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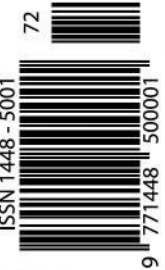
WEEKEND PROJECTS

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Grow nashi pears | Warm up your outdoor space

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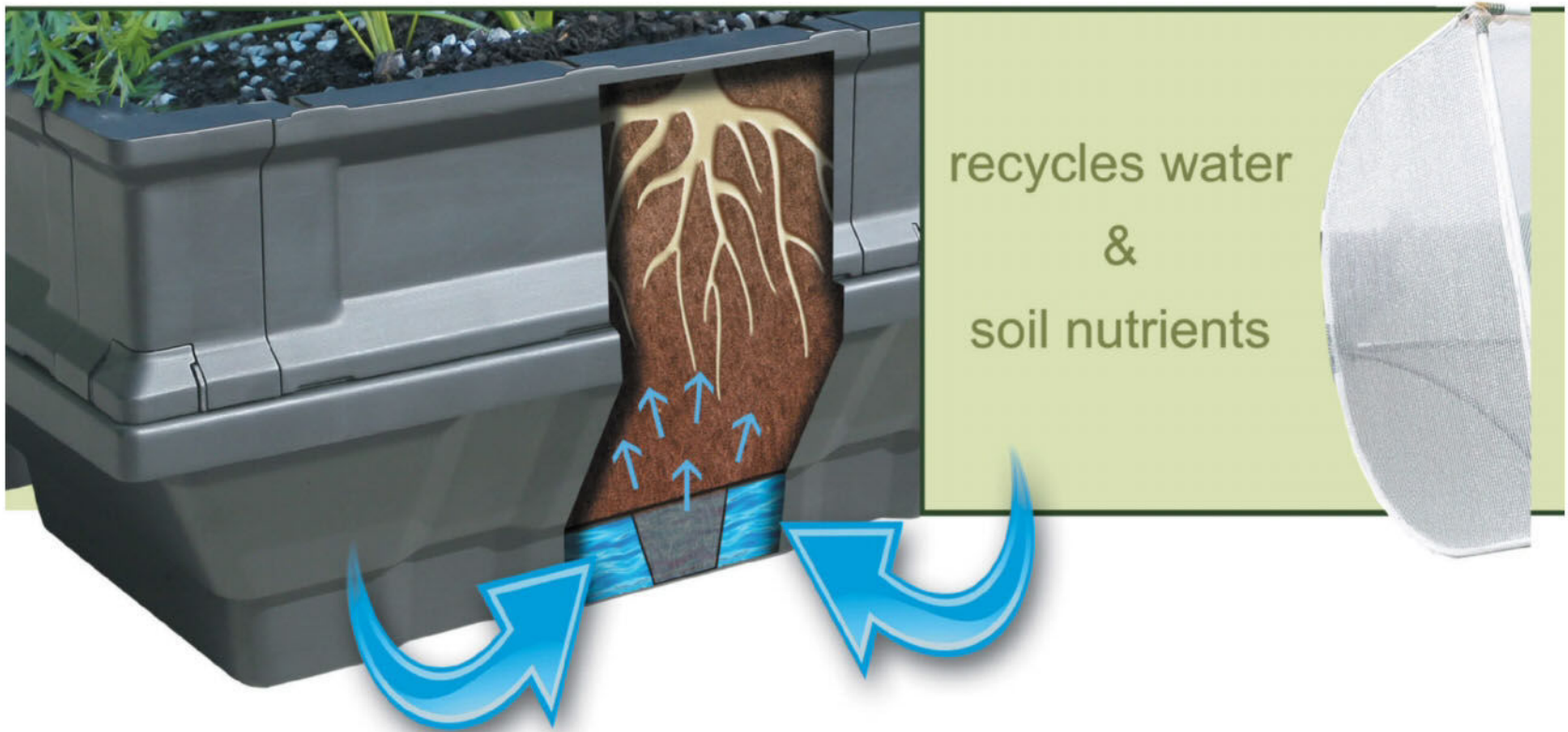
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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the middle of winter, many people stay indoors to keep warm and the backyard is completely abandoned but that needn't be the case. Just as you put a doona on your bed, reach for the throw or turn on the heater to make things a little more comfortable inside, it's well and truly time to gear up that outdoor heating as well. In many parts of Australia the weather is mild enough that there is no need to retreat to the indoors through winter anyway.

The latest technology in outdoor heating means we can enjoy our outside areas in the cooler weather, making the most of our favourite space year-round. Our heating guide showcases a range of modern outdoor heating solutions that will add warmth as well as style and character to your space.

This issue it's all about privacy and security for your backyard. Whether you want to keep prying eyes away, keep people out or section off your outdoor areas into 'rooms', our screening and fencing feature supplies a range of options — encouraging you to think outside the box. There are several eco-friendly options as well. Plus, our screening plants feature shows how you can add privacy to your backyard with greenery. Don't you just love it when solutions are multi-purpose and natural, too?

As long as they are properly rugged up, there usually isn't any way of keeping your kids indoors the entire winter. Outdoor play is so important for a child's mental and physical development so it's a good idea to encourage it where you can. We take a look at seven child-friendly additions to the backyard that will keep your kids occupied for hours.

Our designer gardens this issue are full of inspiration. We escape to a beautiful garden in the small French village of Les Portes-en-Ré, on the island of Ré. The landscaper created a dry garden, with a selection of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that require no watering except for the rain and natural moisture of the seashore. Back in Byron Bay in NSW, we discover a magical garden behind the beach at Watagos. A standout feature is the secret garden that's been created around the outside bathtub.

Our backyard revolutionaries this issue include couple Jennie and John who gave their inner-city garden an edible makeover, while still retaining its ornamental qualities. With raised garden beds, as well as espaliered fruit trees to save space, this garden is committed to creating zero carbon emissions.

With the right heating or proper attire, there's no need to stay indoors this winter, so don't be afraid to get out there and enjoy your garden. Happy reading.

April Ossington

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Backyard

CREATIVE AUSTRALIAN LIVING

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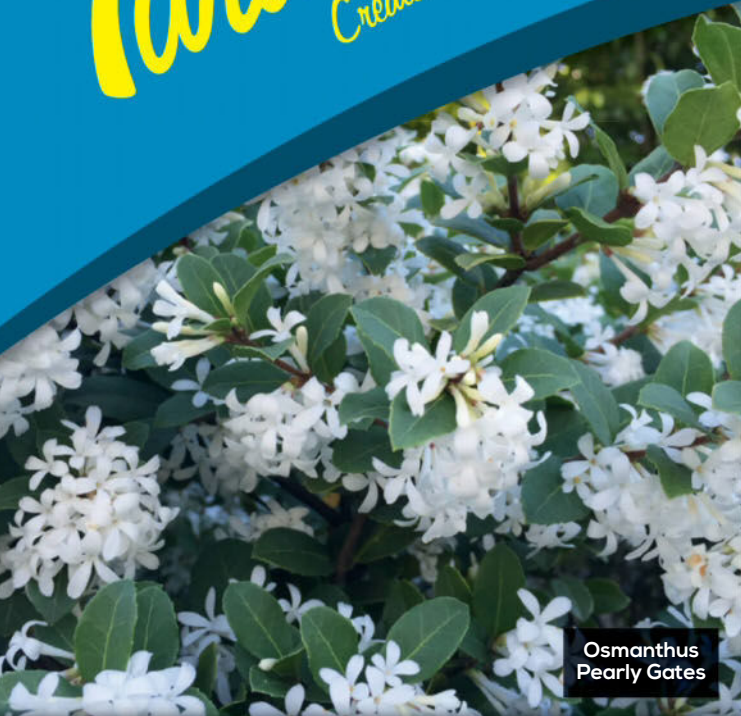
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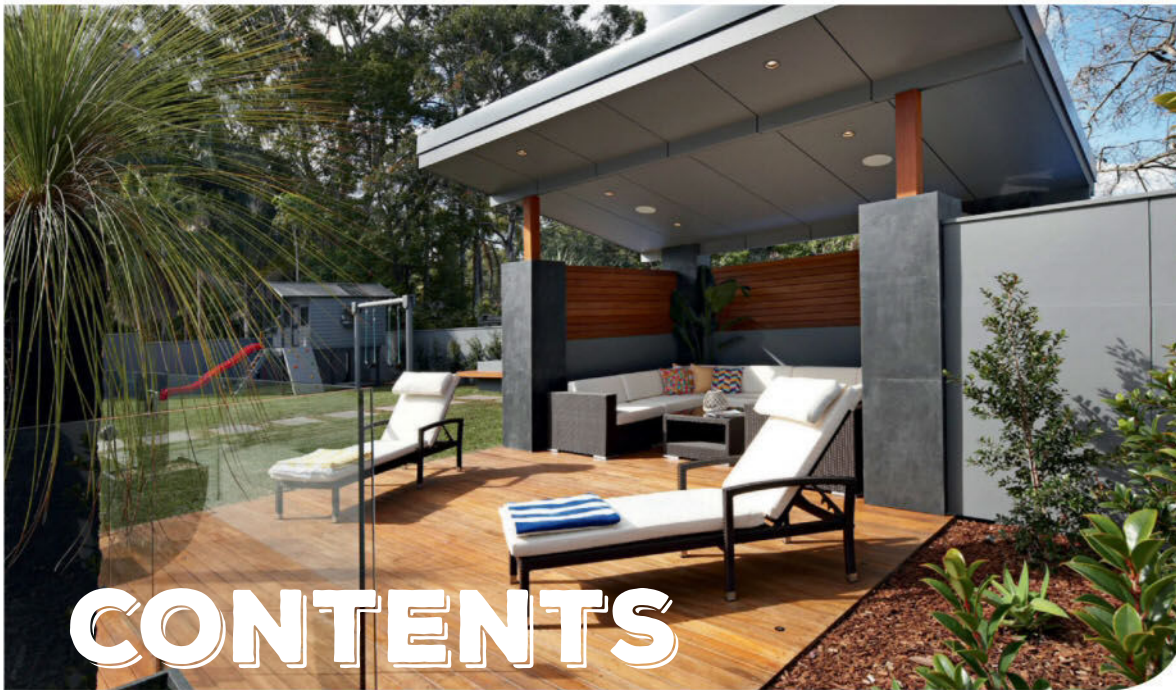
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10 MAKERS

Playtime
Create a kid-friendly backyard today



120 GROW

The perfect pear
Plant some nashi pears



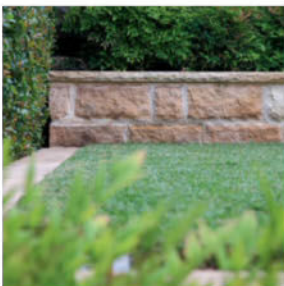
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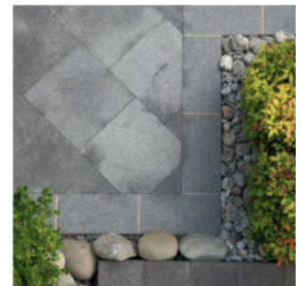
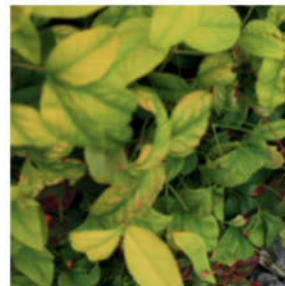
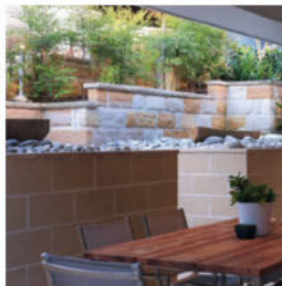
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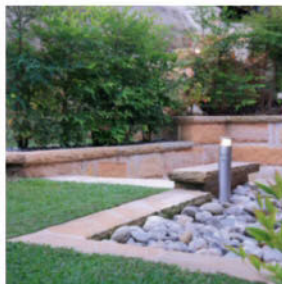
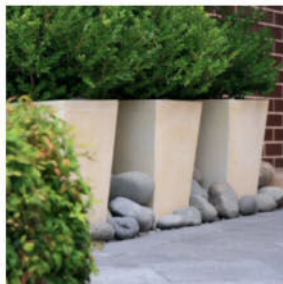
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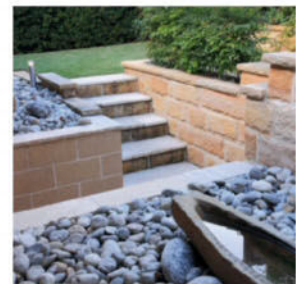
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TIME TO REFLECT

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) wowed industry professionals and garden enthusiasts alike in its 21st year. People flocked to the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens to witness the first-class show gardens and striking floral exhibits on display during the five-day event. "Over the years the show has continued to become more accessible to a wider audience and that's one of the best things about it. No matter who you are or what your knowledge of gardening is, you can pop along and take away lots of inspiration," says MIFGS event manager Kathleen Rushford. Congratulations to Ian Barker Gardens for taking home a Gold Show Garden Award. The garden titled, *Reflection*, encouraged visitors to stop for a moment to reflect and bask in the sunshine.

Photo: Patrick Redmond

GREAT OUTDOORS

At a recent event attended by *Backyard* editor April Ossington, Adbri revealed the results of the Great Australian Backyard survey. Respondents were asked what they used their backyard for and the results indicated a strong relationship between the backyard and wellbeing. "A third of us spend at least one hour a day in our backyard and between 8-15 hours per month maintaining it," explains landscaping expert and Adbri Masonry brand ambassador Jason Hodges. "It comes as no surprise then that people are beginning to see the lifestyle benefits and we will see an increase in the trend of backyard makeovers with a fifth of Aussies planning on doing up their backyard in the next 12 months." adbri-masonry.com.au





GARDEN ROYALTY

Daphne Perfume Princess from Anthony Tesselaar Plants has been named 2016 Plant of the Year by Australia's Nursery and Garden Industry. New Zealand breeder Mark Jury produced Perfume Princess, which is the earliest and longest flowering of all daphnes, with the sweetest of fragrances and surprisingly large blush pink flowers. Standout features of this stunning plant are its large flower clusters, which reach up to 6cm across, and its intense perfume with delightful citrus undertones. The flower continues to impress with its long flowering season. tesselaar.com



SPACE FOR LIVING

STRING THINGS ALONG

You don't need to go overboard when decorating for a garden party. Some potted plants, a few lanterns and a bit of bunting is often all you need. You can opt for flag-style bunting or try something a bit different such as these Mossy Hearts on a string. Measuring one metre in length, the bunting can be strung along the walls of any outdoor space such as a deck or balcony that might be in need of greening up. vinylcuts.com.au



GO BANANAS

The golden lotus banana has been a hot topic of conversation in horticultural circles for a long time. Originating in Himalayan China, this stunning plant was brought to our shores by Gianni Vieri more than 20 years ago. Australian Quarantine held and tested it for approximately four and a half years before it was released, though. The plant's extremely durable fibre is used to weave objects such as furniture, baskets, clothing, hats and thatching for house roofs. Interestingly, it has also been cultivated for commercial pig food, honey production, erosion control, wine and medicine. This beautiful plant typically flowers for six months straight and produces 'hands' of inedible bananas that contain shiny black seeds. thegoldenlotus.com.au



BIGGER IS BETTER

Are you looking for a statement piece for your backyard or to shed some light on your garden? This indoor/outdoor giant lamp has a delightful back story. It was originally created for the Roald Dahl Museum as a tribute to the author's passion for the lamp he used at his writing desk. Dahl's lamp was supersized to suit the size of one of his favourite characters, the Big Friendly Giant. Fittingly, in Roald Dahl's centenary year, Anglepoise has unveiled at the Light+Building exhibition in Frankfurt a new, enhanced and greatly extended Giant collection, including the first Giant Outdoor collection. cultdesign.com.au

THE MAKERS

Backyard play is so important for kids — it helps them grow and develop fond memories that will last a lifetime



AHOY MATEY

It's no secret that kids love to role play so why not create the perfect environment for it in the backyard? They can sail the seven seas searching for treasure in this nifty KidKraft Pirate wooden sandbox. Made from weather-resistant Sanmu wood, this cool sandbox features colourful pirate-themed artwork and a steering wheel at the front. It's large enough so that multiple kids can play at once — perfect for sibling play or play dates with friends. There is even a storage space for housing sand toys including buckets and shovels. The shade canopy provides much-needed shade from the hot sun, as well. The sandbox comes as a flat pack that requires at-home assembly so it's ideal for that weekend project. livingstyles.com.au

IT'S A SECRET

Making your backyard kid-friendly doesn't mean you have to compromise on chic. Such is the case with this gorgeous project by Secret Gardens. The children are catered for with a cubby house and lawn area to play on. This picturesque cubby features a pared-back colour scheme that ties in with the surrounding design elements including the pavers, outdoor furniture and even the architecture of the family home. The creeping plants along the side of the cubby are a nice touch while the bunting gives it a whimsical feeling that is far from kitsch. secretgardens.com.au



SWING LOW

Rest, relaxation, chill time (whatever you want to call it) is just as important for a child's development as play but there's no need to keep them cooped up inside while they recharge their batteries for another round. Why not make rest time fun while you're at it? The Hang Mini hanging chair is the perfect size for little bodies and

is available in two wild fabrics — zebra and giraffe. These groovy prints capture the imagination, creating images of an exciting safari. This hanging chair can rock and bounce in any direction — ideal for kids who can't sit still. It also features a comfortable padded seat and childproof suspension for extra support. amazonas.eu

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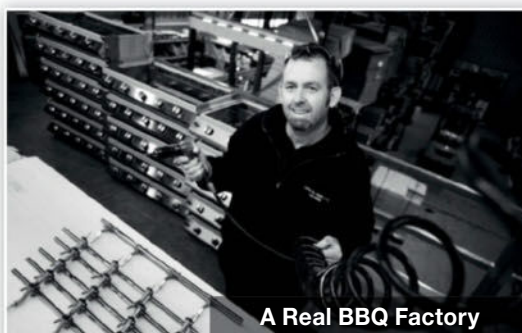
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GARDEN TO TABLE

Have you been looking for a way to encourage your kids to get out in the garden? Children, in particular, can gain special benefits from growing their own produce. It shows them where fresh food comes from, fosters a love of nature, boosts their confidence and teaches them to be responsible. The Birdies4Kids modular garden bed is a great place to start. It comes in six different shapes and colour combinations. Made from quality coloured corrugated steel, this groovy garden bed is quick and easy to assemble. It features a rolled-steel child-friendly edge with clip-on safety strip so that all you have to worry about is what you and the kids want to plant. birdiesgardenproducts.com.au





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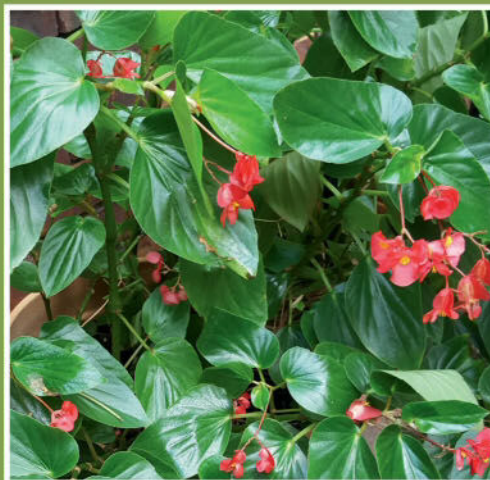
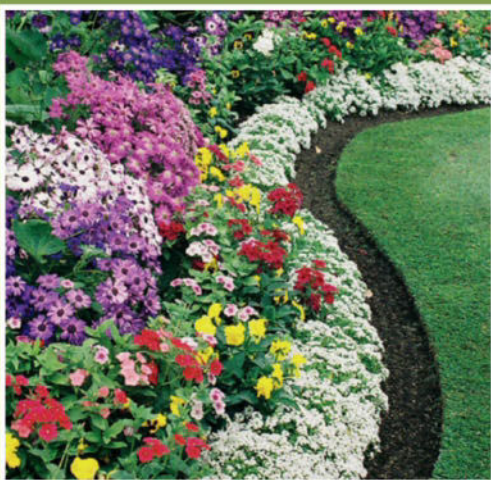




Photo: Peter Brennan

CHALK IT UP

Depending on how much space you have available, there's not always room to put in a huge cubby house or swing set. Modern landscape design is all about making the most of the space available and sometimes that means being innovative. Smaller toys such as bikes, chalkboards and skateboards can also pose a problem when space is at a premium. To declutter, it's a great idea

to secure a chalkboard to an outside wall instead of having it in the way of foot traffic. In this design by Design-it Landscapes, the lower, off-street parking area doubles as a lawn and play space for children and pets. The subtle addition of shape and colour is child-appropriate while still in keeping with the contemporary design. designitlandscapes.com.au



LET'S SLIDE

Let's face it, most things to do with children are bright and garish — think hot-pink bikes with streamers and fluoro training wheels or bright red tables and chairs. But when it comes to permanent structures for your children, there is no reason that they can't be a bit more demure and design-friendly. Take a cue from this design. Notice how it is constructed from trendy timber that matches the pergola behind? While it is predominantly constructed from timber, it still has a moderate amount of colour in the form of a shade sail, swing and slide, which caters to the eyes of a child. And of course, no backyard play area is complete without a slide. Image courtesy of The Tree & Shrub Growers.



MAKE MAGIC

I'm sure you've heard of the saying "this is where the magic happens". I'm almost certain this is referring to the garden and, more specifically, to kids playing in the garden. A place for them to escape to their own magical world. A cubby house is the ultimate outdoor toy for the backyard, sure to keep them amused for endless hours. Tarmak Kids' cubby houses are made from Australian and New Zealand pine. They are designed and constructed in Australia by parents Dean and Kelly. What makes this cubby so special is the attention to detail, from the flooring and pictures inside to the tea house sign and specials board on the outside. It's a space for the ultimate tea party. tarmakkids.com.au

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Organic gardening methods pay dividends in this inner-city garden.

GOOD ENOUGH TO *eat*

This garden in the heart of Melbourne has gone from being merely decorative to an edible jewel in tune with Earth's natural systems

WORDS: TOM REMFRY
PHOTOS: ADRIAN VITTORIO

Jennie and John wanted their inner-city garden to be both ornamental and productive, as well as beautiful to look at, but like many people they sought help with setting it up and ensuring it followed organic principles.

In our organic garden-care business we are approached more and more often by people like this couple, who want to retain elements of their existing formal garden but also understand the importance of having edible plants and herbs.

Our mission was to transform Jennie and John's garden into an aesthetically pleasing and functional space, which included an edible makeover. In Jennie's words, "We wanted an ornamental garden and to retain some existing elements but have vegies, fruit trees and herbs as an essential part of the greater garden scheme."

Despite the constraints of inner-urban locations such as theirs, lack of space need not be a hindrance to creating a beneficial, organic kitchen garden when you use techniques such



Tom adds fallen leaves as mulch to the raised garden beds.

as building raised beds and incorporating fruit trees among the ornamentals.

For example, the pathway into this block has a low formal hedge but the garden bed has a nectarine tree and peach tree complementing the existing plants. These new feature trees are both ornamental and edible.

When space is limited, as in this garden, an effective way of growing fruit trees is the two-dimensional espalier method. Jennie and John have espaliered pear, apple and lemon trees to perfectly suit the restricted space. As long as the branches are tied in a figure eight and the plants are watered well, espaliered trees will fruit almost exactly as their standard tree counterparts.

MAKING IT PRODUCTIVE

The raised vegie beds were built using cypress, a naturally termite-resistant timber, and colour was applied only to the outside, allowing John and Jennie to have a continual supply of organic vegies, herbs and other useful produce available throughout the year.

The bounty of these two beds is quite considerable: Jennie and John enjoy seasonal produce such as bok choy, broccoli, celery, beans, rocket, capsicum, tomatoes, lettuce, strawberries

and a huge variety of herbs that add culinary and aromatic interest in the beds and the kitchen.

Our team uses organic practices combining permaculture techniques of companion planting and crop rotation. Jennie and John were keen to use these measures in their garden.

A large-scale worm farm is used to replenish and feed the soil profile to keep it as active and alive as possible. This provides the best form of organic compost available to top up the garden beds when necessary.

In addition, we have developed an organic composting system that allows us to recycle 100 per cent of the green waste gathered on

this property to form rich organic compost. This adds value to the garden, keeping microclimates healthy, and really strengthens the natural ecosystem.

For instance, if plant varieties that attract native birds are planted — predominantly native species such as callistemon and grevilleas — in addition to carefully locating low, shallow ponds or bowls, the garden can be a place of sanctuary for all sorts of important and beautiful animals, including butterflies, bees, dragonflies, praying mantis and katydids. Of course, the herbs attract beneficial insects, particularly the pollinators, too.

“Lack of space need not be a hindrance to creating a beneficial, organic kitchen garden when you use techniques such as building raised beds and incorporating fruit trees among the ornamentals”



Jennie and John wanted their inner-city garden to be productive as well as beautiful.



ABOVE The raised veggie beds were built using naturally termite-resistant cypress.

BELOW Some strawberries have escaped from the patch.

TOM'S TOP TIPS

- 1** Establish a worm farm located close to your veggie garden.
- 2** Support your soil organically and appreciate it as a living organism.
- 3** Encourage native birds, butterflies and other important invertebrates to be part of your garden ecosystem.
- 4** Plant a variety of useful herbs that will reward you with perfect culinary and aromatic inclusions in cooking, teas and wonderful companion plants for your veggie beds.
- 5** Establish a compost heap, bin or other area to recycle your kitchen waste effectively.

A HELPING HAND

Many gardeners need a helping hand to get started in their new organic space and, as designers and horticulturists, we are qualified in and committed to organic practices and can offer clients the initial design service as well as garden care and a teaching platform.

We aim to give clients an understanding of organic and permaculture principles. Jennie says, "We now consider the natural processes taking place in our healthy garden ecosystem and we can be more in tune with what must be done to maintain this equilibrium in our own garden space."

One of the things we are completely committed to is ensuring zero carbon emissions in managing clients' gardens by creating organic compost that's available throughout the year to replenish and support healthy, living organic soil.

We reuse all the green waste gathered onsite to create humus-rich compost so



nothing is wasted or lost. This also means we can be certain that no parasites or invasive seed material enters any of the gardens in our care. This is essential if one wishes to garden naturally.

We carefully monitor and record what's happening onsite so we and the homeowners are in tune with plant health, soil health and what areas need attention in order to maintain balance and harmony in the garden.

FEEDING THE FAMILY

It's not just John and Jennie who revel in the bounty of their garden. Their grandchildren

can't wait to get to Nanna's place to check if the strawberries, snow peas, lettuce, carrots or nectarines and peaches are ready for snacking on. They race to get the ripest and best fruit before anyone else does.

Isn't that what it's all about? There's no better reward for the effort put into an organic food garden than the delight a family takes in harvesting and eating their own organically grown produce.

Tom Remfry is a multi-award winning horticulturist, garden designer and director of Tom's Secret Garden.



The curry leaf tree is an ideal spot for a home-made jungle gym.

CONNECTION

WITH

food

This family knows all about good food and where it comes from – their own backyard

WORDS: LINDA BRENNAN

Do you remember how you made pocket money as a child? Perhaps it was mowing the lawn, washing the dishes or doing a paper round. Queenslander Luke Read made his money growing and selling vegies — to his family.

His mother saw an opening to have fresh vegies on the table while keeping her son gainfully occupied and, smart woman that she was, she employed Luke to grow the family's vegies — and paid him market price.

Young Luke learnt lots about the garden and had his first lessons on making money. "Sometimes I may have overestimated my harvest of beans, corn or lettuce for a little extra pocket money," he admits.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Growing his own food is a skill he's carried through life and now, with a garden and family of his own, he's harvesting plenty from his poison-free suburban garden as well as thinking of encouraging his own children to earn some pocket money with their own vegie beds.

In fact, Luke's love of good local produce has taken him into a job he loves, as produce manager for Food Connect, an organisation based on the community-supported agriculture model. He gets to liaise with primary producers daily and loves every minute of it.

CAFFEINE HIT

At work, Luke is renowned for his homegrown coffee. From just a couple of bushes he manages to harvest about 10kg of ripe beans a year. The arduous task of separating the three layers of husk is worthwhile, he reckons, for the wonderful roasted beans he enjoys and shares. On the day of my visit, the coffee bushes that incidentally thrive in some shade are ripening another bumper harvest. Daughter Stella gets up the ladder to investigate the crop as Luke declares, "I think this harvest will be a job for the neighbourhood kids."

CHILDREN AND ANIMALS

Luke's small backyard is crammed full of fruit trees, vegies, chooks and play equipment created from scavenged items such as ladders and ropes that make play creative and exciting. Children Stella, Dom and Sebastian have all manner of cubbies and climbing frames around and under the fruit trees, while the chickens scratch around picking at grubs and turning the soil as they fertilise it with their droppings.

Stella declares, "My favourite fruit is the lemons. I like the sourness and eat them just as they are. Dom loves oranges best — we've got Washington navels on the tree now — and Sebastian eats up all our strawberries and mandarins."

Neighbourhood Sudanese children also love the garden; they cleared out the first crop of mandarins and grapefruit a couple of years back. Luke thought it was great that they were eating the fruit. Fortunately for the



ABOVE A basket of goodies from the garden.

BELOW Sebastian loves his drums and serenades the chickens and neighbours.



Growing pineapples from the tops of your last fruit is easy.

“Luke’s small backyard is crammed full of fruit trees, vegies, chooks and play equipment created from scavenged items such as ladders and ropes that make play creative and exciting”

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE?

Farmers are given a guarantee that the community will buy their organically grown produce at a certain price that gives the farmers and their families a living wage. Their fresh food is delivered to their “city cousins” through Food Connect and everyone wins.

Food connect was started by two dairy farmers to reconnect people with the farmers and the origins of their food and to connect farmers to the people who enjoyed their produce. It has branches in Sydney and Brisbane. Find them at foodconnect.com.au

kids, the park over the back fence has old mango trees and the children tuck into them as well for summer snacks."

TROPICAL PARADISE

When you live in the tropics you can grow all manner of exotic fruits. The day I arrive, Luke and his wife Maria are enjoying red dragon fruit (pitaya) from the climbing succulent plant. "We love its terrific pink colour and chop it into fruit salads," says Luke. "There is also a yellow variety, but we are hooked on this tastier one. My dad grows it in his large garden at Rosewood, too, so we share the harvest. It will happily climb up a strong timber pole or a tree trunk.

"Dad also has avocados. We don't have space here, so [we] often get a share of his crop. Each tree produces hundreds of them and they don't ripen until you take them off the tree. It's great when they're a few dollars each in the shops and free from the tree."

GARDEN TO TABLE

Maria also had a childhood immersed in a garden. Her Italian and Croatian parents had a hobby farm where eggs and fresh fruit were always available. "Mum was always whipping up something from the garden," she says. While she enjoys cooking, Maria admits she's "the basic cook. It's Luke who is the deluxe chef. Last night he created a batch of chutney from the tamarillos and before that it was amazingly good pumpkin pancakes."

Adds Luke, "Our other edibles in the garden provide us with something to eat most days of the year. Apart from the vegies, we grow sugar cane as a treat for the kids to chew on, tropical apples, bananas, pineapples, Isabella grapes and lots of lemons. I'm looking forward to the first harvest from our tree grapes (jaboticabas) and the fruit from the chocolate pudding fruit tree. While the fruit on

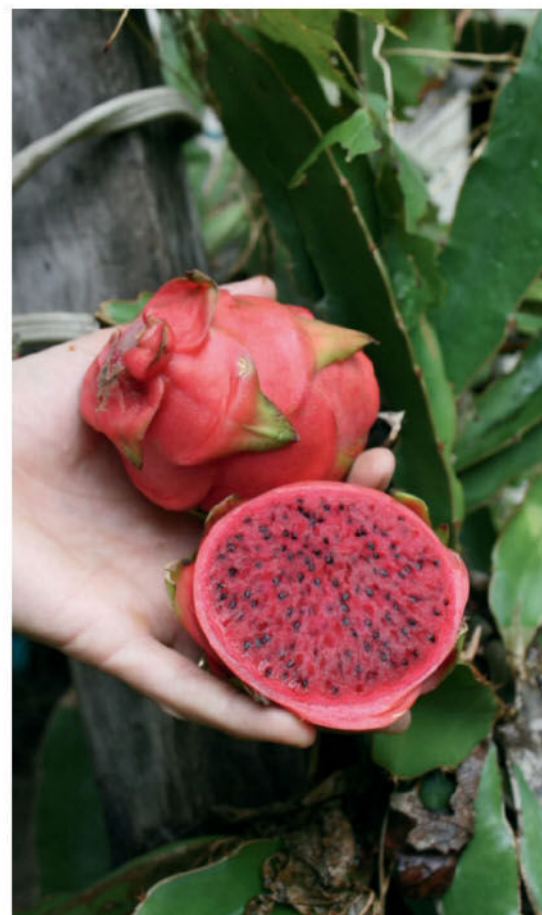
BELOW The kids love to snack on fresh citrus.
RIGHT Pumpkins will make excellent pancakes and soup.



Luke harvests tree tomatoes, or tamarillos, for delicious chutney.

LEFT Stella climbs for coffee.

BELOW These red pittaya, or dragon fruit, are a colourful addition to fruit salads.



this one isn't chocolate flavoured, it makes a great dessert with a bit of cocoa added and is marvellous in smoothies and ice-creams."

LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

As I tuck into the tamarillo chutney on a slab of fresh bread and a slice of Luke's mum's almond cheesecake, the harmonious strains of percussion emerge from the bedroom of the youngest and newest drummer in the street. Sebastian started learning the drums this year and is entertaining the neighbours on a Sunday morning. I wonder if it helps the hens to lay. They seem unperturbed by the noise, continuing their hunt for breakfast under the mulch.

Ah, the comforting sounds and flavours of the suburbs.

PREPARING YOUR OWN COFFEE BEANS FOR ROASTING

Coffee beans have three layers of coating or "testa" on the seeds. Each of these is removed in its own process; if you don't have the right equipment, this can be very time consuming. For information on preparing coffee from your own beans, go to the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website daf.qld.gov.au

The timeless beauty of nature and the imprint of modern mankind work in perfect harmony in this seaside garden.

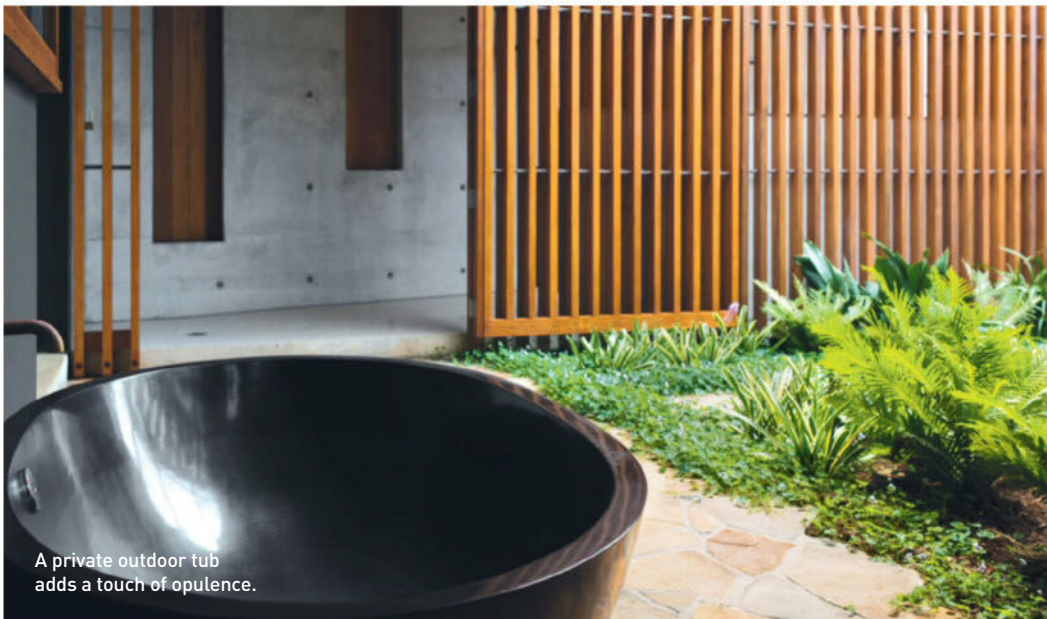


SECRET GARDEN BY THE SEA

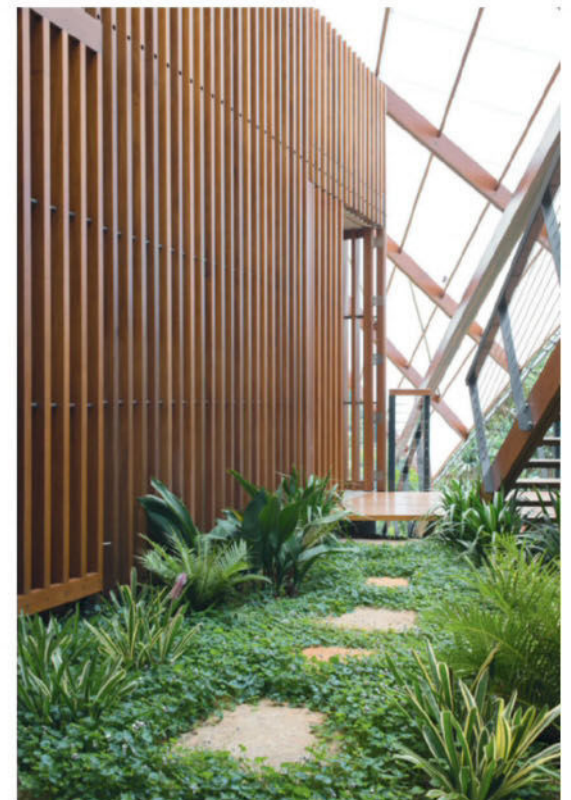
This modern home features exceptional architecture and landscape design



ABOVE The use of decorative grasses and water wise succulents can reduce garden maintenance dramatically. **BELOW** Steppers fringed by leafy ground covers softens the landscape and adds to the lush look of the garden.



A private outdoor tub adds a touch of opulence.



attenuata) are interspersed with cardboard palm (*Zamia furfuracea*), blue jade plant (*Crassula arborescens* 'Bluebird') and a myriad of other plants. Prolific use of grassy plants throughout the garden including flax lily (*Dianella caerulea* 'Little Jess') and *Reineckia carnea* bring sweeping form to the landscape, adding movement as they flow in the sultry ocean breeze.

WORDS: CARROL BAKER
PHOTOS: NICHOLAS WATT

With an outlook over Julian Rocks jutting out of the foaming Pacific, this Wategos Beach garden in NSW is a haven by the sea.

The garden is part of the Wing House, as it's known, and was designed by architect Peter Stutchbury. The palatial home is tucked into the rear of the sheer block, with the Byron Bay Lighthouse Reserve as its backdrop. The dramatic wing-like 27.5-metre span roof is an architectural feat and allows warm natural light to filter throughout the home, which is constructed from steel, timber, concrete and glass.

With the house positioned to the rear of the steep block, designer Matthew

Cantwell from Secret Gardens worked with the natural landscape to subtly blend and layer additional plantings.

"The slope is steep and the house is positioned at the rear of the block so the garden needed to enhance the entrance experience; help absorb the house into the terrain and simplify the outlook from the house to the ocean," he says.

Built elements in the garden landscape were locally sourced and chosen for their earthy look, which complements and softens the man-made features in the architecture.

Natural stone steps give the garden a raw organic feel and juxtapose the warm timber and cool cement stairs that take you up through the garden to the home. Hardy drought-tolerant plants including the century plant (*Agave*

The home set on a steep block is accessible via a series of steps that take you on a journey of discovery from garden to garden.

A must-have in any outdoor garden is seating so you can relax and admire the view. Here a rectangular timber bench complements the straight lines of the render wall behind it.



The plants were chosen for their texture and colour, to create an earthy tapestry. Matthew says the garden mixes plant varieties and creates an interesting palette of greens. "While the garden is still young, as it grows it will enhance the architecture of the home, while being low-maintenance," he says.

One can only imagine how this garden will look, as it grows through the seasons and reaches full maturity. Not only is the garden beautiful and timeless, it will require little upkeep, giving the owners more time to enjoy their natural haven by the sea.

Throughout the garden spaces, there are ample features to capture the viewer's attention. A rectangular wooden bench sits parallel to a retaining wall, inviting passers-by to sit and enjoy the beautiful light-filled garden. As you walk through the space, you can't help but be in awe of the sheer size and scale of it, and what can be achieved on a vertical plane with clever landscaping.

There are many stunning features in this garden; however, the designer's pick is the secluded secret garden that surrounds the outside bathtub. The zen-inspired space is soothing and tranquil — what a wonderful place to immerse yourself in the beauty of the landscape with a chilled glass of wine and a few bubbles.

There's no getting around the fact that given the steepness of the block, creating the garden was a challenge. This is an

example of how sound design principles and innovative landscaping solutions on a steep or undulating block can be a design triumph of colour, texture and form.

In this instance, adding steps in organic shapes throughout the landscape takes you to various levels throughout the space. These are complemented by layers of planting and strategic groupings of plants to soften the hard landscaping elements. Being in an elevated position facing the coast, plants are buffeted by drying sea breezes and salt-laden winds, which can be damaging to their leaves. This is where careful plant selection comes into play, choosing plants like blue chalk sticks (*Senecio serpens*), coastal banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) and coastal rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*) to withstand these harsh conditions.

Michael's philosophy in landscape design is about inclusion — emphasising all elements in the garden and ensuring there is the appropriate balance between the soft and hard landscaping elements — to give the landscape a sense of cohesiveness and harmony. "We love plants so the focus at Secret Gardens is always to lean towards delivering an interesting planting scheme," he says.

A garden should be easy on the eye and take the viewer on a journey through the various spaces within it, where around each corner you just may find the unexpected. You have found it here and the best is yet to come.



ABOVE Cardboard plant has a palm like growth habit, bringing a hint of the tropics to the garden. It's a wonderful stand alone feature plant and also works well with other leafy plants in a garden bed.

Thinking outside the box and mixing plant varieties adds a clever dash of the unpredictable.

"Adding steps in organic shapes throughout the landscape takes you to various levels throughout the space"



SLICE OF HEAVEN

A new low-maintenance garden in a small French village is a natural extension of a reinvigorated house and its revitalised indoor living spaces



Christian was very cautious about the property's soil, climate and natural local flora.



The existing building was modified so that indoor and outdoor spaces are better connected, have continuity and are more in harmony.

BELOW The paving used among the *Phyla nodiflora* groundcover is a strong local limestone.



WORDS: DANIELLE TOWNSEND

PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN PRÉAUD

I am a strong believer that garden-making calls for a lot more than a good knowledge of plants and serves a much wider purpose than just being 'pretty,'" says landscape architect/garden designer Christian Préaud of Atelier Jardins. "It is architecture daring nature to shape a little piece of the world into one client's fantasy of paradise. A dive into human psychology and a unique chance to experiment with every form of artistic expression, shaping the space, sculpting the land, painting with matter and colours, composing rhythms to accommodate the seasons and finding the overall harmony. It requires discipline — a project has a beginning and an end that needs you to keep focusing on the momentum while your heart remains open to inspiration."

Armed with this philosophy, there was no particular brief for Christian and the Atelier



The house was built 20 years ago and the new garden was to be enjoyed as a natural extension of the house.



Jardins team for this project, except to re-examine the house that had been built 20 years ago and to create a new garden that could be enjoyed as a natural extension of the house. The clients were completely open to any ideas, as long as their garden was a low-maintenance one.

Their property is located in a small French village, Les Portes-en-Ré, on the island of Ré, facing the town of La Rochelle, in the Vendée region. The village is in a forest of pine trees, live oaks and poplars, which grow in sandy soil on a carpet of giant ferns.

"For me, the garden is really the outside extension of the indoor living space, so every aspect of daily life can, and should, take place in it," says Christian. "This is why I believe that garden design is, before anything else, an architectural approach. It happens more

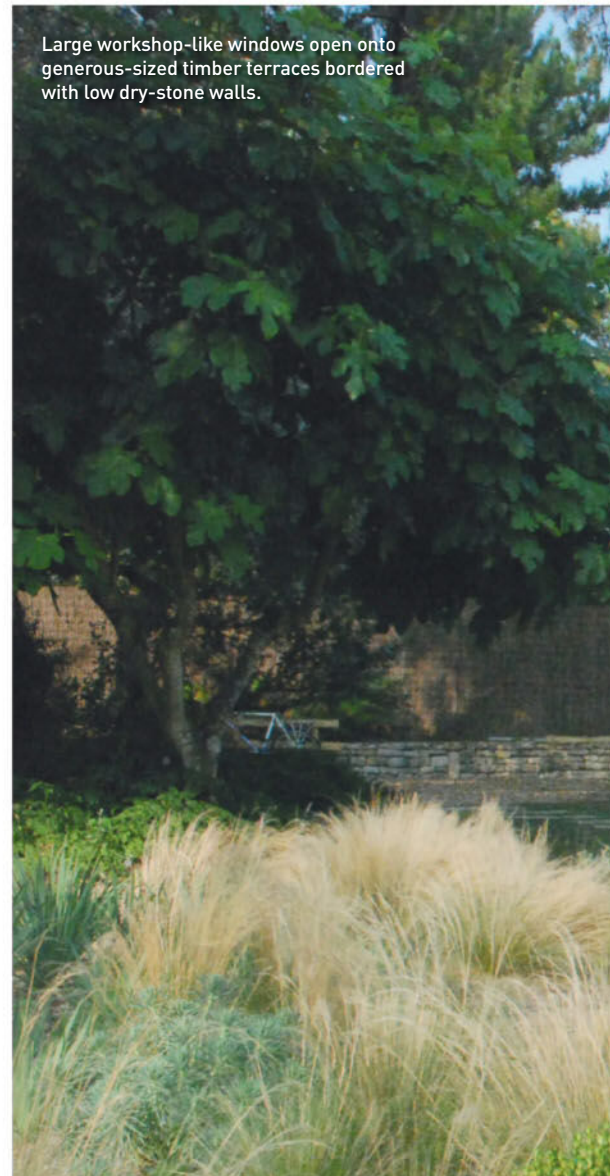
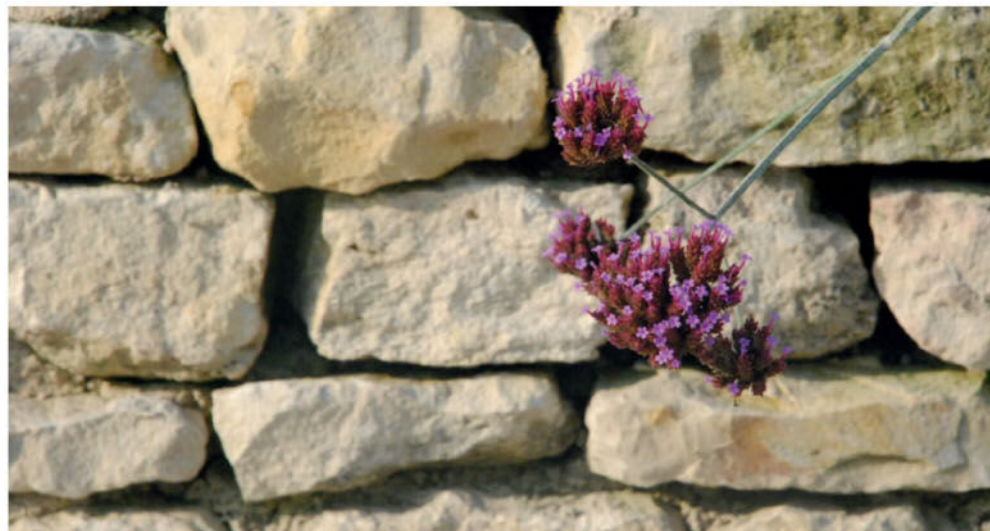
and more that through the process of working on the landscape, Atelier Jardins proposes (or is asked) to modify the existing building so that both spaces, indoor and outdoor, are better connected, have continuity, are more in harmony and better serve the needs of the people who live in it. I am able to offer that whole approach as the firm's staff includes architects as well as landscape architects."

Christian and his team redesigned the front of this house, creating large workshop-like windows that open onto generous-sized timber terraces bordered with low dry-stone walls. These walls around the terraces were built with the same local limestone used for the house walls and paving.

"The idea was to double the impression of available living space by creating the same

Large workshop-like windows open onto generous-sized timber terraces bordered with low dry-stone walls.

TOP LEFT AND BELOW The walls around the terraces were built with the same local limestone used for the house walls and paving.





The new garden is enjoyed as a natural extension of the house.



Christian planted species that like poor and dry soils.





"As for all gardens I design, I am very cautious about soil, climate and natural local flora"

surface outdoors as indoors," says Christian. "In summer, when the windows are open, it is just one big indoor/outdoor floor plan. In winter, even with the windows closed, the inside of the house is still fully connected with the garden and the garden remains part of the indoors."

The large studio-like bay windows were built to measure in galvanised steel by a well-known ironsmith from Rennes, Rémi Crézé, who Christian says "has been a faithful partner for many years". The use of steel allows for a very thin structure, which therefore gives a greater feeling of transparency.

The terraces, meanwhile, were made of ipe wood, a very strong and dense timber that is very close to teak, does not need any maintenance and turns into the same grey-

silver colour. "Also, it is much easier to trace its origin and to make sure it comes from FSC-labelled plantations," says Christian.

The garden was then lovingly created by landscaping contractor, Alex le Jardinier. "We decided to go for a 'dry garden', with a selection of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that would need no watering whatsoever except for the rain and natural moisture of the seashore," says Christian.

The property includes trees such as live oaks, Florence cypresses and mulberry; and perennials such as *Acanthus*, *Eryngium*, *Echinops*, *Euphorbia characias*, *Foeniculum iris*, *Sisyrinchium* and *Verbena bonariensis*; while shrubs such as box, lavender, sage, rosemary, *Helichrysum*, *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Cistus* and *Gaura* were also planted.

"A close eye was required for the garden's first two years, mostly to make sure that the local gardener in charge of the maintenance did not sneak in with a watering hose!" laughs Christian. "Habits are strong ... but watering those plants would have killed most of them."

"As for all gardens I design, I am very cautious about soil, climate and natural local flora. One must learn from what nature tells you. It makes it possible to grow a garden successfully without pouring on tonnes of fertiliser and chemicals to cure unavoidable diseases if you try to go against nature. In this particular case, with the sandy soil being very free-draining and not able to retain much organic matter, it would have been crazy to imagine planting anything else but species that like poor and dry soils."



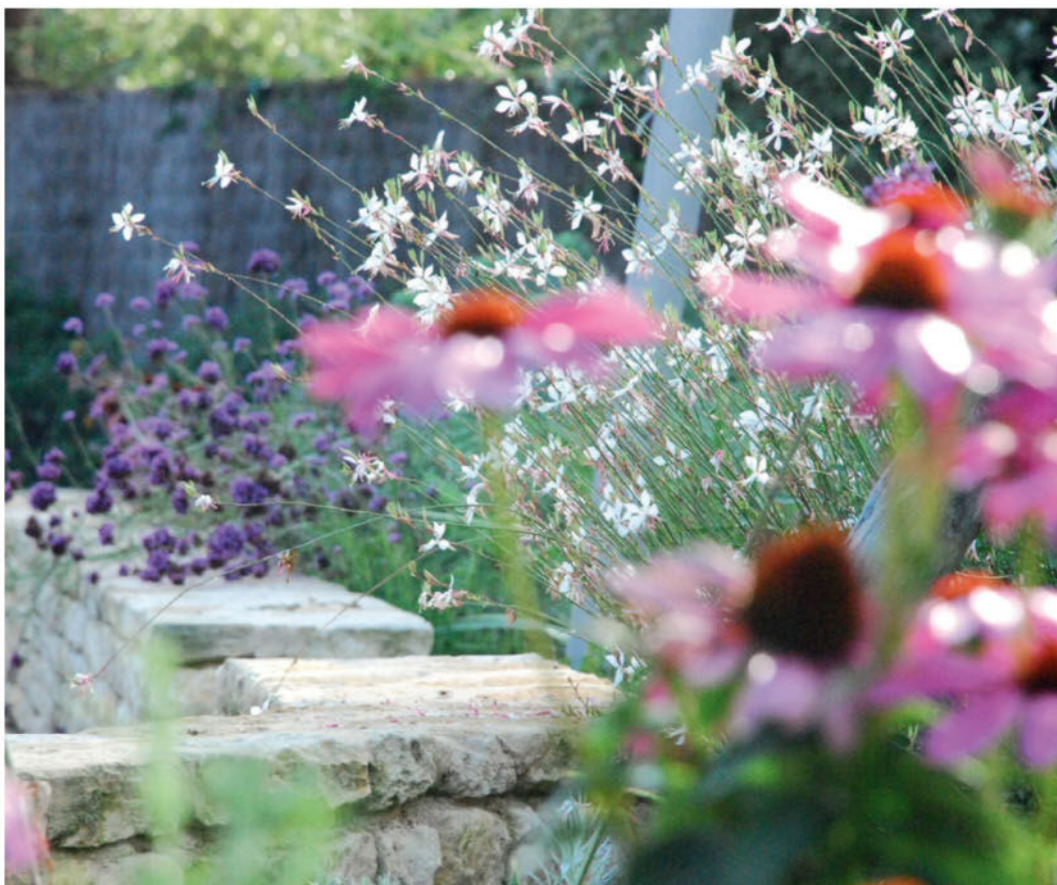
The garden is the outside extension of the indoor living space.

Christian's design also incorporates grasses such as *Deschampsia*, *Stipa tenuissima* and *Pennisetum*; and groundcovers including *Phyla nodiflora* and *Thymus*.

The paving used among the *Phyla nodiflora* groundcover is a strong local limestone, the same that was used for most walls on the property.

The fencing is heather as it is mandatory by local urban regulations. "We doubled it with a lower hedge of *Osmanthus* to break the wall-like feeling it otherwise creates," says Christian.

"I am quite proud of the whole project, it is very homogenous and therefore harmonious. The clients love it. They told me they had the feeling they moved into a brand new place. Mission accomplished!"



DESIGNER GARDENS



TOP LEFT, LEFT, ABOVE AND BELOW The 'dry garden' has a selection of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that would need no watering except for the rain and natural moisture of the seashore — talk about low-maintenance.

These lucky canines have plenty of room to romp and play.



PUPPY PARADISE

A lush haven for both man and his best friend

WORDS: CARROL BAKER
PHOTOS: KATRINE MARDINI

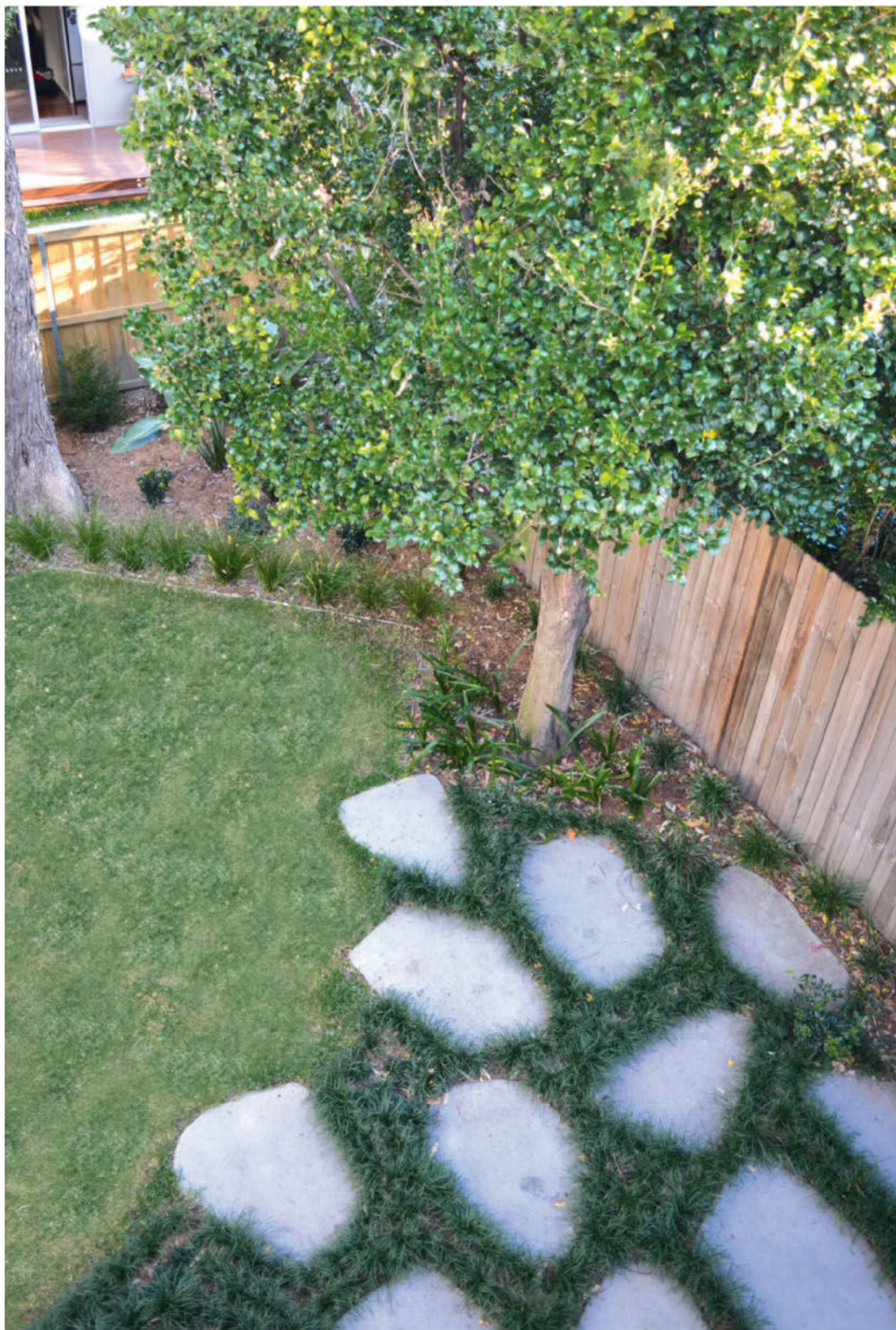
If you thought this garden was just another stylish run-of-the-mill suburban backyard, you'd be barking up the wrong tree. This delightful compact Lilyfield garden pays testament to how man (and his dog) can truly share outdoor living in suburbia.

The garden was designed by Steve Warner of Outhouse Design and constructed by Steve Warner and Greg Soster from Outside Space.

In creating the garden, the homeowners wanted to achieve an informal and low-

maintenance space that was ultimately functional and durable (for the dogs), with a sprinkle of quirkiness and a dash of the unexpected. The resulting garden is a delightful green space that is light-filled, warm and welcoming.

There is plenty of room on the lawn to run and romp, and ample shady places to soak up the sun and have a lazy afternoon snooze — and that is just for the owner. The two in-residence canines, Mana and Tora, have given the garden the paws up, too. With lots of grassy open spaces, it is a little slice of doggie paradise that these canines will definitely enjoy for years to come.



LEFT Leafy trees provide shade for the dogs in the warm summer months.

ABOVE The new curves in the garden work well with the straight lines of the existing hard landscaping surface.

Steve says, "It's the simplicity of the garden I like. It has a strong boldness about it, while still being soft and engaging in its shape and planting selected," he says.

Before the renovation, the garden was a lacklustre space that followed the contours of the fence line. The designers have thought outside the box, adding fluid curves and interesting angles and dimensions with oversized pavers and deep garden beds. The existing square concrete pavers were kept and integrated into the design.

The biggest challenge in creating this garden was the modest budget the designers had at their disposal. The final design clearly illustrates what can be achieved with a minimal spend. "We cleaned up and reused the existing pavers and created the connection to the garden by blending them with new bluestone steppers," says Steve. "Dividing the larger clumps of existing *Strelitzia* into multiples enabled us to create additional planting focal points."

"This garden demonstrates that even on a tight budget, investing in good design and key quality products can make all the difference. It is a great space with plenty of character and a sense of fun," he adds.

The linked garden edging with rolled metal edge clearly defines the leafy lawn from the garden beds. The luxurious leafy green mondo is interspersed among the bluestone pavers and adds a wonderful touch of whimsy. The fluid motion of the mondo sweeping over the pavers brings a charming feel to the space.

The large organic bluestone pavers, the smallest 800mm by 600mm, were sourced from Eco Outdoor. They make a bold visual statement when viewed from the balcony above.



"The luxurious leafy green mondo is interspersed among the bluestone pavers and adds a wonderful touch of whimsy"

There are plenty of places to lay and places to run, this garden is no doubt the envy of the other canines in the neighbourhood.



The positioning of the randomly sized bluestone pavers around the curved grassy space, looks like the pads of a dog's paw.

The key eco-friendly elements are the soft landscaping elements. The plants used are all drought-tolerant, so require minimal watering. The natives are low-maintenance, and select groundcovers and screening plants have been chosen that spread quickly, working well with the existing site and soil conditions.

To provide privacy, the owner opted for a living leafy screen. Native lilly pilly Hot Flush (*Acmena smithii*) has dark green leaves, and a glossy mauve new growth. The trees have petite clusters of white flowers that turn into pretty berries in the cooler months of the year. Steve says it can be trimmed easily to the required height.

The wide garden beds add depth, drawing the eye to select focal points, and within the beds is a variety of mixed layered planting. All of the plants selected were chosen for their colour, interesting texture, and contrast. Fragrance hasn't been forgotten here either, with star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) which grows quite quickly and has delightful white scented flowers that will waft over the garden

and indoors. Miss Muffett (*Pittosporum tobira*) has tightly compacted foliage and a strong defined shape. The beautiful mass cream and white flowers that bloom in spring have a pretty subtle fragrance.

Perhaps most importantly the plants chosen for the garden had to be robust, with two large dogs in residence. Feature plants include bird of paradise (*Strelitzia*) with its glossy emerald leaves and striking showy exotic flowers. Another attractive focal plant is the orange clivia (*Clivia miniata*), which has vivid clusters of flowers in late winter through spring. Snow maiden (*Raphiolepis indica*) has contrasting shape and scent, and *Liriope* 'Evergreen Giant' is drought-tolerant. The *Lomandra* 'Tanika' is another pooch-hardy native plant — it has soft, flowing evergreen foliage that is pliable.

The mondo (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) is mass-planted and visually connects the gardens to the grassy lawns. Steve says it is a cost-effective plant; more importantly, it's very supple and hardy, a must when you have two happy hounds that enjoy laying on it.

BELOW It's doggie heaven for these playful pups.



Bamboo -

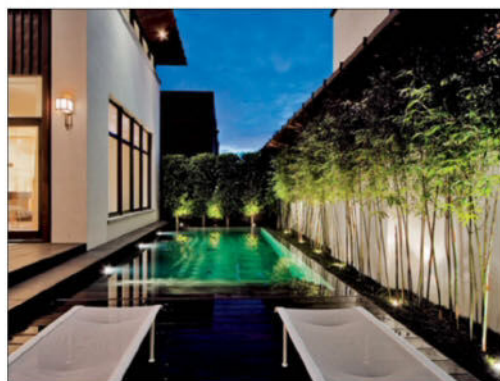
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Courtesy of Jack Merlo Design

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Going with the flow

The skills of a herbalist and a conservation architect have come together to create something free-spirited and very special on this coastal property

WORDS & PHOTOS: DIANE NORRIS

I've visited many inspiring gardens and their remarkable creators over the years, but once in a while I walk into something truly special, even mesmerising — a space that arouses all senses. That was the case when I opened the gate to the garden belonging to Mim and Neville Burkett.

I met Mim and Neville at the Australian Garden Show Sydney in 2014. I strolled into their stand after I noticed the interesting and eclectic potted specimens amassed on tables. As soon as I spoke to them I knew a

friendship and garden bond were bound to happen.

I visited Mim and Neville in early spring when their garden was starting to awaken and bloom into life. Mim's gardening expertise and botanical knowledge were profound. As we walked through the distinct garden rooms, she pointed out and named each specimen, telling me its relevance in the garden and its growing abilities. In particular, it was fascinating to hear the botanical names roll off Mim's tongue so effortlessly and be told about the culinary and

medicinal attributes of the hundreds of herbs throughout the garden. Inspiring is the word!

Mim and Neville had lived on large acreage on the northwestern outskirts of Sydney before moving to a "simpler life" in the South Coast town of Nowra, just 15km from the sea. They had friends in Nowra and loved the spot, so started searching for an old house they could restore — one with space for a large garden. "In November 2009 we moved into a large, rambling, weatherboard California Bungalow built in the 1920s," Mim says. "We painted the house butter yellow and it became known as The Yellow House."



Talk about a lovely place to relax in the shade.

At that stage the garden was “wild and unkempt”, but the couple were well up to the challenge. There was a lot of concrete and impenetrable thickets of plants like oleander, privet, plumbago and tangling ivy, which were fashionable in the 1920s and 30s but needed to be removed to make way for more relevant plants.

Once the house had been beautifully restored (thanks to Neville’s architectural talent), it was time to plan the garden. Mim’s want-list was huge: a cottage-style garden, herbaceous borders, a herb garden, vegie patch, small orchard and chicken coop. She also needed a



ABOVE LEFT A rare find: Paintbrush Lily (*Scadoxus puniceus natalensis*).

ABOVE RIGHT Mulched pathways, soft under foot, lead to each garden room.



DESIGNER GARDENS

“Mim’s want-list was huge: a cottage-style garden, herbaceous borders, a herb garden, vegie patch, small orchard and chicken coop. She also needed a working hub where she could propagate and pot plants”



Geum rivale ‘Jess’ potted and labelled in the nursery.



Potted perennials ready for sale — right up to the backdoor.



Edibles are allowed to grow in a free-spirited way — no space is wasted!

"That's the essence of this garden's charm: it's not ordered, manicured or structured but rather an exciting, stimulating place where plants grow arm in arm with one another, finding their own growing companions"



The amazingly eclectic plantings fill every single space in this garden.

working hub where she could propagate and pot plants. "Our vision was of a sort of city farm, but we certainly didn't envisage a nursery," she says. "It was very exciting to have a blank canvas."

The Yellow House sits on a large corner block, which allows for two entrances. There are a few good old established trees and plants, like the magnificent Indian hawthorn (*Raphiolepis indica*) that welcomes visitors to the front door, now thriving after being rescued from the strangling arms of the rampant ivy.

The front garden is ideal for the cottage garden and is full of old-fashioned varieties, including penstemons, species geraniums, dianthus pinks, giant cardoons, echiums, salvias, buddlejas and many historic bearded irises. It's an exciting mix of plants, with old favourites like foxgloves, nasturtiums, nigella and forget-me-nots being allowed to self-seed and "free-range", popping up in a harmonious but uninhibited fashion. That's the essence of this garden's charm: it's not ordered, manicured or structured but rather an exciting, stimulating place where plants grow arm in arm with one another, finding their own growing companions.

"As gardeners and lovers of homegrown organic produce, we quickly established a kitchen garden for salads and vegetables while planning how to develop other areas of the garden," says Mim. "Coming from Hawkesbury sandstone country to a more coastal, frost-free area with rich loam on clay has required many adjustments. But it's a delight to dig a hole exactly where we want it rather than where the rock dictates!"

The open area east of the house was originally a knotted mess of invasive plants and concrete. What vision and stamina Neville and Mim must have mustered to get it like it is now. The orchard is just lovely; here reside figs, limes, peaches, nectarines, a damson and a King Billy plum, an apricot, a cherry guava, a navel orange and a kaffir lime. Of course, there are the essential lemons — Lisbon and Eureka — and a dwarf form of Pink Lady apple. The adjacent fence supports a choko, passionfruit and muscatel grape. Mim quite loves the choko, relating how she set up a little table on the footpath and gave away over 150 chokos last autumn. "Sharing produce is fun!"

The orchard also boasts an understorey of flowering plants — annuals and perennials, like the bee-attracting favourite borage, poppies, cosmos, stocks, linaria and cornflowers — as well as potatoes, sweet potatoes, chicories and giant red broccoli. Along the fence are clumps of the now rare but "real" culinary lemongrass, which is seldom available in nurseries.

It would be accurate to describe the vegie garden as a free-spirited kitchen potager; a garden-to-plate or garden-to-salad-bowl arrangement. It's a diverse mix of herbs, leafy greens, brassicas and loads more. Some plants have gone to flower, inviting bees to the patch and allowing seed to form. It's nice to see plants

BELOW Pretty bee-attracting annuals and perennials are part of the orchard.
RIGHT Mim's working hub lives quietly in the back corner.





Salvias of all sorts grow in the long “outside-the-fence” garden.



ABOVE LEFT Vegies and herbs grow to their full potential, flowering and seeding at will.



ABOVE CENTRE Pineapple sage, forget-me-not and figs grow handsomely together.



ABOVE RIGHT Spring-flowering *Echium* is a sight to behold — how fabulous is that?

allowed to grow to their full potential and, in some cases, Mim says, “to see how far they can go”.

The soil is rich and friable with aged composts and I can see water retention is excellent and growth is healthy. The pathway is soft underfoot with a thick-pile carpet of mulch.

To think that this superb garden is just a few years old is beyond ken. The plants, all grown (and propagated) organically, are allowed to grow in a healthy, uninterrupted way. All the potting mixes are made on-site, with no artificial fertilisers, pesticides or herbicides ever used, and each is prepared to suit individual species. “It’s reassuring to know where our vegetables come from, what feeding they received and how they were treated from seed to plate,” Mim says.

She explains that she grows plants for gardeners who embrace the opportunity to grow something different. She has gathered many plant treasures from old gardens and propagated them to quell the fear that some heirloom varieties could be lost forever.

Mim and Neville are members of the Australian Garden History Society and the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia; they also belong to the Alpine Garden Society (UK) and the Hardy Plant Society (UK). They have participated in Open Gardens Australia, where, quite literally, the establishment of The Yellow House Heritage Perennials first took root.

I’ll leave the last word to Mim: “Above all, gardening is such rewarding fun and always

full of surprises, some uplifting and inspiring, but occasionally gloom descends as one mourns the loss of a particularly treasured plant — though I’m suddenly revived at the prospect of a space for something new. It’s a good but busy life.”

Mim was a naturopathic herbalist and studied herbal medicine with the legendary Dorothy Hall. Apart from medicinal herbs, she also cultivates many hard-to-find culinary and household herbs as well as rare and heritage perennials. Neville is a trained conservation architect and manager of The Yellow House Heritage Perennials. For more information visit yellowhouseheritageperennials.com.au

BONDI DAYS

A pool, outdoor kitchen and a calming atmosphere – what more could you want from a slice of outdoor heaven?



How cool is the outdoor shower?

DESIGNER GARDENS



Get some vitamin D or relax in the shade — the choice is yours!

WORDS: ANNABELLE CLOROS

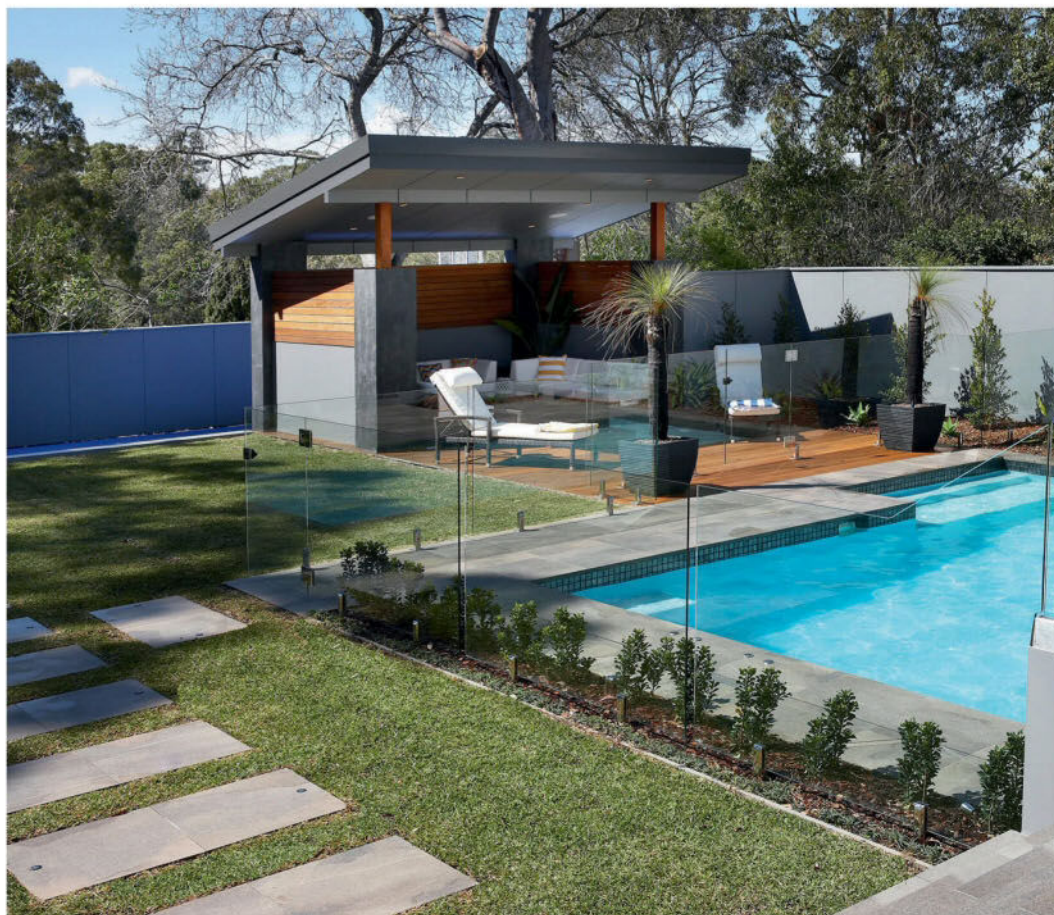
PHOTOS: DANNY KILDARE

Living in Bondi comes with many perks — great restaurants, a positive vibe and, of course, the famous beach. But if dodging tourists and spending time on a crowded beach doesn't appeal to you, creating your own private oasis is the perfect plan B.

Masterminded by Iconic Landscaping, this Bondi home boasts the ideal space to unwind and spend lazy summer days outside. With a body of work including a pool, entertaining/dining area, barbecue and pavilion, there's no need to leave home for a sunny day by the water.

Armed with a brief to create an area that's family friendly, director of Iconic Landscaping Nathan Boutros says the project had two purposes — to be "family friendly, where the kids had their area and [where] the adults could have an entertainer's paradise".

Beginning the project with land that was "blank and very steep", the space has now been transformed into a modern area where the L-shaped pool is the centrepiece. Situated on the right side of the garden, the pool can be directly accessed from the outdoor dining area with just a few steps. Surrounded by a glass fence and lined with hedges and lush green plants, there's also an outdoor shower for swimmers to rinse off before heading back indoors. Grey tiles were used to pave the pool area, which complement the bright blue colour of the water.

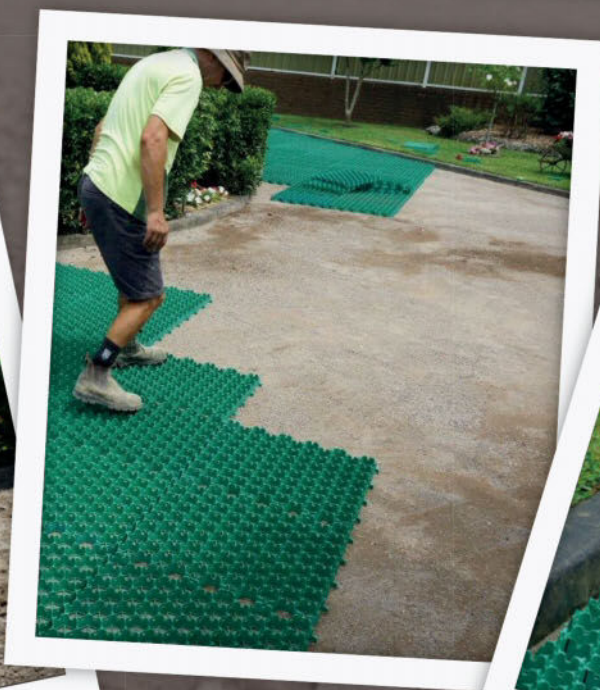


ABOVE The perfect vantage point for the pool.



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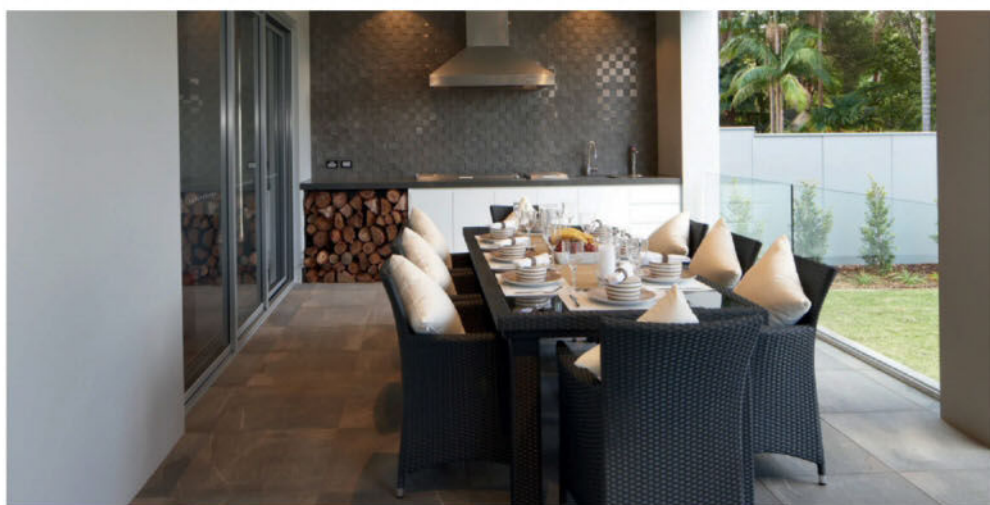


Brilliantly lit up at night, it's easy to imagine summer barbecues under the stars in this stunning outdoor space.

DESIGNER GARDENS



Protruding plants add a rustic element to the modern space.



ABOVE An outdoor dining area fit for a king.

BELOW These pavers leading to the house are lit up with LED lights.



“With a body of work including a pool, entertaining/dining area, barbecue and pavilion, there’s no need to leave home for a sunny day by the water”

Directly behind the pool sits a cabana with a timber floor and other timber accents throughout. Providing shade on those scorching days, occupants have the choice of working on their tan or relaxing on the lounge in the cabana. The structure adds a beachy feel to the garden, which has a modern aesthetic, linking it to the environment in which it exists.

To match the paving in the pool area and garden stairs, large stone pavers extend from the back steps of the home and over the manicured green lawn, creating a feeling of cohesion.

An outdoor kitchen is a luxury all homes should invest in. Complete with a rangehood, cooking area, barbecue, sink and dining table, the outdoor kitchen provides the family with a space to dine outside overlooking the picturesque garden and inviting pool.

Combining all the elements necessary for a peaceful day in the garden or a dinner party at night, this home now houses a stunning outdoor room that suits just about any occasion.

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BACKYARD GEMS

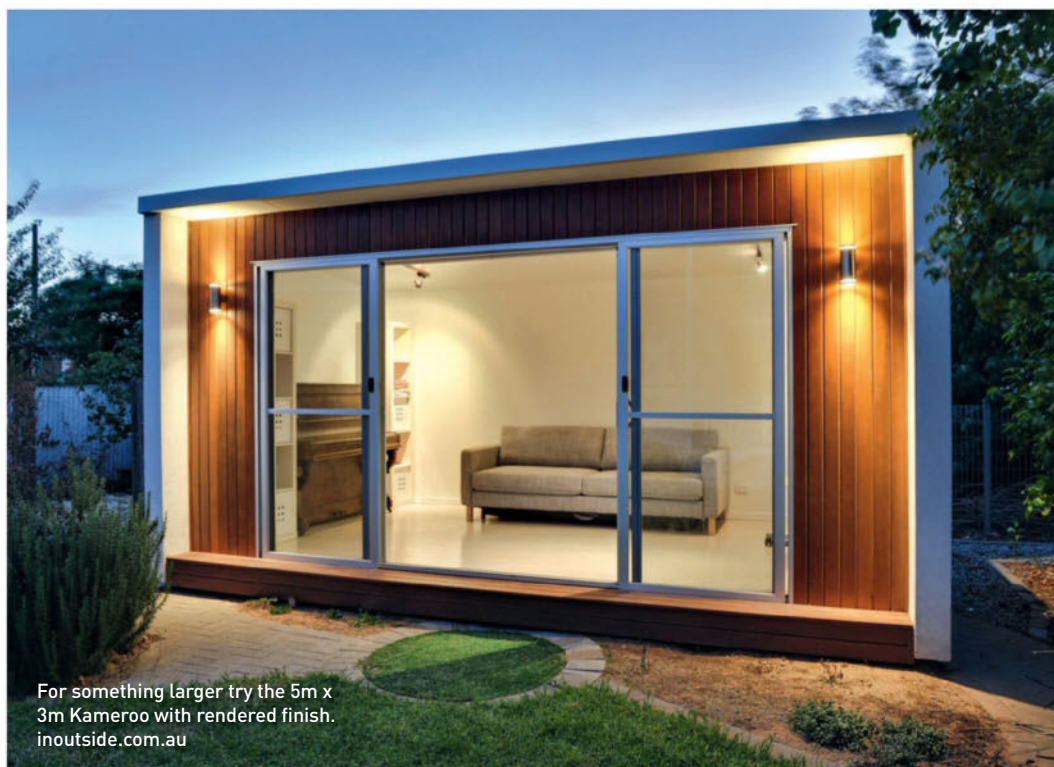
Garden offices and studios can add significant value to your property, provide additional accommodation and offer a much-needed retreat for work or play — the possibilities are endless

WORDS: DANIELLE TOWNSEND

Imagine heading out to the backyard and retreating to your garden studio — a peaceful home office, hobby room or man cave away from the rest of the house and family. When guests stay, rather than having them squeeze into an already crowded house, they could enjoy their own private accommodation in your garden.

"The possibilities for your backyard room are endless," says Tony Atkinson, director of InOutside. "With space to escape from everyday stress, our fully functioning, highly efficient work or lifestyle studios offer a secure, warm winter haven or a cool summer retreat. I like to call them office studios, as they are not restricted to one area alone. They are for a range of uses: home office, teenage retreats and craft/art studios."

Tony has seen the popularity of studios rise for various reasons. "I think the main reason for the increased need for these structures is that people want and need more space as their family grows," says Tony. "They provide an adaptable space — from adult office to rumpus room to hobby/craft room — as the family grows and their needs change."



For something larger try the 5m x 3m Kameroo with rendered finish. inoutside.com.au

"High property costs and office rentals also drive our business. It's much more cost-effective and productive to work from home. There's no long commute in traffic, no fuel and parking costs, and no office lease.

"We also have a high percentage of people looking to rent out the space at the end of their garden to assist with their mortgage repayments. Airbnb is another area that's very popular."

InOutside provides an easy, affordable option for extra living space, while enhancing existing homes. "Our products are a practical and economically viable alternative for anyone who needs extra living space," says Tony. "Using attractive and environmentally conscious construction materials, our outdoor rooms achieve designer looks without the hassle and intrusion of a renovation or home extension — and they offer greater function and style than a simple shed conversion."

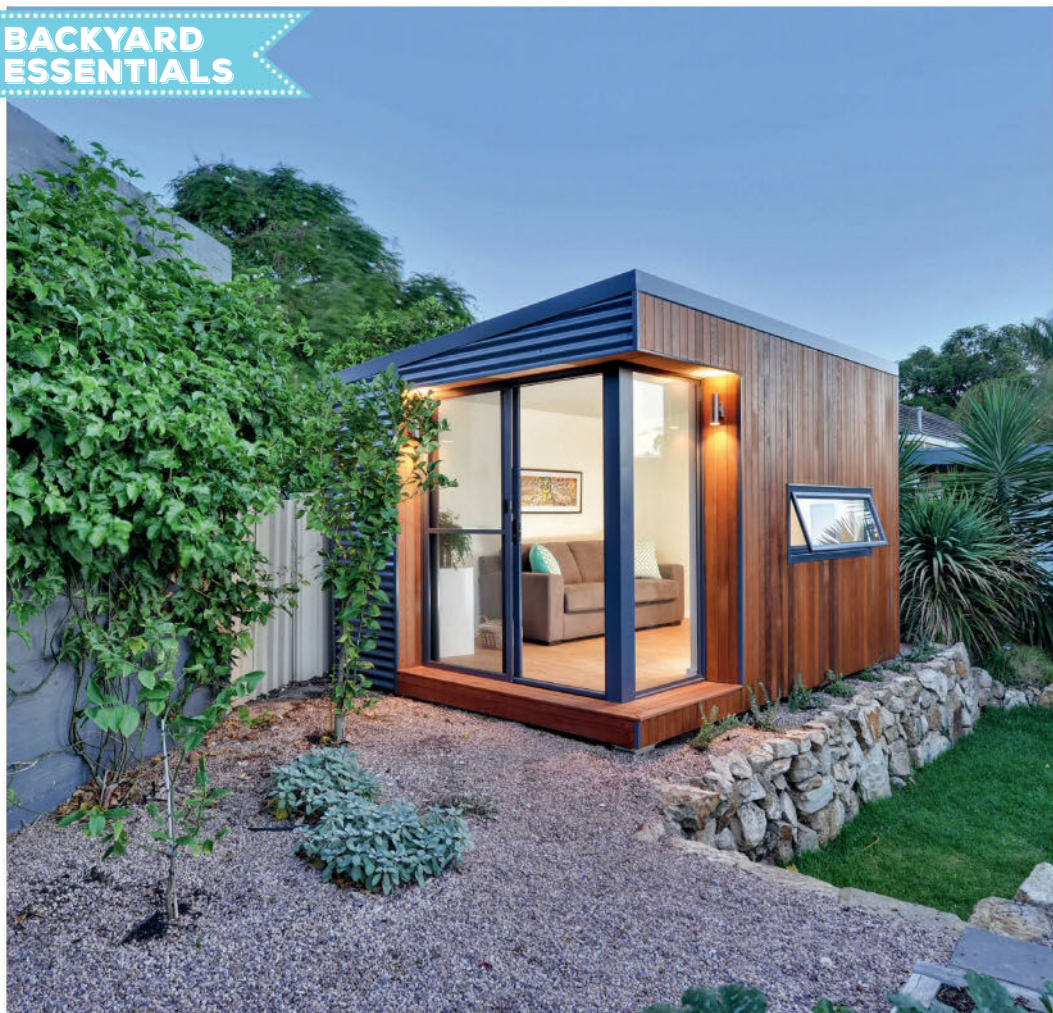
InOutside buildings are made to order and are very flexible in design, with no set standards, such as exterior cladding, window and door sizes and positions, and odd-sized floor plans. The company can also install internal walls and doorways to form bathrooms. Optional extras include double-glazed windows and doors, floor coverings, air-conditioning, extended decks and roof eave overhangs.



If you need even more space, the 7m x 5m Kameroo with extended deck is ideal. inoutside.com.au



The 4m x 3m Kameroo is perfect for an office. inoutside.com.au



LEFT AND ABOVE The 4m x 3m Cooba with Colorbond and cedar finish would make a functional and attractive addition to your backyard. inoutside.com.au

The company's three designs — the Kameroo, Mallee and Cooba — are manufactured in sizes from 3m x 3.3m up to a 7m x 5m footprint. These modern outdoor studios can be pre-assembled and transported to site ready for assembly and fit-out in a matter of weeks.

Each fully insulated backyard room is Australian-made and comes with a 12-month structural guarantee. Construction materials including timber, corrugated iron and render-finished panels are fitted to a robust aluminium/zinc-coated steel framework and base for durable good looks.



"The possibilities for your backyard room are endless"

The 3m x 3.3m Mallee studio is ideal for a smaller space or courtyard. inoutside.com.au



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PERFECT PODS

We speak to Jason Fremder, managing director of Harwyn, about prefabricated studio rooms that can be easily installed in your backyard.

What is a Harwyn Pod?

The Harwyn Pod is a permanent structure built from the ground up, with the ability to be easily relocated with minimal fuss. The Pod is luxurious and homey.

Who can use a Harwyn Pod?

When extra space is needed, a Harwyn Pod is used as a home office, studio, music room, theatre room, yoga and pilates space, exercise room, teenagers' retreat, self-contained living space and more. Whether you are a drummer looking for the perfect practice room that will keep sound contained or a corporate professional wanting home/work separation, the Harwyn Pod is the ultimate flexible space.

What makes the Harwyn Pod stand out?

The Harwyn Pod was designed from the user standpoint. The first question the team asked was: "What would make the world's most comfortable office, a place to think, create and be inspired? What would be a small space that feels like a big space, a space that is so comfortable that no matter how long you are there, it remains comfortable and inviting so that you always look forward to returning?"

Could somebody build a Harwyn Pod themselves?

Yes, they could. A DIY enthusiast could get the job done.

Are there limitations to where a Harwyn Pod can be delivered?

A Harwyn can be delivered complete to virtually any location around the world.

Are Harwyn Pods built on-site or in a factory?

Each Harwyn Pod is fully constructed and finished in the factory and delivered to site complete and ready to be plugged in. When a Harwyn Pod is delivered, it is similar to an appliance. Walk in, bring your laptop, plug it in, connect to WiFi, switch on the built-in climate control, shut the door and you have your own private retreat, your haven, your escape to create.

Where are Harwyn Pods built?

Harwyn Pods are fully designed and built in Melbourne.



How nifty is this prefab studio? harwyn.com.au



Featuring intuitive design, innovative materials and smart interior layouts, Harwyn designer pods are whatever you want them to be. harwyn.com.au



ABOVE AND BELOW As you can see, with different styling and furniture, the possible uses are endless. royalwolf.com.au



This Royal Wolf outdoor room makes the ideal entertainment space or rumpus room. royalwolf.com.au



BREAK DOWN

Features:

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- Wide opening created by glass sliding doors.
- Exceptional presentation and superior stability.

Applications:

- Executive or student office.
- Teenagers' or parents' retreat.
- Art/photography/music studio.
- Movie/media/games room.
- Home office/small business setup.
- Extended family accommodation.

Benefits:

- Add value to your existing home.
- Contemporary modular design.
- Delivered direct.
- 'Plug and play' installation.

SHIPPING CONTAINERS

The Royal Wolf Outdoor Room provides those needing extra space with a flexible solution. Innovative and portable, the Outdoor Room can be transformed into a space solution for residential applications such as a home office, retreat, spare bedroom or chill-out zone. It's ideal for those working from home, extended family, or as a teenagers' retreat or entertainment room.

The 20-foot modular unit features power, lighting, air-conditioning, flooring, superior

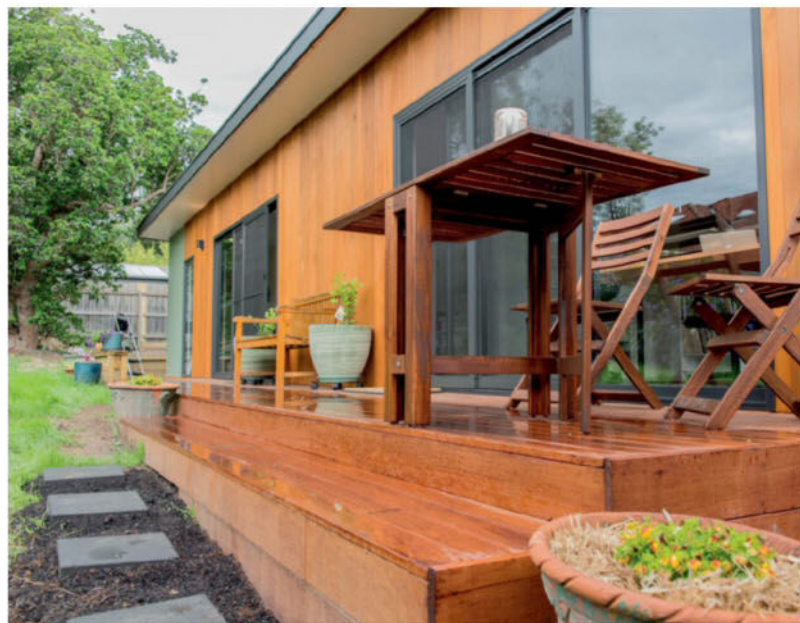
insulation and glass sliding doors. It is delivered as a blank slate and can be used and furnished to create whatever type of room is needed.

Mixing practicality and contemporary design, the Outdoor Room can be delivered direct to your nominated site and removed or repositioned if required. It comes with flexible rental and purchase options that provide a strong, weatherproof and secure new alternative for those looking for a permanent or temporary space solution.



LEFT Anyone looking to supplement their income could rent out the granny flat. Convert the studio into a music room, study or a three-person garden office — the only limit is your imagination. gardenstudios.com.au

BELOW At approximately 70 square metres, this Bawa granny flat is Garden Studios' largest studio with two bedrooms, one bathroom, living room, dining room, kitchen and laundry space. The granny flat is fully finished and can be installed on-site in just six weeks. gardenstudios.com.au



GARDEN STUDIOS

A recent article on realestate.com.au stated the average house in Australia has four bedrooms, two bathrooms and two garages built on a 474-square metre block. The common complaint of homeowners was the lack of space — despite having four bedrooms. In fact, 43.6 per cent complained that it was too small.

"Lower wage growth and paid employment, coupled with the ever-increasing cost of land, are forcing Gen Y and Gen X into smaller houses," says director of Garden Studios, Joseph Cade. "In some cases, it's a voluntary decision to buy small because of the environmental implications of a McMansion."

Sydney has a more progressive approach to the granny flat business than the other states and territories. Here, planners permit two dwellings on a block of more than 450 square metres. This has created a massive increase in the demand for granny flats — more than 5000 were built in 2015.

"Garden Studios has a system of assembly to reduce build times and make studios that are affordable," says Joseph. "The word studio is chosen on purpose as it connotes a more apt description of what they build. Garden Studios believes its system of using cement sheet-clad structurally insulated panels in a pre-fabricated arrangement with excellent energy credentials is unique."

These studios are built for purposes that range from offices and gyms to family rumpus rooms and, more recently, a billiard room. They also have constructed studios for young adults and dependent-person units.

"Quick to build, these tailor-made solutions are both environmentally sound and competitively priced," adds Joseph.



ABOVE These eco-smart studios are constructed on-site and take approximately five to six weeks to build. Garden Studios can build these studios to any size, based on needs and specifications. gardenstudios.com.au

LEFT The Foster garden studio is 23 square metres and comprises a living/bedroom, bathroom and study/kitchen. It's ideal for grown-up children and provides much-needed distance and privacy. Senior family members could also live here in close proximity to the main house. gardenstudios.com.au

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Photo: Tim Turner

Plants uplit at night form a beautiful leafy screen. Image courtesy of Bayon Gardens.

GREEN SCREEN SCENE

Create an all-natural screen for your garden to get the best of both worlds

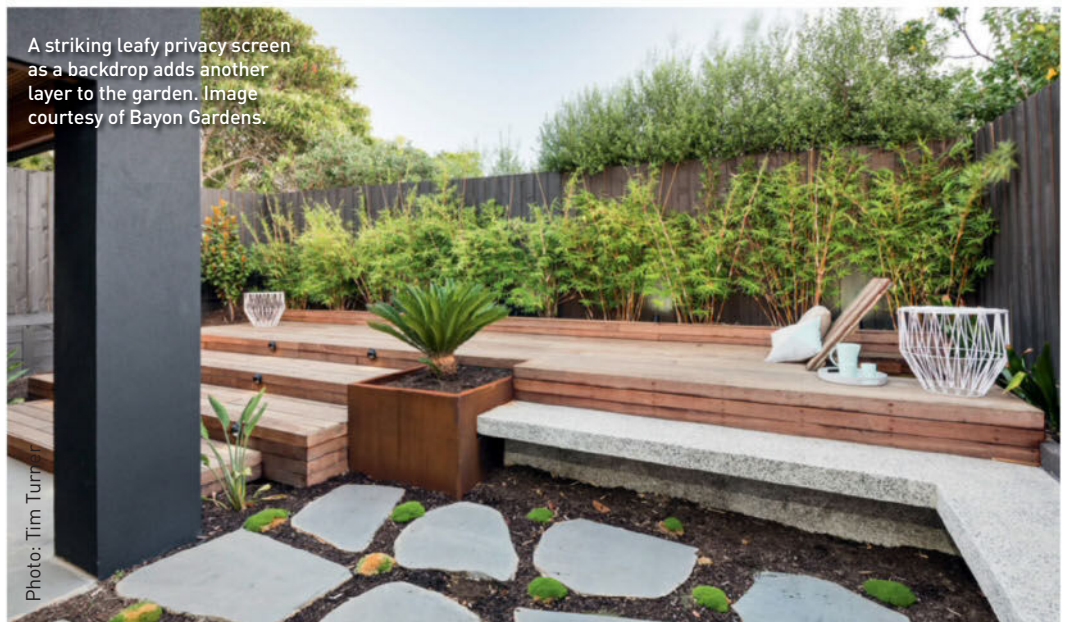
WORDS: CARROL BAKER

Creating a living green screen not only gives you privacy, but it can add a whole new dimension to your garden.

Ahhhh... the serenity. Your home really is your little Aussie castle in the burbs. Just like the Kerrigan family in the iconic Australian movie, *The Castle*, we all want to enjoy our own little slice of urban paradise. But with smaller housing lots and bigger homes plonked on them, creating a sense of privacy is becoming increasingly challenging.

This is where the clever use of garden screening comes to the fore. Screening can offer you privacy from prying eyes, help to shade outdoor spaces, create garden rooms, and hide unattractive necessities such as sheds.

Leafy screening brings with it a natural beauty, colour, texture and life. A sweet-smelling screen can add fragrance and a leafy living screen can invite butterflies and birds into your garden.



A striking leafy privacy screen as a backdrop adds another layer to the garden. Image courtesy of Bayon Gardens.

Photo: Tim Turner

OVER THE HEDGE

For a formal-style hedge, choose trees and plants with dense growth and small leaves so it can be tightly clipped to retain a regular or specific shape. If you prefer a more relaxed style of hedging, prune sparingly — to allow the plant to grow to its natural form — and trim as needed. When screening, also keep in mind that more advanced plants will give you a head start on your privacy screen.

Julia Thomas, Landscape Designer from Sticks and Stones Landscape Design, says one of the most popular types of plants for mass screening or hedging is lilly pilly. “They’re extremely hardy, they have a small root ball so don’t take up much space, and they’ll take a hard prune,” she says.

Of these, popular choices are Red Head™ (*Acmena smithii*) with its deep green foliage and

new-growth flushes of red to deep claret. It grows to six metres, while the smaller Sublime™ (*Acmena smithii*) grows to five metres, and has zesty lime new growth, prolific white flowers in summer, and dense foliage to the ground.

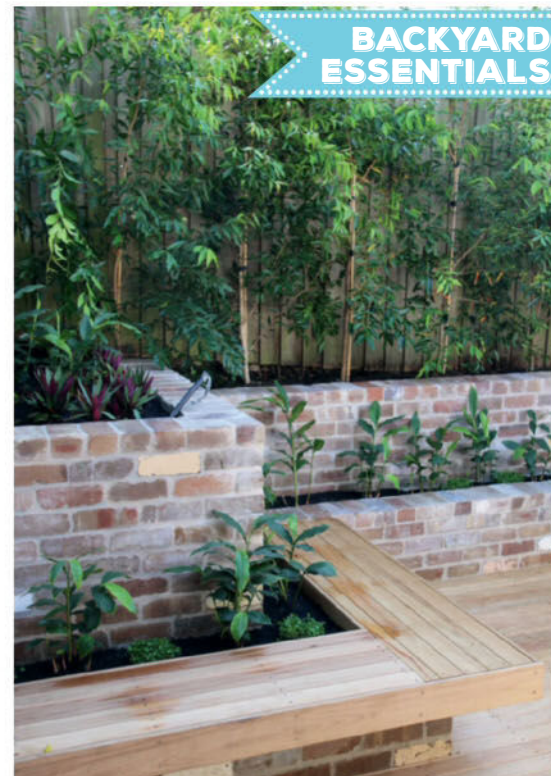
Or try bamboo, of the clumping variety so it doesn’t run rampant in your garden. Ornamental Slender Weavers (*Gracilis*) is a good choice. “It grows quite dense and quickly, and it’s lush and full,” says Julia. “For a contemporary look, remove the bottom foliage, and it almost appears to be floating.”

Evergreens are always good options as they give you year-round colour; however, don’t underestimate the beauty of deciduous trees such as crepe myrtle for screening. Your living screen will blossom with fragrant flowers in spring and summer, then give way to beautiful autumn tones when the leaves start to fall.



“If you have the room, create visual diversity with a mixture of layered plants”

Create any look you like in screening with a variety of plants. Image courtesy of Sticks & Stones Landscape Design.



ABOVE A living green screen hugs the fence line, and the tiered planting adds depth to the garden bed. Image courtesy of Sticks & Stones Landscape Design.

BELOW Formal hedging brings art to the landscape. Image courtesy of Lifestyle Landscape Design & Construction.



SIZE MATTERS

Before selecting your plants, do some research. How big (height and width) will the trees or plants grow? Chris Gill from Lifestyle Landscape Design and Construction says scale is important and it’s something people do get wrong.

“Get the right proportions. Select a tree to fit the space, that will screen what you need it to, but won’t get too big or you’ll be doing lots of maintenance in years to come,” he says. Another tip: follow the planting guide. As much as you might want an instant screen, don’t plant trees too close together.

GO WITH THE ROW

Rows of planting will, for practical purposes, give you the desired result. But do you need to screen everything? Screen only what you need to and you'll invite in more light and warmth, making the most of not only your garden but any borrowed landscape.

To strategically screen just a specific area or smaller space, Julia suggests Silver Sheen (*Pittosporum tenuifolium*). "It has small petite foliage and an elegant finish, with glossy green leaves with a touch of silver to them," she says.

If you have the room, create visual diversity with a mixture of layered plants. "Layers of three or four plants can actually make small spaces feel larger, as the eye is drawn into the garden," says Julia. "Different plant heights also work well."



ABOVE Flowing grasses incorporated into screening bring movement to the garden. Image courtesy of Fiona Brockhoff Design.

BELOW There are many varieties of lilly pilly to choose from when screening. These Aussie natives tick all the boxes for beauty, density and growth habit.



Bamboo is a popular screening choice, if you want a fast growing screen. Image courtesy of Fiona Brockhoff Design.

Photo: Nicky Pitkanen



Screening off a section of your garden creates leafy garden rooms. Image Courtesy of Fiona Brockhoff Design.

Photo: Nicky Pitkanen

SLIM SPACES

To screen the often-narrow spaces between houses, the right plant selection is crucial. Pinnacle™ (*Syzygium australe*) is a narrow, compact and dense lilly pilly, ideal for tight planting areas as it only grows one to 1.5 metres wide without pruning.

Slim™ (*Callistemon viminalis*) is providing landscape professionals and homeowners with a pretty bottlebrush solution for slender planting areas, as it grows to just 1.3 metres wide.

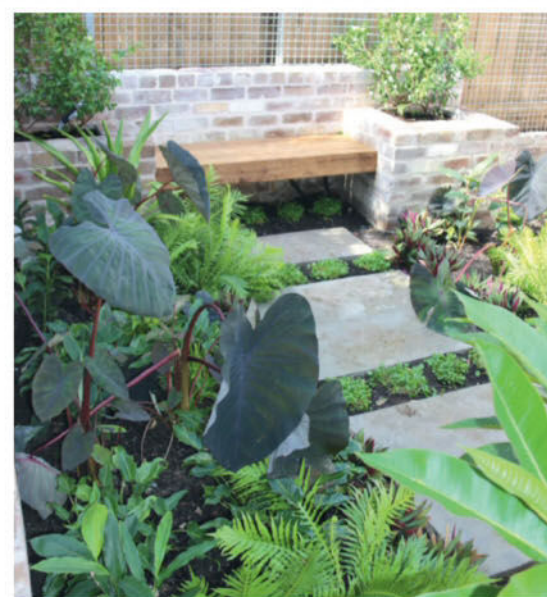
Some planting techniques can also be of benefit in narrow spaces. The art of pleaching, which means removing the bottom branches to form a stilt hedge, will take up less space in a garden bed.



Screening with flowering shrubs or trees also adds colour and invites birds into your garden.

Weeping varieties of lilly pilly soften the landscape when used as screening.

BELOW The wire frame at the back of this garden would be the perfect spot for climbing plants, don't you think? Image courtesy of Sticks & Stones Landscape Design.



OUTSIDE THE BOX

Looking for something a little different in screening?

- Olive trees (in threes) make versatile hedges that look a little formal.
- To soften a masonry wall erected for privacy, try espaliered planting of citrus or pears. It will require more maintenance, however.
- Add a little softness with weeping forms of screening. Sweeper® (*Waterhousea floribunda*) has lush new growth and an elegant rippled leaf.
- Looking for a scented screen with tightly compacted growth for complete privacy? Dense Fence™ (*Viburnum odoratissimum*) is an innovative new variety of viburnum.

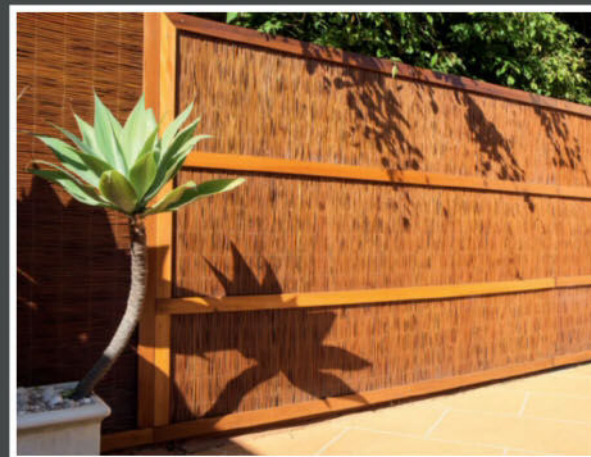
CONTAINER SCREENING

Rows of pots filled with plants on a deck or balcony can form a beautiful leafy screen. Put pots on casters to move them with the changing seasons or if you want a fresh new look on your deck. For plant ideas, Julia suggests robust lilly pilly, bamboo and *Westringia*. "Minerals in potted soil are depleted quite quickly, and plants are exposed to the elements, so choose hardy species," she says.

Potted plants also make ideal screens. They give you an instant effect and you can move them as needed. Image courtesy of Sticks & Stones Landscape Design.

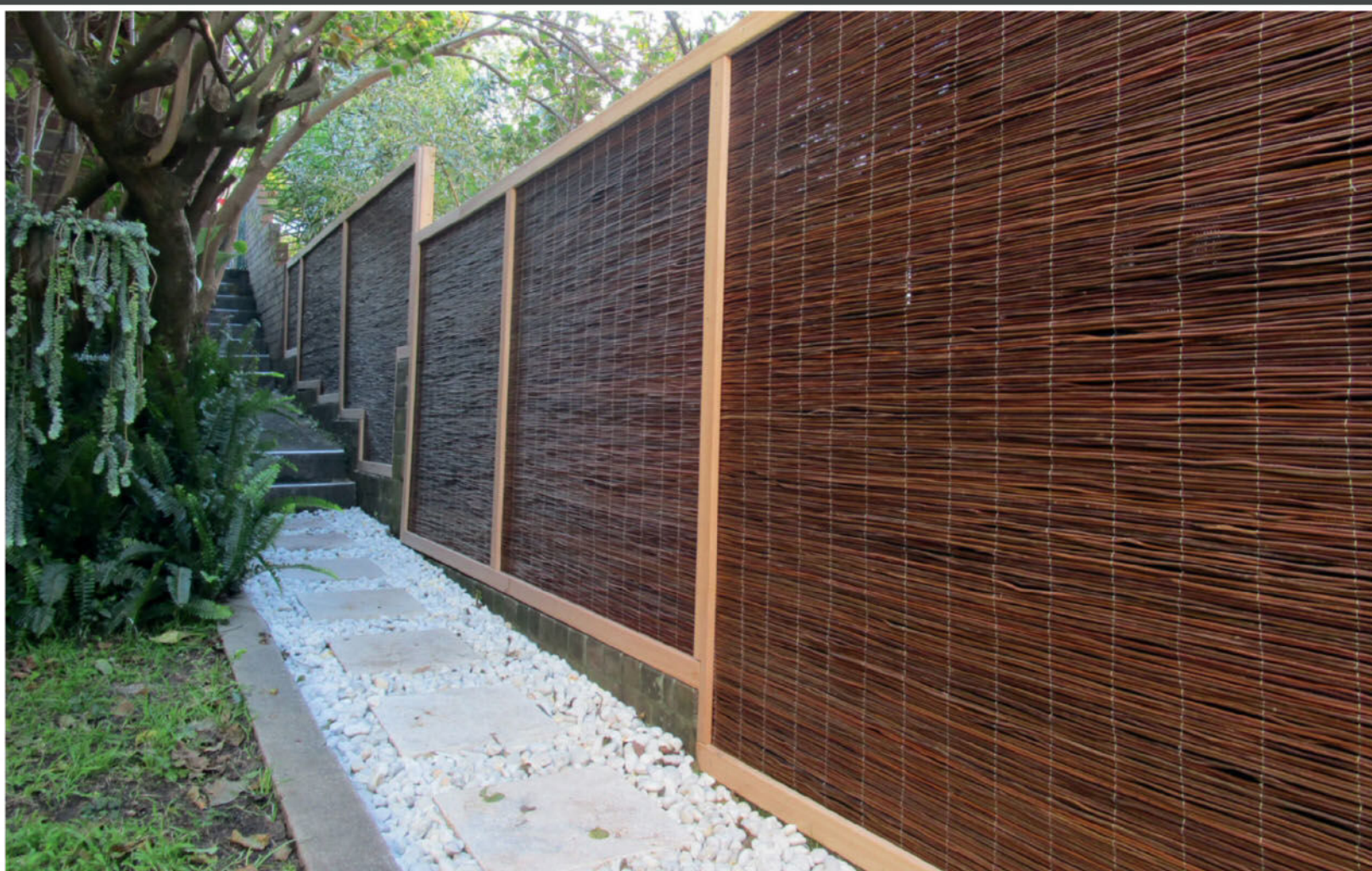
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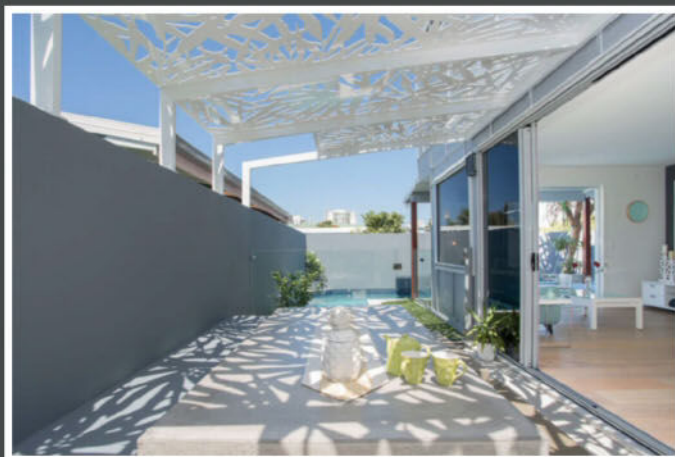
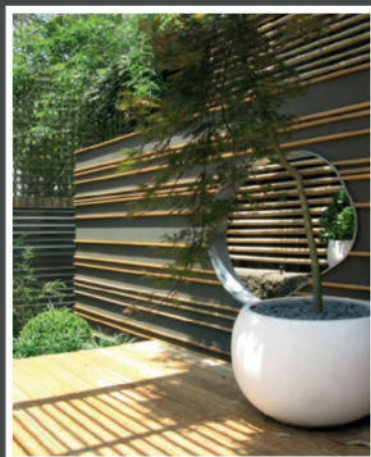




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Photo: Peter Brennan

HIDE & SEEK

More than just a way to add privacy and security, fences and screens will add style to your outdoor space

ABOVE This unique project features fencing made from split timber stacked within custom-built Corten steel frames. Adding a great feeling to the space, it creates a distinct, contemporary look for this outdoor area. christopherowen.com.au

WORDS: APRIL OSSINGTON

Whether you're building a complete border around your home or simply need to add a little privacy to your outdoor space, there are plenty of screening and fencing solutions for every style and purpose.

As the name suggests, privacy screening is perfect for offering seclusion in smaller

areas in your outdoor room and is also useful for dividing rooms within your space. Perhaps you want to offer a little privacy to an outdoor showering area or cover a structure such as an old garden shed? Many people use screening to section off their outdoor areas into rooms, which could include an entertaining area, alfresco kitchen, pool area or utilities space. Privacy screening is also

useful for homes that are on a slope or surrounded by high-rise apartments where neighbours are able to look down on your property.

Choosing a material all comes down to your personal style and the materials currently present in your outdoor space, however sustainability concerns are becoming another deciding factor for a lot of people.



Photo: Nick Wilson

Check out the amazing green fence at the front of the Forest Lodge Eco House from *Grand Designs Australia* series four.

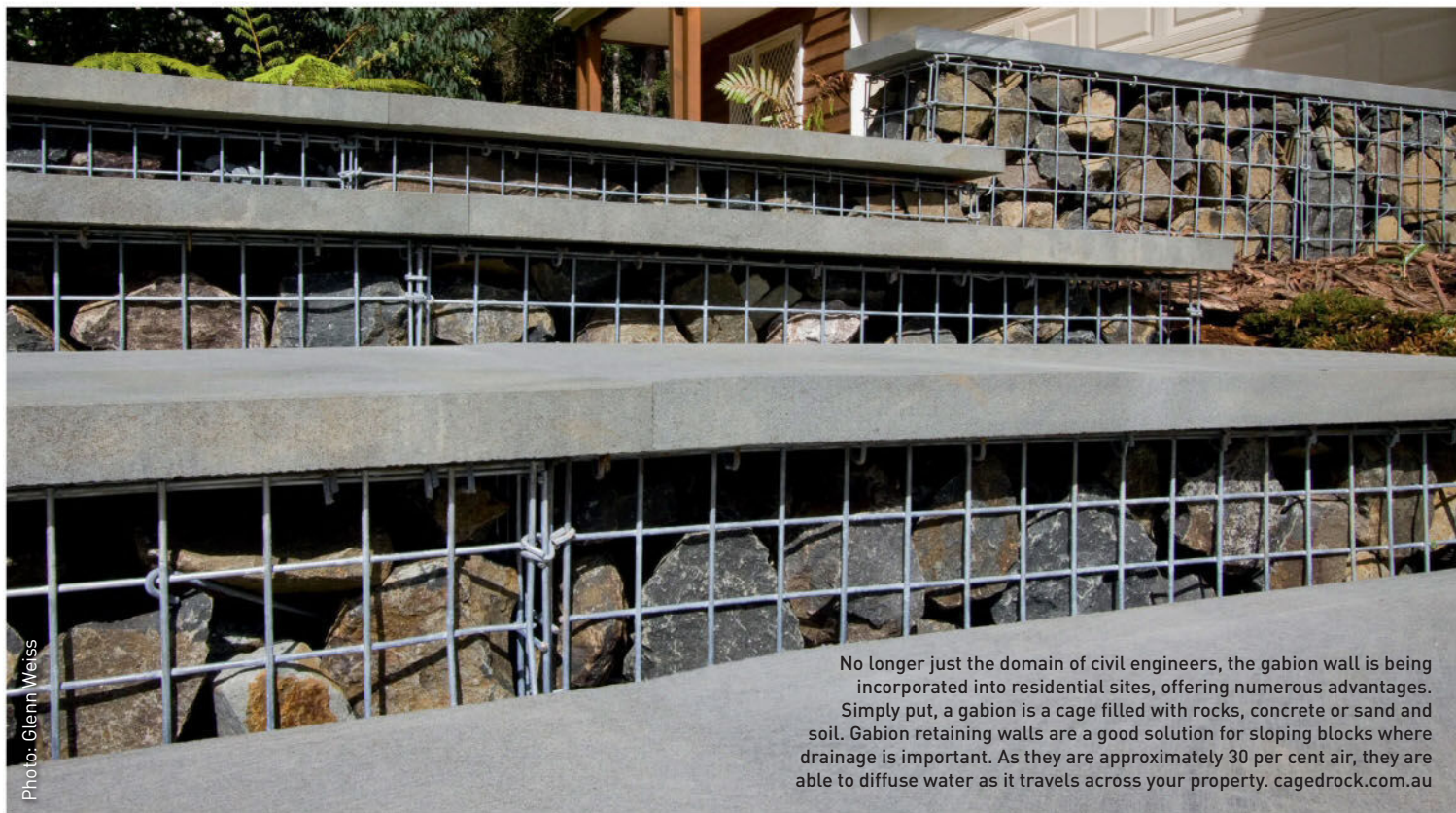


Photo: Glenn Weiss

No longer just the domain of civil engineers, the gabion wall is being incorporated into residential sites, offering numerous advantages. Simply put, a gabion is a cage filled with rocks, concrete or sand and soil. Gabion retaining walls are a good solution for sloping blocks where drainage is important. As they are approximately 30 per cent air, they are able to diffuse water as it travels across your property. cagedrock.com.au

DON'T FENCE ME IN

Just because you're adding boundaries doesn't mean you can't think outside the box



AN ALTERNATIVE

Vertical gardens and fences made from plants are right on-trend, however they are not always appropriate for dry climates or drought-stricken areas. A realistic-looking alternative, ReadyLeaf green screens, walls and hedges are made from UV-stabilised, recycled polyethylene. This recyclable material is chemical-free and has been tested for heavy metals such as cadmium and lead. As they don't require water, these products are maintenance-free and retain their appearance over time. greenscreens.co.nz



Photo: RhiannonSlatter

ABOVE As well as a majority of the rear façade, the back fencing of the Port Melbourne Urban Green House from Series Five is clad with a Gro-Wall Facade system. This sustainable solution is made from 85 per cent recycled polypropylene and is resistant to mould and algae. An alternative to traditional lattices, this cladding is the basis for a vegetated façade. gstore.com.au



The Maple leaf screen adds an almost whimsical feeling to the front of this house. entanglements.com.au



This Organic contemporary screen from Entanglements is ultra modern.

LASER-CUT METAL

Laser-cut screening made from materials including mild steel, stainless steel, galvanised steel, Corten steel and Alucobond is a popular choice for modern landscape designs. Most often, the metal is oxidised, which gives it a rusted finish that suits contemporary and industrial styles. Providing superior durability, these materials are often available in a powder-coated finish in a range of vibrant colours. Its ability to be laser-cut gives great flexibility in design and style. Otherwise known as weathering steel, Corten steel is a common material for fencing and screening. Made from a group of steel alloys, it was developed to eliminate the need for painting and forms a rust-like appearance if exposed to the weather for several years.

BACK TO BASICS

These popular solutions deliver a range of benefits

ALUMINIUM

For those who want the warm, natural look of timber without the ongoing maintenance, a wood alternative is timber-look aluminium. This low-maintenance material doesn't require painting, staining or oiling and as there is no timber involved, it won't fade, oxidise, rot, warp, split or crack. Knotwood manufactures privacy screens and fences made from Australian marine-grade aluminium that is finished to look just like wood. The material is available in 30 timber-look colours as well as a wide range of powder-coated colours for extra durability. Knotwood aluminium fencing uses a patented concealed fastening system which hides unsightly screws and rivets and is easy to install. The company's range of privacy screens can be custom built depending on your ventilation and privacy requirements. knotwood.com.au



This fencing from Knotwood features a rich reddish hue that adds warmth to this backyard.



The Kokomo smoked bamboo screen adds a pleasant aesthetic to this courtyard.

BAMBOO

If you're looking for a natural, eco-friendly way to block out an unattractive view or add privacy to an outdoor entertaining area, bamboo fences and screens are ideal. The more natural the setting, the closer to nature we feel, and bamboo blends perfectly with natural surrounds, creating a serene environment in your outdoor room.

Brustics' bamboo screens are perfect for hiding fences or creating barrier screens around pools, gardens and deck areas. An unsightly shed needed for storage, the carport or the clothesline can all be hidden as well. Installed outside, Brustics' Jati natural fence will weather to a silver-grey colour similar to timber. The company's Kokomo smoked bamboo screen will weather to a mushroom colour after three to six months.

This natural-looking material blends with a wide range of contemporary architectural and landscaping styles including gardens with tropical, Balinese, oriental, Mediterranean or Australian native themes. brustics.co.nz



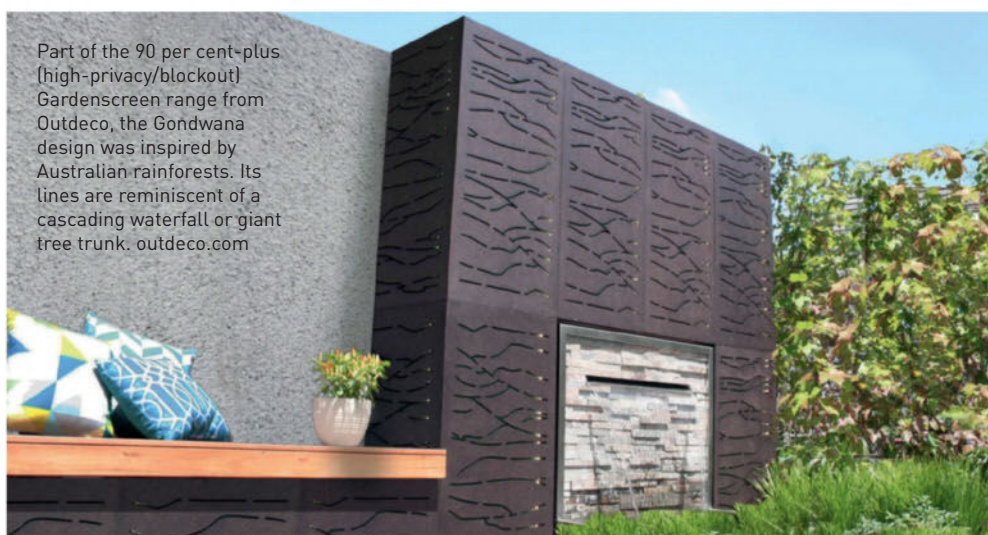
These Paravento side screens by Weinor offer privacy, security and protection from the elements. Available in a wide range of modern colours, they are ideal for complementing your outdoor awnings. petermeyerblinds.com.au



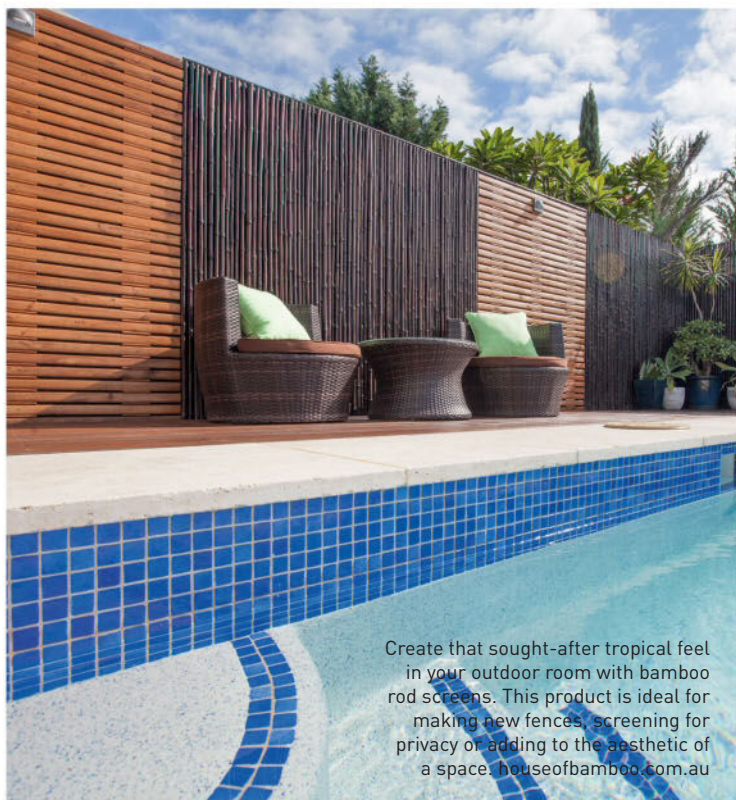
ABOVE EnviroSlat is perfect for use as either a vertical or horizontal screen or boundary fence as it can be screwed directly to fence posts positioned at 900mm intervals. The end result is a great timber-look fence without the hassle. There is no need to paint or stain this fence or worry about rotting, peeling or termite issues. futurewood.com.au

MATERIAL WORLD

From timber to aluminium, take a look at the latest products in fencing and screening



Part of the 90 per cent-plus (high-privacy/blockout) Gardenscreen range from Outdeco, the Gondwana design was inspired by Australian rainforests. Its lines are reminiscent of a cascading waterfall or giant tree trunk. outdeco.com



Create that sought-after tropical feel in your outdoor room with bamboo rod screens. This product is ideal for making new fences, screening for privacy or adding to the aesthetic of a space. houseofbamboo.com.au



ABOVE Martin Kellock Pots & Planters offers a range of screens made from laser-cut Corten steel. While an interesting material, it's important to be aware of the Corten's run-off, which can cause staining to porous surfaces. martinkellockpots.com.au

BELOW Featuring a 3D appearance, Sand Rhombus screening from Abodo is suitable for fencing and exterior cladding. As well as providing an original look, this timber screening supplies privacy in your outdoor space while still promoting airflow. If left uncoated, the material will develop a natural grey patina. abodo.co.nz



“Many people use screening to section off their outdoor areas into rooms, which could include an entertaining area, alfresco kitchen, pool area or utilities space”

Photo: Nick Wilson

ECO CHOICE

Recycled timber cladding and screening was used in the Hunters Hill Textural House from *Grand Designs Australia* series four. Made from salvaged spotted gum, this screening adds warmth and an element of privacy without obstructing views to the garden.



WHAT'S HOT

Heat your outdoor room with style this season

Enjoy your backyard when the weather cools down. Pictured is the Equinox by Brown Jordan Fires. brownjordanfires.com

WORDS: RACHEL FALZON

One of the most significant ways to extend the use of your outdoor room is to install an outdoor heater. With the correct heater for your outdoor space and lifestyle, you'll find yourself using this living area during the cooler months of the year in comfort. There's a host of heating options on the market — from built-in fireplaces to portable heaters — so there's bound to be something to keep your outdoor room warm and cosy and beckoning you outdoors well into winter.

FIREPLACES

There's nothing more romantic than sitting by a fire in winter, snuggled up with your favourite book and a good glass of wine. The options for fireplaces in outdoor rooms are virtually endless and can be built into the room if thought of at the design stage of your plans. They can be made into the focal point of the area, with a couple of cushy lounges completing the picture.

However, if you have a small outdoor area or live in a high-density building, smoke can be a concern as it can get into the home and

inconvenience neighbours. For these reasons, many people don't think having a fireplace is an option. However, one of the biggest trends in outdoor heating is the ethanol-fuelled fireplace, which burns without creating harmful toxic substances, allowing it to be used in areas that have little or no ventilation — and you'll feel comfortable in the knowledge that you're doing your part for the environment.

ACCESSORY-STYLE HEATERS

We all want our outdoor rooms to look great as well as feel comfortable, and it's great to

This outdoor area is sure to warm the cockles of your heart. Landscape design by Greenart Gardens.

Photo: Patrick Redmond

THE ULTIMATE BACKYARD

Entertaining outdoors in winter is all about creating a warm welcoming atmosphere. Create the ultimate winter outdoor room by lighting soft flickering candles at night and changing your decor to a cosier winter colour palette with deep blues, chocolates and reds. Toss a few throw rugs over armchairs for your guests to keep comfy and shift potted plants and screens to block draughts. And if you have an open fire, don't forget the marshmallows.



FIXED VERSUS PORTABLE

One advantage of tabletop burners, firepits and some gas heaters is their portability. When redesigning your outdoor space, you can simply move your heat source. Or, if the party is on the move, you can move your heater around on demand.

This curvaceous space is only enhanced by this suspended fireplace. Landscape design by Rolling Stone Landscapes.



Photo: Patrick Redmond

ABOVE Crisp white finishes work well with a bioethanol fireplace. Landscape design by Georgia Harper Landscape Design.

be able to inject a bit of style and personality into a room wherever possible. If you'd like to have a heater that doubles as a feature in your outdoor living space, perhaps a fire bowl, tower or chiminea will be perfect for you.

Chimineas can be made of cast iron or clay, and look great in a rustic-style outdoor setting. They can be moved around with little effort and are good for heating small areas.

Fire bowls and fire pits are also great for heating small areas and come in a variety of

looks. Some of the most popular styles include those within cast-iron stands for a casual, country look or positioned at the top of a column structure for a more formal, elegant approach.

An electric tower heater is a good option for those lacking space, as they are tall rather than wide. Electric tower heaters will need to be positioned close to the mains power supply. A gas patio heater is another popular and tall option that has the extra

benefit of being movable around the outdoor entertaining area as required. Just be sure to adhere to the clearances outlined by the manufacturers for safety.

HANGING HEAT

Electric strip radiant heaters are becoming popular, too. It could be because they are generally out of the main line of sight and because little fingers won't find their way easily to the hot surface of a heater hung up

"Fire bowls and fire pits are also great for heating small areas and come in a variety of looks"



The EcoSmart Fire Cyl ethanol-fuelled outdoor fireplace certainly creates a statement. agnews.com.au

Introducing *Elegance*



After many years of developing, researching and working in partnership with coating technology experts, Thermofilm, a world leader in electric heaters, has utilised a unique composition to produce the new generation in outdoor heaters. Heatstrip Elegance comes in an 'off white' colour which blends in seamlessly with most white ceilings in alfresco areas. This innovative, world first heater comes in 2 easy DIY models (1800W or 2400W) or a hard wired 3600W version. For more information go to www.heatstrip.com.au

Heating with Style...



...For 75% LESS vs cost of bottled gas.

Heatstrip® by Thermofilm is the cost effective electric radiant heater that unites efficiency with style. Ideal for your alfresco and outdoor entertaining area, pergola, patio, balcony. Even your garage, shed or hard-to-heat indoor space.

Heatstrip runs at a quarter of the cost of bottled gas, is more efficient over a larger area and won't corrode. It's easy to install and operate, an optional controller adjusts the timer and warmth levels. For more information go to www.heatstrip.com.au

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ph: (03) 9562 3455 email: sales@heatstrip.com.au



ABOVE The EcoSmart firebox creates a cosy space. ecosmartfire.com

BELOW The EcoSmart Bulb is perfect for smaller areas. ecosmartfire.com



high. These heaters are available in different lengths and can be attached to the ceiling beams or walls and near umbrellas or shade sails. Radiant/infrared technology works similarly to the sun — it heats the same objects that the light touches, rather than heating just the air. There are portable models that can be moved around, but only so far as their power cord will reach.

THINK PORTABILITY

Consider how you are going to use your outdoor heater. Do you need something that is fixed and at the ready when entertaining or would you prefer something that can be moved around to heat certain areas of your outdoor space at different times? Perhaps you have a series of rooms and want something that can be moved from room to room to warm you up no matter where you decide to be.

Ethanol is a great option for portability because it doesn't require a connection to a fuel supply (which is needed for electric and gas fires) while still being able to control how much heat is emitted. This makes ethanol fires ideal for small spaces set away from the house's main energy supplies.

Tabletop heaters are also seeing a rise in popularity. These are not only clever ways to keep an intimate space warm, but they look great and provide a romantic ambience.



Heatstrip® Max is suitable for difficult-to-heat exposed outdoor sites and areas with high ceilings such as pergolas. Using unique low-glow heating technology, the heating element provides a mild and unobtrusive glow. thermofilm.com.au



SAFETY TIP

All heaters require users adhere to safety guidelines. Children should be supervised at all times around a heater. Some heaters require clearance from roof and shade structures, such as gas patio heaters — see the manufacturer's instructions.



Blush.

Why not enrich your landscape with colourful plants that are long-lasting as well?

Plants with beautiful red and purple foliage are able to provide your garden with a sensational burst of colour for most of the year, contrast amazingly with evergreen plants and give your garden a real richness. Today you are able to walk into any retail nursery and find these in abundance but, unfortunately, a lot of them are short-lived. So what are some plants that will provide your garden with copious amounts of colour and stand the test of time?

Every now and then a truly revolutionary plant comes along, and Obsession™ *Nandina domestica* 'Seika' PBR is just that. As with common nandina plants, it will provide a full flush of vibrant red new growth in winter but the Obsession™ plant goes further than that. On average it will provide up to nine months of vivid red new growth — basically all of its new growth is red.

If you are looking for a more traditional broader leaf nandina plant, then Blush™ *Nandina domestica* 'AKA' PBR may be just what you are after. But what sets the Blush™ plant

apart from your typical 'Nana' is that again it will produce more red new growth, more often. In the winter months it is vivid red all over and in spring and autumn it has red new growth.

Flirt™ *Nandina domestica* 'Murasaki' PBR is a unique nandina as it is a low-growing, spreading ground cover form. What truly makes this plant stand out is that when other nandina plants are red in winter, the Flirt™ plant is in fact green, but in spring, summer and autumn, when other nandinas are green, the Flirt™ plant is red.

All three of these plants are changing the way we see nandinas and will have you seeing red more often.

If you want a plant with amazing deep purple foliage, then Little Ruby™ *Alternanthera dentata* 'LRU30' PBR tops the list. It has been growing in popularity since its release in early 2012 and is now one of the most popular garden plants in Australia. It is a striking and unique mounding groundcover plant that has spectacular deep burgundy foliage year-round. This plant loves areas of high humidity, looks great in any garden

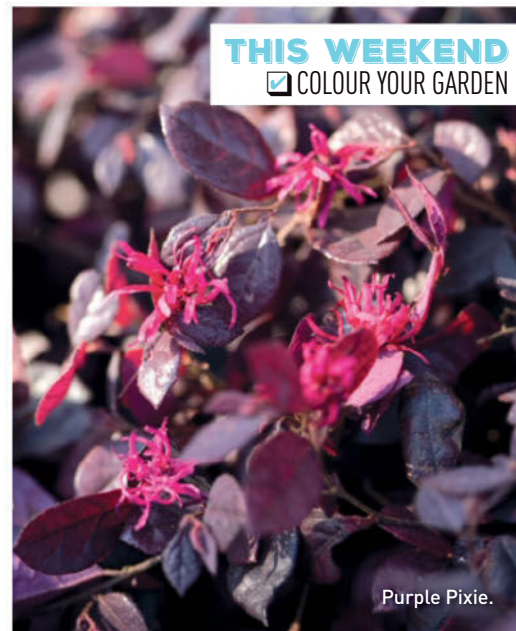
or as a border plant, and is a low-maintenance plant in containers. It has better cold tolerance than the common form working well in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, and in Melbourne and Adelaide, either near the coast or in a sheltered area with some frost protection.

Lastly there is another choice for stunning rich purple foliage, Purple Pixie™ *Loropetalum chinense* 'Peack' PBR. This dwarf weeping groundcover plant will provide amazing colour contrast in any garden bed or container. Along with its amazing foliage colour, it has the added bonus of showy pink flowers that appear in spring and complement the foliage beautifully. It will tolerate frost and humidity and is even moderately drought-tolerant.

GET THE LOOK

OZBREED

Website ozbreed.com.au





Install attractive and durable decking without the maintenance — it couldn't be easier

The appearance of your deck is important but with Australian weather so unpredictable and, at times, extreme, it's just as important to ensure that your decking solution is as durable as it is stylish.

From the unforgiving sun to flash flooding, Aussie weather can have a detrimental effect on building materials. While timber has traditionally been the go-to for builders, over time it is prone to warping, splitting and deteriorating due to wild weather and constant temperature changes.

If you have been looking to build a new deck or want to renovate an existing one, Futurewood's CleverDeck may be just what you're looking for. No one wants to spend their spare time maintaining their homes but there

are also the ongoing costs of maintenance to consider. For families, in particular, composite materials such as Futurewood's CleverDeck are an economically viable alternative.

So you don't have to compromise on style, CleverDeck features a realistic timber-like appearance, minus the trouble. As opposed to timber, it doesn't require oiling or finishing, which can chew up hours of your free time. There's no need to worry about rotting or termites, or about the surprise of imperfections and irregular-sized boards. This composite timber alternative is free of knots and holes, making it an aesthetically pleasing choice for any home.

Homeowners can enjoy a timber look and feel to their outdoor decking while being

content in the knowledge that it's going to cope with the climate and be cost-efficient with little maintenance required. Plus, for those looking to make an environmentally conscious choice, Futurewood's CleverDeck is made from 90 per cent recycled materials. Now you can sit back, relax and enjoy the view instead of maintaining your deck.

GET THE LOOK FUTUREWOOD

Phone 1300 484 308

Email info@futurewood.com.au

Website futurewood.com.au



www.futurewood.com.au Ph: 1300 484 308 | Email: info@futurewood.com.au

CleverDeck Composite Decking & EnviroSlat Screen Fencing



City Beach and Futurewood decking: the perfect fit

With breathtaking views overlooking the Indian Ocean, City Beach is a treasured gem in Perth whether you're a local or newcomer to the area. It's clean, crisp air and laidback vibes make it the perfect destination for families to unwind, relax and spend quality time together.

But with any beach, the area is prone to harsh weather conditions that can weaken material over time. It's essential that home and business owners consider this, and pick a decking that can withstand harsh environments as the designers of the new City Beach Surf Club did when they chose Futurewood CleverDeck as their low maintenance decking for this project.

Futurewood's composite decking and cladding eliminates this problem with ease, without the hassles of constant maintenance. Made from 90 percent recycled material, our composite decking and cladding products are low-maintenance - they will not rot, split or cup and do not require oiling or painting, ensuring your home or business stays in tip top shape all day, every day.

The low-maintenance of our decking materials minimises regular upkeep,

helping keep costs in check so you can spend your money on the better things in life like creating fond memories at a place like City Beach without worrying about the state of your decking.

Futurewood's durable and low-maintenance decking means you can spend more time embracing your other life interests and pleasures. Hopefully you have more time to go to the beach and take a lovely stroll with the kids on the boardwalk, or kick-start your day with a morning picnic. Or maybe you prefer to just kick back and while away the hours with friends at a beachside café/bar or restaurant.

Futurewood is a specialist provider of quality composite decking, cladding and fencing materials. Our decking is the perfect fit for those tough jobs that require extensive durability and longevity without the trouble of regular maintenance.

For more information about Futurewood's full range of composite decking, call **1300 484 308** or email info@futurewood.com.au today.



You can support Australian-grown products in your own garden with pretty flowers

Have you ever wondered where new plant varieties come from? More often than not, new plant releases that you find at a nursery or garden centre have been imported from overseas. Often they are from countries that have completely different climatic conditions to what we experience here in Australia.

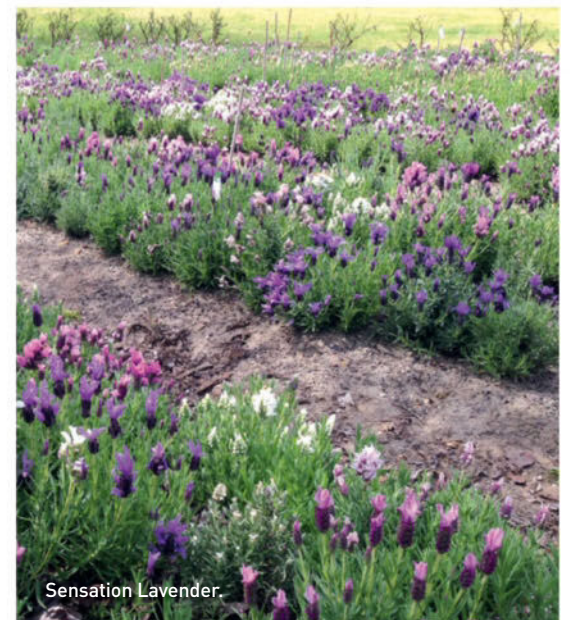
The Paradise brand is renowned for developing and promoting outstanding varieties that are bred and grown in Australia to suit our unique and often challenging conditions. From the thousands of hand pollinations that occur every year at Paradise Plants' trial gardens, only the very best plants are selected and offered for sale.

Located on the beautiful Central Coast of NSW, Paradise Plants' trial gardens offer the perfect environment for breeding and testing plant varieties. Heat tolerance, survival under humid conditions, drought tolerance, disease resistance

and beautiful garden performance are the cornerstones of the company's selection process.

While all of the company's flowers are beautiful, the team has a few favourites. Some of these include:

- **Sensation Lavender:** From Queensland to Tasmania and across to Perth, this is one of the most reliable ranges of lavender in the market today.



• **Oriental Hawthorns:** Love the spring flowers of Indian hawthorn but hate the constant leaf spot and leaf drop? Paradise has the answer. Paradise Oriental Pearl is one of the top-selling *Rhaphiolepis* in the Australian market. Beautiful white flowers in spring, clean foliage, compact rounded habit and low maintenance make this shrub the easy choice for low borders. The recently released Paradise Oriental Pink (*Rhaphiolepis* 'Rapopink' PBR) is the perfect partner, offering the same attributes as Oriental Pearl but with pretty pink flowers.



Oriental Pink.

• **Princess Magnolias:** Many people know about the magnificent deciduous magnolia that burst into flower in spring but many may not be aware of their evergreen 'cousins', which are equally as beautiful and full of perfume. These are commonly referred to as 'michelias' but have been recently reclassified as magnolias. Paradise has released a new range of these michelias which they are calling Princess Magnolias. This range includes Princess Cleopatra (*Magnolia* 'Parcleo' PBR), Princess Cinderella (*Magnolia* 'Parcind' PBR) and the recently released Princess Little Sarah (*Magnolia* 'Parlitsar' PBR pending).



Princess Cleopatra.

GET THE LOOK

PARADISE PLANTS

Website paradisepplants.com.au

Sensation Rose.



THIS WEEKEND
☒ GROW AUSSIE PLANTS



Oriental Pearl.



Princess Cinderella.



Put up a fence that withstands the test of time and looks great as well

So you have your dream home but you can't escape the feeling that something is missing. A fence not only provides security for your home but frames it visually and creates a cohesive look for your property. If you've ever dreamed of having a white picket fence like those in the movies, now you can without the ongoing maintenance.

Polvin Fencing Systems manufactures and distributes a variety of Australian-made PVC fencing products and accessories that are designed to withstand harsh Australian conditions.

As opposed to traditional materials such as timber, a Polvin PVC fence won't rot, rust, peel, flake or splinter. With increasing

concerns over chemical exposure, it's also important to note that they are non-toxic and environmentally friendly. They are also impervious to termites and will never need a lick of paint. Hard water deposits from yard sprinklers require most conventional fences to be repainted but stains can be cleaned easily from PVC.

Few things add to the beauty and warmth of a home like a picket fence. Polvin Picket Fences are available in a variety of styles that are sure to complement your home and suit your personal taste. Matching gates are also available in various sizes to enhance the elegant look of your new fence. Known as the "PVC Experts", Polvin Fencing Systems produces and distributes products of the

highest quality while always striving to offer customers an exceptional level of service.

The team at Polvin can custom-make fences to suit any home's aesthetic style and individual homeowner's vision for their fence. The images show a fence that was specifically designed to suit the client's home.

GET THE LOOK **POLVIN FENCING SYSTEMS**

36 Jayco Drive, Dandenong South
Vic 3175

Phone (03) 9768 2198

Email sales@polvinfencing.com.au

Website polvinfencing.com.au

Be an Angel for Animals

ALWAYS ADOPT. NEVER BUY.



Save a life by adopting from an animal shelter, and always give your animal companions the love and care that they deserve.

Yvonne Strahovski
WITH CHAZZIE & WILBUR, FOR
PETA



Grow thriving ornamentals and nutrient-rich fruit and vegetables in your garden

The Earth Summit in 1992 revealed something concerning about the quality of soil around the world. In Australia, soils were at least 50 per cent mineral-depleted. This means that the fruit and vegetables grown in Australian soils contain much less of the essential vitamins and minerals than they did years ago.

Many people who grow their own edibles do so to obtain fresh produce that is superior to those available at the supermarket. They seek food with better flavour, fewer chemicals and often, a higher nutrient content. It's not only about edibles, though. An avid gardener will know the importance of quality soil to the appearance, health and yield of ornamental plants. So how can the home gardener ensure that they are doing the best for their plants?

This is where Australian company Earthlife comes in. The company specialises in rock mineral-based fertilisers and soil conditioners that address the mineral-deficiency problems in

Australian soil. Not only do Earthlife's products replace missing minerals, they also dramatically improve soil structure and help the soil utilise fertilisers and water more efficiently. Its products are suitable for both clay and sandy soils. They will loosen all clay soil providing better moisture penetration, softer soil and reduce the effects of waterlogging. It also binds sand particles together in sandy soils, which reduces nutrient leaching and improves moisture availability.

Trials and customer testimonials have revealed that after using Earthlife's Soil Enhancement System, plant yields have increased considerably. The result is a healthier and more consistent plant.

With concerns over El Nino, it's a good idea to save water where you can. As Earthlife's products add minerals and improve soil structure, they also allow more water into the soil and make more available to the root zone.

Interestingly, Earthlife's products also protect against insects but not in the

traditional sense. Due to increased minerals for the plant, during the photosynthesis process, the plant is able to build complex sugars/carbohydrates in the leaves, to make them unpalatable to insects. According to Earthlife, insects are Mother Nature's mechanism to stop unhealthy plants from propagating.

Earthlife is happy to announce that it has just won the People's Choice Award for the Soil and Fertiliser category in *Good Organic Gardening* magazine.

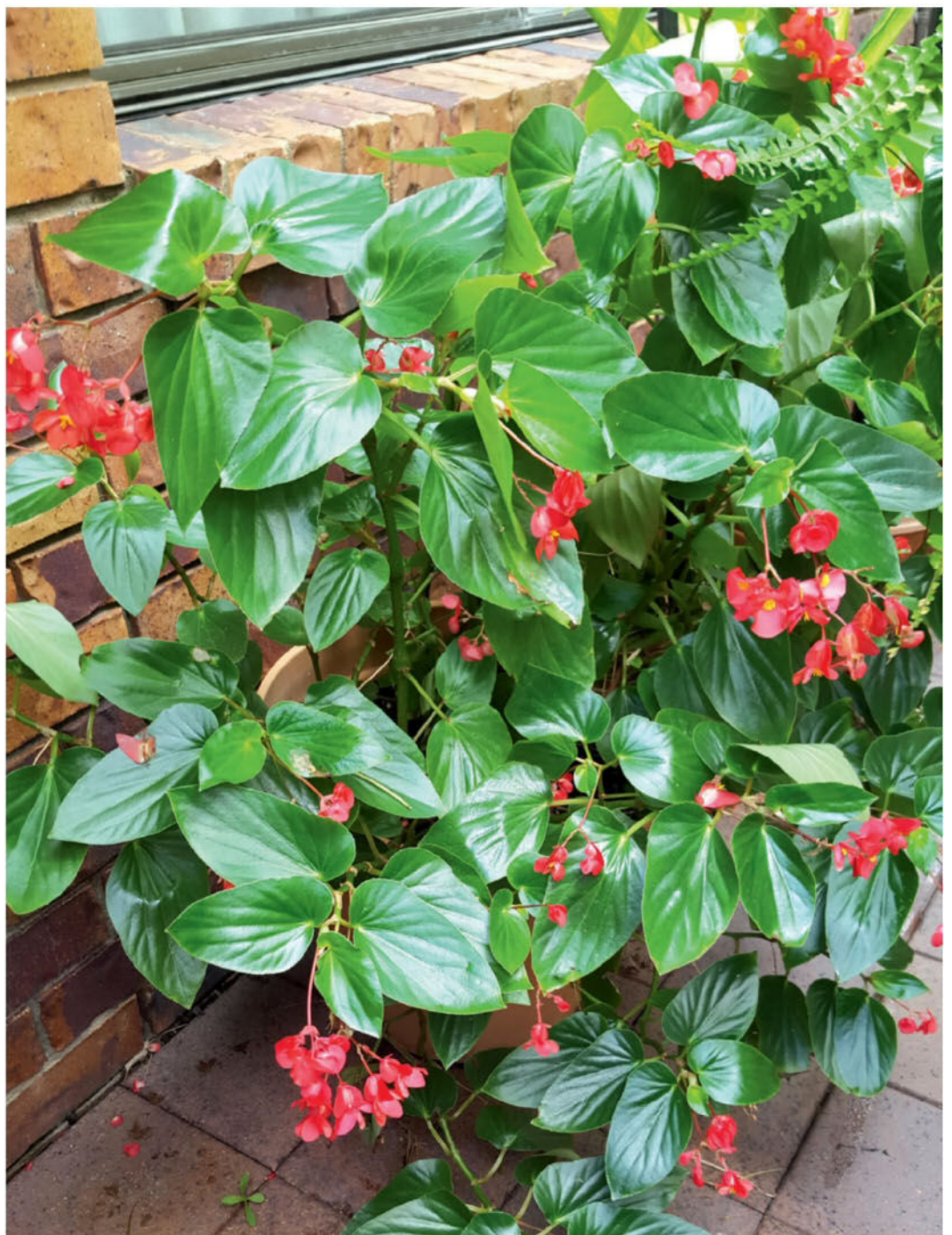
Head to the web page to order online or to see a list of distributors.

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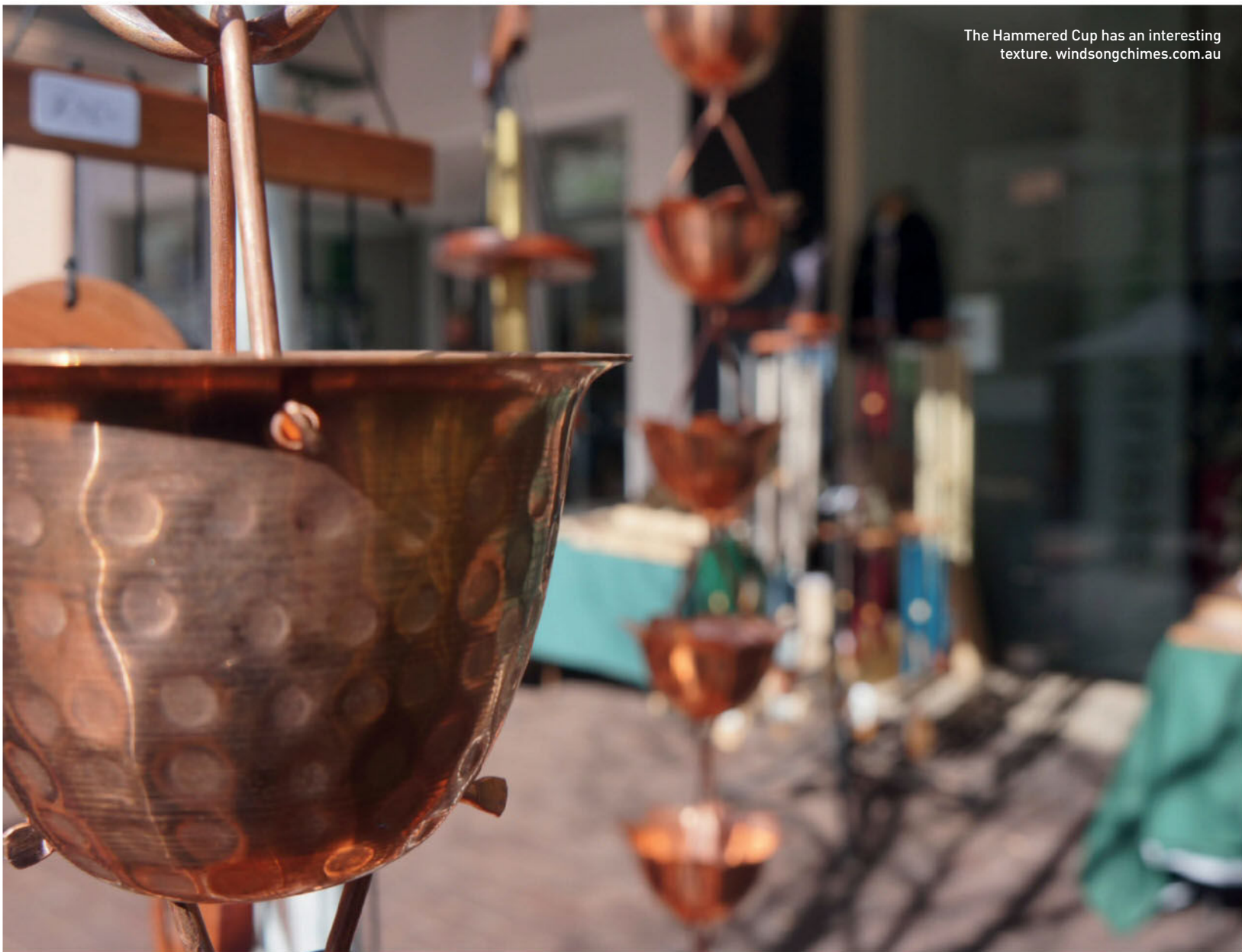


Cedar Shingle Pavilion

With the summer sun both a friend and an enemy, it's important to provide shade and shelter in your outdoor areas, and a thatch pavilion or gazebo is a cool way to do just that. Not only is a thatch pavilion an attractive addition to any garden and pool area, the natural thatching is a proven insulator - so you and your family are safe from the sun in a cool and breezy shelter. Oz Thatch Roofs & Gazebos will design and install or supply in kit form, so you can take advantage of their experience and expertise with this attractive and practical natural product. A well designed thatched shade structure or gazebo will complement both contemporary and more traditional style homes, and natural thatch looks great with an attractive, decorative internal appearance. The properties of thatch roofing, and its insulating properties provide a space 5-10 degrees cooler than other roofing materials.

Phone: 1800 THATCH (1800 842 824)
www.ozthatch.com.au

The Hammered Cup has an interesting texture. windsongchimes.com.au



LET IT RAIN

Rain chains are a beautiful alternative to your standard downpipe

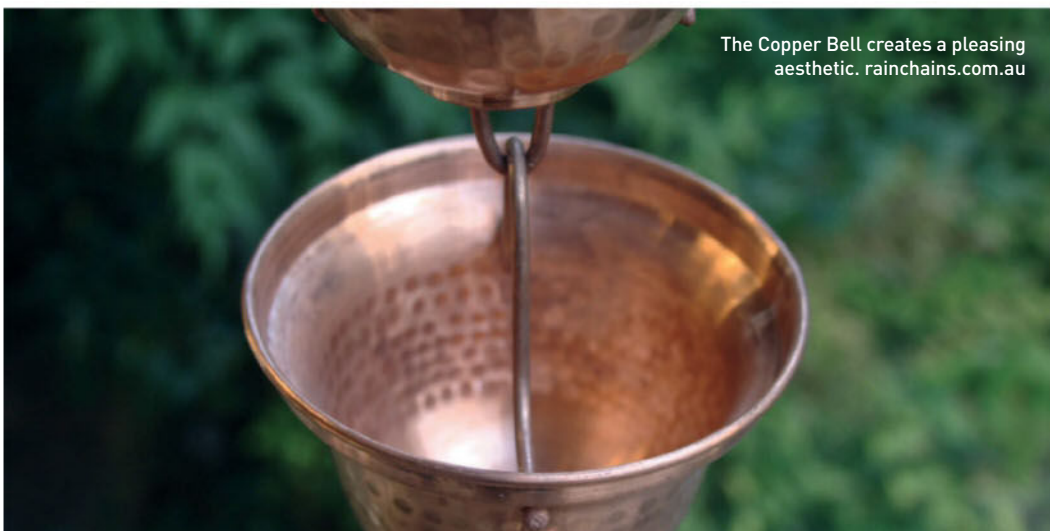
WORDS: APRIL OSSINGTON

Purely functional and sometimes even ugly, there's not much to be said about the common downpipe. Luckily there is a solution that is not only practical but will add beauty and charm to your space as well. Used in Japan for hundreds of years *Kusari-doi*, or rain chains as they are commonly known in Australia, are an attractive alternative to the traditional downpipe. They can transform a downpipe into a visual delight and be added to any part of a gutter. Rain chains are typically a collection of metal cups with holes at the bottom that are chained together. Rainwater from the roof is dispersed from the gutter downward through the rain chain.

ECO SOLUTION

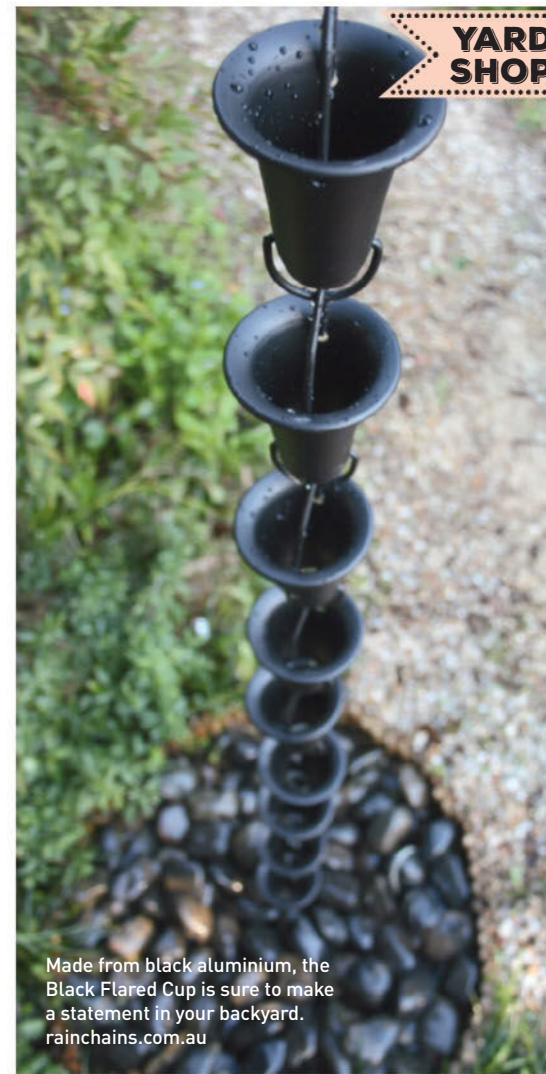
When used to replace a downpipe, the water from a rain chain may run into an existing stormwater drain but rain chains are often used to recycle water onto a garden or into a pond. If you purchase a matching bowl for your rain chain, you can use it to collect water to keep your plants hydrated.

The Copper Bell creates a pleasing aesthetic. rainchains.com.au





The Lotus Cup is delicate and pretty.
windsongchimes.com.au



Made from black aluminium, the Black Flared Cup is sure to make a statement in your backyard.
rainchains.com.au

CREATE A FEATURE

While they are primarily decorative, they still effectively serve the purpose of channelling water from your gutter to the ground. Already an interesting feature when the skies are clear, when it rains, they also double as a spectacular water feature as the water travels through the chain. In light rain, it will form a soothing trickle, while in a downpour, a dramatic gushing column of white water. Various rain chain accessories

are also available including attractive copper or aluminium bowls to collect water at the base of the chains, gutter adapters to suit standard and half-round gutters, and debris blockers. These accessories are designed to complement your rain chain, creating a cohesive look for your garden. While they work best connected to a water source from above, such as a gutter, they can be used in other ways too, such as garden ornaments hanging from trees or pergolas.

RAINCHAINS.COM.AU

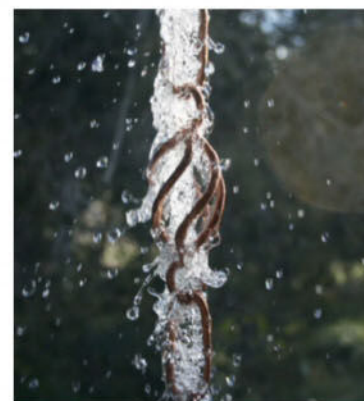
Replace your downpipes with decorative water features that will add individuality to your house and garden. You can install a rain chain anywhere along a gutter and direct water into the drain or into one of our attractive copper or aluminium bowls.

easy to install

They are easily installed with supplied hooks or an optional gutter adapter.

save water

Run rainwater from your chain into a barrel, a pond, or onto a garden bed.



Inspect our full range at:
rainchains.com.au



or email us at:
customerservice@rainchains.com.au



MATERIALS MATTER

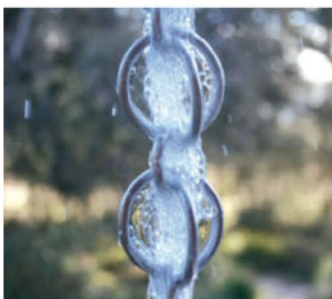
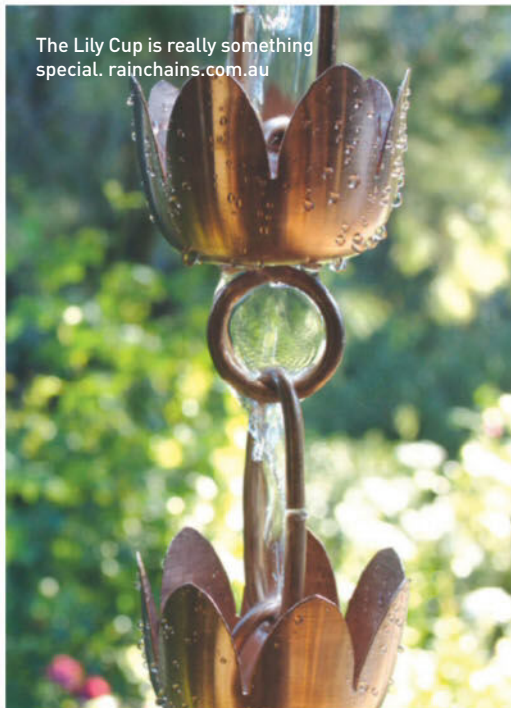
"Most rain chains are made from copper, which weathers into an attractive patina, but many customers are choosing aluminium or stainless steel to complement the colour and style of their house," says Keith Binnington, manager of Australian company Rain Chains. "A black, powder-coated aluminium fluted cup design

is particularly popular." As rain chains are exposed to the elements, during the first year most will change colour from a light golden copper to a shiny dark brown. This weathered look tends to look more natural and even rustic, which is quite sought after these days. Aluminium chains will remain silver but may develop small oxidation pits on the surface.

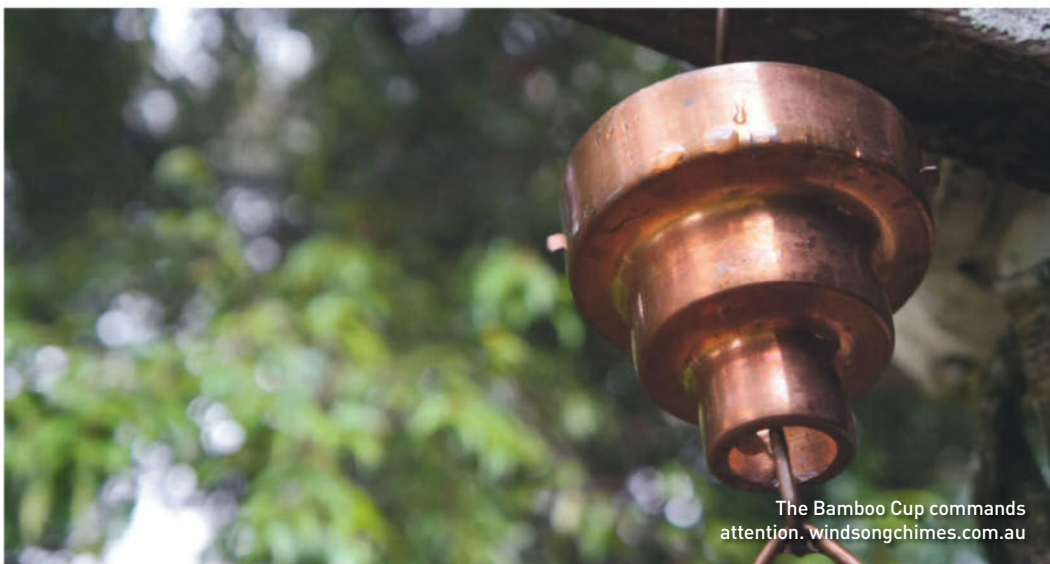
The indented style of the Aluminium Flared Cup adds interest. rainchains.com.au



The Lily Cup is really something special. rainchains.com.au



ABOVE LEFT, CENTRE & RIGHT Aluminium Loops, Double Lotus Cup or Art & Craft Cup? Rain chains are available in so many styles, materials, colours and finishes — the options are endless. Why not have one of each? rainchains.com.au



The Bamboo Cup commands attention. windsongchimes.com.au

Turn plain old rain into a spectacular show. rainchains.com.au



INSTALLATION

While rain chains are relatively simple to install, there are several methods that you can use. The method you choose will depend on whether you are installing a rain chain for purely aesthetic purposes or if you are looking to completely replace your downpipe. It's important to be aware that rain chains may not work as well as a normal downpipe during heavy storms. The following website details three methods that you can try if you want to go down the DIY route but you should only attempt these if you are confident working on your roof. If not, it might be best to employ a tradesperson to make sure the job is done properly. rainchains.com.au/pages/installation

Pumpkins come in many sizes and colours.

YARD SHOP

PUMP IT UP

For a welcome pop of colour — plant pumpkins in your backyard

PLANTING TIPS

- **When to sow:** From October to December in cold areas, September to December in temperate locations and August to February in subtropical areas.
- **Spacing:** Plant 4–5 seeds in each location about 1.5m apart and thin to 2–3 seedlings by cutting down extras.
- **Depth of planting:** Sow seeds in position 2cm deep or start them in pots indoors and plant out after frosts have finished.
- **Time from planting until harvest:** 12–14 weeks for miniature varieties and 14–18 for larger types.

WORDS: DONNA MACPHERSON

No baked dinner would be complete without the humble pumpkin and, with miniature and bush varieties, growing them does not have to take up masses of space in your backyard. However, if you have room, why not try growing your own pumpkins for soup, biscuits, bread, chutney, muffins or desserts such as pumpkin pie and cheesecake? They grow during the warmer months and are usually picked in autumn when the vine dies down and the stalks have turned brown. Larger pumpkins are ready to harvest if they sound hollow when tapped. Leave a stalk of at least 5cm attached when you harvest them and let them cure in the sun for one or two weeks to prevent them going mouldy. Once picked, they will store in a cool, dark place for up to nine months.

EXPERT ADVICE

Be the bee. If you have beautiful pumpkin vines that flower but produce no pumpkins, you may need to hand-pollinate the flowers yourself. Don't panic — this is not as difficult as it sounds. Pumpkin vines have both male and female flowers and first you will need to determine which is which. The female has a lump at the base of the flower which, when pollinated, will become the pumpkin; the male does not. Simply find a freshly opened male flower, pull the petals off and gently rub the pollen from the male anther in the centre of the flower onto the stigma of the female flowers. This is the tall centre part of the female flower. With any luck, in a couple of months you should be eating your own hand-pollinated pumpkins.

Pumpkin vines take up considerable space, so think about where you will grow them before planting.



Mineral content of the soil is a key factor for growing nutritious vegies.

Photo: Diane Norris

BUILDING BRUX

High-brix gardening is all about boosting the health of the soil, the health of the plants and, ultimately, our own health

WORDS: KERRY BOYNE

The accepted wisdom these days is that people of the developed world are far and away better fed than we've ever been. But is it as simple as abundant food = well fed? Even leaving aside all the unhealthy modern foods such as fast food, processed foods etc and focusing only on so-called fresh food, the answer to the question is ... not necessarily.

According to the Real Food Campaign, now known as the Bionutrient Food Association, "The nutrient content of commercially produced fruits and vegetables has been dropping since records were first taken ... You would need to eat five apples today just to get the same nutrients from eating one apple in 1965." That's certainly food for thought.

Organisations like this one say that, instead of the perfect-looking but often nutrient-poor produce we buy at the supermarket, we should be eating nutrient-dense foods; and not just for nutritional reasons — nutrient-dense foods also have much better flavour. They have higher levels of vitamins, minerals, enzymes and antioxidants, not to mention trace elements such as selenium, chromium, iodine and cobalt: all the things that are good for our health. Naturally, most of us would confidently assume that because something is homegrown without the use of harmful chemicals it's going to be more nutritious and that because we let it ripen naturally it's going to taste better. Right?

Sadly, that's not always the case. It all depends on our soil. Our homegrown produce may look good and even taste good yet still be lacking or lower than it should be in some

important nutrients. How then can we tell how nutrient-dense our homegrown food is? The answer is with a handy little device called a brix meter. But first things first.

WHAT IS BRUX?

Put simply, brix is a measure of the dissolved solids in the juice or sap of a plant. Many people think it refers only to sugar levels but sugar is only one component. Brix is actually a measure of sucrose, fructose, vitamins, minerals, amino acids, proteins, hormones and many other things that are important to our nutrition and the health of the plant.

The higher the brix, the more nutrients in the plant. But high brix doesn't just deliver good health; it also means better flavour. What's more, plants with high brix are also far more resistant to attack by predators and disease and are more heat- and frost-tolerant. One more thing: high-brix foods can be stored a lot longer. So high brix means

better nutrition, more flavoursome food and easier gardening because you won't be always fighting off pests and diseases.

Low brix, on the other hand, indicates there is something lacking or out of balance in the soil, usually mineral content. When you remineralise the soil where needed, add more organic matter and so build up the health of the soil, plants get healthier and tastier because the brix goes up.

Mineral content is usually the key factor. We all put a lot of focus on constantly adding animal manures, compost, green manures, seaweed-based soil conditioners and so forth but, unless the minerals are properly balanced, what we grow will not have the nutrient levels — nor the flavour — it could have, even though it may look perfect.

Calcium is one of the most important nutrients that increases as brix increases. The presence of trace minerals such as copper, iron and manganese, all of which

THE ORIGIN OF BRUX

German chemist Professor A. F. W. Brix (1798–1890) was the first to measure the density of plant juices by floating a hydrometer in them. The winemakers of Europe, who needed to be able to judge the quality of their grape juice well before it went into bottles, saw him as a hero, so the measuring process was named in his honour. Brix is often expressed as a percentage of sucrose but, as mentioned, it is much more than that. Taking grapes as an example, a sour-tasting grape from unimproved soil can test 8 brix or even lower, while a full-

flavoured grape grown in balanced, fertile soil can test 24 brix or higher.

Brix measurement was popularised by American mathematician and biochemist, Carey A. Reams (1903–1985), who put together the correlation between high brix and high quality, formulating the necessary brix measurements for different foods, as seen in our sample chart. Carey taught that disease is a result of mineral deficiency. As an amusing aside, he is often said to have entered the same watermelon in the same competition three years running to prove how long high-brix food can keep its quality.

are important in the digestive process, also correlates with brix readings.

BRIX METERS

Measuring the brix of your plants is simple with a brix meter, or refractometer. These have been used for years by agronomists and by the fruit and wine industries to measure the natural sugar levels in crops. Now, they are affordable for both small farmers and home gardeners, more of whom, especially in the US, are becoming interested in using them.

A brix meter is a simple hand-held optical instrument that measures the amount of light refracted in a liquid. The more dense it is with dissolved solids the more the light will be refracted.

The optical brix meter looks a bit like a small telescope with a viewfinder at one end and a prism with a clear plate over it at the other. All you need to do is take a drop of juice from your vegies using a garlic press, place it on the prism, flatten it with the attached cover plate, point it towards a light source and look through the viewfinder to see the brix reading.

There are also palm-sized digital brix meters, though these tend to be a lot more

expensive for the home gardener. You'd need to be very serious about high-brix or nutrient-dense gardening to invest in one of those.

The part of the plant you measure is the part you eat when it's ripe. If you want to measure before your produce is ripe, you take the most recent mature leaves that have had at least two hours of full sunlight and measure their juice. If you measure regularly, you try to do it at the same time of day so you can compare through the growing season.

With some produce it's hard to get juice for testing. Sometimes you can cut a very thin slice and lay it on the prism or crush a leaf and lay that on the prism. Or you can use a juicer or food processor and squeeze the chopped result.

If you decide to buy a brix meter it will come with instructions on using it and the brix chart. All the information you need to increase the brix levels of your produce by balancing your soil — and sometimes with foliar sprays — is freely available on the internet. Some resources are smilinggardener.com, highbrixgardens.com and crossroads.ws/brixbook/BBook.htm

BRIX READINGS FOR SOME COMMONLY GROWN FOOD PLANTS				
	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Vegetables				
Beans	4	6	8	10
Beets	6	8	10	12
Broccoli	6	8	10	12
Cabbage	6	8	10	12
Carrots	4	6	12	18
Cauliflower	4	6	8	10
Celery	4	6	10	12
Cucumber	4	6	8	12
Lettuce	4	6	8	10
Onions	4	6	8	10
Peas	4	6	10	12
Potatoes	3	5	7	8
Squash	4	8	12	14
Sweet corn	6	10	18	24
Tomatoes	4	6	8	12
Turnips	4	6	8	10
Fruits				
Apples	6	10	14	18
Blueberries	7	9	12	15
Cherries	6	8	14	16
Grapes	8	12	16	20
Grapefruit	6	10	14	18
Lemons	4	6	8	12
Limes	4	6	10	12
Nectarines	6	12	16	20
Oranges	6	10	16	20
Papayas	6	10	18	22
Passionfruit	6	9	12	18
Peaches	6	10	14	18
Pears	6	10	12	14
Plums	8	12	16	20
Raspberries	6	8	12	14
Strawberries	6	10	14	16
Watermelon	8	12	14	16



A gardener studies the results in the refractometer.



ABOVE A Use a garlic press to get juice from your vegies.
ABOVE RIGHT A hand-held brix meter is all you need.



THREE OF A KIND

There are some excellent commercially made compost bins on the market, but if you want to build your own, here's how

Photos: Diane Norris

WORDS: ROSEMARY & ARTHUR LATHOURIS **DIAGRAMS:** ARTHUR LATHOURIS & KATE PODGER

There are many variations of the compost "bin". We have always used the three-bin system, which we like for several reasons:

- Ease of use.
- Contained and controlled.
- Tidiness.
- A good project for the home handyman to enjoy

If possible, we try to build ours out of available materials but, unless you're a compulsive hoarder, it's highly likely that some items will need to be bought — or scrounged. You will need:

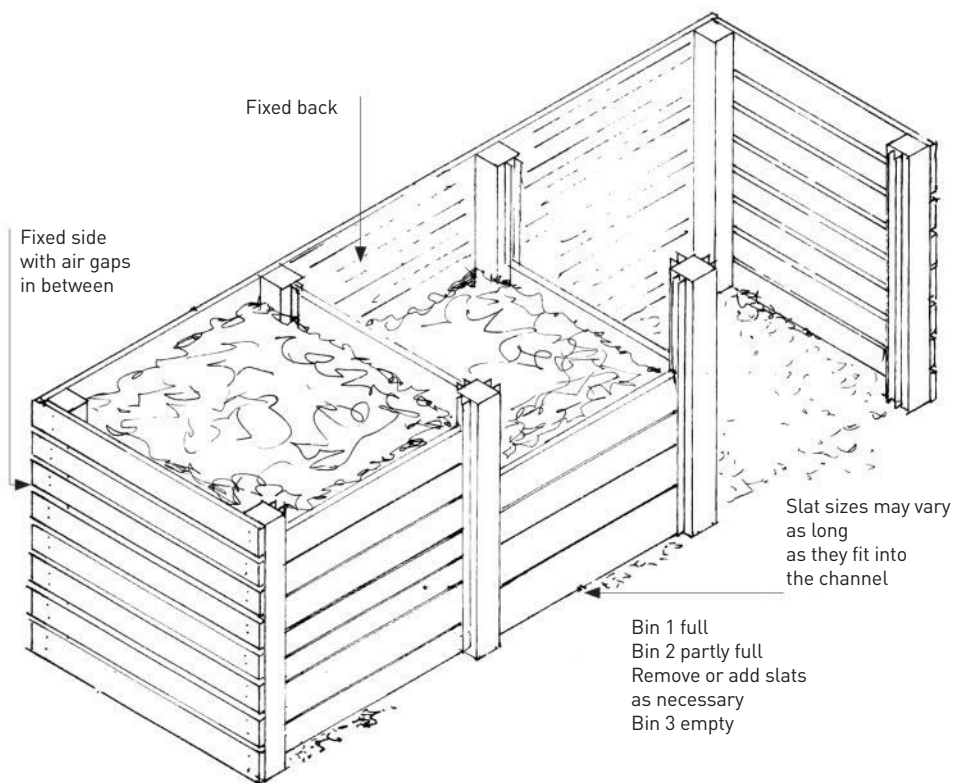
- Eight posts, hardwood or H4 ACQ-treated pine (which is arsenic-free) at least 1.5 metres long.
- Sides and back: corrugated iron, timber boards or panels, compressed cement sheeting etc. These need to be solid as they will get battered by shovels and garden forks. Additionally, the organisms of the compost heap will happily include your timbers in their diet as well.
- Front and mid panels of removable slats: these can vary in height as long as they all fit into the channels. All the slats should be the same length, which makes it easy when you're moving them from bin to bin.
- Bags of cement — optional.
- Nails and screws.

The size of the bins can vary to suit your needs and the size of your garden. We've found it easier to work with a system that's about three metres long by one metre deep and one metre high.

The sketch and diagrams show all of the more important details.

A and C are the sides and back. These are fixed and can be made of corrugated iron, timber, old pallets or whatever material is available.

ABOVE The perfect project for DIY enthusiasts.

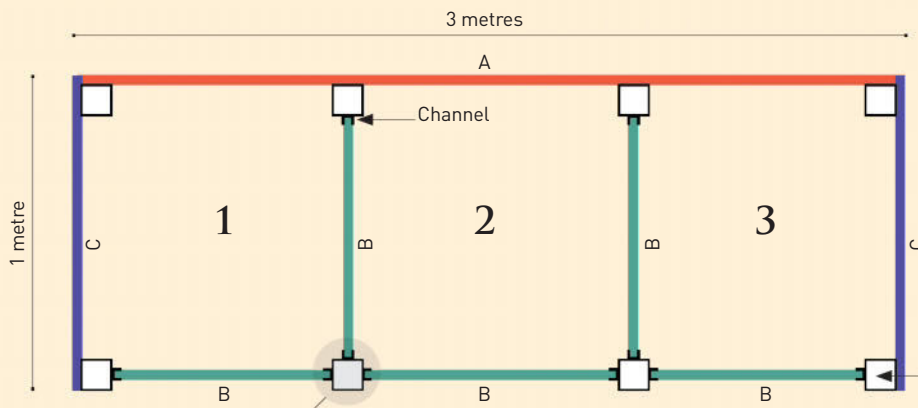


B are the removable front and mid panels or slats. These are made of equal-length slats, which individually slot down between the posts. The slats can be timber decking or any type of weatherboard or sheeting.

The slats slide down a channel set into, or onto, the posts. The channel may be a metal U channel or made from two strips of timber that form a channel. If you have the tools or expertise you might even groove the channels into the timber.

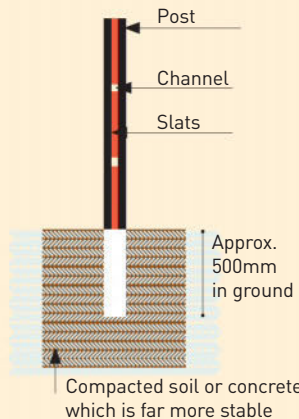
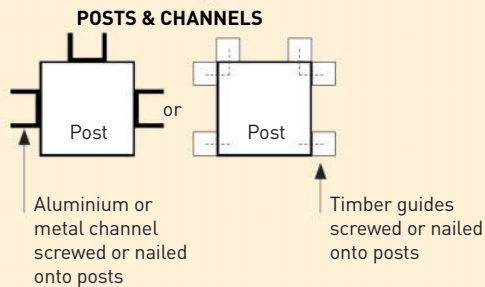
The most important detail of construction is to make sure the three front openings and the two central ones are all the same size. This will ensure that all your slats will be interchangeable as you build your compost or toss it from bin to bin.

No base is required. It's better that the composting material is in touch with the ground so that earth-dwelling organisms can do their work as nature intended.



- A** Back of the bins fixed to posts.
- B** Removable slats which slot into channels as compost is built up. Slats are all of equal size and therefore interchangeable.
- C** Sides of bins at both ends. Gaps between slats (or holes in iron) for air flow.

POSTS 100x100mm timber or 100mm diameter round. Use H4 ACQ-treated pine or hardwood suitable for inground use



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A woman with long brown hair, wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat with a colorful beaded band and a vibrant floral shirt, is crouching outdoors. She is holding a bright green plastic bucket and pouring a dark liquid from it into a black, tiered worm bin. The bin has a black lid with circular ventilation holes. In the background, there is a rustic brick wall and some green foliage. The scene is set in a garden or backyard.

GET A WRIGGLE ON

What the so-called “intestines of the Earth” get up to and why they’re so important

One of the benefits of having a worm farm — liquid fertiliser literally on tap.



Composting worms: red, blue and tiger are commonly used.

WORDS: CLAIRE BICKLE

PHOTOS: CLAIRE & ROSE BICKLE

Everyone knows an abundance of worms in the soil of any garden, orchard or farm is a good thing, as is the worms' ability to recycle household and garden waste. But exactly what do they do that is so miraculous?

You may be surprised to learn there are some 3000 species throughout the world, but did you also know there's quite a marked difference between what the composting worms we use in worm farms do compared with the activities of the earthworms we find in our garden soils?

Composting worms, most commonly seen in worm farms, have a preference for consuming waste products such as fruit and vegetable scraps, grass clippings, leaf litter and related

organic waste matter, including ground eggshells, shredded newspaper, soft prunings and so on. What they're really keen on is the bacteria that grow on these types of organic matter.

The worms usually used in worm farms are red, blue and tiger worms (*Eisenia fetida*). They tend to travel longer distances faster and are found in clusters or groups. These types of worms have happily transitioned to worm-farming setups where they can easily recycle large amounts of household waste or be a part of a much larger waste-recycling situation.

Earthworms, on the other hand, tend to be solitary and spend their time consuming existing soil. Important outcomes from this consumption and passing of soil and organic matter include improving soil structure, better

water infiltration, increased availability of nutrients to plants, turning over of the topsoil, increased rate of decomposition of organic matter and large deposits of castings that contain high levels of beneficial bacteria, organic matter and nutrients. Not without good reason have earthworms been called "the intestines of the Earth".

EXPERT TIPS

- Keep your worm farm out of the sun as worms don't like the heat.
- Keep it out of the rain, too, if possible or at least make sure there's adequate drainage so your worms don't drown.
- Worms do like the dark, so cover the top with carpet underlay, newspaper or a worm blanket.
- Worms love to eat kitchen scraps: fruit, vegetables, tea bags, coffee grounds, ground eggshells, small amounts of shredded paper and garden refuse such as lawn clippings, leaf litter and soft prunings chopped finely. And be sure to chop your kitchen scraps finely as well; it makes it a lot easier for your worms to consume. Fruit and vegetable pulp that comes out of a juicer is ideal, too. Remember, dry materials need to be moistened and lawn clippings should be free of herbicidal residue.
- Worms don't like to eat onions, meat, fish waste, dairy, citrus peel, chilli, garlic, oily food scraps, animal manures and strong-smelling herbs high in oils such as rosemary.

COMPOSTING WORMS

• **Which worm farm is for you?** Ready-to-go worm farms are available from garden centres and hardware stores, but if you're into recycling there are many homemade alternatives. I've seen people use bathtubs, kitchen sinks, Styrofoam boxes and even old compost bins — there really are unlimited design options. Coir peat bricks make ideal bedding for your worms to start out in your worm farm, whether store-bought or homemade.

• **What comes out of your worm farm?** Worm wee, or liquid castings, the liquid that collects in the very bottom tray, needs to be drained off at least weekly to stop it backing up into the farm and drowning the worms. This brown liquid can be diluted to the colour of weak tea and used as a fertiliser on just about everything.

Worm poo or worm castings is what the worms turn your kitchen scraps and garden waste into. This dark brown, nutrient-rich, compost-like substance can be used in potting mix and propagating mix or added straight into the garden as a fertiliser.

Earthworms are generally a lot larger than the species chosen for composting purposes.



IMPORTANT NOTES

- The ideal temperature range is 20–25°C. If the weather is too hot or too cold, worm activity will decrease.
- Worms will regulate their population within the farm.
- Worms like a neutral pH. Add dolomite or garden lime on a regular basis.
- Worms tend to be more active at night.
- Monitor your worms' consumption. Don't put more food scraps in if there are still some there. Excess food will go mouldy before the worms can get through it.

FAST FACTS

- If you cut a worm in half it will NOT grow back the other half.
- Worms can eat half their bodyweight in food every day.
- Worms in pots is a no-no. If they're confined in a small space, while churning through the soil they'll inevitably damage your pot plant's roots.

GOTTA GET SOME WORMS

It's relatively easy to encourage earthworms into your garden soil: you just need to add organic matter in the form of compost, mulch, manures, leaf litter — anything you can get your hands on, basically.

One easy method is trench composting, where you simply bury kitchen fruit and vegetable scraps about 20cm deep in various locations around the garden. Mulching is also conducive to more worm activity as it keeps the soil moist and its temperature regulated, so it slowly breaks down to add more organic matter to the soil. Regular watering around the garden will also encourage the worms.

Avoid using chemical fertilisers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. Worms are very sensitive to them and these chemicals will actually reduce worm populations. Also recommended is a reduction in vigorous soil cultivation that breaks up the soil structure too much.

What are you waiting for, then? You should have already put down this magazine and started your own worm farm — or at least begun adding organic matter to your garden beds to encourage more worm activity.



The initial bedding used for worms to settle into their farm is usually coir peat.

TROUBLESHOOTING

• **Smelly worm farm:** This means your worm farm has become too acidic. Add a good handful of dolomite or garden lime to the top tray and water it in. It's good practice to do this every 2–4 weeks, anyway.

It can also mean you've forgotten to drain the worm wee from the bottom tray and it's backing up. You may even have to clean out the whole farm and start again if this has occurred. Rain exposure can also cause drowning in traditional setups, or in other styles, where drainage is inadequate.

Finally, it could be due to too much nitrogenous kitchen scraps and not enough

carbon-dry material like dry grass clippings or leaves to balance it out.

• **Ants or flies in the farm:** Ants are a sign that the farm is too dry.

Moisten by running a 10L watering can through the farm. Add more kitchen scraps — you may have been including too much dry material such as leaf litter and the like. Vaseline around the legs of your worm farms will stop ants marching up into the farm.

Flies are generally a problem if meat and fish products have been added to the farm and the exclusion screens aren't working.



ABOVE Worm farm overhaul in progress with worm farm, coir peat brick and worm blanket.
BELOW Vermicastings are liquid gold.



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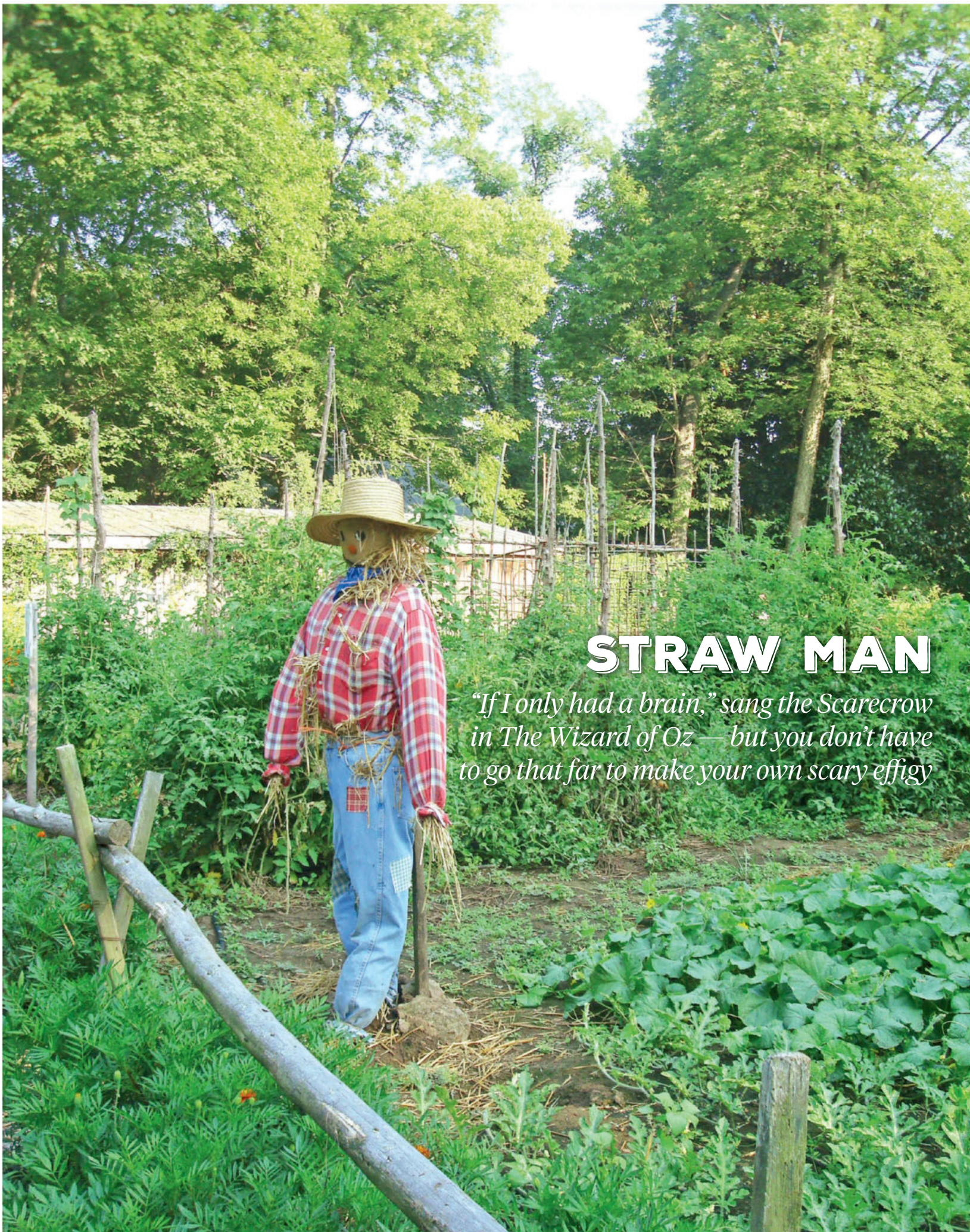
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STRAW MAN

“If I only had a brain,” sang the Scarecrow in The Wizard of Oz — but you don’t have to go that far to make your own scary effigy

WORDS & PHOTOS: DIANE NORRIS

Scarecrows have been around for aeons and they can evoke many feelings. Some people find them creepy, while others associate them with the lovable character in *The Wizard of Oz*; some see them as a companion or friend in the garden.

Scarecrows have been used in different cultures for many centuries, even if their look and character have evolved over time. In ancient Greece, for example, wooden statues were carved in the likeness of Priapus, the quite unhandsome but well-endowed son of Aphrodite. It was noted that birds seemed to avoid fields where this statue stood, so farmers began using him to protect crops. The practice soon spread into Roman regions.

Long ago in Japan, rice fields were guarded by the presence of different types of scarecrow. Sticks were pushed into the ground then dressed in old grimy rags, bells or sticks — even meat — and set on fire. Birds and animals were kept away from the rice paddies by the flames (and probably the smell, too). Soon farmers began making more elaborate and humanlike scarecrows with shirts, hats and coats.

As for parts of Europe and Britain, during

“During the Middle Ages children were used as ‘living scarecrows’, running around while clapping sticks or blocks of wood together to scare marauders away from grain fields”

the Middle Ages children were used as “living scarecrows”, running around while clapping sticks or blocks of wood together to scare marauders away from grain fields. Soon farmers gave the kids a break and started making their own scarecrows by stuffing old clothes with straw, using some sort of vegetable as a head and posing them in their fields. For a time they proved successful.

First Nation people in America protected crops by simply standing atop raised mounds and shouting at birds or animals. This expenditure of energy was alleviated when children started making frightening effigies from cedar poles adorned with cords and animal skins.

Of course, when North America was settled by Europeans, farmers brought the idea of the scarecrow with them. German settlers in Pennsylvania created the bootzamon (or bogeyman) to stand guard over crops — often with a bootzafrau, or wife, at the opposite end.

With thanks to Cathy Stuart, Kids on the Verge.



Another way to reuse preloved clothes.

MAKE A SCARECROW

1



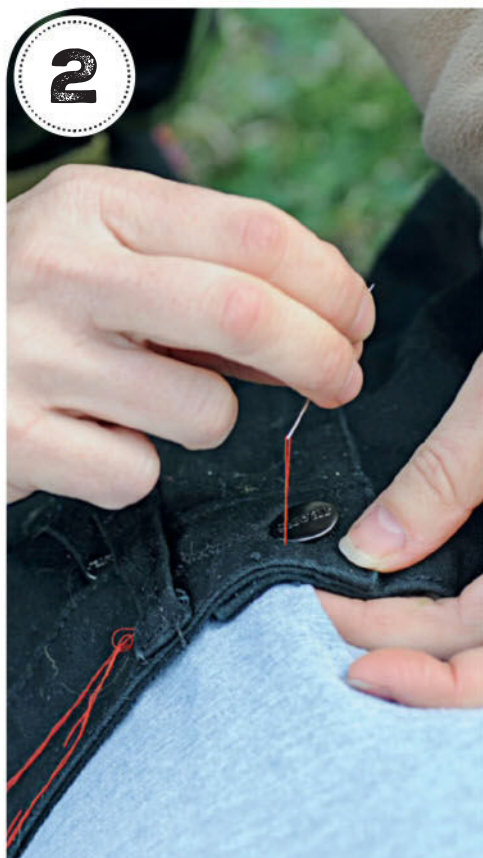
Step 1. Tie the pants at the bottom and fill with stuffing. Be generous as you don't want it to flop.

A great activity to do with the kids.



WHAT YOU NEED

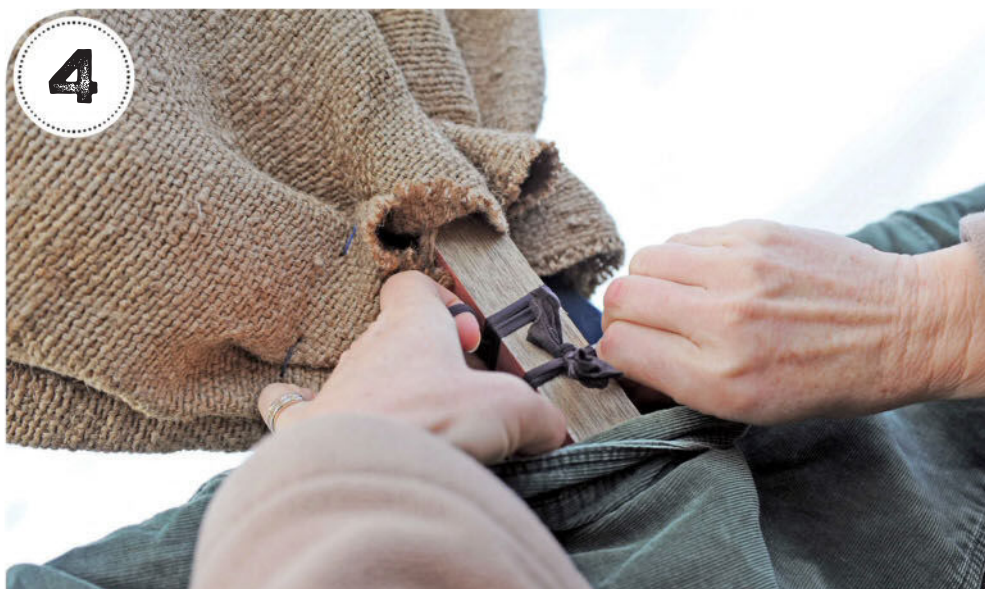
- Old clothes: jeans, trousers, shirts, hat.
- Buttons, marking pens, wool etc.
- Sturdy long piece of wood or broom handle (upright).
- Shorter piece of wood (for arms).
- Pillowcase or bag (for head).
- Straw, rags, old pantyhose or other stuffing materials.



Step 2. Sew pants then tie them securely to the long pole remembering it has to be driven into the ground.



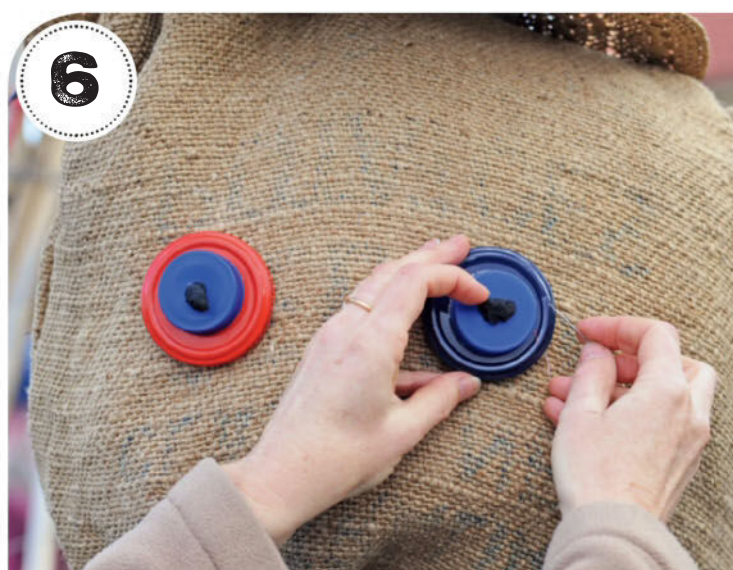
Step 3. Thread a shirt's arms over the short pole then thread another shirt over it. This "double-shirting" will add strength to its upper body.



Step 4. Attach the shorter pole to the longer pole then stuff inside the shirt and tie it to the long pole.



Step 5. Fill a pillowcase or bag with stuffing to form the head — it can be loose or tight — then thread through top of long pole. Tie at bottom and top to secure.



Step 6. Add a hat, a face (draw on features or use buttons etc) and any other decorations you like.



Protect your patch today.

NET WORTH

Protect your produce so that you get to harvest it before the birds do

WORDS & PHOTOS: ROSEMARY & ARTHUR LATHOURIS

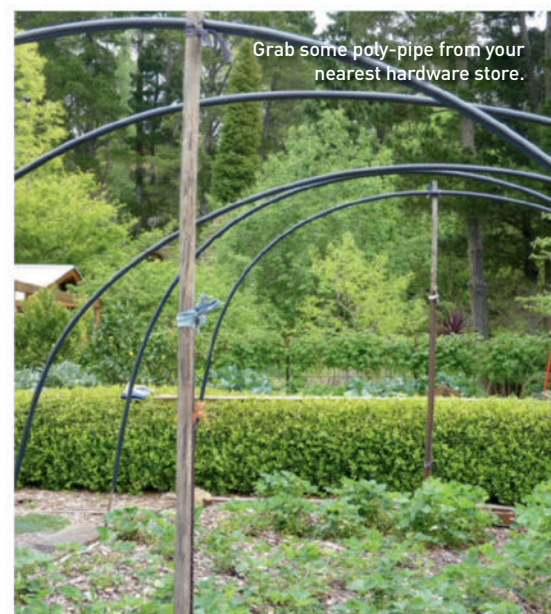
If you want to net a crop for just a few weeks or months, an effective enclosure can be created in quite a short time. It will keep out birds and rodents but deterring possums may need extra work.

Once you've created it, the netted enclosure is quite easy to dismantle and you can pack the pieces away for use on another crop at a later date. If netting is not left out for a long period, it will last many seasons. Keep bird netting off the ground as it can trap lizards, snakes and other creatures.

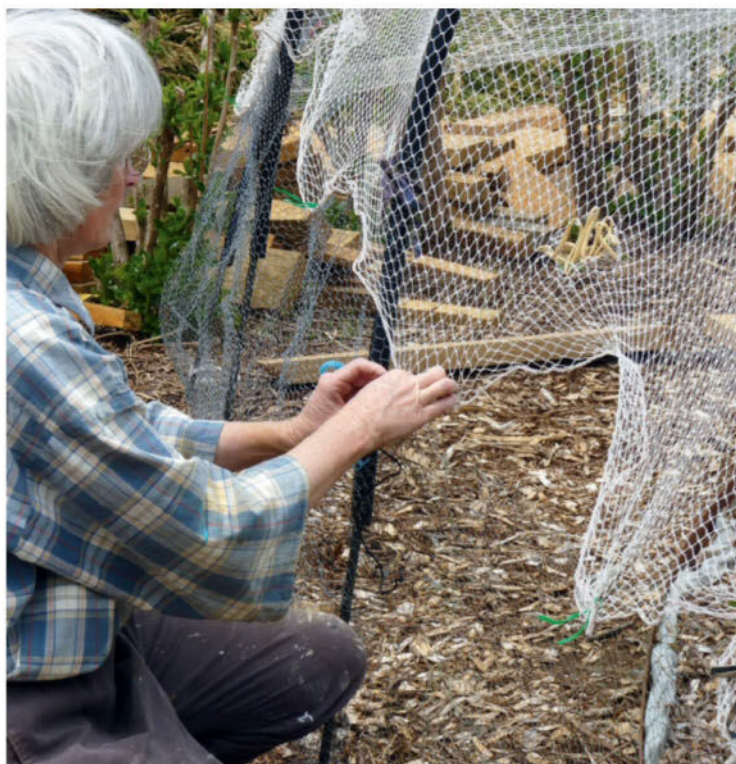
Over the summer growing period, our nets move around the garden as berries, fruit and beans become tasty targets for our local birds and rodents. We're lucky not to have possums but, from the horror stories we've heard, something stronger than bird netting is probably needed to keep these clever creatures from feasting on your produce.

WHAT YOU NEED

- A large piece of bird netting — enough to cover the area and drape well down the sides. White is better as it's more visible to birds.
- A length of fine-mesh chicken wire or birdcage wire — enough to go around the perimeter of the garden. A height of 50cm to 1m is fine.
- Steel rods of about 1.2–1.5m in length.
- Lengths of black poly-pipe, about 5m long with a diameter such that it can slide over the steel rods. We prefer the 5m length because it allows us to stand within the completed enclosure. Lower is fine if you have narrow garden beds.
- A long pole or piece of bamboo to go the full length of the garden.
- Two steel star posts and two tomato stakes — for either end of the enclosure.
- Two plastic containers, eg yoghurt tubs.
- Sufficient ties to hold down the net and wire.



Grab some poly-pipe from your nearest hardware store.



ABOVE, RIGHT AND BELOW With a little hard yakka, you can ensure your produce is safe from predators.



WHAT TO DO

Step 1. Hammer the steel rods firmly into the ground along both the long sides of your garden. A spacing of about 1.0–1.2m between rods is probably the maximum distance so the net doesn't sag. After hammering in, there should be at least 70cm of rod still above ground level.

Step 2. Thread the poly-pipe onto the steel rods so the pipe forms an arch over the garden.

Step 3. Attach the mesh wire at a point where you would like to access the garden. Unroll it around the perimeter of the garden and attach as necessary to the poly-pipe. Make sure the wire is pulled right down so it's sitting on the ground. Enclose the whole base of the garden frame with the wire and attach the ends as required to give

you a point of access to the garden without undue effort.

Step 4. Hammer in the two steel star pickets in the middle of the two short ends of the enclosure. Attach the two timber stakes to the upper part of each of these steel posts with ties so the tops of these "poles" extend about 10cm above the peak of the end arches.

Step 5. Place a yoghurt pot or other cover over the apex of each end pole. This allows the net to be pulled smoothly without catching as you pull it over the structure.

Step 6. Place the long pole horizontally along the length of the enclosure, at the peak, so it starts at one end post and goes to the other. Tie the top of the end stakes, poly-pipe and horizontal pole together to give your frame stability. Tie the top

of each hoop of poly-pipe to the horizontal pole. It's best if the pole has no branches or nasty little twigs that will catch on the net. If you don't have a long enough horizontal pole, simply strap together two or three shorter lengths with substantial overlapping for stability.

Step 7. Lay the net out along one long side of the enclosure and pull it over the structure. You will probably need two people. If the peak is too high for you to pull the net over, use a broom to lift the net above your head and then guide it over to the other side.

Step 8. Tie the bird netting to the chicken wire all around the perimeter. Leave an access opening in the netting so you can get in and out to pick your crop. It should be easy to open and close again, leaving the structure secure from predators.

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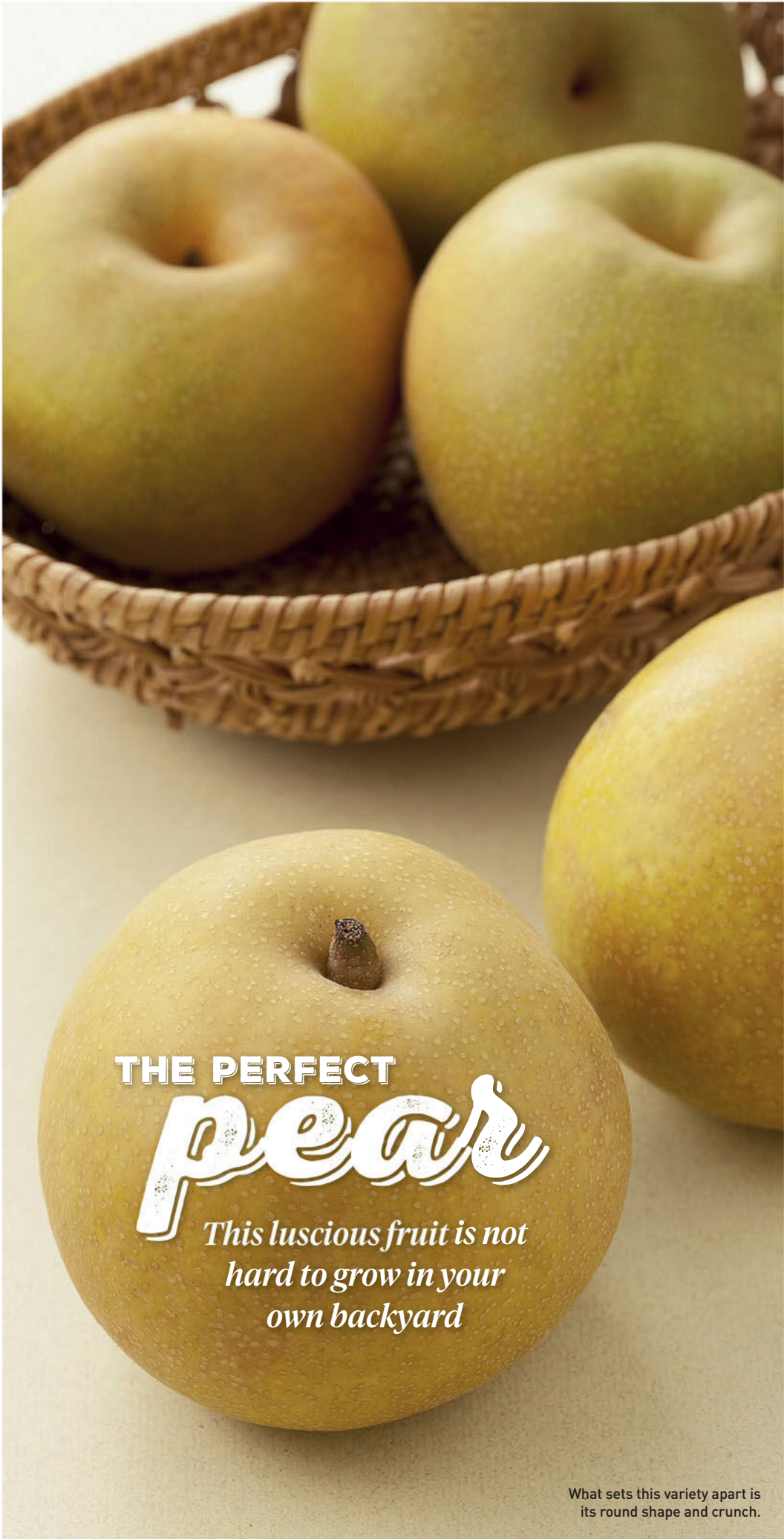
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THE PERFECT *pear*

*This luscious fruit is not
hard to grow in your
own backyard*

What sets this variety apart is
its round shape and crunch.

WORDS: VASIL KANIDIADIS

Is it an apple or is it a pear? It looks like an apple but tastes like a pear, but is crispier. So it must be an apple crossed with a pear, yes?

I was confused with the whole nashi situation and had to get answers from the experts, so I went out to AusFresh in Bunbartha to learn exactly what a nashi is and how it grows.

Well, wasn't I dumbfounded when I got there. I really couldn't believe how much land was needed to grow pear trees; there were literally thousands of trees and it was frightening to think that only a handful of people maintain them. The bulk of the work is in the picking when the season's right — and that's just around the corner.

I met up with John Karl, who took me on a tour of the farm and explained everything I needed to know about nashi. Did you know, for instance, that nashi is the Japanese word for pear?

Nashi are native to Northern Asia and have taken thousands of years to evolve from their long-distant cousins, the European pears. But, unlike the European pears, which have a soft and juicy flavour and are harvested much earlier before they ripen, the nashi are harvested ripe and ready to eat. They're also very juicy but with a distinctly crisp texture.

Nashi have been an Asian delicacy for centuries and the first nashi to arrive in Australia in the 1850s were brought in by Chinese gold miners. For the past 25 years they have been locally produced on a commercial scale and about 90 per cent of Australia's nashi come from the Goulburn Valley.

Nijisseiki is the variety you'll find in your local greengrocer and supermarket, but you really should have one growing in your own backyard.

Nashi are naturally low in fat and kilojoules with plenty of vitamin C and antioxidants and they're a good source of soluble fibre, but they bruise easily and need to be hand picked and packaged in little socks so you can have fresh-looking fruit when you get it home.

If you're planning to grow a nashi tree, the approach is similar to that of other pear and apple trees. Here are some basic tips to keep in mind:

- Nashi trees are adaptable and like well-drained soil. They prefer cooler climates but need some protection from frost, heavy rain, wind and especially birds.
- Routine spraying with pest oil will help to prevent many grubs and slugs destroying the fruit and leaves.

GROWING A PEAR TREE

- Pear trees prefer cooler weather and frost/dormancy is required for a short time to induce fruit production.
- They require rich soil.
- Cross-pollination may be necessary (so two or more trees with the same flowering time may be needed).
- Pears bear fruit after three to five years.
- Fruit can be left to ripen on the tree or picked when still yellow, wrapped in paper and placed in a box to ripen. Store the box in a cool place.



Nashi pear and cake — the perfect pair.

- Keep the trees around 2–2.5m high to make picking easy.
- Fertilise twice a year with compost and blood and bone and keep the base of the tree well mulched.

For those who want to grow a pear tree other than a nashi, try the European pear, *Pyrus communis*, which comes from the Rosaceae (rose) family and is native to Eastern Europe and Asia.

This type of pear became a desired commodity among traders during the Renaissance. Master artists of the period painted still-lives of pears and by the late 16th century the pear had become a much-admired and cultivated fruit. Late in the 18th century, the Christmas carol *The Twelve Days of Christmas* immortalised the pear (along with the partridge).

Pear trees are vigorous and can live to 70 years of age. They often grow very much like apple trees. The leaves are oval-shaped, green and pointed at the tip. Clusters of flowers are produced in early spring, sometimes three to four weeks earlier than apple trees. Short spurs form and pears soon start to ripen, depending on the variety.

The fruit varies from oval-shaped through to a bell shape. The skin colour can be green,

brown, yellow and even burgundy red. Pear trees will generally produce a heavy crop one year, followed by a lighter crop the next.

PEAR AND CHERRY SLUG

Pear and cherry slugs usually appear in late spring or early summer. The black sawfly lays its eggs beneath the upper surface of the leaves and black slugs hatch within two weeks. They are about 6–8mm in length. These slugs feed on the leaves of your tree, leaving it looking mistreated.

Black slug solution:

- Remove black slugs from the tree.
- Squash slugs and place them in a bowl with one litre of boiling water.
- Allow solution to cool.
- Pour cool contents into a one-litre plastic bottle with a spray nozzle.
- Now you are ready to spray the entire tree.

Wood ash method:

- In winter, scoop up all the ashes from your fireplace — use as much as you have.
- Mix the ash into the dirt at the base of your pear or cherry tree. Sawfly eggs that are dormant in the soil will have no chance of a second breeding.

EXPERT TIP

Espalier a pear tree and watch it produce lots of fruit each year without becoming a huge tree. Thinning the branches improves the quality of the fruit produced by the tree.

BELOW This variety is also known as the Asian pear.





NOW SCREENING

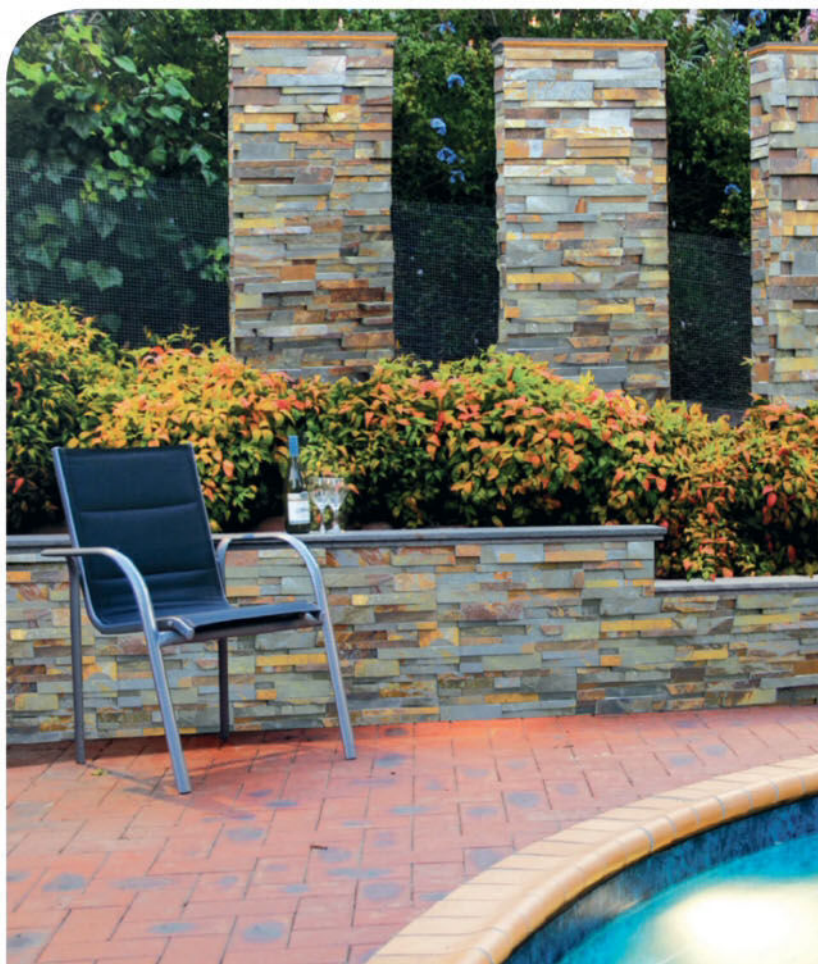
House of Bamboo® specialises in outdoor products made from renewable materials, such as screens made from eco-friendly acacia. The acacia is a member of the wattle family and is a sustainable, plantation-grown resource. These screens can be used for a range of outdoor applications, including hiding the bins, the pool pump or an unsightly area, while still allowing ease of access. The panels that comprise each screen are bound with heavy nylon, which makes it possible to bend the screen to suit your needs. Other applications include cladding to update a tired, existing fence or to create a new fence. These screens have also been used to produce a range of outdoor furniture, from daybeds to benches and planter boxes. houseofbamboo.com.au

BACKYARD Stuff



ECO CHIC

This round dining setting is part of the EE-I-EE-I-O collection from Think Outside. Suitable for indoor and outdoor use, the dining settings are made from recycled 44-gallon drums. Each setting has its own unique character as well as being environmentally responsible and beautifully handmade, the way only Think Outside knows how. Designed by Aaron Jackson, a leader in the decorating field, EE-I-EE-I-O is an eclectic collection of furniture and sculpture that captures the imagination of young and old. This year, Think Outside charmed judges and viewers alike on the top rating television program *The Block*. If you are looking for a fun, good quality statement piece for your garden, this is for you. thinkoutside.biz



GREAT WALL

Amber's exclusive Deco Block System gives homeowners the chance to create a truly unique look in their garden. The versatile modular wall system is pre-faced with natural stone, can be assembled by the home handyman and takes only hours to build. The blocks can be filled with crushed rocks or, if the wall or pillar is to be a load-bearing structure, the blocks can be filled with concrete with readymade joints for reinforcing. Amber's stylish Deco Block System provides the opportunity to create a look that is completely distinctive and offers a range of shapes and styles that can be customised to meet your particular needs. For a durable, natural-looking feature in any garden, the versatility of Amber's Deco Block System is unbeatable. ambertiles.com.au



LIVING SCREENS

Times have changed. We now have a species of bamboo that will not run rampant in a garden. Clumping bamboo is not new; it's just that it is not well known in Australia. Most clumping bamboo varieties are tropical but there are several varieties, such as Gracilis and Alphonse Karr, which are well suited to our cooler regions and make for fantastic, quick-growing screening plants. Red Cloud Bamboo's team members provide expert advice and take immense pride in the variety and health of their bamboo plants, all of which are potted in containers and are disease-free. You can get pots as small as 200mm up to 500-litre pots with an impressive bamboo plant, some 10 metres tall for when you want an instant effect. redcloudbamboo.com.au



BACKYARD STUFF

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Just because you're getting dirty in the garden doesn't mean you can't do it in style. The hand trowel and fork set by Thoughtful Gardener features wooden handles that have been paint-dipped in a gorgeous aqua colour. The rustic look of this set improves as it ages and the paint begins to wear over time. Designed in England, the set also features brushed stainless-steel parts for a modern look and sturdy construction. The ideal gift for a keen gardener, the set comes beautifully presented in a Thoughtful Gardener gift box. petersofkensington.com.au



SO EDGY

EverEdge flexible steel garden edging is durable, versatile and incredibly simple to install. Each metre length incorporates six spikes (the spikes and edge are all in one piece), and the lengths are simply hammered into the ground and easily interlocked. EverEdge is made from 1.6mm mild steel (90 per cent recycled) with either a galvanised and powder-coated finish (colours are black and brown) or a Cor-Ten rust finish. It's available in three different depths: 75mm, 100mm and 125mm. The powder-coated colours are intended to be unobtrusive while the Cor-Ten finish turns it into more of a feature piece. EverEdge bends to virtually any shape, holds angles and curves, and suits all soil types. It's ideal for both small and large projects and can be used to edge lawns, driveways, paths and garden beds. It works perfectly with a wide variety of materials, including synthetic grass, pavers, rolled tarmac, gravel and pebbles, as well as all mulches and natural grasses. everedge.com.au



DESIGNER PLANTERS

The Oltrevaso range of lightweight, non-toxic, recyclable thermo-plastic resin pots come all the way from Italy. These pots are also shock-resistant, colourfast and weatherproof and can be used indoors or outside. The Oltrevaso range represents the best in Italian design and the pots are ideal to use as accents in a modern built environment. The standard colours are white and black but the pots can be painted with high-gloss two-pack finishes so you can have the colour of your choice and achieve a customised high-quality look. As well as the Oltrevaso range, Kellock supplies the landscape and building design industries with a range of pots and garden features, including wall-mounted and freestanding screens in Cor-Ten and mild steel. kellocktrading.com.au

BACKYARD STUFF



LIGHT UP

Kichler Design Pro LED landscape lighting is designed to bring professional interior design principles to the exterior of your home with a high-quality fit and finish. You can see a beautifully lit landscape, pictured below, that exclusively features LED lighting from Kichler. From the front of your home to the backyard deck and garden, there's a wide variety of fixture sizes and styles, ensuring there is something for anyone's home, no matter the décor. Now available in Australia through Landscaping and Lighting, this range of quality lighting provides clean, focused light at a fraction of the energy usage of traditional lighting. It is 100 per cent recyclable and all fittings come with an industry leading 15-year warranty. landscapingandlighting.com.au

UNIQUE PIECES

Pietro by Clearpond is one of the largest and highest-quality ranges of distinctive fountains, urns, sculptures, planters and garden décor made of GRC (glass-reinforced concrete). Bringing indoor and outdoor stoneware décor to a whole new dimension, each Pietro by Clearpond product is an individually hand-finished patented work of art. It is constructed of a composite material made of ceramic fibre and reinforced cement, which is up to 75 per cent lighter than pre-cast concrete. The Corinthian Ornamental Fountain, pictured here, is one of a range of more than 50 carried in Clearpond's warehouse. As the company has products in a variety of colours and styles, you're sure to find that distinctive piece for your garden, deck, patio or office. clearpond.com.au



HOT PROPERTY

There is nothing more tantalising than the taste of food cooked in a wood-fired oven so if you're thinking of adding one to your outdoor entertaining area, the people at Polito Wood Fire Ovens are experts in the field. The company offers a broad choice, starting with Polito ready-built ovens, which are constructed in one solid structure with a strong concrete base, reinforced by steel rods. Alternatively, you might prefer a Polito Wood Fire Oven DIY kit. It comes in a choice of four styles and five sizes. Each complete oven kit includes a precast dome, pre-made arch, oven floor, door, granite panel, temperature gauge, three-piece flue kit, an insulation cover, and mesh and metal string. You can then finish the oven however you like to add your stamp. politowoodfireovens.com.au

NOT WOOD

Knotwood produces a range of timber lookalike aluminium systems that can be used in place of timber in virtually any application. The Knotwood range of products includes aluminium privacy screens, fencing, decking, louvres and shutters. To make the task of matching your new screen or shutters to your home easier, Knotwood has designed its systems so that they will complement any existing colour scheme. Knotwood products are available in any powder-coated colour, including all Colorbond colours, so you can be assured of creating a uniform, co-ordinated look. And, as no timber is used in the creation of Knotwood, the products won't fade, oxidise, rot, warp, split or crack — nor will they ever need repainting or varnishing. knotwood.com.au





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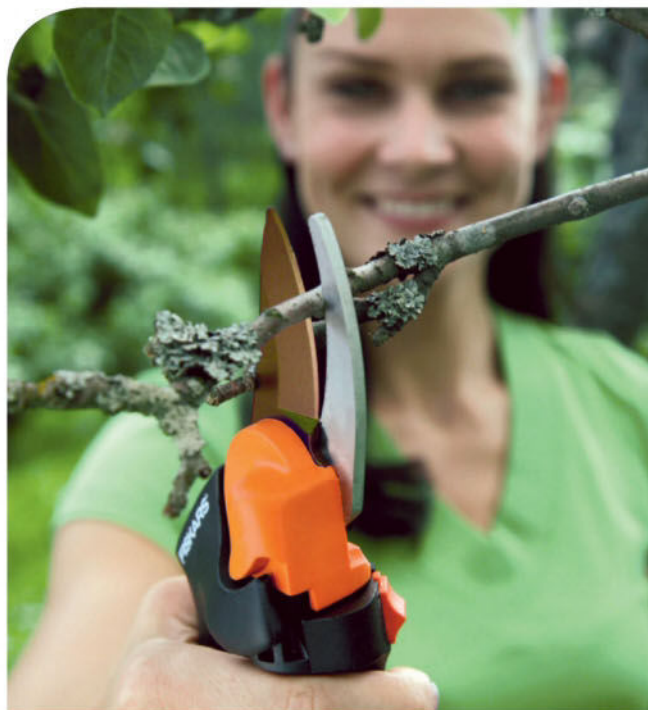
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LET'S RIDE

When you live on a farm or acreage, mowing can be a mighty big task so it's important to have the right equipment to get the job done without taking up too much precious time. Rover's Lawn King Ride-On Mower 20/42 is now more durable with an improved high-performance steering system. Its new-style chassis is stronger and more resistant to the elements. The Lawn King's tighter, compact turning circles reduces time by lessening the amount of required line trimming — the rider can manoeuvre better through tighter areas and around common backyard obstacles such as trees, fence posts and flower beds. The mower is controlled by a foot-operated hydrostatic transmission system and powered by a 20hp Kohler® 7000 Series V-Twin OHV engine. Coupled with cruise control and a high-back seat, the Lawn King easily allows the user to comfortably cover grounds up to 8000 square metres. rover.com.au



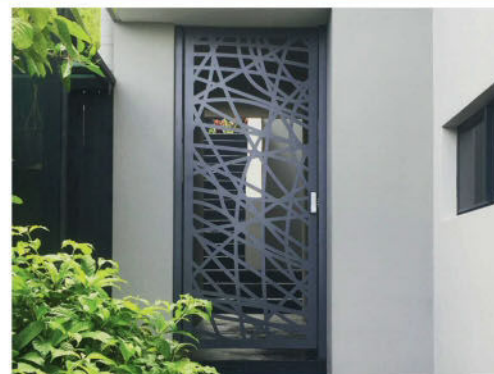
A CUT ABOVE

If you're an avid gardener, you will know the difference that a great pair of hand pruners will make to your time in the garden. To celebrate its 365th anniversary, Fiskars has released the Special Edition Fiskars 365 Titanium Pruners. These pruners feature patented Powergear technology that reduces tension, giving the user more torque, and providing three times more cutting power than traditional pruners. The strength and precision of titanium blades make cleaner cuts every time, which is important in preventing damage to plants and leaving them vulnerable to disease. The pruner's ergonomic design is so comfortable it almost feels like an extension of your own hand. fiskars.com.au



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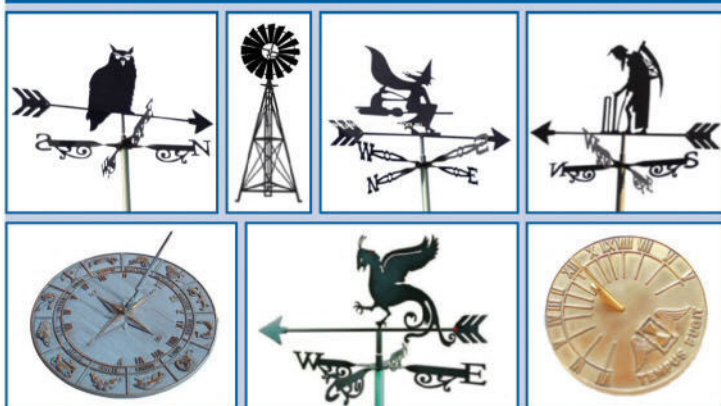
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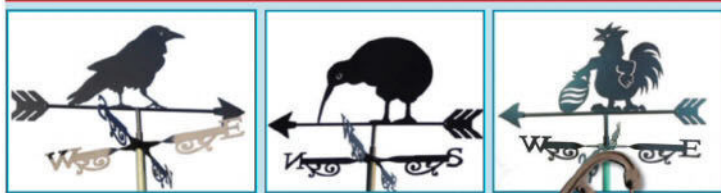
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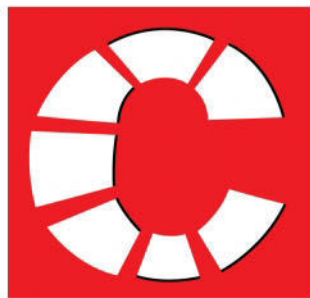


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