tool, \$99.
ozito.co.nz

REGULAR USE

Reliable all-rounder with LED work light, variable speed and magnetic tool tray. Compatible with One+ batteries and comes with a range of accessories.



Ryobi One+ 18V Lithium-ion
Multi Function Tool, \$129 (skin only).
ryobi.co.nz

HEAVY USE

This multifunction tool performs like a heavy-use corded tool. It has wide range of accessories and applications. Ready for next generation batteries. ♦



Bosch Blue 18V Professional
Multi-Function Tool, \$318 (skin only).
bosch-pt.co.nz



BUILD A

LAUNDRY BASKET DRESSER

Create valuable storage space in the laundry with this easy DIY project



The laundry is one area of the home that needs a lot of storage space. This easy-to-follow guide shows you how simple it is to make a laundry basket dresser that will keep your clothes and laundry off the floor.

Once you've worked out the size of your laundry basket, you can have the plywood pieces for the frame and shelves pre-cut at your Bunnings store.

For this dresser's frame, 25mm-thick plywood was cut into two 1325 x 600mm pieces for the top and base, and two 800 x 600mm pieces for the sides.

And 17mm-thick plywood was cut into two 1325 x 600mm pieces, laid one on top of the other to create a sturdy shelf. Two 358 x 600mm pieces were cut for the upper and lower dividers.

WHAT YOU NEED

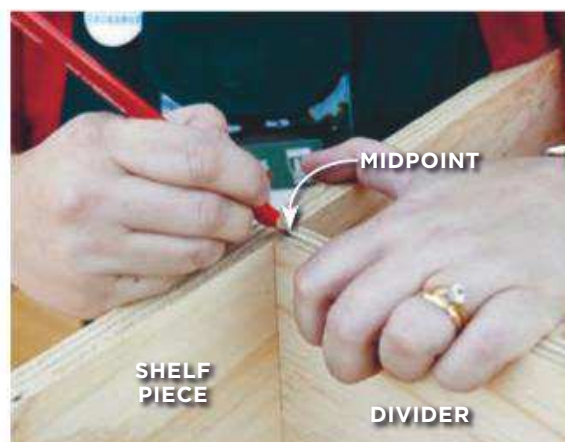
- 2200 x 600 x 25mm plywood x 2
- 2400 x 1200 x 17mm plywood
- Circular saw (if cutting)
- Measuring tape, pencil
- Set square, spirit level
- Drill and bits
- Countersink drill bit
- 75mm castors x 4
- 50mm countersunk screws
- 30mm countersunk screws
- Ear muffs, knee pads
- Safety glasses
- Paint, paintbrush

1 2 3



1 Assemble the frame

Position the four 25mm plywood pieces of the frame: two 800mm sides and a 1325mm top and base. Keep edges square. On a side edge joining the top, make three countersunk holes using a drill and secure with 50mm screws. Repeat for the other three edges.



2 Position the dividers

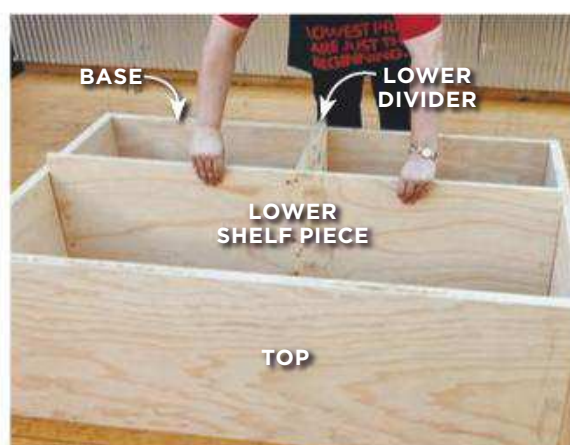
Measure the two lengths of the 17mm plywood that will run across the frame and become the shelf. Here, this will be the two 1325mm pieces, laid one on top of the other. Mark the midpoint on each. Line up a 17mm divider piece, this will be one of the two 358mm pieces.



3 Attach the dividers

To attach a divider to a shelf piece, mark three positions along the shelf piece. Use a drill to make countersunk holes and secure to the divider piece with 30mm screws. Repeat this process to secure the other divider to the other shelf piece.

▶ WATCH THE VIDEO
D.I.Y. laundry basket dresser
at bunnings.co.nz/diy-advice



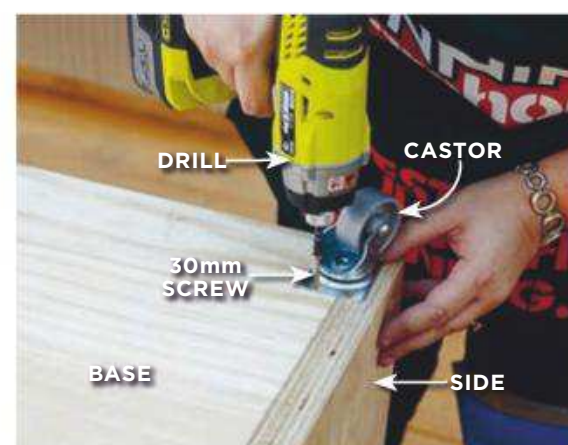
4 Install lower shelf piece

Place a shelf piece and attached divider inside the frame so the divider sits on the base, ensuring it is square. To attach the shelf to the frame, drill three holes each side and secure with 50mm countersunk screws. Attach the divider to the base with three 50mm screws.



5 Install upper shelf piece

Place the second shelf piece and attached divider inside the frame, so the shelf rests on the lower shelf piece. Use the drill to secure the two shelf pieces together with four 30mm screws on each side of the lower divider. Drill on the underside so the screws won't be visible.



6 Secure the frame

Use the drill and three 50mm screws to secure the top of the frame to the upper divider. Attach a castor to each corner of the base using 30mm screws. Paint the dresser with a colour that matches your laundry decor. Once dry, insert your baskets into the shelves. ♦

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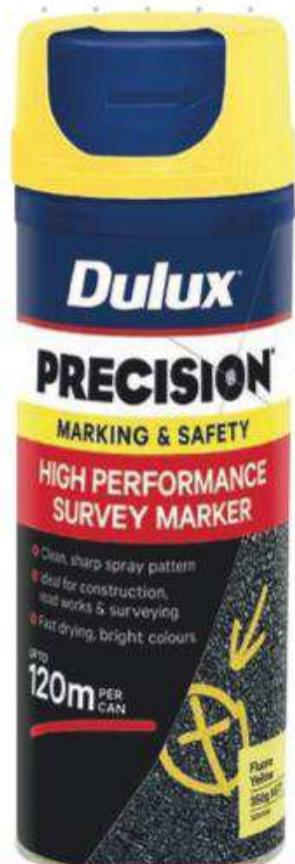


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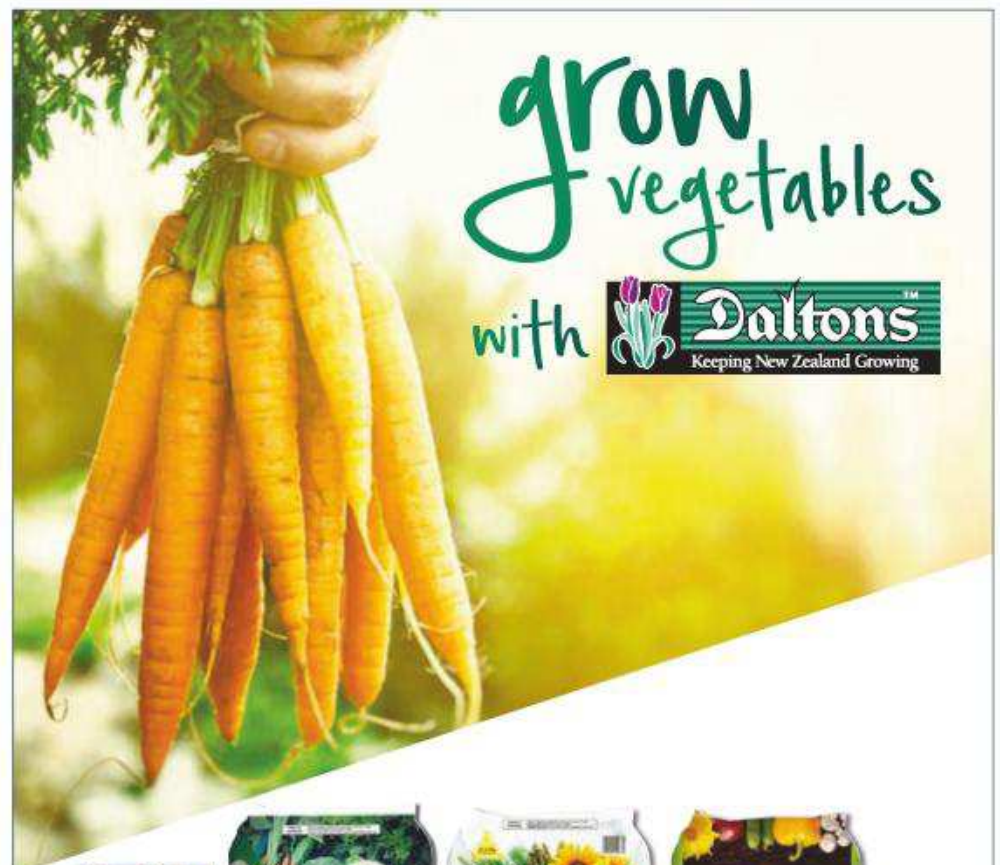
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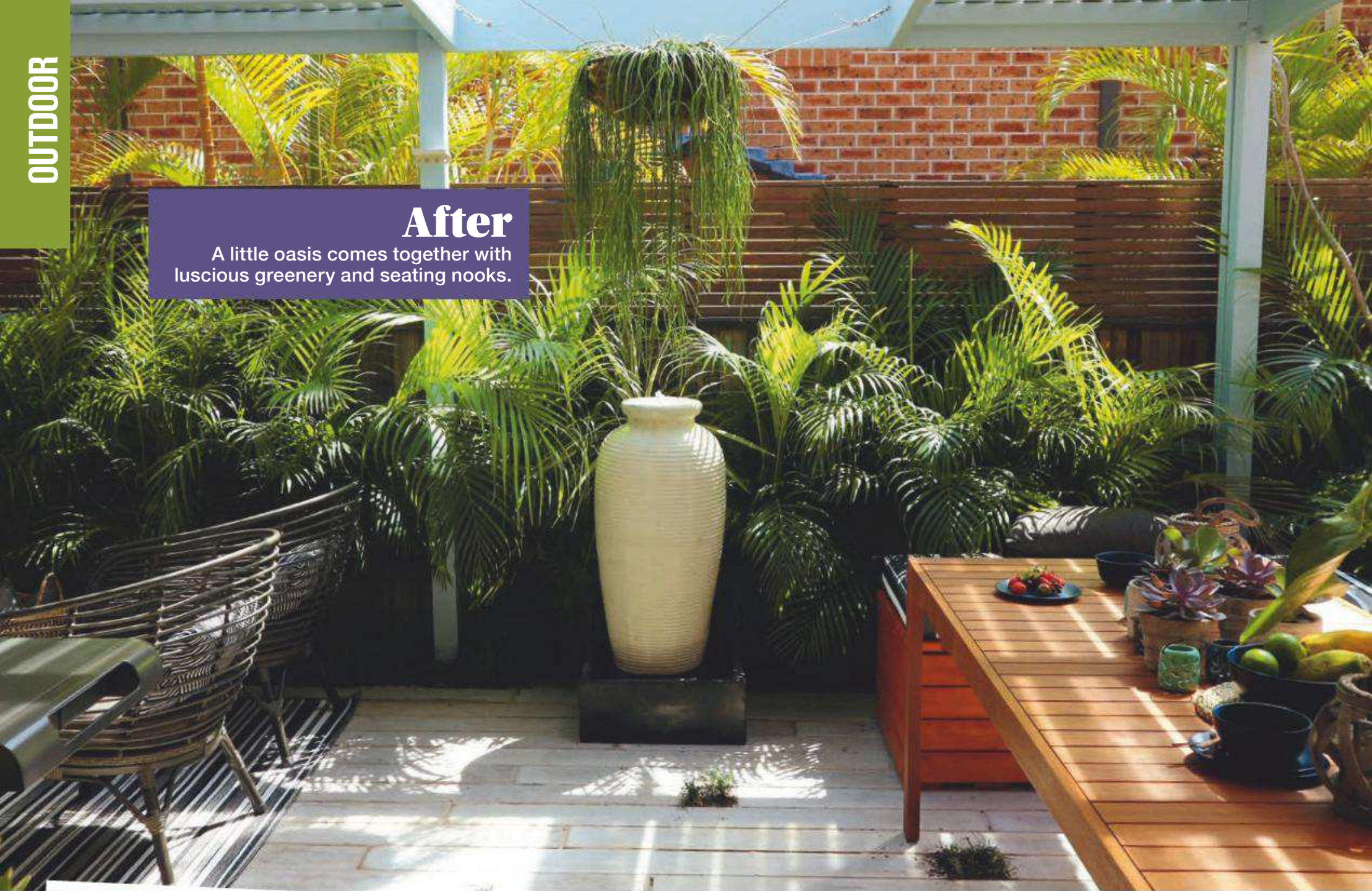


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After

A little oasis comes together with luscious greenery and seating nooks.

**Before**

Outer Sanctum

Garden guru Jamie Durie and *The Living Room* team reclaim a desolate courtyard and turn it into a sanctuary

Maria had a courtyard that she never used, as it was so uninviting. The pavers were ugly and stained from her dog, there was nowhere to sit comfortably, the exposed fences were an eyesore, weeds had taken over, and plants kept dying.

Maria even kept her blinds closed to block out the ugly view of it from inside.

Since her dog passed away, Maria's home had felt empty. She wanted to bring new life to it and make her little courtyard a relaxing space she could enjoy all year round. ►



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SLEEPERS

The old pavers had to go. They were quickly stripped out and discarded, which meant Jamie could get cracking with laying the new surface. He chose to use concrete sleepers, as their length helps to create the illusion of space in a small area, as well as being rot and warp resistant. With the addition of some pops of green between the sleepers, the courtyard renovation started to take shape.



Before

SEATING AREA

To make the most of the limited space available, DIY star Kyal Demmrich made two bench seats that cleverly double as storage boxes.

He began by measuring and cutting his timber down to size for each bench seat. To decide the height of his seats, he stacked the timber boards until he found a comfortable seating position. By doing this, he avoided unnecessary cuts and wastage. Four board-widths high was the best choice. He then simply fixed the timber together with screws to form a long box.

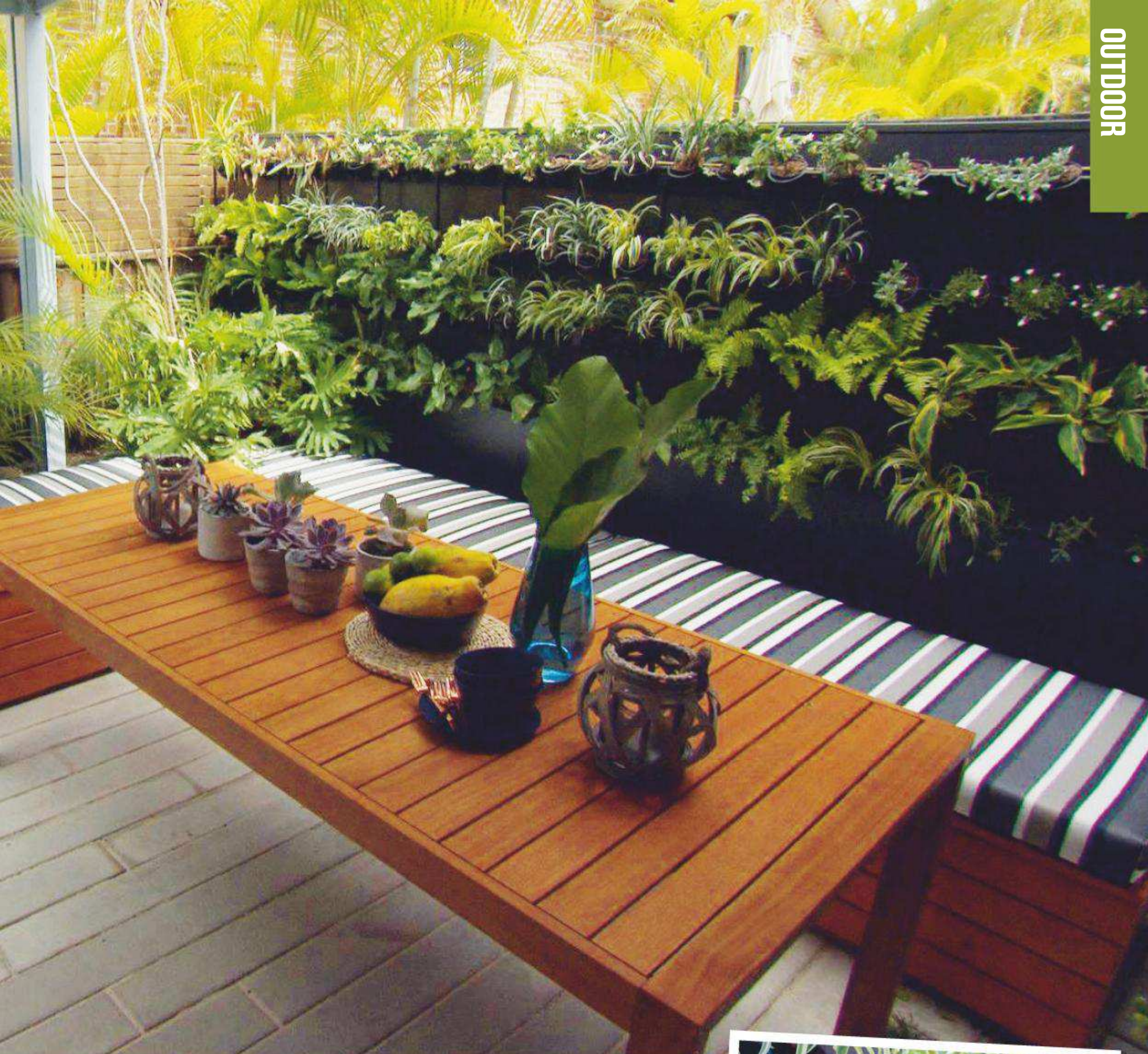
To top it off, Kyal used timber decking to form the seating. With a gloss stain finish and some comfy custom-made cushions, this corner of the courtyard was easily turned from dull to delightful.

After

On the up: a living, breathing vertical garden gets the green light.



While stripes add depth, a peek inside reveals storage.



VERTICAL GARDEN

A simple and effective way to bring greenery into a tight spot is to use a vertical planting kit. Jamie was able to connect several kits together to make a large green wall to cover one whole fence. The kits have removable pots for easy planting and care, and a clever irrigation system, which delivers controlled amounts of water to each

plant while at the same time ensuring minimal water wastage.

Jamie planted beautifully scented Chinese star jasmine at the top, as it likes full sunlight and will also look beautiful as a trailing border along the fence. At the bottom in the shadier section of the green wall, Jamie planted *Philodendron xanadu*; it has an attractive leaf that created a lush fullness to the wall. To finish off, he filled the remaining pots with grasses, succulents and ferns. ►





After

An outdoor gallery wall is a work of art.



Before



A barbecue in situ provides year-round alfresco cooking.

GALLERY WALL

Jamie created an outdoor gallery wall for some of Maria's treasures, including items she has picked up on her travels, artwork made by friends and her own beautiful photography. It doubled as an

attractive screen. A comfy lounge was also set up, making for a most inviting area within the courtyard.

Another of Maria's treasures was her mum's 40-year-old orchid. But before it could grace the gallery, it needed some attention. Jamie noticed the leaves

had black spots on them, indicating poor drainage, and the roots were compacted in the pot. Orchids like to sit in well-draining material, and Jamie used a specially formulated potting mix with the nutrients needed to bring this beauty back to its former glory.



Tall features draw the eye up as a clear roof lets in the light.

PERGOLA

To bring more light into the courtyard, Kyal removed a section of slats in the existing pergola, added a new section of frame, and installed some clear roof sheeting on top. He then suspended a beautiful hanging plant above a striking new feature water fountain to really draw the eye. To ensure his plant was hanging straight, he used a turnbuckle to easily balance all four sides.

Jamie painted the underside of the pergola in an enticing sky blue to create the feeling of being in the open air, even though it's undercover.

With these final touches, the courtyard was reimagined as a peaceful, green retreat, where Maria could relax or entertain in comfort and style – thanks to *The Living Room* team. ♦



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CREATING WAVES FOR POOL SAFETY

BEST OF FENCES

Choose the right type of fence to suit
your home and your needs

WORDS MARC MCEVOY



PICTURE GETTY IMAGES

A fence marks the boundary around your home and provides you with both privacy and security.

It also plays an important role in the exterior design of your property, which means your choice of fence

will have an impact on your home's appearance and value.

The most common building materials for fences are timber, metal and brick, all of which come in different styles.

Other types include brush, chain wire, PVC, modular panels, and glass

fences around pools. Most of these can be built DIY.

All residential fences must conform with council regulations. Fences must not be higher than 1.8m or you will need a consent. Check with your local council for further details. ►



TIMBER

Timber is the most popular material choice for fences, as it lasts a long time, can be stained or painted, and is economical to install.

- ◆ **PALING** fences form fine high boundaries. They are usually made of treated pine. If left untreated, they weather to a natural grey colour. Palings can sit flush, have small gaps between them, or be lapped for total privacy, then capped with a flat board to give them a neater appearance. They can also be shaped for decoration.
- ◆ **PICKETS** are a staple of traditional front fences, symbolising the ideal suburban life. They provide a boundary

but are low enough to allow a view and enhance a garden. Picket fencing is associated with the early 1900s and looks best when stained or painted. The pickets are made of treated pine, and can have decorative shapes.

- ◆ **LATTICE** panels are used as an addition to timber boundary fences, usually to extend their height. They can provide a framework for climbing plants and act as a screen.
- ◆ **SLATTED** timber fencing is another popular choice for both backyard and front boundaries. Horizontal slat screen fencing is attached to timber posts or secured between masonry pillars.

METAL

Metal fences provide durability and security, and because of their quality, add extra kerb appeal as front fences. The choice of material is usually between aluminium and steel, although wrought iron is an alternative if you have the budget.

- ◆ **ALUMINIUM** fences are the most cost-effective and easiest to maintain. They do not corrode, which makes them the best choice if you live near the ocean or in a humid environment. They are sold in slat or balustrade panels.

With the right finish, an aluminium fence will look great for years, and is less expensive than steel. Although it is not as strong as steel, aluminium fencing is lighter and cheaper to transport. It is best used for aesthetic purposes, such as garden, yard or pool fencing.

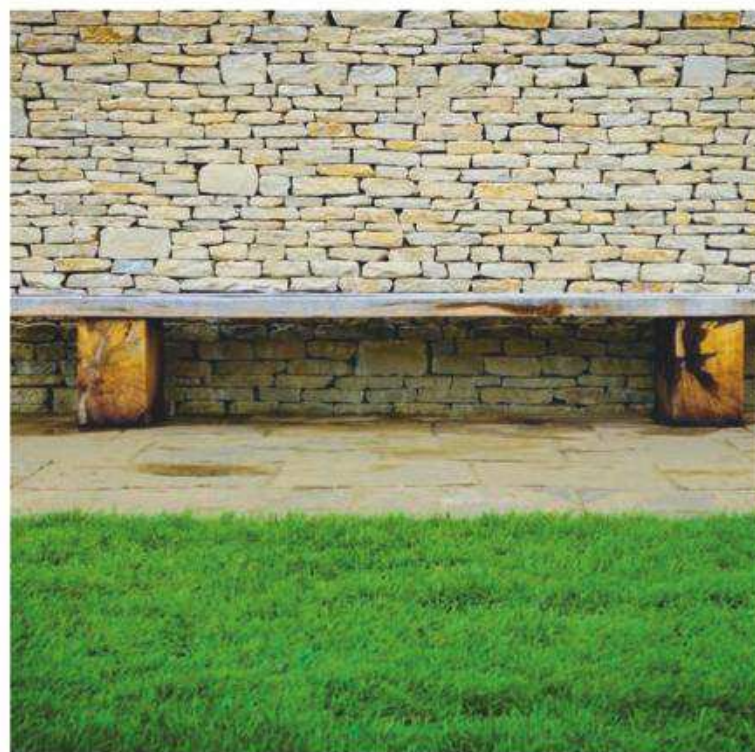
- ◆ **STEEL** fencing has the advantage of extra strength and durability, and makes a great protective barrier, such as security fencing.

Steel fences come in a range of coloured panel styles including slats and balustrades, or they can be used to mimic the decorative appeal of wrought-iron fencing. Most steel fences are galvanised and powdercoated to prevent rusting.

- ◆ **CHAIN WIRE** fencing is widely used as a secure and cheap barrier requiring little maintenance. As residential fencing, it is best installed around tennis courts or as a garden screen with creepers or vines growing over it, as it provides little privacy without them.



PICTURES GETTY IMAGES



MASONRY

Masonry is the most expensive building material used in fencing, but these walls have great visual appeal and can last for decades, if not centuries.

◆ **BRICK** walls are a sturdy choice that can be rendered and painted for a clean look. They're strong, fireproof and windproof. They prevent intruders and give you privacy while still looking great. But their build often requires a professional, which adds to their cost.

◆ **CEMENT BLOCK** walls are cheaper than full brick while still providing the

security and privacy of brick. Like brick, blocks can be rendered and painted, which gives them kerb appeal. Both block and brick walls require little in the way of maintenance or repairs.

◆ **STONE** walls are the most expensive option due to the cost of materials and installation. However, they provide an aesthetically appealing addition to a home or garden. Stone walls can be made of solid stone, such as scoria, or as a cheaper cladding that can be attached to cement blocks. ►



GLASS

Pool fencing and verandah railings are often made from glass panels supported by metal spigots. They are an elegant option because they maximise your views, but all pool fencing must comply with strict height and safety regulations.

Glass fencing is hardy, lasts a long time, and can be installed DIY.



BRUSH

Brushwood fencing is a popular barrier for backyards as well as street frontages. Made from Australian hardwood broom, brush fences are either hand-thatched or made in prefabricated panels.

The brush is woven between wires and the panels or thatching are supported by steel posts, such as the example above.

They look great in a garden setting, but they can be expensive and usually need minor repairs when the brush ages and deteriorates.



MODULAR

Modular fencing panels are made from fibre cement and expanded polystyrene (EPS), such as the ModularWalls fence above.

They are cheaper than most conventional fences, easy to maintain and can be installed DIY.

TREAT A TIMBER FENCE



Exterior timber structures such as fences and decks are exposed to the elements year-round, so a few years of neglect can result in weathered or rotted boards and rusted fasteners.

To restore a hardwood fence, start by using a high-pressure washer to give the timber a solid clean and blast away moss and grime. Repair any damaged sections and replace any corroded fasteners, then apply two coats of a clear finish such as decking oil to protect the timber.

TIP To avoid being saturated by backspray, wear wet weather gear while you're working.



1 Wash the timber

Use a pressure washer to clean the timber, holding the nozzle about 45cm from the fence and keeping it moving along the entire length of the boards to avoid damaging the surface of the timber.



2 Repair any damage

To repair damaged sections, replace broken lengths of paling or fill rotted sections with a wood hardener followed by exterior filler. Remove any corroded screws or nails, replacing them with stainless steel or galvanised fasteners.



3 Apply the finish

Use a fence brush on the larger surfaces to apply the finish, or use a 100mm roller and 75mm paintbrush on small sections such as gates.

TIP Position drop sheets to protect the ground from contamination. ►

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REPAIR A PICKET FENCE

A well-maintained picket fence looks great, but sometimes the pickets get damaged. Here we show you how to replace broken pickets.

A picket fence comprises evenly spaced pickets attached to two horizontal rails supported by posts spaced about 2m apart. The posts will have been secured in the ground with concrete. Housings are cut in them to attach the rails.

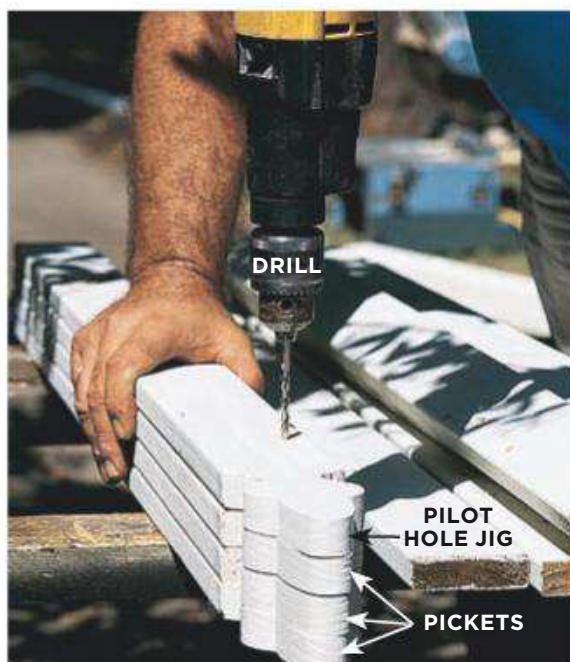
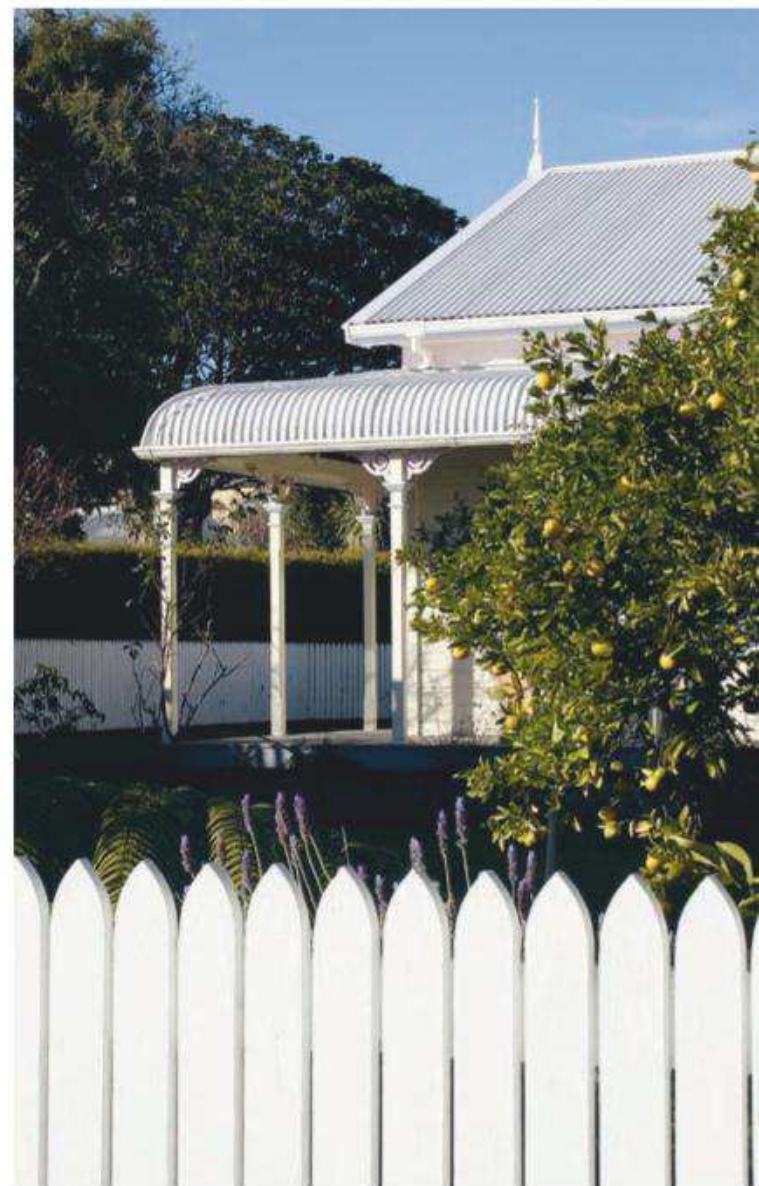
Have the new pickets pre-cut to the same length or cut them yourself. Remember to match them with the same decorative tops.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Compound mitre saw
- Cordless drill, 3mm bit
- Square drive bit
- Tape measure
- Pencil
- Spirit level
- 8g x 45mm square drive treated pine screws
- 150-grit sandpaper
- Primer, paint
- Paintbrush
- Timber putty

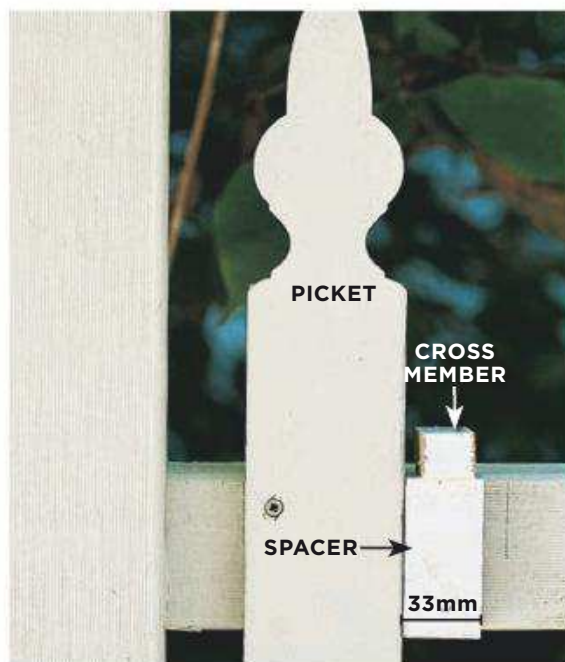
The key to maintaining a professional-looking picket fence is to keep the pickets level and evenly spaced. So if you are repairing and replacing several pickets in a row, use spacers to make the gaps plumb and even, aligning the tops of the new pickets with a stringline set between the posts.

Fill the screw holes with putty, then sand them with 150-grit sandpaper.



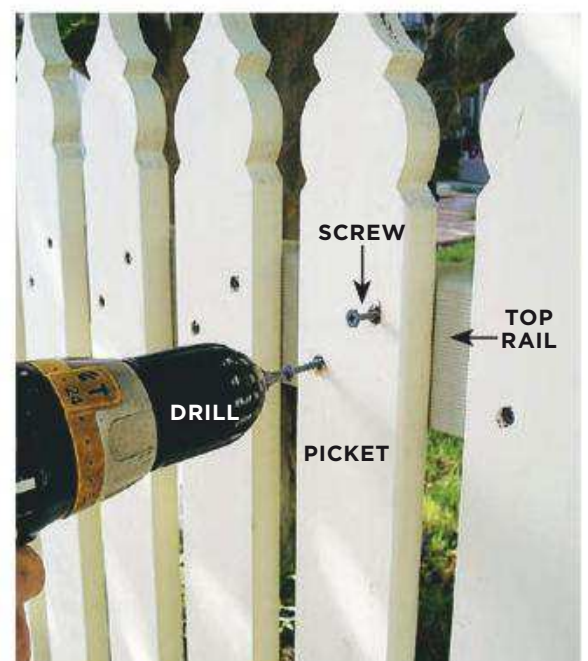
1 Pre-drill the holes

Make a pilot hole jig by drilling two pairs of 3mm holes into a picket aligned to each of the rails. Offset the pairs of holes 15mm from the edges to prevent twisting. Position the jig to drill into three pickets at a time.



2 Position the pickets

Position new pickets using 33mm-wide spacers made from offcuts with a cross member so they can hang off the rails. Mark even spacings. To replace a row of pickets, start at the centre of the rails and work towards either side.



3 Secure the fence

Prepare the pickets by cutting them to size with a mitre saw. Secure them to each rail using two 8g x 45mm screws, checking for plumb with a level. Apply putty to holes, then sand the pickets before priming and painting them.

RENDER A BRICK WALL

Applying render takes practice, so it could be worth calling in the professionals. But with a little DIY nous you can do the job – and save plenty of money.

A coat of cement render over bricks creates a smooth surface that can be painted after it's left to cure for about four weeks. You can also use a roll-on render or bag the fence by smearing mortar mix over the surface with a hessian bag.

Use a concrete mixer to mix the materials with clean water into a creamy consistency. Mix them in small batches, as the render will become too stiff to spread after about 20 minutes. The mixer also lets you work while a new lot is blending.

TIP Carry out the rendering in mild weather, as frosts can freeze water in the render, causing it to crack.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Water
- 12 parts fine washed beach sand
- 2 parts cement
- 1 part fire clay or lime
- 1 cap bricklayer's plasticiser
- Drop sheet, brush
- Mortar board
- Heavy-duty sponge
- Steel and timber floats
- Corner trowel
- Straightedge



1 Apply the render

Lay drop sheets and dampen the wall. Use a steel render float and mortar board to apply the mix, working in 1sqm areas.

TIP Work from the top, applying the render with short upward strokes, then smoothing in a circular motion.



3 Smooth the surface

Use a large brush to sprinkle the render lightly with water to dampen the surface, then smooth over it in a circular motion using a timber or fibreglass float. You can then detail the corners using a small metal corner trowel.



2 Screed the wall

Let the render set slightly for about 30 minutes. Screed with a straightedge, holding it horizontally and working left to right in a sawing motion. Fill any depressions and smooth the surface, leaving it to harden for up to 15 minutes.



4 Sponge the finish

As the render firms and dries, rub over the surface in a circular motion with a flat heavy-duty sponge, then leave it to cure for four weeks.

TIP Before painting, rub the surface with a brick to remove the sand film. ►



Fencing essentials

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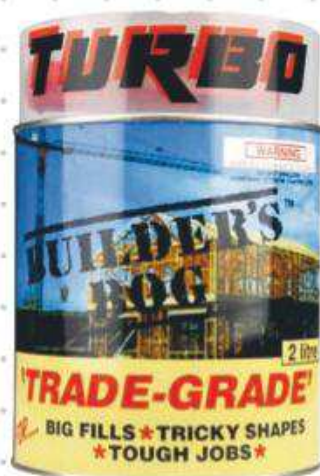
Cabot's 5L Water-Based Deck and Exterior Stain, \$78 for 5L. cabots.co.nz



Protector Aluminium 2400 x 1200mm BlackFlat Top Boundary and Garden Fence Panel, \$85. protectoraluminium.com.au



Irwin Fencing 260mm Pliers, \$42. irwintools.co.nz



Turbo Builder's Bog, \$47.45 for 2L. chemspec.co.nz



Turbo Metal Builders Bog with Hardener, \$30.95 for 500ml. chemspec.co.nz



Turbo Concrete Bog Filler with Hardener, \$28.85 for 1L. chemspec.co.nz



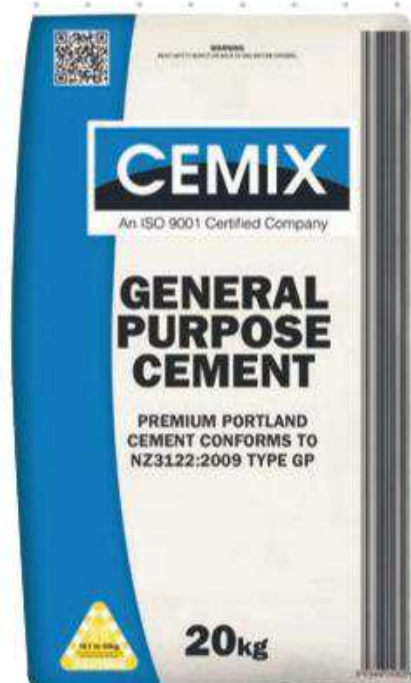
Protector Aluminium 900 x 1750mm Easy Screen Welded Slat Panel – Wood Tech, \$184. protectoraluminium.com.au



Raven Contractor's Flat Scrub, \$5.90. bunnings.co.nz



Colonial Timber Picket H3.2 69 x 20mm x 1.2m, \$4.05 each. bunnings.co.nz



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If you can't make a session, don't worry - we have plenty of step by step guides and expert help in-store, plus handy online videos 24/7.



Here are just some of the handy online videos available at [bunnings.co.nz](https://www.bunnings.co.nz)

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Armeria 'Pretty Petite'



SPRING COLOURS

Armeria 'Pretty Petite' is a long-flowering perennial featuring masses of ball-shaped pink blooms during spring and much of the year.

It forms an ornamental tight mound of grass-like foliage up to 15cm high and spreading to 40cm. While no pruning is necessary, removing spent flowers will promote further flushes.

Give 'Pretty Petite' a spot in full sun or part shade in most soil types with good drainage. It is a frost-hardy,

low-maintenance plant and while dry tolerant once established, it will need watering regularly in long, hot periods.

Feed in spring with an application of a slow-release fertiliser.

Ideal for small gardens, rockeries mixed borders and edging, 'Pretty Petite' also grows well in containers.

It gives fast results for new gardens and is suitable for coastal areas.

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



SUSPENDED PLANTS

If you're looking for a stunning alternative to the usual indoor hanging baskets, then *Hanging Kokedama - Potless Plants For The Home* (Jacqui Small, \$40) is the book for you.

Kokedama is the Japanese art of intricately wrapping a plant's root ball, cocoon-style, in string or fishing line and suspending the plant in midair.

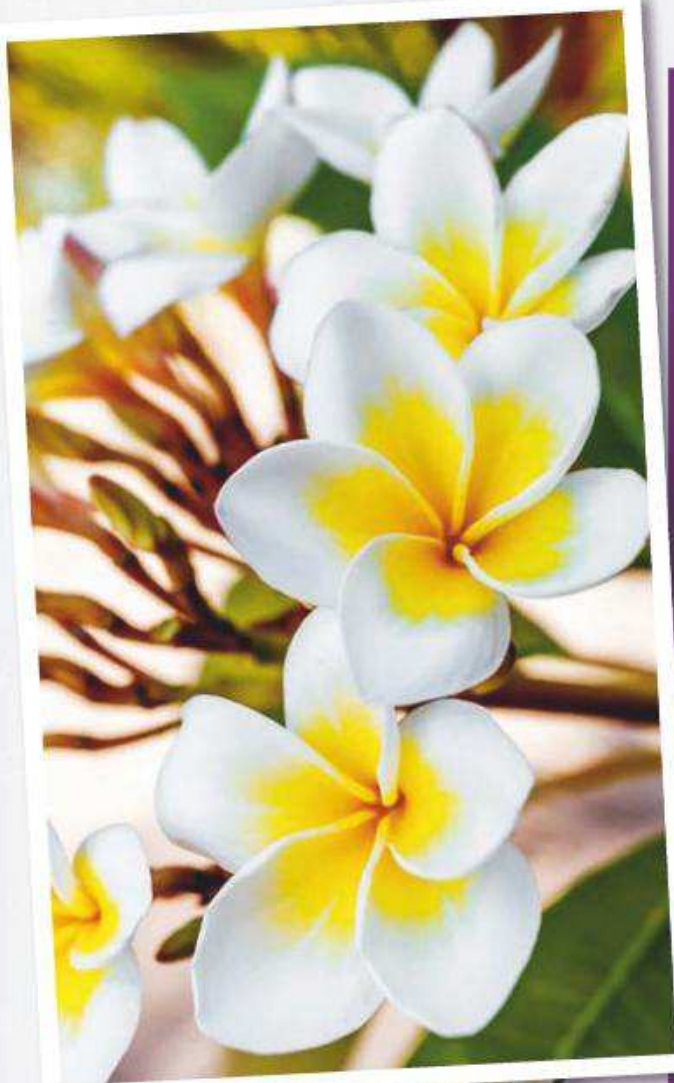
In her book, New Zealand botanist Coraleigh Parker showcases her moss ball creations, featuring orchids, ferns, air plants, succulents, cacti, flowering bulbs, tropical plants, small trees and herbs.

Turn your favourite plants into kokedama using the 25 easy-to-follow projects, and design a gorgeous hanging garden in your home. ►

TO-DO LIST

Finish off winter jobs ready for the new season.

- ◆ **PROTECT** tender plants such as frangipani from late frosts.
- ◆ **TAKE** cuttings or pinch back leggy plants in containers.
- ◆ **DIVIDE** and replant daylilies and agapanthus in warm areas.
- ◆ **RE-POT** indoor plants in a container one size larger.
- ◆ **IMPROVE** the soil in garden beds for summer plantings.
- ◆ **CHECK** for aphids on new rose shoots in subtropical zones and hose off.
- ◆ **REMOVE** dead flowers from bulbs in cold climates, allowing the leaves to die down naturally.





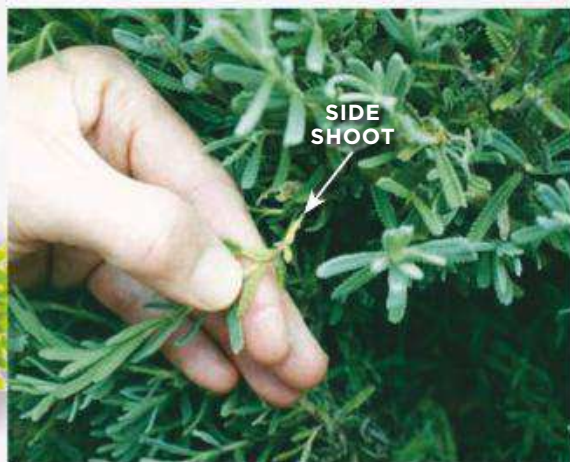
PROPAGATE LAVENDER

Lavender is a hardy fragrant shrub. The English variety, known as true lavender, is the most popular and features grey-green foliage and purple flowers from winter to spring.

Give it a spot in part to full sun, with wind protection. Good drainage

is essential. It will tolerate a light frost and grows well in pots.

Take softwood cuttings from non-flowering stems. Insert them in a pot and put in a warm, shaded spot. Transplant in six weeks into well-drained soil.



1 Take cuttings

Pull side shoots 70-100mm long off the main stem, with a strip of bark, or heel, attached.

This is where the roots will develop. Strip the leaves from the base of the shoots by hand.



2 Make holes

Dip the cuttings into hormone powder, then fill a pot with seed-raising mix. Make holes around the pot using a stick. Insert the cuttings into the mix, then water. Cover with a clear plastic bag to create humidity. ❖

Guava



FEED NOW

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- ◆ CITRUS
- ◆ GUAVA
- ◆ VEGETABLES
- ◆ ROSES



PRUNE NOW

Cut back trees that have finished fruiting.

- ◆ CITRUS
- ◆ TAMARILLO
- ◆ FIG
- ◆ APPLE
- ◆ PEAR

Spinach



HARVEST NOW

Pick these vegetable crops.

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- ◆ SPINACH
- ◆ LEEK
- ◆ CAULIFLOWER
- ◆ BROCCOLI



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Weed
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THE LEADING HEDGE

Invest in privacy and style with
the original green wall

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

Whether it is purely ornamental or a practical screen, a hedge is still one of the landscape additions of choice for switched-on gardeners. They're a great solution for privacy in gardens small or large. But to make sure your hedge will provide the level of density or screening you need, it's important to get it right from day one, starting even before you plant it out. So read on for our goof-proof guide to the perfect hedge.

GROW TIP

While many plants can be used as a hedge or screen, the difference in the end comes down to how they've been cared for.

A shaped camellia hedge has a bonus: fabulous flowers.

Hedge or screen?

There's no hard and fast rule to determine the difference between a hedge or a screen, but there are some simple points to take on board.

A hedge is dense from top to bottom, completely blocks out light and views, and functions well as a windbreak.

A screen tends to break or soften a view but doesn't block it out completely. It will let through dappled light and diffuse wind but won't work as a windbreak in the traditional sense. So, while it's fair to say that all hedges are screens, not all screens are hedges.

It's also worth noting that neither a hedge nor screen are very effective at reducing sound, such as traffic noise.

Why go for a hedge?

With block sizes and outdoor spaces getting smaller, privacy is becoming increasingly important. You may want to screen a view of the neighbour's spa, provide some cover for your deck, or sit in your lounge room with the curtains open, without prying eyes.

While you could choose to add a built screen, a living wall will provide

a beautiful lush backdrop that enhances your home and lifestyle. Even better if it bursts into flower from time to time.

But hedges do more than add privacy and beauty. They can also be very important design elements in landscaping, creating separation and definition between various garden spaces, or serving as boundary fences or borders along paths or driveways.

Which plants to choose?

Selecting the right plant for your needs and situation is essential if your hedge is to do what you need it to. Here are a few points to consider.

◆ **SIZE** Although hedges are usually trimmed to a desired size and shape, you need to take into account the actual growth habits of the plants. If you want a hedge to reach 2m, for example, it isn't a good idea to select a plant with that as its maximum growth height – it will likely take too long to reach that size and be thin on top. Much smarter to choose something that's naturally at least a third taller than your required height so that you'll achieve the desired effect in good time.

◆ **FUNCTION** Make sure the species of plant you select will give you what you need once the hedge matures. Some species with larger leaves will only ever be suitable as screens, not dense hedges. A rough rule of thumb is to select smaller-leaved plants when density is important.

◆ **LOCATION** Is there full sun or part-shade? Is it windy? Is the soil sandy or heavy? These are all important factors to consider. Take the level of sunlight as an example. A murraya or lilly pilli hedge will grow quite well in full sun to part shade but require more pruning to maintain density in the shade. On the other hand, a photinia hedge gets very leggy in part shade.

Do the research to find the right plants for your situation. You can always have a mixed hedge with one species in the sun and another in the shade.

◆ **CLIMATE** There's an old garden saying, 'Just because you want to grow it, doesn't mean you can.' For a hedge to thrive, it must be the right plant in the right place. Make sure that the species you select is appropriate for your climate and aspect. ►



1



2



3



4



5



6

SIX OF THE BEST

Here are a few of our all-time favourite hedge choices.

1. Corokia

Varieties of this hardy native evergreen come in silver, green, grey, chocolate, yellow-green, bronze and red. It is excellent as a hedge or border when kept clipped, and is suitable to almost all New Zealand soils and climatic situations. Once established, it offers good shelter from strong winds.

2. Pittosporum

Pittosporum is one of the most popular shrubs for hedging, shelter and screens. Many of the varieties available are native to New Zealand. It has dark stems and lush-green smallish leaves. Very fast growing and unfussy about conditions, pittosporum responds well to clipping.

3. Photinia

This is a traditional favourite, with many fast-growing varieties. A highlight is the bright-red colour of the new growth. Its largish foliage makes it ideal for larger hedges, plus it has excellent cold tolerance.

4. Box, boxwood or buxus

This is the signature plant of the formal garden but is equally at home in the suburbs. Generally used as low dividing hedges and borders, its small foliage allows for very accurate clipping and dense cover. However, while some varieties can be used as borders of 30cm or so, others are good for hedging up to 2m, so make sure you select the one you need.

5. Sasanqua camellia

If you prefer a hedge with a serious flowering display, the sasanquas are for you. With a range of sizes up to 5m there are varieties for just about any situation. They have glossy, green leaves and bear masses of flowers from late summer into autumn.

6. Lilly pilly (*Eugenia*)

A native of Australia, the lilly pilly is very hardy with a tropical look. It has white fluffy flowers followed by edible berries. New foliage is often in bold shades of red or orange. The size varies but is generally from 1.2 to 3m+. ►



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CARE FOR YOUR HEDGE

◆ MAINTAIN YOUR SOIL

As hedge plants are placed very close together, root competition, and therefore nutrient demand, is high. Prepare the soil by digging in a generous amount of compost or aged manure, then regularly add a quality controlled-release fertiliser.

◆ PRUNE EARLY AND OFTEN

The natural temptation is to encourage plants to grow tall quickly and prune later. However, this will lead to a sparse hedge. To help them grow to be nice and dense, tip-prune your plants from the day you put them in. A light haircut all over is all they need.

◆ MAKE THE MOST OF MULCH

Adding mulch to your hedge garden bed will help retain moisture and suppress weeds. Spread mulch to a depth of around 5cm. Remember to keep

it away from the trunks to prevent fungal problems.

◆ GIVE A GOOD FEEDING

The key to vigorous growth is regular feeding. Apply a controlled-release organically fortified product, such as Osmocote, in early spring. Your hedge will also benefit from an occasional application of an organic liquid product, such as Seasol.

◆ PICK YOUR TOOLS

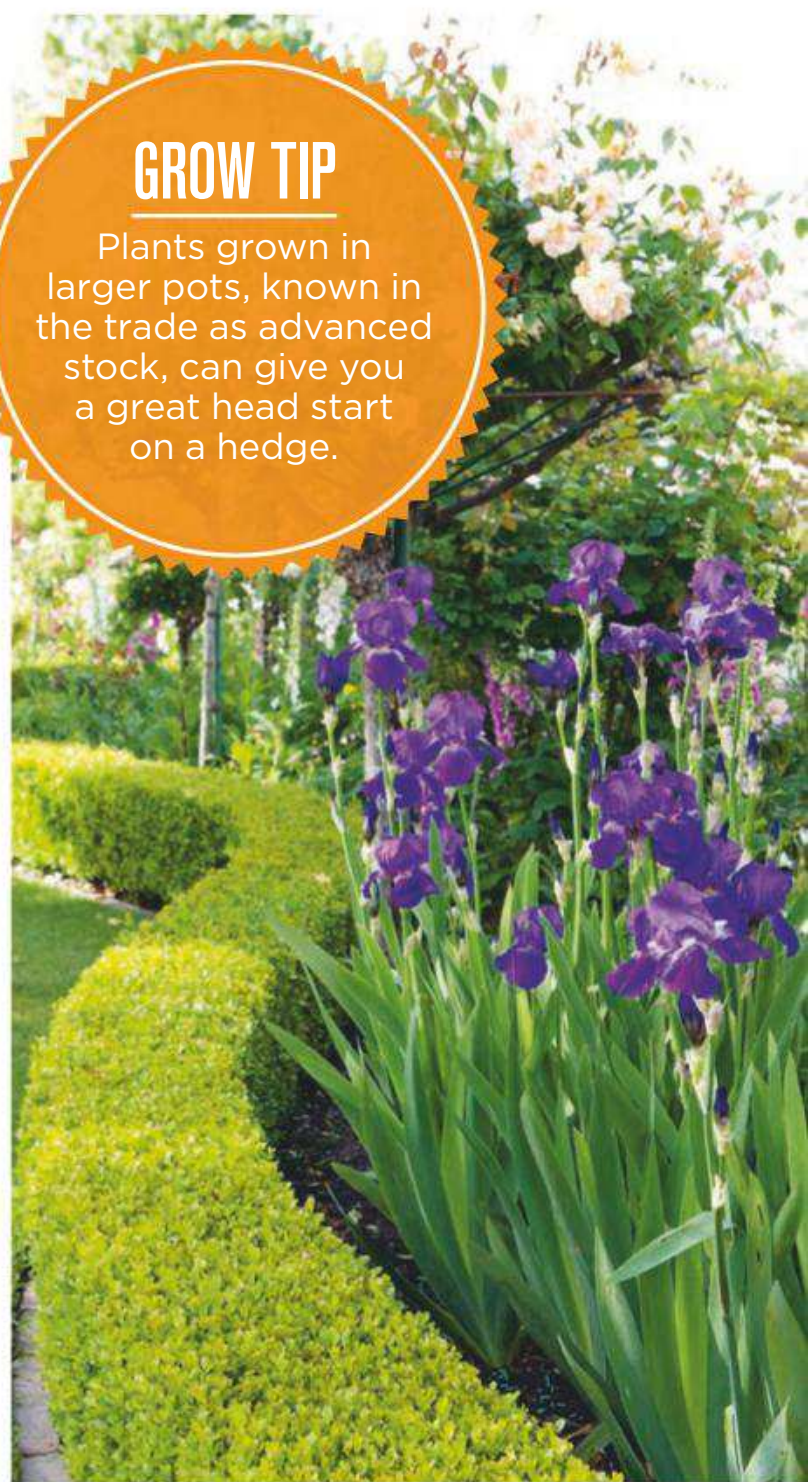
Your hedge will need to be pruned to maintain it. For larger hedges, consider investing in battery-powered shears. For smaller hedges, regular hand shears will work. Ensure they're kept clean and sharp.

◆ IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT YOU

Consider your neighbours. Don't plant anything that will block their views or their sunlight, or become a maintenance issue for them. ►

GROW TIP

Plants grown in larger pots, known in the trade as advanced stock, can give you a great head start on a hedge.



TOP PICKS



Cyclone Extendable Wavy
Hedge Shears, \$59.
bunnings.co.nz

NZ Wheelbarrows 65L
Supertuff Wheelbarrow,
\$178. nzwheelbarrows.co.nz



Ryobi One+ 18V Hedge Trimmer
\$159 (skin only). ryobi.co.nz



Seasol 1.2L Seaweed
Health Tonic Concentrate
\$11 for 1.2L.
bunnings.co.nz



Osmocote Total All Purpose
Controlled Release
Fertiliser, \$19 for 1kg.
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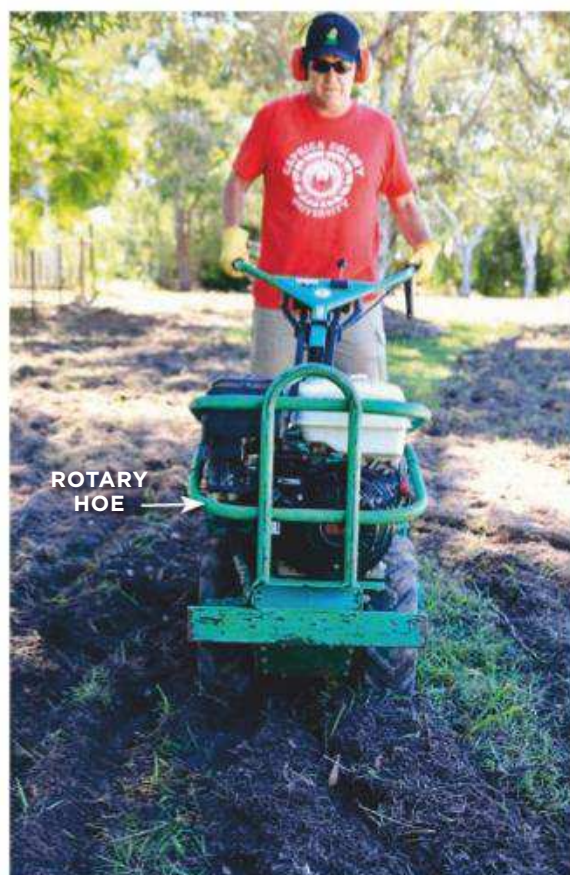
SPACING TIP

Correct spacing when planting a new hedge will depend on the species used. Taller varieties such as lilly pilly, murraya or viburnum are planted 1.1-1.5m from the centre of each plant, trunk-to-trunk. Smaller plants, such as varieties of buxus, may be planted as close as 30cm.

Murraya flowers grow in profusion, for months on end.

PLANT A HEDGE

To maximise the performance of your hedge in both the short and long term, setting it out correctly and planting it well are essential. Adding a drip-line irrigation system will ensure the plants receive adequate water and grow consistently. Here's how.



ROTARY HOE

1 Prepare the area

When planting a long hedge, it is best to trench plant so you can cultivate the entire planting area, align the plants and give the roots ample opportunity to develop. You can hire a walk-behind rotary hoe to do this. Blend through compost or manure to improve the soil. Here, chicken manure bought in bulk was used. Use the rotary hoe to evenly blend the manure, then level the area with a soil spreader or landscape rake.



STRINGLINE

MARKING SPRAY PAINT

SPACER

2 Mark the placement

Run a stringline between two stakes along the length of the area to keep the plants in a neat line. Using spray paint, mark planting intervals for your hedge plants. Here, the plants were spaced 1.1m apart from the centre of each trunk, using a garden stake cut to length as a spacer. To allow for access at the back for pruning and for any future repairs to the fence, the plants were set 1.2m in from the boundary.



PLANTING HOLES

3 Dig the holes

Remove the stringline and dig the planting holes at the marked spots. Leave the excavated soil beside each hole for backfilling later on, then position the plants ready for planting. **TIP** If you encounter a layer of clay, don't dig into it, as this will create a dish that will fill with water after rain and cause root rot. Instead, spread gypsum clay breaker in and around the hole and create a slightly raised planting mound.

Before



After

Ground prepared, hedge planted, irrigation installed, job done.



4 Position the plants

For each hole, gently remove each plant from its pot and check the depth of the hole is correct: the plant should sit so that the top of the potting mix is level with the surrounding soil. Position the plant in the hole and backfill around the root ball with the soil. Gently firm down but don't compress the soil. Mound the soil to create a watering wall around the plant, which helps capture and retain water for use by the plant.



5 Add irrigation

Cut two pieces of brown 13mm drip-line pipe long enough for four drippers once shaped into a hoop. So that the hoops can be daisy-chained together, insert a T-joiner on each piece and leave open at one join. Wrap the hoop around the plant and close the circle. Connect the hoops together with plain black poly pipe. To ensure balanced water output, connect the first and last hoop using a long length of plain black poly pipe.

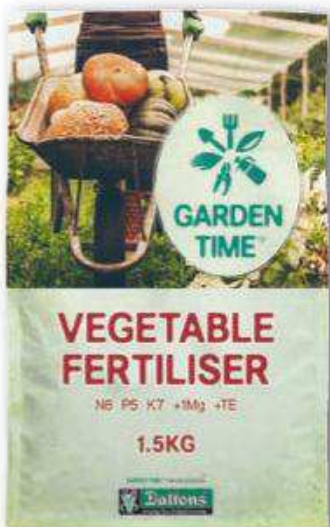


6 Test, mulch and finish

Before closing off the irrigation system, run water to flush the pipes, then close off the system again and run the water to check that it is functioning correctly. Apply a controlled-release fertiliser around each plant, then spread mulch over the entire area to a thickness of 5cm, ensuring that the mulch is kept at least 5cm clear of the stems or trunks of the plants. Here, a partially composted coarse blend was used. ♦

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PREP YOUR GARDEN *for spring*

Do the legwork at the tail end of
winter and your garden will
zoom ahead in spring

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

It's not long now – that magical time of growth in the garden when flowers unfurl and scents abound. But as the warmer weather of spring approaches, now is the perfect time to get your garden into shape.

Follow these seven simple steps and you will be rewarded for many months to come.

1. Weed out nasties

Unwanted weeds compete with plants for soil nutrition and leave them open to attack by insects and diseases. Pull them up as soon as you see them.

Take action

◆ **REMOVE** weeds by hand, making sure that the roots are lifted as well. You can compost your weeds, but your compost heap must be working efficiently for the seeds to be killed.

◆ **PLACE** hard-to-kill bulbous, perennial and seeded weeds in a plastic bag and tie the top. Leave it in the sun for a couple of months to rot and then toss the rotted weeds on the compost heap.

◆ **GET RID** of weeds as soon as they appear, as one weed can quickly turn into hundreds once it goes to seed.

◆ **CHECK** for weeds in lawns and top-dress if necessary with compost to repair any bare patches.

◆ **PLACE** annual weeds that have not gone to seed directly back onto the soil surface, where they will eventually break down and condition the soil. Leaving them in situ adds mulch and saves you the trouble of taking them to the compost heap.

◆ **BE ORGANIC** and spray vinegar onto weeds on pathways and between pavers. Take care that the spray doesn't drift onto plants you don't want to kill. Boiling water also kills weeds on pathways.

Keep your soil happy by aerating it with a pitch fork and mixing in compost.



2. Rejuvenate the soil

Not only is healthy soil the key to good gardening and thriving plants, it also holds water for longer periods.

Soil needs to be conditioned regularly, and the end or beginning of each season is an ideal time.

Organic matter is the best conditioner. As it disintegrates in the soil, it helps to build soil structure and supplies beneficial nutrients.

Conditioners also encourage earthworm activity, which breaks down root mats and opens up tunnels for oxygen and water to penetrate the soil. These tunnels are coated with nitrate-rich mucus, and the plant roots rapidly take advantage of this nutrition.

Take action

◆ **ADD** a layer of compost to your soil. Compost is full of goodness and nourishes the soil while increasing its water-holding capacity by at least 30%. And by recycling organic waste, you're ensuring that less rubbish ends up in landfill.

◆ **TRY** cow or chicken manure, for an effective alternative conditioner if you don't have compost.

◆ **USE** a seaweed product, such as Seasol, to help promote valuable microorganisms in the soil that are beneficial to plant health.





3. Add mulch

Mulch is essential as it helps to retain moisture in the soil, keeps the ground cool and helps suppress weeds. The mulch also eventually breaks down, adding structure and beneficial organic matter.

Take action

- ◆ **WATER** the soil thoroughly before applying mulch, or mulch after it has rained. Water again after the mulch has been laid.
- ◆ **ADD** a 5-8cm layer of lucerne hay or pea straw mulch to flower and vegetable gardens. Make sure that it is clear of tree trunks or stems to prevent fungus or rot developing.
- ◆ **USE** coarse woody materials, such as Dalton's New Zealand Pine Bark Mini-Chips on shrub beds. Add some manure or Yates Dynamic Lifter under the mulch as these materials actually draw nutrients out of the soil as they break down, to the detriment of plants.
- ◆ **LAY** inorganic mulches such as gravel, scoria and pebbles on gardens and succulent beds in fire-prone areas.

4. Transplant shrubs

Winter is a great time to move shrubs that are growing in the wrong position, whether they have outgrown their situation or become shaded by taller plants.

Take action

- ◆ **PREPARE** the new planting hole before you dig up the shrub to transplant. Make sure it is wider and deeper than the expected root ball.
- ◆ **USE** a spade to cut a trench around the outside perimeter of the shrub.
- ◆ **DIG** down about 30-40cm around the plant, then in under the root ball. If it won't budge easily, rock it gently to see where it is clinging. Try to take as much of the root ball as possible when lifting the shrub and then trim any broken roots with secateurs. Slide strong plastic or a hessian sack underneath to move it to its new home.
- ◆ **MIX** some compost with the soil that was removed from the new hole.
- ◆ **PLACE** enough mix in the bottom of the hole so that the shrub, once planted, will sit at the same depth it was originally. Backfill around the shrub, forming a saucer-shaped depression so that water is directed to the roots. Apply Seasol to prevent transplant shock, and mulch with lucerne hay.
- ◆ **GIVE** the shrub an all-over light prune, as removing some of the foliage will compensate for the loss of roots.
- ◆ **WATER** well for the first few weeks. Weekly applications of Seasol, which is not a fertiliser but a soil conditioner, will encourage root growth. ►



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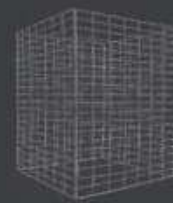
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5. Tend the vegie patch

Prepare the vegetable garden now to enjoy a spring harvest of delicious edible crops.

Take action

- ◆ **HARVEST** remaining winter crops.
- ◆ **PULL UP** any weeds, then turn the whole patch with a fork or spade, incorporating any remaining mulch

into the soil. Break up clods until you have a nice crumbly soil.

- ◆ **TEST** your soil with a pH testing kit. Most vegetables like a pH of around 6.5. If it is too acidic, rectify it with dolomite or liquid lime.
- ◆ **DIG** compost, or cow or chicken manure, into the soil.
- ◆ **WATER** well as this helps the compost to break down and settle before you plant seeds or seedlings.



7. Care for the herb garden

Many perennial herbs grow slowly during winter but bolt forward in spring, providing leaves for your culinary delights, if given some attention now.

Take action

- ◆ **CONDITION** the soil with compost or cow manure.
- ◆ **DIVIDE** chives by digging up the clump with a trowel or fork and carefully separating the plants. Replant in small clumps and water until established.
- ◆ **PLANT** coriander and rocket so you can harvest spring leaves.
- ◆ **REPLACE** woody thyme with a new plant.
- ◆ **ADD** some dolomite around rosemary, as it loves alkaline soil.
- ◆ **FEED** parsley to encourage more leaves for spring.
- ◆ **RE-POT** older potted herbs into fresh potting mix.

A healthy, nourished vegie garden will return a plentiful harvest.



6. Don't forget potted plants

After a few years, potting mix starts to degenerate and repels water, causing plants to lose vigour. Even if the plants haven't outgrown their containers, it's a good idea to replace the mix so that potted plants will spring to life before the warm weather arrives.

Take action

- ◆ **FEED** indoor and outdoor plants with a controlled-release plant food such as Osmocote Planters and Indoor

Pots Fertiliser, which will nourish them for about six months.

- ◆ **INSPECT** indoor plants for mealy bug and scale. Spray with Yates Bug Oil if they are infested.
- ◆ **WASH** large-leaved indoor plants with a clean, damp sponge or soft cloth, or put them in the bathtub and shower them with cool water. Dusty leaves make it difficult for indoor plants to absorb carbon dioxide.
- ◆ **MULCH** potted plants with lucerne hay, coir or pea straw.
- ◆ **REMOVE** yellowed leaves.





HOW TO RE-POT

When re-potting a plant, always choose a good-quality potting mix suitable for its needs.



1 WATER the plant in its existing pot to make it easier to remove. Turn the pot upside down, hold the base of the plant's trunk and squeeze the pot to remove the plant. If the root ball looks root-bound, gently tease out the roots and cut off damaged ones.



2 PARTIALLY FILL the new pot with potting mix, then place the plant in the middle of the pot so the top of the root ball is about 2cm from the top of the pot rim. This will prevent the potting mix and water spilling over the sides during watering.



3 FILL around the plant with more potting mix, gently pushing it down around the sides of the plant to eliminate any air pockets. Water and add more potting mix if necessary. For good drainage, sit the pot up off the ground using pot feet. ♦



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Alluring Orchids

Grow cymbidium orchids – it's easier than many people think

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Cymbidium orchids are among the most seductive plants on the planet. And at this time of year it's easy to be enticed by pots of these gorgeous flowering plants on display at nurseries. They make great gifts, with their colours ranging from white and pink through to tones of red, orange, brown, yellow, cream and green.

Some people simply discard the orchid after it has flowered; they argue that the cost of a plant is the same as a large bunch of flowers, and they've had their value.

But throwing them out is a waste. They don't need specialist care. Give them a little TLC and they'll reward you year after year with beautiful blooms.

How to grow

Give cymbidiums the correct light, potting mix and food and you will be rewarded yearly with gorgeous flowers. When not in flower their strap-like leaves look great in the garden.

♦ **POSITION** cymbidium orchids in a semi-shaded spot. A place under a deciduous tree where they receive morning sun is ideal. In a position like this they also receive winter sun when the flower buds start to appear. Too much shade will prevent flowers from forming.

♦ **PROTECT** them from frost to prevent the flower spikes being damaged. Dark green leaves are usually an indication that the orchid is receiving too much sun. The leaves should be a light apple green.

♦ **POT** using an orchid potting mix. Cymbidiums grow naturally on rocks or in tree branches, not in soil. The thick roots like plenty of air around them and won't grow well in normal soils or potting mixes. The drainage must be perfect or the roots will rot.

♦ **FEED** them correctly to produce flowers the following year. Fertilise in spring with Yates Dynamic Lifter and give fortnightly applications during summer and autumn of a liquid plant food for orchids. Alternatively, apply a six-month controlled-release fertiliser in spring and early autumn.

♦ **WATER** properly or cymbidiums won't flower or grow well. Water every second or third day during the growing period in spring and summer, twice a week during autumn, but only weekly during winter. Do not allow them to dry out for long periods.

♦ **MAINTAIN** by cutting off the flower spikes when the blooms have finished.

ORCHID FACTS

Cymbidium orchids are found naturally in Asia and northern Australia. In these tropical and subtropical areas, they grow as epiphytes on trees or in forest floor leaf mould.

Three species are native to Australia. They produce small,

perfumed flowers and are very floriferous.

The cymbidium genus of orchid has about 52 species and many hybrids. Most of our cymbidiums are developed from larger high-altitude forms found in the Himalayas. ►

DIY TIP

Cymbidium orchids are usually grown in containers but they can also be grown in pockets between rocks, on decaying logs, or in the hollows of dead trees.



Pests and diseases

Regular checking for pests and fungal diseases will keep your cymbidiums healthy. Make sure the plants have free air circulation around them.

Snails and slugs

SPOT IT Flowers and young foliage appear eaten. Snails can hide under the rims of pots during the day and eat the flower buds overnight.

FIX IT Check the pots regularly or use snail bait. Raise the pots off the ground by placing a brick beneath each side, as this will increase airflow through the pots and help to foil snails.

Scale, spider mites, aphids

SPOT IT Scaling appears around the sheaving leaves at the base of the plant. Foliage has a dull and sand-blasted appearance when spider mites are present. Aphids will be seen around flowers and flower spikes and will cause leaves to wilt and drop.

FIX IT Spray with insecticide products such as Kiwicare Organic Super Spraying Oil or Yates Conqueror Spraying Oil.

Caterpillars

SPOT IT Flower buds appear chewed.

FIX IT Apply Kiwicare Organic Caterpillar Bio Control or Yates Derris Vegetable Dust.

Orchid scale is often mistaken for mealy bug.



HOW TO RE-POT



Cymbidiums do not need to be re-potted frequently as the less they are disturbed the better they flower. Dividing and re-potting is only necessary when a pot is cluttered with leafless back bulbs and the plant isn't flowering. The best time to re-pot or divide your cymbidiums is immediately after the flowering season.

1 TAKE the orchid out of the pot so you can see the root ball. Remove leafless back bulbs by screwing them out with a quick twist. Divide the root ball with secateurs or a sharp knife and if possible try to make the division so that it contains 3-4 green bulbs with leaves. This will give better prospects for flower spikes the following year.



2 REMOVE any dead brown roots that you find on the root ball. Re-pot into the same container or a larger one if necessary using a specially formulated orchid potting mix. There should only be a 2-3cm gap between the edge of the plant's root ball and the edge of the pot. Fill around the divisions with the mix. Water the plants after re-potting and place them in a cool shady area for a week before returning them to their main growing area.

TIP Cymbidium orchids are not indoor plants and need to be put outside as soon as the flowers have finished. Better still, cut the flower heads after about a month indoors, put them in a vase and place the plant back outside. ♦

WHY CYMBIDIUMS DON'T FLOWER

- Congestion in the pot.
- Too many back bulbs (the old bulbs without any foliage).
- Too frequent re-potting – cymbidiums like to be slightly pot-bound.
- Not enough light.



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