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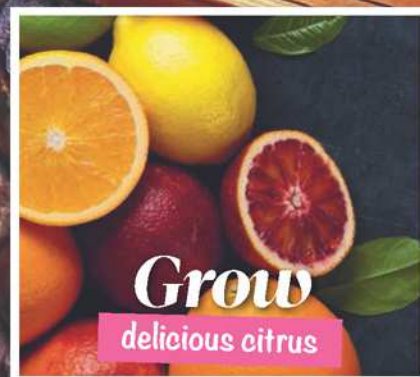
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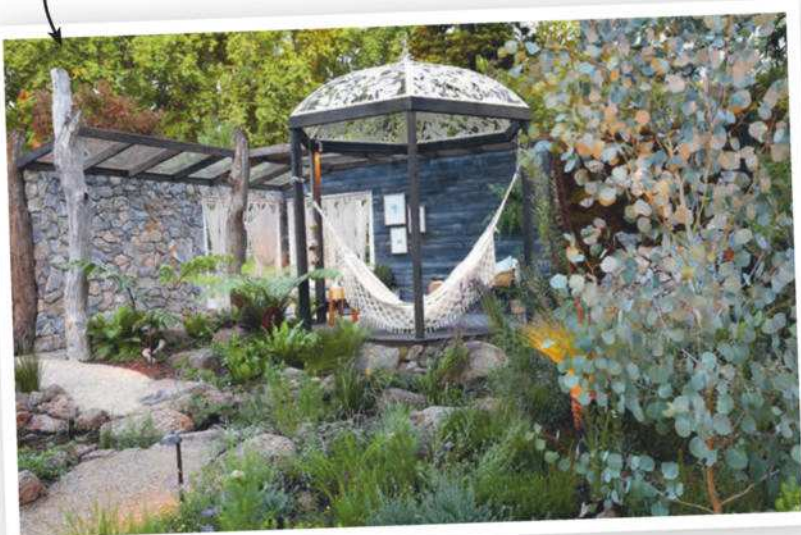
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EDITOR'S LETTER

Staying snug this winter

Winter may be upon us, but with such a great range of outdoor heating options available, there's no reason we can't still enjoy our alfresco areas throughout the chilly months. See our outdoor heating guide on page 55 – just add toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate!

Winter is also the ideal time to address other outdoor maintenance jobs. We show you how to refinish your deck (page 62), build a retaining wall (page 72) and install three different drainage systems (page 83).

Easy bathroom fixes

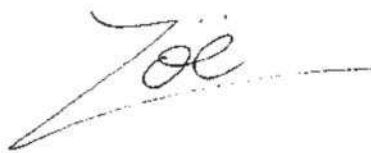
Bathroom renovations are notoriously pricey, but there are actually plenty of upgrades you can make that are well within the budget, from painting the walls and tiles to upgrading your fixtures. Find out how on page 39.

What's cooking in kitchens

Finally, don't miss our kitchen special, starting on page 24. We showcase the latest designs and innovations in splashbacks, benchtops and hardware, plus stunning makeovers to inspire you.

And if kitchen storage is an issue in your home, why not tackle one of our great projects, such as a portable storage trolley (page 48) or plate display rack (page 51)?

Happy DIYing!



MANAGING EDITOR
ZOË MEUNIER



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Check out *Handyman* magazine's boards by going to pinterest.com/DIYHandyman for all things home and garden, from maintenance tips and storage solutions to decorating ideas, handy hacks and BBQ recipes.



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NEW ZEALAND Handyman

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MODERN WORDS SITA SIMONS
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MONOCHROME

An innovative extension to a classic Queenslander makes a bold statement while harmonising with the natural environment



One of Australia's most beloved heritage homes is the Queenslander, instantly recognisable with its weatherboards, wide verandahs and signature stilts.

Found all over Queensland and Northern NSW, but particularly associated with Brisbane and its suburbs, the style was developed to

capture the breeze, stand high to avoid flooding and, with its iron roofing, withstand tropical rains.

Although highly valued by today's homeowners for its timber flooring, timber windows and era-specific details such as Art Deco door handles, stained-glass windows, French doors, fretwork and pressed-metal ceilings, the

Queenslander's appearance of grandeur can be deceiving. Commonly, there is limited space and little temperature control. Internal rooms can be dark and lacking in storage options, as well as deficient in many key design areas.

Renovating to suit modern tastes is a smart move, while this Brisbane family's vision also paid off in the style stakes. ►



BOLD BRIEF

After living in their home for 10 years and with two children approaching their teens, the owners decided the time had come to extend and renovate. A few changes had been made to the property in the 1980s, but this family had been living in an original space that was largely untouched.

Seeking the help of Brisbane-based design studio Wrightson Stewart (wrightsonstewart.com.au), the family was looking for an extension to the original building that would provide an extra four rooms plus an additional bathroom.

Ian Wrightson relished the idea of doing something a little different.

‘The standard way of renovating a Queenslander is to lift it up and build underneath, but that was a complicated proposition here, so we had to be creative,’ says Ian.

‘The clients are real design enthusiasts and they wanted something that pushed the boundaries, even if it happened to be potentially quite polarising. They wanted to create something that people would be really

The black industrial-style extension enhances the traditional Queenslander.



interested in – something that people either really loved, or that at least caused a reaction.’

The qualities of the site dictated a lot of the design initiative, which was to make best use of the double-sized block.

‘A standard plan for a modern

extension would be to leave the original facade at the front and build something new at the rear. But in this case, it didn’t make sense to do that because we wanted to showcase the site and bring views of the adjacent parkland into the home environment.’

STREET APPEAL

With a clear idea to build on to the side rather than the rear, the focus turned to how best to join the two parts together in a cohesive way, while still asserting the difference between old and new.

It was important to the designers not to relegate the original home, but also not to produce a carbon copy, which would feel inauthentic. This idea of mirroring led to a definitive design choice.

'We had interesting conversations about colours, in which we said we wanted to paint the new extension black

and keep the original part of the house white. It's a pretty brave client who agrees!' says Ian.

'To my mind, there's nothing more beautiful than a traditional white house, and we didn't want to detract from the beautiful Queenslander, which is so detailed and feminine.

'We wanted to enhance that aspect and so it just seemed natural that the extension, which is quite an industrial shape, was painted black.

'It is a balance of masculine and feminine. That was the decision which really drove the project from then on.' ►





NEW PLAN

The exterior of the original house remains almost entirely intact, but for a couple of aluminium windows that were replaced with timber sashes to match the original. The interior of the old house was the typical configuration of the classic Queenslander, comprising two bedrooms, a living area, kitchen and bathroom.

The new layout avoids major structural works but reconfigures the



The family wanted to involve everyone in the idea of communal space

floor plan to accommodate a master bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe and ensuite, an office and a living room.

The new extension contains a further two bedrooms for the children, a bathroom and separate toilet, and features an expansive open-plan living, kitchen and dining space, as well as a new deck that connects the inside living area to the abundant natural surroundings. ►

Traditional shelving doubles as a dividing wall. ABOVE The kitchen is a welcoming space for gatherings.





INTERIOR DESIGN

Once the light and vistas were brought in, and a simple palette of authentic materials was chosen, the decoration needed only a light hand. Ian is most concerned with the emotional response to the space.

‘A successful home functions at the highest level of liveability. Projects can get carried away with the latest thing, whether it’s the fanciest knobs for the kitchen cabinets or new gadgets. In the end it comes down to how much you enjoy living here,’ says Ian.

‘All my experience tells me that it’s about flow, light and spaciousness, whether real or perceived. Our job is to first understand how the people living here want to function and feel.’

In the new kitchen, for example, the family wanted to involve everyone in the idea of communal space. It’s welcoming and relaxed, a social environment. It’s not over-designed.

‘It’s rarely about the cabinets or the exact colour on the walls. It’s about doing the things you enjoy in an environment that makes it easy and comfortable,’ says Ian.



Brisbane’s natural beauty is invited into every room. LEFT A simple palette throughout allows the outside to shine.

BUILT IN

Given the home's modest footprint, its feeling of expansiveness comes down to clever planning and tailored solutions. Customised joinery is a signature feature that serves multiple purposes.

'When you build in furniture and storage, it makes it feel like you are living in a larger space,' says Ian.

'We do a lot of flow diagrams to establish how to best move through the space and how it works for each family member. We look at all the things you might want to do during the day and how things might change on the weekend. Then we create a shape to match those diagrams.

'This allows us to get the essential furniture elements right in terms of function and, just as importantly, size.'

Part of the initial brief was to find creative solutions to display the family's many books. Traditional shelving does double duty as a dividing wall in one area of the living room. For the rest of the library, the design team turned things on its head.

'When you are dealing with a house that is half white and half black, you have some space to suggest more left-of-centre design ideas!

'We had the notion to ground all the open sky and space by having solid timber furniture and then solid



departments of books that go around the floorspace. It creates detail and weight for the whole design.'

The sofa banquette, entertainment unit and dining area focus the room. The dining table, a family treasure, adds to the archaeology of the home.

'If you start with a full appreciation of the environment, you are always going to create space that works,' says Ian. ▶



'When you build in furniture, it makes it feel like a larger space'



Finding creative solutions to display the family's book collection was key.

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BLOCK PARTY

Connection to the environment is the other prevailing design theme in this project. The site itself runs adjacent to heritage parkland that dominates the landscape to the back. The whole side of the extension opens up with louvres, inviting the view into the space and flooding the home with light.

‘This house is such a celebration of Brisbane’s beauty. What defines us here is the expansive blue sky, the lush subtropical greenery, and the vibrant jacarandas. We were really adamant that we capture those views – not only the actual view, but also the *feeling* of the view. The jacarandas are

introduced into the home through the kitchen window and then again through the picture window splashback, which also captures a glimpse of the Queensland next door.

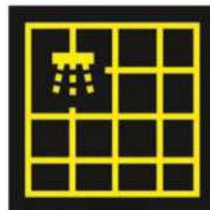
‘There are elements of Brisbane in all the vistas, which I find wonderfully exciting,’ says Ian. ❖



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WORDS SITA SIMONS

Kitchen design is moving away from the high-tech, glossy finish of the past five years and into a more personal expression of those who inhabit it





PICTURE SMARTER BATHROOMS+/TOM ROE

It's the living, beating heart of a home, the place where family and friends congregate. It's where childhood memories are made, teenage angst is vented and grown-up dreams fulfilled. No other space in the home carries as much emotional weight and creates as much history as the kitchen.

The latest evolution of its design has come to reflect these kinds of human interactions rather than straight-up function. Modern kitchen spaces are egalitarian and take in the needs of all family members, creating a sense of cooperation and inclusion.

Steph O'Donohue is a kitchen design expert from SmarterBATHROOMS+ in Melbourne (smarterkitchens.com.au). For her, good design always mirrors social norms and helps inform progress.

'People who are looking for something for their forever home really want to put their stamp on their kitchen and have a place that is inviting and warm,' she says.

'It is really taking over the feel of how we want to interact in our interior spaces. Current trends see the concept of relaxation being sold as essential for our mental health. It's about self-care, and this translates to our interior spaces - in particular our kitchens because we spend so much time there.

'We're seeing a move away from the high-tech, glossy finishes to a much more artisan feel. There are a lot more matt finishes - something more crafted, more furnished. It's less slick and perfect, more subtle and soft. It's braver, too, with more colour and texture and less homogeny.' ►



‘The kitchen sets the tone for the rest of the home’

Today’s kitchen designs take function as a given. The more engaging design elements are the personal touches.

Setting the tone

‘The key is creating a beautiful kitchen,’ says Steph. ‘Though function may have been the main touchstone in the past, the approach I take is that function is inherent anyway – it’s a part of the equation. The difference lies in focusing on the mood and feel you want to create.’

Steph analyses the room’s use, then hones in on a hero element.

‘The kitchen is where you invite your friends and family so you can entertain, where you are the host,’ says Steph.

‘It’s an intimate zone within the home, but it’s actually a very open space too. The kitchen most definitely sets the tone for the rest of the home, so it’s important to get that tone right.’

‘The way I work with clients is to establish what their ‘hero’ is going to be. It may be someone they’ve been tracking on social media. Or it might be a tile they’ve already bought and are in love with. They could be excited about a certain finish in tapware. We can use any of these elements to drive the subsequent tone of design,’ says Steph.

‘This approach results in a cohesive brief in which everything works in harmony, instead of choosing things that catch your eye at random.’

‘To narrow down your style, use magazines, blogs and social media apps such as Pinterest and Instagram to determine a few options that would suit your home. Everything is a clue to what your story is.’ ▶



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Subway tiles add geometry to this Kaboodle kitchen. ABOVE Penny rounds give texture.



Splashing back

Natural and reconstituted stone is still popular in splashbacks, but trends have swung back to tiles.

‘Glass is part of the very shiny, very hard, very lab-like aesthetic that was popular five to 10 years ago,’ says Steph. ‘It was a rejection of the bitsy finishes that were prevalent in the 1970s and ’80s. The move back towards tiles is to reclaim some of that softness we lost along the way, and texture plays a huge part in that.’

Trends in tile choices range from mosaics to penny rounds, which are having a definite resurgence and benefitting also from vast improvements in grouts. But the big story is the large terrazzo tiles that are sweeping the industry at present.

Terrazzo is traditionally a flooring material made by exposing marble chips in concrete. New style tiles are typically large format and come in a wide range of colours to suit a more textured and unique interior.



PICTURES KABOODLE



Matt finishes

When it comes to making the choice between glossy and matt, anything goes. As long as it's matt.

'High-shine and glossy is definitely on the way out,' says Steph.

Matt finishes can be achieved with laminate, which is tough and easy to clean, making it ideal for families. Two-pack painted surfaces are a little more delicate and need more care, but very appealing matt finishes can still be achieved.

'Colour in kitchen joinery is also coming back in a big way. It's difficult to convince people to go with colour if they are in a home they only plan to be in for five years or so. But if we're talking about a forever home, I find that people are really excited about introducing colour and making brave choices,' says Steph. ►

Textured, natural, matt surfaces are replacing the shiny, glossy look popular in the last decade.

PICTURES SMARTER BATHROOMS/TOM ROE



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Handle this

Handles are back. The handle-less finishes that have been so popular over the past five years are on the wane, and again it goes back to creating that artisan look - moving away from the clean and slick to something more crafted and unique, handmade or local.

'We have a range of hand-turned timber handles made by a small Tasmanian company and they are running out of the door,' says Steph.

Metallic finishes are still popular, and the long-held love for rose gold, gunmetal grey and brass shows no signs of waning.

'You might think a handle is a small, insignificant thing, but a thoughtful choice is a way to express ourselves. Just like wearing a great piece of jewellery can set off a dress, a fabulous handle can really make a kitchen pop,' says Steph. ►

Handles make a comeback: even better if crafted, unique or local.



PICTURES SMARTER BATHROOMS+TOM ROE (BOTTOM) KABOODLE

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A wide range of handles is available to match the many door colours and profiles available in the Kaboodle Kitchen range. For more information and inspiration, visit kaboodle.co.nz.

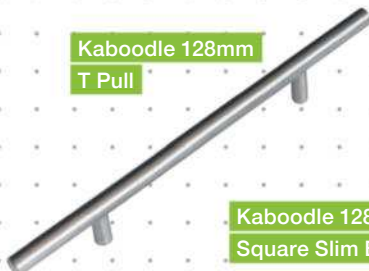
Kaboodle Grip Knob



Kaboodle 38mm Square Knob



Kaboodle 128mm T Pull



Kaboodle 128mm Square Slim Bar



Kaboodle 96mm Classic Bow



Kaboodle 27mm Mushroom Knob



Kaboodle 64mm Cup Handle (Brushed Nickel)



Kaboodle 128mm Bar



Kaboodle 64mm Cup Handle (Matt Black)





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ABOVE Porcelain benchtops are a popular choice for performance and appearance. BELOW Stone and reconstituted stone are still going strong.





On the bench

Stone and reconstituted stone continue to be popular choices for benchtops. But the biggest growth area is porcelain, which can be formed into a very thin profile. Thin benchtops, or a floating thin top on a thicker element, is a look that has come straight from the design fairs in Europe. Steph says it's a material that's very well-suited here, too.

'It's extraordinarily durable and performs a lot better with heat than reconstituted stone. It's almost totally non-porous, which makes it supremely resistant to stains,' she says.

'There is endless choice. It can be made to look like marble, or something tougher and more industrial like concrete, and any colour in between.'

One drawback is its tendency to be brittle. Edges may need to be reinforced with steel. The material itself is on par cost-wise with stone, but the reinforcement and special needs for transport do add to the expense.

'Technology will catch up, though. I predict porcelain will be a go-to choice for many homeowners in the near future,' says Steph. ❖

PICTURES SMARTER BATHROOMS/TOM ROE

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RENO RECIPES



Celebrity renovator Cherie Barber cooks up a kitchen renovation storm that's easy on the budget

WORDS AND PICTURES
CHERIE BARBER

One of the smartest ways to save money on a renovation is to retain as much as possible and simply update the rest, especially when you're dealing with older properties. Once you start ripping up floors, gutting kitchens and bathrooms, and taking the sledgehammer to fixtures and fittings, you risk uncovering decades of remedial works that need immediate attention.

But sometimes your reno calls for a brand spanking new kitchen. Let's look at three different approaches that won't break the bank.



After

This kitchen had good bones, so its renovation was all about the surfaces.



Cherie Barber is the reno expert and owner of Renovating For Profit (renovatingforprofit.com.au).

\$10,000

THE SPRUCE

This kitchen was central to the renovation of a sprawling house in Sydney's semi-rural suburb of Dural, where houses typically fetch upwards of \$1.5 million since the city's massive property boom.

With an entire five-bedroom house to renovate on a \$60,000 budget, there was no possibility to spend up big on a new kitchen. However, I needed the look of a brand-new kitchen. The answer? Modern new door fronts throughout.

By retaining the carcasses and updating the facade in bold charcoal grey laminate doors, I was able to pull off this kitchen transformation for under \$10,000. I saved on demolition and skip costs, and the expense of buying and installing a complete new kitchen.

A new laminate benchtop and plain white splashback tiles were a conservative choice that fitted the classic look of the finished renovation. On a bigger budget, you could upgrade to a Caesarstone benchtop for that extra touch of luxe. ►

Before



LOOK 2



\$14,000

THE CHERIE LOOK

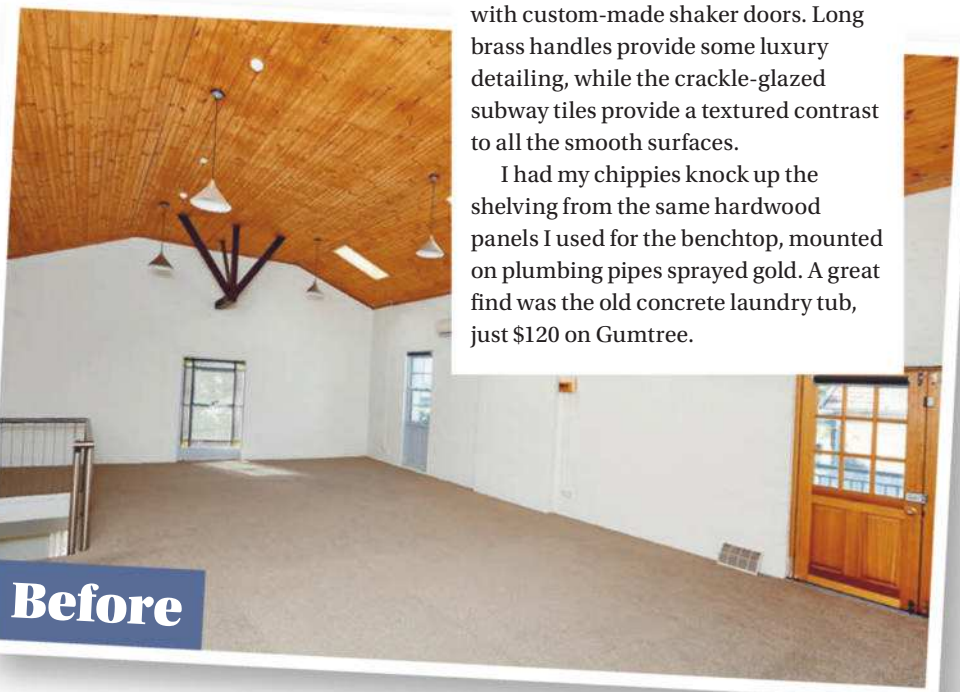
When I finally knuckled down and bought a commercial space for our Renovating For Profit office (after years of renting), I was determined it was going to be a bit special. It was part of an old converted biscuit factory in Balmain, Sydney, with high vaulted ceilings and exposed brick walls.

For the kitchen, a real focal point of the upstairs open-plan office, I decided to marry vivid teal-coloured cabinetry with moody charcoal-coloured walls and ceiling. The carcass is Kaboodle, with custom-made shaker doors. Long brass handles provide some luxury detailing, while the crackle-glazed subway tiles provide a textured contrast to all the smooth surfaces.

I had my chippies knock up the shelving from the same hardwood panels I used for the benchtop, mounted on plumbing pipes sprayed gold. A great find was the old concrete laundry tub, just \$120 on Gumtree.

After

Cherie's bespoke touches show what can be done with some imagination.



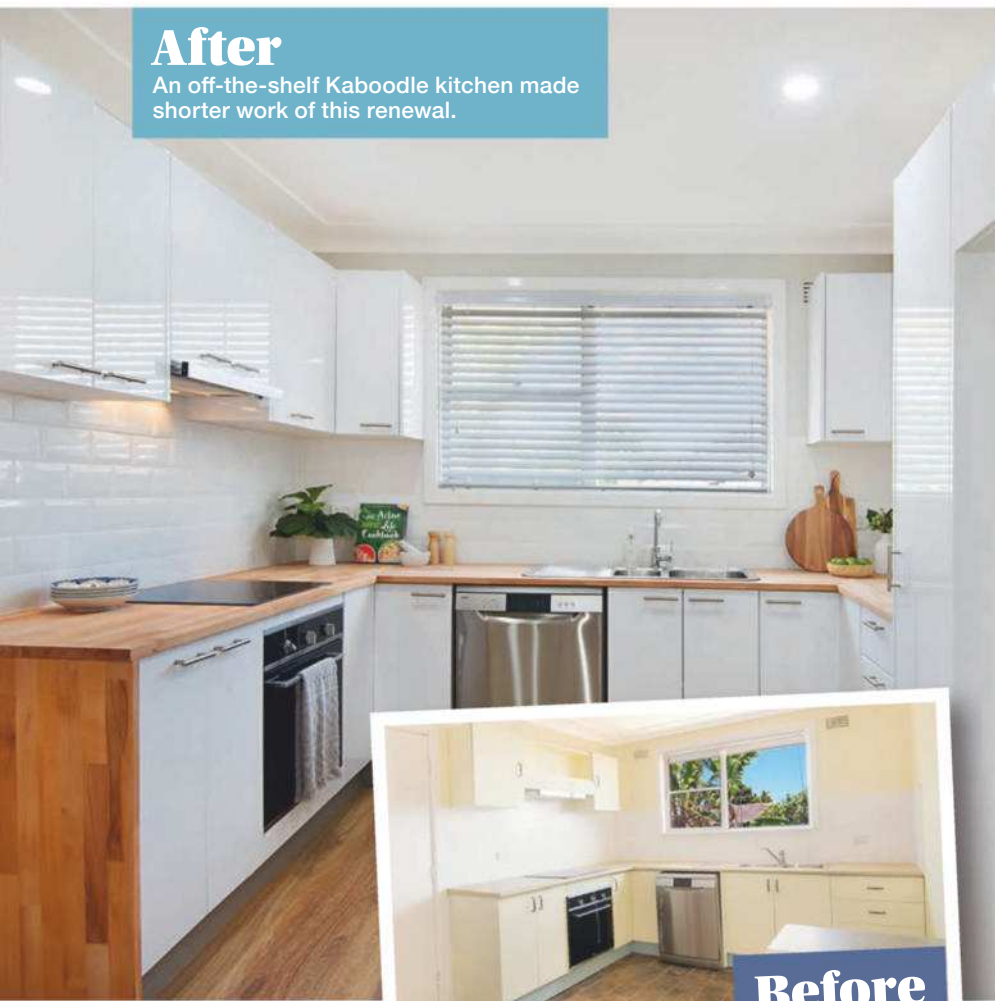
Before

LOOK 3



After

An off-the-shelf Kaboodle kitchen made shorter work of this renewal.



Before

\$9,000

THE BRIGHT IDEA

When in doubt, you can't beat the timeless appeal of a white kitchen, especially for a rental property that you don't want to be updating every few years. The skeleton of an old kitchen in this investment property would have posed more problems to work around than simply ditching it and putting in a new off-the-shelf Kaboodle kitchen from Bunnings.

The appliances were fairly new and didn't need replacing, and none of the electricals and plumbing were moved, making a major cost saving. So it was out with the old and in with the new!

The new install was an opportunity to extend the footprint of the original kitchen with additional floor and overhead cabinets.

For some contemporary detailing, I added a waterfall edge on the new timber benchtop, made from hardwood panels (from Bunnings), which tied in neatly with the new timber-look laminate flooring throughout the open-plan space. ❖

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PICTURE I STOCK

5 EASY BATHROOM UPGRADES

You don't need to break the bank to transform a dated washroom

WORDS AND PICTURES ZOË MEUNIER

STEIN

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BLACK OAK, WALL HUNG, HANDLELESS WITH COUNTER TOP STONE AND ADDITIONAL BASINS



1200
WHITE, FLOOR STANDING, HANDLELESS, DOUBLE BASIN

SELECT YOUR COLOUR AND STYLE



WHITE

Handleless



LIGHT OAK

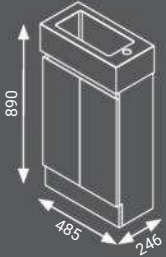
Handle
Sold separately



BLACK OAK

Integrated Handle
Integrated handle available in Silver or Black

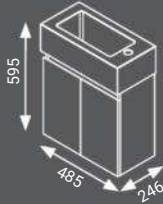
SELECT YOUR SIZE



500

Floor Standing

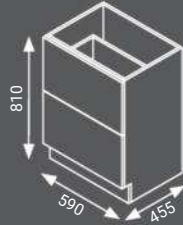
Handleless option only, top included



500

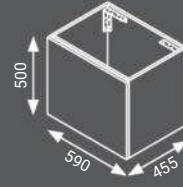
Wall Hung

Handleless option only, top included



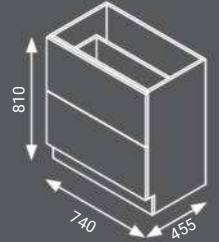
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Floor Standing



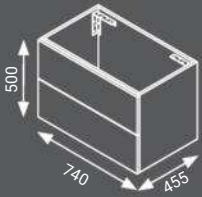
600

Wall Hung



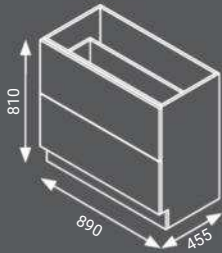
750

Floor Standing



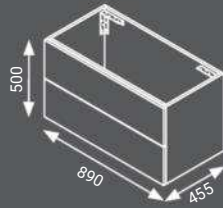
750

Wall Hung



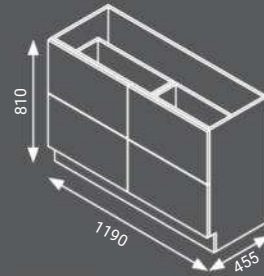
900

Floor Standing



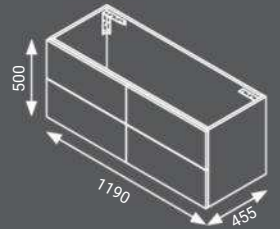
900

Wall Hung



1200

Floor Standing



1200

Wall Hung

BASE DIMENSIONS ONLY, EXCEPT FOR 500 (+ or - 3mm)

SELECT YOUR TOP



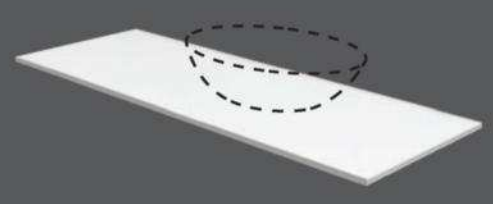
Composite Stone

White stone, 30mm thick
 Available as a single or double basin.



Vitreous China

White Vitreous China, 20mm thick.



Counter Top Stone

Marble stone, 20mm thick.

With its reputation as an expensive, time-consuming and inconvenient reno, it's little wonder many of us put up with a less-than-lovely bathroom for years on end. But there are many cosmetic or minor upgrades that can be done simply and relatively inexpensively which will have a dramatic impact on the look and function of your room.

This ensuite was structurally sound, but featured dated gold fittings, fussy floral tiles, an uninspiring wall colour and ageing amenities. But with a few tins of tile paint, a new shower screen, shower rail and cutting-edge new toilet suite, it now looks modern and sophisticated. Better yet, it required minimal outlay or downtime, with the majority of the revamp involving simple DIY tasks that could easily be knocked over in a weekend or two.

1 GET OUT THE PAINT ROLLER

There's nothing as good as a fresh lick of paint to totally transform the look and feel of your room. And with some clever paints now on the market ready to tackle even the trickiest of surfaces, it's never been easier to DIY a bathroom upgrade.

Walls

The first thing you see when you walk into our ensuite are the walls. Unfortunately for us, they were an insipid pale green. Still, it was an easy fix. We cleaned them thoroughly with sugar soap and rinsed, before applying two coats of a deep teal blue with a roller and paintbrush. The room was instantly lifted.

Towel rail

One of the primary objectives for this bathroom reno was the 'de-golding' of all the fixtures. Step one was to change the floral gold knobs on our vanity to chrome ones, with feature starfish



knobs for the doors. The towel rail was a trickier affair, as the ceramic sides of the towel rail and the toilet holder had been tiled into the walls. One option would have been removing and replacing the wall tiles to attach new chrome fittings, but we were unable to easily source tiles of the right size, so next best thing was to paint the gold towel rail. We applied two coats of White Knight Epoxy Enamel in Aluminium, which gave a brushed nickel finish.

Wall tiles

There's nothing like a floral pink feature tile shot through with gold flecks to scream 'dated'! But redoing the entire ensuite would have meant the inconvenience of demolition, rewaterproofing and retiling. The easy and effective answer? Tile paint. We used White Knight Laminate Paint in White, although you can tint tile paint to any colour you like.

Floor tiles

To update our pink floor tiles, we chose the Rust-Oleum Tile Transformations Coating System. Rust-Oleum tile paint has a textured, stone-like finish suitable for use on both walls and floors. There are around 30 different shades to choose from, but we opted for Graphite, a pale blue-grey colour.

To use, we thoroughly cleaned the floor first and masked up the surrounding area. Then we simply mixed the base coat with the supplied activator and stirred thoroughly. We cut in with a 50mm brush and used the supplied paint roller to apply the coating to the surface - no priming required. It's best to work with a partner for this job. ▶



After

Painting and new fittings turn dated into contemporary.



Before



HOW TO PAINT WALL TILES

PREPARE If replacing your old shower screen, dismantle it and remove shelving and towel rails where possible. Scrub the wall tiles clean with White Knight Tile and Laminate Cleaner and scrape away all traces of silicone from the old shower. Rinse the area thoroughly of cleaning residue and allow to dry. Sand the tiles with 240 grit sandpaper and wipe clean with a cloth.

PRIME To ensure a smooth and lasting finish, apply a coat of White Knight Tile and Laminate Primer. Use a 38mm paintbrush to apply paint to the grout lines and wall edges, then a microfibre foam roller to apply the paint to the tiles in a zigzag fashion. Once the tiles are completely covered in primer, run your roller gently back over the tiles in long up and down strokes for a smooth finish.

PAINT Once the primer has dried, give it a quick sand with 240 grit sandpaper, then wipe clean before applying the first coat of White Knight Laminate Paint using the same technique as the primer. Allow at least six hours to dry, before giving it another light sand with 600 grit sandpaper and applying the second coat of paint, using the same technique.

TIP We chose Laminate Paint as we wanted a satin finish. For a high-gloss finish, use White Knight Tile Paint.



2 REPLACE FIXTURES

The simple act of changing your tapware or fittings can dramatically modernise a tired-looking bathroom. We had already hastily changed our (yes, you guessed it) gold and plastic taps for a Mondella Chrome Resonance Pin Lever Basin Set, but had yet to replace our old showerhead. We splashed out on a rail shower with overhead, a classy, European-look suitable for any modern bathroom, which offers flexibility in its water output mode while reducing water use.



DIY TIP

When choosing a new showerhead, just check that it is suitable for retrofitting and doesn't have to be installed as part of a new build.

3 UPGRADE THE TOILET

Nothing brings down the look of a bathroom faster than a dated or discoloured toilet, and you'll be amazed how a new one can transform your space. This Caroma Luna Cleanflush Wall Faced Toilet Suite looks fantastic with its sleek, modern design, but the best part about it is under the lid! Caroma's innovative new Cleanflush technology features a rimless design that makes for a much more hygienic bowl clean.

If your budget doesn't stretch to a new toilet, a simple, cost-effective alternative is to replace the seat and lid.



4 INSTALL A NEW SHOWER SCREEN

There are so many stylish shower screen options available at a range of pricepoints these days that it's easy to upgrade your shower tastefully and affordably. We chose a sleek pivot shower screen, as it was easy to install DIY and had an adjustable design that allowed us to fit it easily onto our existing tiled hob. It can even be turned upside down to allow for left or right hand entry as your bathroom dictates. ►



After
Out with the gold, in with the new.
This shower screen was a DIY install.

Here's what Wayne & Pauline had to say...

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5 DON'T FORGET THE GRATES!

Perhaps the easiest and cheapest upgrade of all? Updating your floor grates. Ours were once gold but had turned an interesting shade of almost green - and would have stuck out for all the wrong reasons in our sparkling new bathroom.

The answer was a quick and easy replacement with shiny new chrome ones, and the transformation is complete. ♦



TOP PICKS



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Stein Georgia Square 2-sided 900mm Shower Unit, \$999
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Stein 750mm Light Select Wall Hung Handleless Vanity, \$469
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Stein Easy Clean Waste, \$26
bunnings.co.nz



White Knight Tile & Laminate Primer, \$53 for 1L
White Knight White Laminate Paint, \$53 for 1L
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Selleys 750ml White For Life Tile and Grout Cleaner, \$20
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KITCHEN STORAGE BUILDS

Add decorative storage space in the hub of the home with these easy projects

Create a moveable storage unit over the weekend using plywood and give it a contemporary edge by trimming it with aluminium. It's ideal for use as a dining servery.

And if you need a place to display your favourite plates, you can make a slimline five-tiered rack in a day. It can be stood on a sideboard or table and leant against the wall.



Aluminium flat bar attached to the edges using construction adhesive hides the joins for a professional finish.

MOVEABLE TROLLEY

This storage unit comprises nine individual boxes made from 9mm plywood, butt joined with PVA adhesive and a brad nailer using 15mm brads. An outside joining panel of the same plywood thickens the walls, adding strength and stability.

Heavy-duty castors, two swivel and two lockable at the front, keep the trolley in position when it is loaded up, and a pair of galvanised trunk trolley handles installed either side control trolley movement.

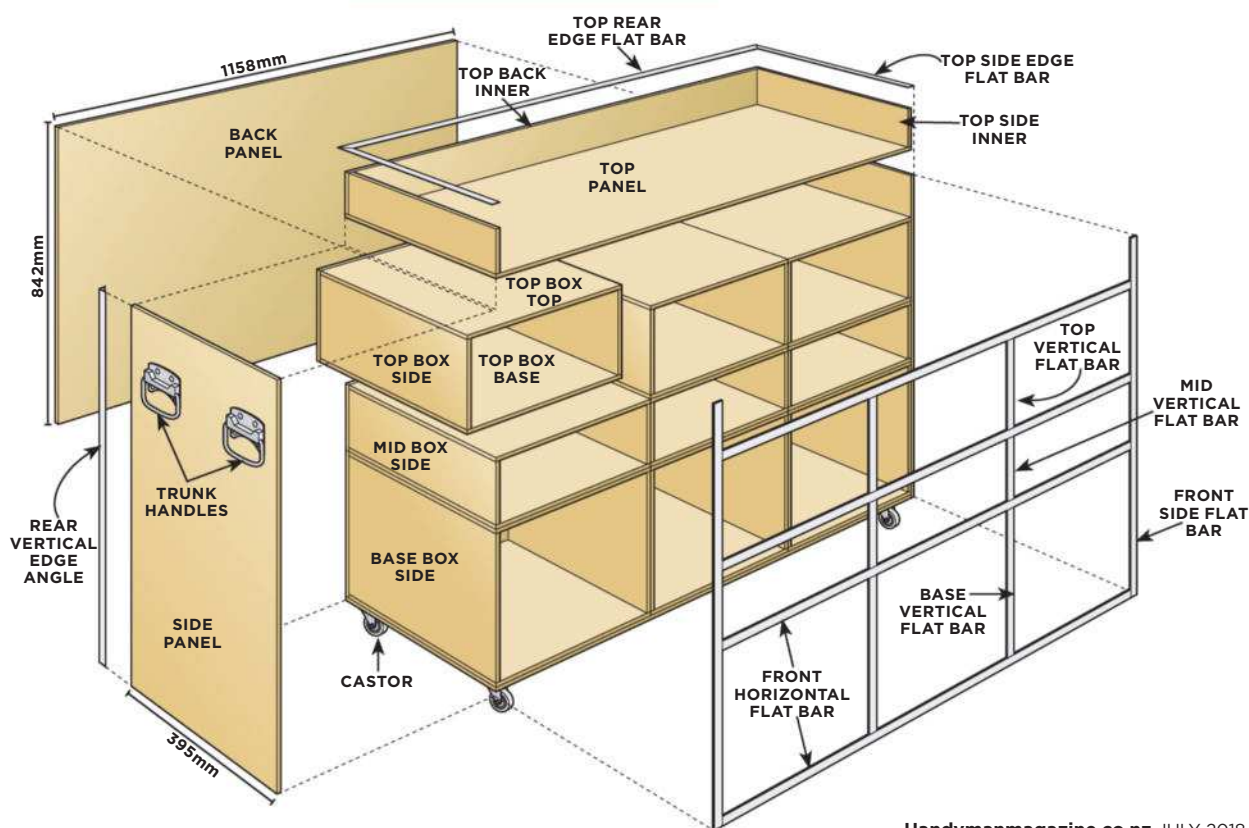
Aluminium flat bar positioned along the joined edges and aluminium angle along the vertical edges contrasts with the plywood and disguises the joints. It can be cut using a mitresaw with a metal cutting blade, or you can use a timber cutting blade lubricated with a spray of WD-40. ▶

WHAT YOU NEED

- Mitresaw, metal cutting blade
- Belt sander
- Brad nailer, 15mm brads
- Clamps
- 9mm plywood
- Aluminium flat bar, angle
- Coloured timber putty
- PVA adhesive
- Construction adhesive
- Shellac finish
- Paintbrush
- Beeswax furniture polish
- Four 75mm heavy-duty castors, two swivel and two lockable
- 2 pairs trunk handles
- Masking tape

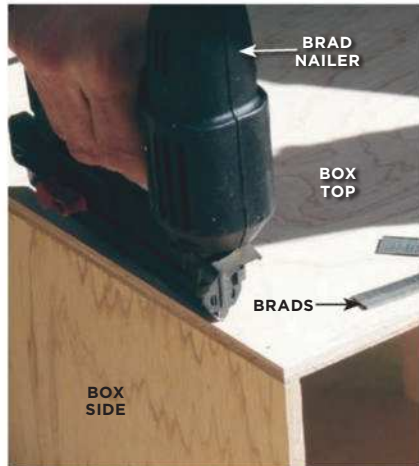
CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE (mm)	No
Plywood		
Box tops and bases	386 x 380 x 9	18
Base box sides	386 x 330 x 9	6
Mid box sides	386 x 140 x 9	6
Top box sides	386 x 200 x 9	6
Base box backs	380 x 348 x 9	3
Mid box backs	380 x 158 x 9	3
Top box backs	380 x 218 x 9	3
Top and base panels	1140 x 395 x 9	2
Side panels	842 x 395 x 9	2
Back panel	1158 x 842 x 9	1
Top back inner	1140 x 100 x 9	1
Top side inners	386 x 100 x 9	2
Aluminium flat bar		
Front sides	842 x 20	2
Front horizontals	1118 x 20	4
Base verticals	330 x 20	2
Mid verticals	140 x 20	2
Top verticals	200 x 20	2
Top rear edge	1158 x 20	1
Top side edges	406 x 20	2
Aluminium angle		
Rear vertical edges	845 x 20 x 20	2



1 2 3

MAKE THE MOVEABLE TROLLEY



1 Assemble the boxes

To make the base, mid and top boxes, position the sides of each box between a top and a base, securing with PVA adhesive and a brad nailer using 15mm brads. Position and secure the base, mid and top box backs to the outside edges of each box.



2 Join the boxes

Begin the assembly by joining the centre column, stacking a base, mid and top box, then applying adhesive between each, clamping and securing with five brads along each joint.

TIP Angle the gun slightly to avoid driving the brads all the way through.



3 Attach the outer panels

Position the base and top panels, securing with adhesive and brads, clamping until dry. Secure the side and then back panels, then secure the top back and top side inner panels.

TIP Drive the brads from the inside into the outer panels.

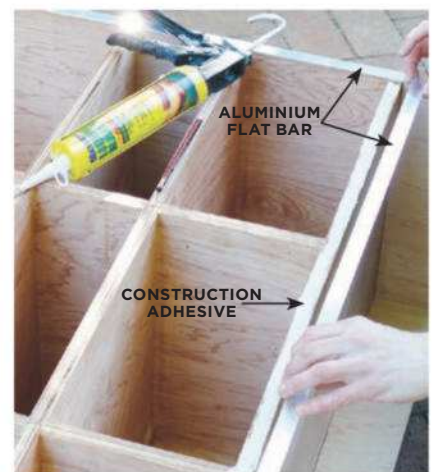
ADD THE FINISH

Apply two coats of shellac to the plywood with a fine natural brush. It dries quickly, so avoid drips or blotches, as there's no time to wipe up errors. Add a protective layer of beeswax furniture polish.



4 Smooth the edges

Cover the brad heads with coloured timber putty, then use a belt sander along the joints to make sure the edges are flush. Attach two trunk handles to each side and secure four 75mm castors underneath the trolley, using lockable castors at the front.



5 Attach the trim

Position the flat bar flush to the top or outside edge, applying construction adhesive to each, starting with the side verticals, then the front horizontals and centre verticals, mitring the corners of the top edge, then adding the rear edge angle. Hold with masking tape until dry.



PLATE RACK

Leftover boards and architrave were used to make this rack to display plates.

The frame and shelves are made from 18mm pine, secured with 8g x 50mm timber screws, and backed with five 180 x 18mm lap-jointed boards. The front is clad with mitred pine finger-jointed architrave. Dowel keeps the plates secure. Backing and trim are secured using 50 x 2.8mm bullet-head nails; an 8mm drill bit was used to make 10mm deep dowel holes.

Grooves were made in the shelves using a router and retaining strips were secured with 15 x 1.2mm panel pins. ▶



Showcase your plates in this rack and keep them close at hand

CUTTING LIST

PART	SIZE (mm)	No
Pine		
Base	1050 x 140 x 18	1
Sides	1216 x 94 x 18	2
3 shelves, top	820 x 94 x 18	4
Dowel	840 x 8	4
Square moulding		
Retaining strips	820 x 8 x 8	4
Architrave		
Sides	1312 x 115 x 28	2
Top	1050 x 115 x 28	1
Lap-jointed pine		
Backing boards	1235 x 180 x 18	5



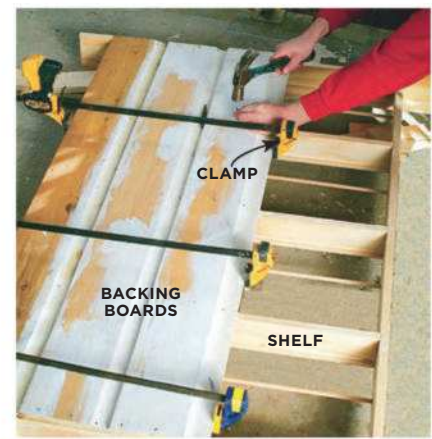
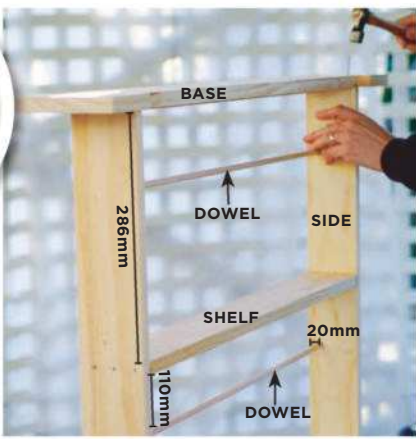
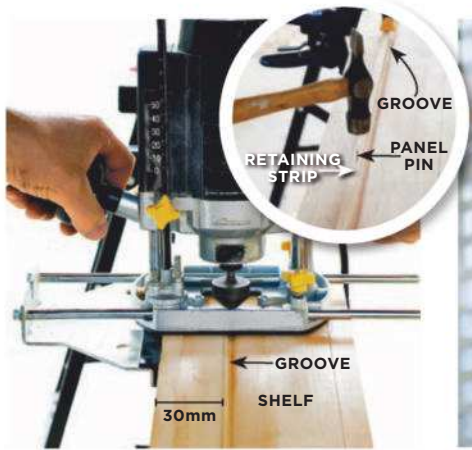
This slimline rack measures just over 1.3m high and a metre wide.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Circular saw
- Router, drill
- 8g x 50mm timber screws
- 50 x 2.8mm bullet-head nails
- 18mm pine
- 5 lap-jointed boards
- Pine finger-jointed architrave
- 8mm dowel
- Square moulding
- 15 x 1.2mm panel pins
- Timber putty
- PVA adhesive
- Nail punch
- Acrylic primer undercoat
- Semi-gloss acrylic paint
- 180, 220 grit sandpaper

1 2 3

MAKE THE PLATE RACK



1 Cut the grooves

Use a router to make a 6mm groove on the shelves 30mm from the front edge, and on the base 60mm from the front and 115mm from the ends. Secure a retaining strip in front of each long groove with panel pins. On the base's back edge, cut 820 x 18mm, centred, to slot in the backing boards.

2 Assemble the frame

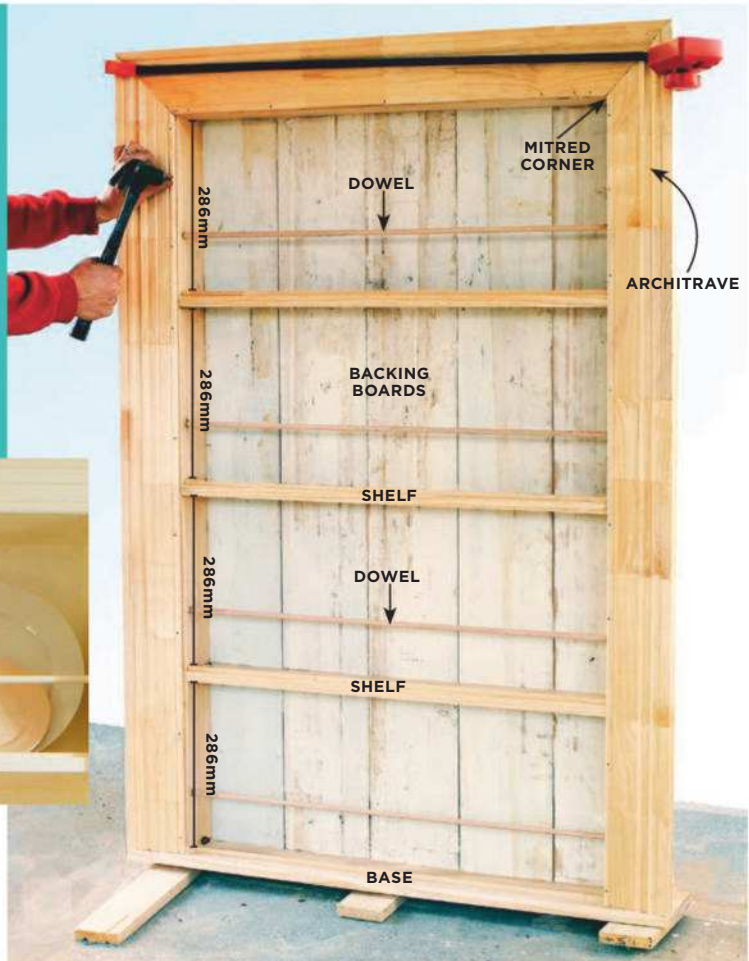
On the sides, mark 286, 590 and 894mm up from the base for the shelves; mark 110mm above each of these and 20mm from the edge for dowel holes. Drill three pilot holes for each shelf joint. Use screws to assemble one side with shelves, top and dowel, then the other side and base.

3 Secure the boards

Lay the assembled shelving frame face down to secure the five backing boards. Position the first board in the centre of the frame, add two more boards, then clamp in place. Drill pilot holes and secure the boards using bullet-head nails. Secure the remaining two boards.

FINISH THE RACK

Mitre the architrave using a circular saw or handsaw, then position it around the front edge, securing with adhesive and nails. Set the nails below the surface using a nail punch and hammer, then fill the holes with timber putty. Sand with 180 grit sandpaper. Apply an acrylic primer undercoat and allow to dry. Sand lightly using 220 grit sandpaper, then apply two coats of semi-gloss acrylic paint and allow to dry. ❖



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WINTER *warmers*

Revive alfresco entertaining during the chilly season with the right outdoor heating

WORDS MARC MCEVOY

A blue-sky winter's day with the sun on your back can be a glorious experience, so it's a shame we let the colder months drive us indoors.

The solution, taken up long ago by cafes and alfresco restaurants, is to install outdoor heating. It allows you to use your outdoor entertainment area and recapture the enjoyment you shared around the barbecue during summer.

The most effective and efficient outdoor heaters emit radiant heat, as opposed to convection appliances, such as oil heaters. Choose the right heater to suit your needs and you can make the most of the great outdoors this winter. ►





Thermofilm 3200W Classic
Electric Outdoor Heatstrip,
\$849. heatstrip.com.au

ELECTRIC HEATERS

Electric radiant heaters are one of the best options for heating outdoor spaces where there is a lot of air movement. They produce even warmth and transfer heat almost instantly, with no time spent waiting for them to warm up.

Run on mains power, these appliances are very effective at heating targeted zones such as a table setting or lounge area, with little heat lost on unused spaces.

They can be freestanding appliances that you can move around, or they can be fixed appliances such as strip heaters, which can be mounted on a wall or on the ceiling of an alfresco area.

Electric heaters mounted overhead provide more coverage than angled mounting, with a 2400W appliance warming about 5sqm.



Electric strip heaters mounted in this outdoor zone make a great room comfortable all year round.



Jumbuck Outdoor
Halogen Heater
2000W, \$99.
bunnings.co.nz



Heatstrip 2200W Outdoor Portable Electric Infrared Heater, \$699. heatstrip.com.au



Electric radiant heaters are more efficient than gas heaters

GAS OR ELECTRIC?

◆ **GAS HEATERS** create almost instant warmth. Appliances that run on LPG cylinders are portable, simple and convenient. Those that connect to mains natural gas via a spigot eliminate fussing about with cylinders when you run out of gas.

They expend a lot of energy heating the air around them through convection, meaning they feel warm when close, but the heat drops off as you move further away.

◆ **ELECTRIC HEATERS** create instant heat with the flick of a switch and are more efficient than gas heaters because they radiate heat directly at you, not just heat the air around you.

They are cheaper to run than natural gas if you want to heat a targeted area, costing about 50 cents an hour. Portable LPG gas heaters cost the most to run at more than \$2 an hour, depending on how high you run the appliance.

GAS HEATERS

Gas heaters come in a range of styles and designs, but the most popular are freestanding portable floor and tabletop appliances. Often called patio heaters, they run on LPG, but fixed installations can be hooked up to mains natural gas.

Made from stainless steel, portable patio heaters can be moved to different locations as they are needed and then stored away during summer. Small appliances can be positioned on tabletops and can heat areas up to 3sqm.

Larger appliances often have a round disc at the top to direct heat downwards. These have a high heat output that can warm more than 10sqm.

For safety reasons, gas heaters must be positioned away from low ceilings and have plenty of air circulating around them. ▶



Fiammetta Stainless Steel Outdoor Patio Heater, \$269. bunnings.co.nz



Fiammetta Outdoor Gas Area Heater, \$249. bunnings.co.nz

FIRE PITS

Open fire creates a wonderful ambience in any outdoor entertainment area. Fire transfers heat energy through radiation, convection and conduction, warming surfaces and the surrounding air.

Your council may have restrictions on installing an outdoor fireplace, especially in bushfire-prone areas. A safer alternative might be a fire pit.

'Fire pits provide a functional, stylish way to warm your outdoor spaces and keep them suitable for entertaining and relaxation alike,' says Matt Leacy, founder of Landart Landscapes.

'You can sit by the fire and chat with friends and family, cook food – and they're great for disposing of branches that may have fallen from your trees.'

'The warmth and light generated by the pit means you can continue to make use of all your beautiful outdoor furniture pieces in the cooler months.'

Fire pits come in a variety of stone and metal designs to suit outdoor spaces, and include tabletop and ground-based versions.

'You could have a built-in fire pit that doubles as a coffee table beyond the cooler months, or just a basic iron or steel bowl. The important thing is to look at your outdoor space and consider what will work best for you in terms of functionality, budget and look,' says Matt.

Wood, briquettes or gas can be used to fuel the fire. For wood burners, care should be taken when children are present and when windy conditions produce flying embers.

Samba Hot Shots BBQ

Fuel/Briquettes,

\$13 for 4kg.

bunnings.co.nz



Machu Cement
Fire Pit, \$399.
bunnings.co.nz



Jumbuck Fire Pit
Brazier Round,
Black, \$99.
bunnings.co.nz



Decofire Huracan Fire Pit,
\$399 (with optional tabletop).
decofireheating.com.au



PICTURE LANDART LANDSCAPES/JASON BUSCH

Nothing brings a family together on a winter's evening quite like an open fire.

Fire pits are generally safer than open fires set in the ground. And don't scar the earth.



Fiammetta Cast Stone Fire Pit, \$269. bunnings.co.nz

FIRED UP

Outdoor fire pit specialists, Glow, share their favourite ways to add ambience and warmth to your outdoor area.

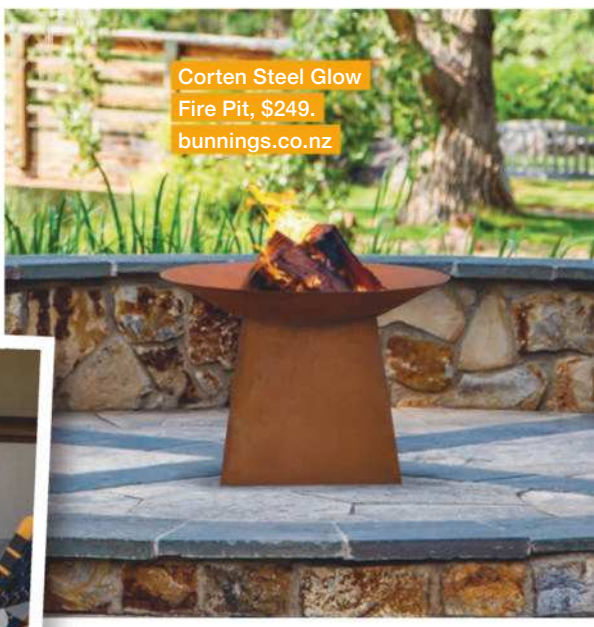
- 1** Burn eucalyptus or fruit tree logs to add a fresh, modern scent to the traditional log fire smell.
- 2** Add some simple home and garden ingredients for extra aroma, such as cinnamon sticks for spicy warmth (ideal for Christmas in July), or dried oranges for a citrus twist.
- 3** Keep mozzies away naturally by burning sage or rosemary in your fire pit, while adding a delicious fragrance to the surrounding area. ▶

DIY TIP

Install bistro blinds in outdoor areas to keep in heat and block out chilly breezes, but ensure there is adequate airflow when using gas or wood burners.



This fire pit doubles as a stylish coffee table during the warmer months.



Corten Steel Glow Fire Pit, \$249. bunnings.co.nz



Chimeneas are great outdoor heating solutions for confined spaces.

CHIMENEAS

Chimeneas are a great alternative to an open fireplace or fire pit. Often made of terracotta or cast iron, a chimenea is a small fireplace shaped like a lightbulb with an open cavity at the

base for burning wood or briquettes and a tall top acting as a chimney.

To get them going, just stack dry kindling on top of scrunched-up paper, as you would with a regular fireplace, then light it. They burn wood effectively, can be moved around and, because they take up little room, they suit small spaces.

Chimeneas are supported by a metal stand, but they get very hot to touch, so it's wise not to use them around children and pets.

Chapala Small
Flamma Chimenea,
\$199. bunnings.co.nz



A woodfired pizza oven can help reduce your household's carbon footprint

PIZZA OVENS

Outdoor pizza ovens make an ideal combination of cooking appliance and heater. Made from clay, stainless steel or stone, pizza ovens are designed to stay hot once fired up.

This creates a cosy ambience, like an open fire, in your entertainment area as you cook pizzas. Even after you finish cooking, the oven can still be used to generate heat.

Woodfired ovens do produce smoke as a result of burning wood, but they are remarkably energy-efficient and operate without using electricity or gas. If you're looking for a way



Pizza ovens serve up warmth as well as crowd-pleasing fare.

to reduce your household's energy consumption and lead a greener lifestyle, a woodfired pizza oven can help reduce your household's carbon footprint. ❖

PICTURE I/STOCK



Heating with Style...

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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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REFINISH YOUR DECK

Keep your deck looking its best all year round with these DIY tips for maintaining tiptop timber

A great place to relax or entertain, a timber deck adds beauty and value to your home at any time of year. But leaving your deck untended and unloved in these colder months won't do it - or you - any good. Exposure to harsh outdoor elements can take its toll and fast-track deterioration.

Luckily, deck maintenance is easy when done properly and regularly. And there's no better time than now to give your deck the care it deserves to last a lifetime. ►



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ASSESS AND REPAIR

The first place to start with a deck renovation is to check the condition of the existing timbers. Inspect the entire structure, looking out for rotten, spongy, split or damaged boards and corroded and loosening fasteners.

Look for any mould or mildew, as this can indicate where moisture has seeped into the timber and may cause structural damage, as well as creating a dangerously slippery surface. This will need to be removed in the cleaning process before treating.

If you can get underneath, check the joists, bearers, ledgers and posts, particularly any in contact with the ground where water can be absorbed and start to rot the timber.

It is important to repair or replace timber at the first sign of damage. This may be a relatively simple job of cutting away the rotten decking board and laying a replacement board. If joists start to show signs of decay, you may be able to simply scrape away the damage and apply timber preservative and filler.

If bearers or posts are decayed, you may have safety issues. Depending on the extent of the damage, sections may need to be replaced. ▶

DIY TIP

When sanding timber, make sure you always sand in the direction of the grain, whether using a belt sander or doing it by hand.



Timber posts and pergolas need treatment too.



A pressure washer may remove flaking stain. But sanding may be required.



Raised fasteners need hammering back into place.

TOP PICKS

Put these products on your shopping list and get the deck reno done properly.



Earl's Wood Hardener, \$40.85 for 250ml. bunnings.co.nz



Stanley Fatmax 8m Tape Measure, \$34.70. stanleytools.co.nz



Ryobi 800W Belt Sander, \$99. ryobi.co.nz



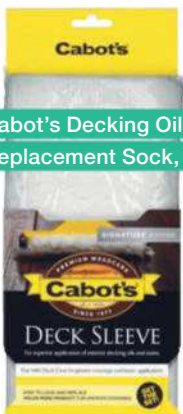
Earl's All Purpose Multifill, \$35.90 for 1kg. bunnings.co.nz



Karcher 1700W K3 High Pressure Cleaner with Home Kit, \$298. karcher.co.nz



Sabco Bulldozer Outdoor Broom Multi Surface 350mm, \$34.90. bunnings.co.nz



Cabot's Decking Oil Applicator Replacement Sock, \$14.25. cabots.co.nz



Cabot's Deck Clean, \$31.50 for 4L. cabots.co.nz

Cabot's Deck Coat Applicator, \$40. cabots.co.nz



Cabot's Kwila Aquadeck, \$72.50 for 5L. cabots.co.nz



Sikkens Cetol BLX-Pro Dark Oak Timber Stain, \$229 for 5L. jacjay.co.nz

PREPARE AND CLEAN

For the deck to absorb its new finishing treatment, it's important to remove all traces of dirt, grime, stains and mould. If you want to remove the previous stain or layer of paint back to the natural wood colour, or if you want to smooth a rough surface, sand it back with a belt or palm sander.

Make sure to check all nails and screws before you do. If the wood has dried out, or is starting to deteriorate, nails may be protruding above the level of the timber, which can tear your sandpaper – or worse, catch the bottom of someone's foot and cause an injury. They should be hammered back level, sunk with a nail punch, or screwed firmly back into place.

If the surface is smooth but only dirty, you can go straight to washing the boards.

To thoroughly clean the surface, first use a pressure washer set to the minimum level. Don't hold it too close to the surface, as this can actually damage the wood by splintering it.

Next, apply a deck cleaner with a stiff-bristled broom. This is an important step. A household detergent won't do, and it may cause problems by reacting with the new finish, causing it to need sanding back again.

Specially formulated deck cleaner contains a type of acid that reacts with the natural oils in wood, and has a bleaching effect. This prepares the surface for its finish. Scrub the timber surface thoroughly, leave for around 20 minutes, then hose it off.

Allow the deck to dry completely before applying any further treatments. How long you need to wait will depend on the temperature and humidity.



1 Wash the deck

Thoroughly wash the surface with a pressure washer set to minimum.



DIY TIP
Grease stains from barbecues may need extra treatment. Rub down with mineral turps and remove residue with a clean cloth.



2 Clean the timber
Scrub the surface using deck cleaner applied with a stiff-bristled broom.



3 Rinse the surface
Hose off the deck cleaner and allow to thoroughly dry.



4 Sand rough areas
Smooth any rough or marked areas and remove dust. ▶



DIY TIP

Be sure to change the positions of pot plants every six months or so. Their weight and moisture can stain or damage timber.



1 Mask the deck

Use painter's tape to cover areas around the edge of the deck that you don't want touched, such as other painted surfaces.



2 Cut in the edges

Cut in, applying the finish to the edges of the deck using a paintbrush. Long even strokes give the best result.



3 Apply the finish

Apply the oil, stain or paint according to manufacturers' instructions. In most cases, a second coat will be needed.

DECIDE WHICH FINISH

Once your timber surface is prepared, decide whether you are going to use deck oil, timber stain or paint.

◆ **OILS** protect timber and prevent weathering. They penetrate into the wood, resisting water damage while minimising UV damage. Oils never flake or peel, are resistant to mould and fungus, and some have anti-slip properties. They enhance the colour and grain of quality hardwood and are the preferred choice for a lot of hardwood decks. They are easy to apply with a lambswool applicator, giving a low sheen and smooth finish. But oils usually require reapplication at least every 12 months, and more often, depending on the level of exposure to direct sun and weather.

◆ **STAINS** enhance the appearance of the timber by deepening the colour to your preferred look and protect the timber. They highlight the natural grain and come in a range of rich colours. A water-based stain is quick and convenient to apply, while an oil-based stain is durable and seals the surface of the wood. Stains also shouldn't fade in direct sunlight, but some stains need to be applied with brush and roller, which usually means it takes more time than applying oil.

◆ **PAINTS** offer limitless colour choice, so you can make a bold statement or complement the colour of your house. However, they don't penetrate into the timber to protect it and need more frequent maintenance. Paint finishes are best for decks that have not been treated with a stain or oil.

HOW TO APPLY THE FINISH

Before applying your finish, the first step is to check the weather. Make sure rain isn't forecast for at least the next 24 hours. Also avoid very hot and windy conditions, and when the temperature drops below 10°C, as this can affect the treatment.

Always apply going in the direction of the grain, and in sections of two or three boards at a time.

WHAT'S IN A DECK?

Decking boards come in softwood or hardwood timber, which offer different strengths, colours, grain, flexibility, durability and prices. The material that your deck is made of will figure in your choice of finish.

SOFTWOOD

Pine timber is a very popular choice for its availability, cost-effectiveness and ease of installation. Made from quick-growing trees, this timber is undoubtedly cheaper than hardwood alternatives, and is treated with preservatives to a high quality to protect it from decay and deterioration. It can have a grooved surface to help with slip resistance, but it won't last as long as hardwood and lacks distinctive grain, making stain or paint finishes the best options, both of which it takes well.

HARDWOOD

More durable, dense and resilient than softwood, hardwood makes excellent decking material. The most commonly used timber is kwila but there are many other choices. An oil finish enhances the natural grain, but hardwoods also take stain well and are easy to strip back. ▶



TREATED PINE is easy to work with and usually cheapest to buy.

KWILA is imported and has a natural red-brown colour.



If your deck absorbs water rather than repels it, it's time to give it a bit of love and care

A little effort in upkeep should have at least a year's rewards.

DECK UPKEEP

To keep your deck in tiptop condition, it's a good idea to implement a regular maintenance schedule.

Set aside one weekend a year to inspect, clean and refinish your deck, but there are small things you can do regularly to extend its life and keep it looking great.

◆ **SWEEP AND CLEAN** Treat your deck as you would an indoor floor. Clean up food spills, sweep away leaves, wash off mud and tree sap, and keep it free of bird poop.

◆ **CLEAR THE PERIMETER** Prune overhanging tree branches, as leaf litter can build up quickly and also holds moisture, which causes staining.

◆ **MAINTAIN FLOW** Some decks may have been constructed to conceal problem areas without addressing the original issues.

Check that the area underneath the deck is clear of any moisture build-up and is well-ventilated.

◆ **MOVE THINGS AROUND** Rearrange pieces of furniture or move your pot plants to avoid staining or discolouration.

FINISH FREQUENCY

How often you need to refinish your deck depends on a number of factors, including the timber used, whether a water- or oil-based finish was applied, how much it gets used, and the climate.

If your deck looks dull and absorbs water rather than repels it, it's time to give it a bit of love and care.



WARM UP IN WINTER

There's no need to retreat inside as the cold rolls in. Warm up your deck with these five clever weatherproofing ideas.

◆ **PROVIDE SHELTER** A fixed pergola or awning gives cover, inviting people to use an outdoor

space. It also traps warmth from an outdoor heat source.

◆ **INVEST IN AN OUTDOOR HEATER OR FIRE PIT** What nicer way to stay warm than around a modern-day camp fire?

◆ **TAKE COOKING OUTSIDE** Alfresco eating isn't just for summer. A barbecue or pizza

oven will warm you and your companions inside and out.

◆ **INSTALL AMBIENT LIGHTING** Low-level light creates an intimate outdoor room.

◆ **CREATE A COSY NOOK** A screen or hedge windbreak can make a comfy corner. Consider deciduous trees for letting in winter light. ♦

PICTURES GERALDINE LANZARONE

GREAT WALLS

A well-constructed retaining wall can be a thing of beauty, and a great way to enhance the functionality of your outdoor area



PICTURES BMS LANDSCAPES



Retaining walls introduce texture and colour and maximise yard space.



If you are looking to maximise the utility and visual appeal of every square metre of your outdoor space, you are probably going to consider installing some form of retaining wall.

In flat, open areas, carefully conceived and properly installed walls lay the groundwork for grand garden designs that are pleasing to the eye and practical for your needs. By delineating particular zones in your yard, you can create visual borders or divisions that suggest their desired purposes – even as simple a concept as separating a garden bed from a lawn area.

Retaining walls alter the perception of space. They can be used to conceal unsightly views, or they can highlight zones for relaxing and entertaining.

On sloping or hilly blocks, retaining walls come into their own by creating tiers where uneven ground may have rendered an area otherwise unusable. These levelled areas can become garden beds, paved entertainment areas or turfed play zones.

Importantly, the construction of a retaining wall allows for the introduction of attractive textures and shapes into your outdoor zone. Materials for their construction can vary from rock, stone, bricks and blocks to treated pine sleepers (planks). Their look and feel can introduce aesthetically pleasing features and turn a drab yard into an alluring landscape that invites exploration and admiration. ►



ABOVE Timber cladding softens the look of this border. BELOW Render introduces colour.

No sensible discussion of retaining walls can overlook the importance of their proper construction - and the perils of poor planning. Just add water, like a sudden downpour of rain, and any wall that is being built to retain something (usually soil), will likely become a dangerous hazard if the first principles of drainage and footings are not followed. Water is the great leveller, and has potentially disastrous consequences if not taken into account.

This is why strict regulations govern their construction, and most councils forbid DIY walls over a certain height without proper engineering certification. Even a solidly constructed wall may breach council regulations if its drainage system diverts water thoughtlessly. Always check with

your council before building any wall, especially one over knee height, and always if it is near a fence or on a steeply sloping area.

But do your homework and a DIY retaining wall can be one of the most satisfying additions a home handyman can put their energy into.

The images presented on these pages from BNS Landscapes of Sydney (bnslandscapes.com.au) showcase the various styles of construction and materials that can be used - and what a professional landscaper can do. On the next page we show you how to turn a patch of rough dirt adjoining a home into a section of lush lawn abutting a courtyard, all with the simple installation of a treated pine sleeper retaining wall. ►



PICTURES BNS LANDSCAPES

INSTALL A RETAINING WALL

Build a low retaining wall using a galvanised post system for pine sleepers



PICTURE STUART SCOTT

The Retain-iT system is designed to hold pine sleepers, which look great after treatment with a stain.



For this garden, a simple system was required for installing a retaining wall. The Retain-iT Post System from Whites was ideal, as the galvanised posts are made to accommodate treated pine sleepers.

Pine capping and a set of wide steps were added and the timber was finished with a stain for a rich look.

Drainage was installed behind the wall, using drainage fabric, 100mm drainage pipe and gravel.

To start, establish the line of the wall, excavating 200mm behind it, then use a laser level to set the finished height of the wall either end, setting out a stringline as a guide.

Calculating the materials

For this wall, the sleepers were stacked three high, and a sleeper thickness of 75mm was chosen for strength and less timber flexibility.

The posts were concreted into the ground at a maximum of 2400mm apart on the sandy site.

Measure the length of the wall, setting the posts to match the sleeper sizes. Multiply the spacings between the posts by the number of vertical sleepers to find how many you need. Here, we used 15 sleepers 2400mm long, plus six each of 1200 and 1800mm for about 16m of wall, with steps set in one panel.

Simple post system

The Retain-iT posts are made from high-tensile galvanised steel and are a simple system for building treated pine walls.

After the posts are concreted into position, the treated pine sleepers are dropped into the 40mm deep recesses, with no fasteners required.

The posts come in three heights for walls, 200, 400 and 600mm high, to fit 50 and 75mm thick sleepers.

DIY TIP

Check with your local council about regulations. Walls over 1.5m high require certification, as do less-tall walls built for heavily loaded situations.

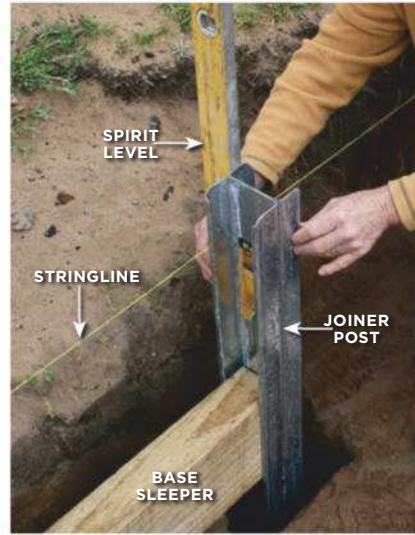
WHAT YOU NEED

- Whites Retain-iT end posts joiner posts, corner posts
- Treated pine sleepers
- Concrete
- Builder's square
- Spirit level
- Stringline
- Drainage fabric
- 100mm drainage pipe
- Pine lengths for capping
- 14g x 75mm bugle-head screws, drill
- Router with roundover bit

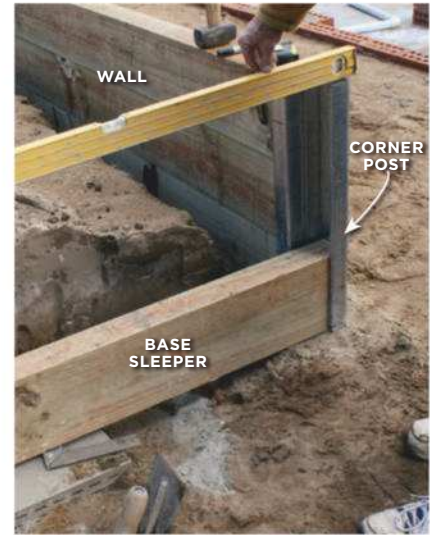
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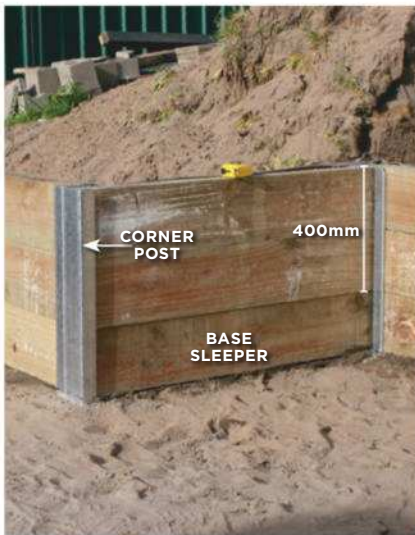
1 Concrete the end posts
Excavate two 550mm deep holes and insert the end posts. Pour in concrete to 600mm from the top. Use a spirit level to check for plumb in both directions, then check the post is the right height.
TIP A 20kg bag of cement, mixed with gravel and sand, fills three holes.



2 Install the joiner posts
Set up a stringline to use as a guide, then position a base sleeper in each end post. Position the joiner posts, then dig 550mm deep holes and concrete them into position using a spirit level to plumb, aligning them with the stringline and leaving to dry.



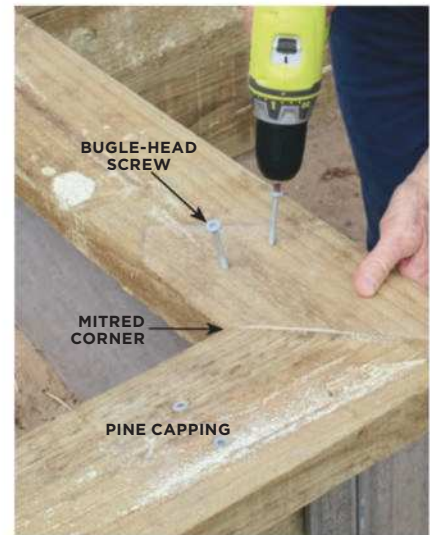
3 Build the corners
Position and concrete the corner posts, using a builder's square to install the sleepers at 90° to the wall.
TIP To build the steps later, a 1200mm deep and 2400mm wide recessed area was added, which incorporated four corner posts.



4 Slot in the sleepers
Position the base sleepers, levelling and packing them to leave exactly enough space above to accommodate the middle and top rows.
TIP Check the height of the top sleeper matches the post so the capping sits flush along the wall.



5 Install the drainage
Position drainage fabric behind the wall and fold it over the sleepers. Install 100mm drainage pipe with clear exits at the ends, then cover with 20mm gravel to 300mm deep, folding the cloth back to separate the drainage, and backfill with soil.



6 Add the capping
Square cut and mitre the capping. Apply construction adhesive to the ends and secure to the sleepers with 14g x 75mm galvanised bugle-head screws. Use a router with a roundover bit to remove splinters and trim the edges. Apply two coats of decking stain. ❖



Find it at Bunnings

HOW TO MAKE A FIREWOOD RACK

Build a handy and stylish copper rack to collect and store firewood in your home

A pile of firewood in your living room can look unsightly, but this simple DIY project shows you how to make a stylish and functional rack to store your wood cuts.

Made from copper pipe and formply, the rack is portable, so you can roll it outside and restack it with wood. You can make the rack any size, but here we show you how to build one in a size that suits home use.

Once you have loaded up this handy rack, it will sparkle in the firelight and help keep your fire burning.

▶ WATCH THE VIDEO
How to make a D.I.Y.
copper firewood rack
at bunnings.co.nz/diy-advice

CUTTING LIST		
PART	SIZE (mm)	No
3/4in copper pipe		
Top and base crossbars	530	3
Uprights	520	4
Top joining lengths	135	4
Long base joining lengths	220	2
Short base joining lengths	25	4
18mm formply		
Base	575 x 310	1

WHAT YOU NEED

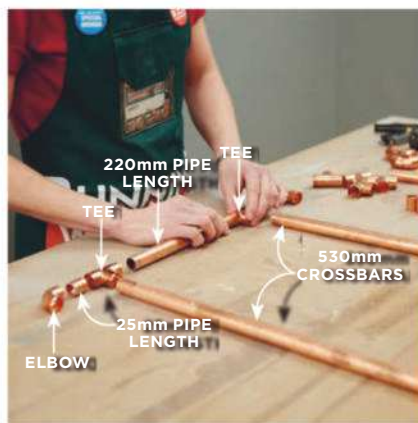
- 1200 x 596 x 18mm formply
- 3/4in x 1500mm copper pipe x 4
- 20mm copper elbows x 8
- 20mm copper capillary tees x 6
- 20mm saddle clips x 4
- 55mm castors x 4
- 6-8g x 15mm timber screws x 8
- 10g x 35mm timber screws x 16
- 20mm copper pipe cutter
- Combination square
- Circular saw
- Cordless drill and 3mm bit
- Impact driver and Phillips bit
- Crimping tool or epoxy adhesive
- Random orbital sander and 120 grit paper disc
- Straightedge clamp
- Dust mask and earmuffs
- Safety glasses and work gloves
- Measuring tape and pencil
- Metal cleaner and rags

1 2 3



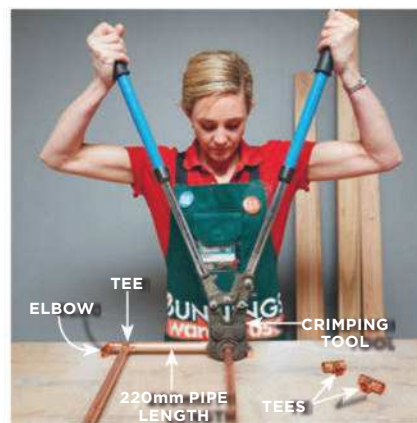
1 Cut copper pipes

Follow the cutting list to measure, mark and cut the copper pipe lengths for the rack frame. Use the first cut length as a template for multiple cuts for the top and base lengths, crossbars and uprights. When marking, use a square to ensure the ends are flush. Use a pipe cutter to get clean cuts without burrs.



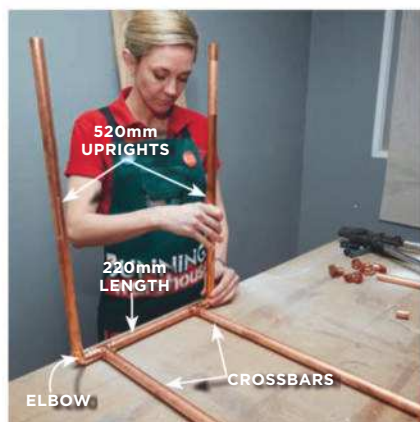
2 Lay out base frame

Lay out the framework for the base so you can join it all together. Start by attaching a tee to a 220mm pipe length. Add a 25mm piece to the tee, then attach an elbow to make a short end. Attach a 530mm piece to each tee to make the two base crossbars. Repeat this at the other end to complete the base.



3 Secure base frame

Use the crimping tool, or an epoxy adhesive, to join the pipes for the base frame. Before crimping them, make sure that the elbows on the ends are facing downwards on the workbench. Place the crimping tool over each joint and squeeze together the arms of the tool to seal the pipes. Turn the base face up.



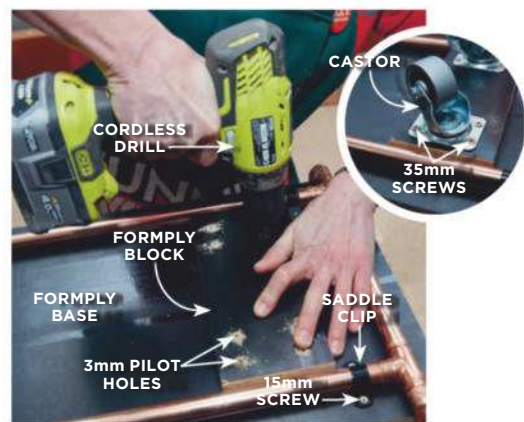
4 Attach the frame pieces

Crimp the four 520mm uprights to the elbows on the base. Attach an elbow, facing parallel to the base, to the top of each upright. Attach a 135mm joining length to the elbow, a tee to hold the top crossbar, and another 135mm length to the other upright elbow. Repeat for the other end. Attach the top crossbar to the tees and crimp the joints. Polish the pipe frame with metal cleaner and a rag.



5 Make the formly base

Measure and cut the base to fit the rack. Here it is 575 x 310mm. Use the straightedge clamp and the circular saw to cut the base. Use the sander to sand the painted formly edges with 120 grit paper. Use the formly offcuts to make two 210 x 95 x 19mm blocks. Position them, with the castors, at both ends of the base inside the crossbars, so the castors will have room to swivel.



6 Complete the base

Attach the formly base to the frame with saddle clips and 15mm screws. Mark where the screw holes will be on the formly blocks for the four castors. Predrill four holes for each castor with a 3mm bit through the ply and into the base. Use an impact driver to secure the castors to the blocks and base with 35mm screws. Give the copper a final polish with metal cleaner and a rag. ❖

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DRAINBRAINS

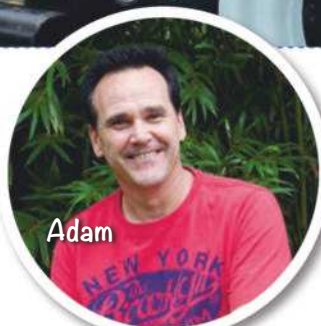
Poor drainage can be a soggy nuisance. Or worse, the cause of serious structural problems in the home or garden. But with the right plan, drainage headaches can be an easy DIY fix

WORDS AND PICTURES ADAM WOODHAMS

Drainage – or, more correctly, a lack of drainage – can cause major problems around the home and garden. You may end up with temporary flooding during heavy downpours, or have perpetually boggy spots in

your yard. The good news is that in many cases the fixes are quite straightforward.

Each situation will usually require a different solution, but the first step is to work out the cause of your problem. ►



Adam

EXPERT SECRETS

If you suspect that drainage problems are causing cracks in brickwork or concrete, or contributing to the subsidence of structures, paths or driveways, call in the experts for advice before undertaking any work.

INCOMING WATER

Obviously, any drainage problem is caused by water arriving at a given point. But your solution might involve different approaches.

Perhaps the answer is to install drainage in your problem area. Or it may mean stopping some of the water from arriving there in the first place.

Take a driveway that slopes down towards your home, as an example. The solution might be to install a drain at your wet point and a drain at the top to prevent water flowing in from the road.

This is where your detective work will pay off. You may need to slip on the gumboots and raincoat and investigate during heavy rain, as the source may not be as obvious as you think.

COLLECTED WATER

If water starts collecting because it can't escape, you have a drainage problem. It could be that your situation

is simply caused by run-off from another area, and the water has nowhere to go. This requires the most straightforward solution – a simple drain to divert the water.

DRAINAGE TYPES

Once you have determined the cause of your problem, you can plan your solution. Before you start digging, however, you'll need to understand the different types of drainage and their uses. There are two main drainage groups.

Surface drainage is the conspicuous type of drain system that you'll see running across driveways, along the edge of paved areas or in courtyards. Basically, a channel allows water to flow into a buried drainage pit or pipe.

It is usually covered by a grate so it's not a trip hazard. The underground section will then be connected to a stormwater pipe to carry away the

water. This system is primarily used when excess surface water is the issue.

Sub-surface drainage systems are buried out of sight. These will divert water as it soaks through the soil from above or as the water level within the soil rises.

The most common type of sub-surface drainage usually involves installing corrugated drainage pipe (such as Marley Drainflo) behind retaining walls.

In most situations these will be connected to a suitable stormwater drainage system. In some cases, however, they may be output into a large garden area where the water can be dispersed without creating any further problems.

This system is used primarily where waterlogging needs to be avoided, to fix areas that are waterlogged, or where accumulation of water needs to be avoided, such as behind a wall.

DIY TIP

Never run a drain so that it flows into a neighbour's property. You have a responsibility to deal with stormwater within your block.



INSTALL A SURFACE DRAIN

This area beside a pathway pooled with water after rain. It's an ideal spot for a simple surface drain.

As the area was small and the water was more of a nuisance than a major issue, we installed a shallow or low-profile drainage channel, as you can see in the inset photo.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Drainage channel modules
- Pre-mixed sand and cement, or concrete
- Unslotted drainage pipe of a suitable diameter for pick-up pipe
- Pipe connectors as required



1 2 3



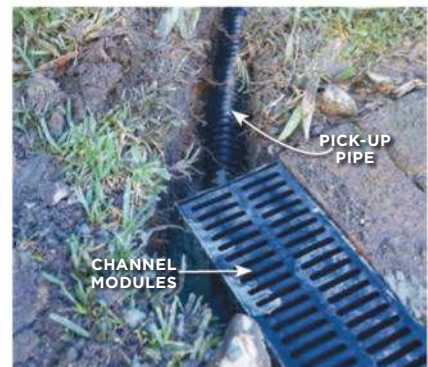
1 Excavate the drain

Dig out a channel the required length of the drain. The trench should be about 50% wider and 25% deeper than the drainage channel module to allow for the laying of concrete. A trenching shovel will make this task easier, but a spade will handle the job.



2 Lay the base

Mix concrete or a bagged sand and cement mix (not quickset products) and ladle this into the base and up the side of the trench. Cap the end of the channel module if needed and place in the trench into the wet concrete. Use a level to check it falls towards the output end.



3 Connect to outlet

At the output end of the drain, dig a trench for the pick-up pipe, ensuring there is adequate fall. This pipe will take water away to a point where you can connect to the stormwater system, or on to another suitable location. Connect the pipes and cover with soil. ►

INSTALL A SUB-SURFACE DRAIN

An area at the bottom of a rock terrace received a lot of run-off from a paved area above. The quick and easy fix was to install high-volume trench liner or a half barrel drain. We used trench liner.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Trench liner of a size to suit your needs and end caps
- Drainage fabric
- Drainage gravel
- Output pipe (we used rigid PVC pipe, but you can use unslotted drainage pipe)
- Optional: decorative gravel (we used washed 20mm river pebbles)
- Optional: 100mm treated pine timber garden edging

1 2 3



1 Excavate the area

Dig a hole in the problem area and a trench for the output pipe. The main hole should be at least 100mm deeper than the height of your trench liner. Line the bottom with drainage fabric, add a layer of drainage gravel about 40mm thick, then position the trench liner with its end caps fitted.



2 Lay the pipe

Position the output pipe, ensuring that it has adequate fall to take the water away. Create a hole in the trench liner end cap and connect the pipe. Cover trench liner with drainage fabric and lap this up the trench sides before covering with drainage gravel. Bring the drainage gravel to soil level.



3 Cover the drain

To add a finished look to our drain (optional), we used treated pine timber edging to create a box frame. The drainage gravel was then covered with a layer of drainage fabric and then the box frame was filled to the top with decorative river pebbles.

PIPE LOWDOWN

Marley Drainflo corrugated drainage pipe is a cost-effective and easy way to add drainage. The corrugated surface is perforated to allow water to enter. These corrugations serve multiple purposes.

- They allow the pipe to be very flexible without kinking.
- They increase the strength of the pipe so it won't crush under normal loads.
- They create natural agitation in the flowing water. This prevents silt from settling in the pipe, which may otherwise clog it.

GO WITH THE FLOW

Marley Drainflo corrugated drainage pipe is being installed to move water away from a sleeper retaining frame. As it won't be in contact with soil, drainage fabric isn't essential.



RETAINING A WALL

A wall in a landscape can quickly become a dam. Most of the time it is holding back soil to prevent it going downhill, but when it rains it also holds back water. Some of this water may drain out underneath it or through weep holes or cracks, but first it will saturate the soil, doubling the soil's weight.

This places huge levels of stress on your wall and its footings, and it soaks the wall components for extended periods. This can lead to rot in a timber wall and accelerate the corrosion of metal components.

In short, good drainage is key to preventing the collapse of any retaining wall. The good news: it is a straightforward task to add drainage behind a retaining wall.

See the cross-section diagram on the right. It depicts a retaining wall constructed of sleepers, set in concrete to a reasonable depth.

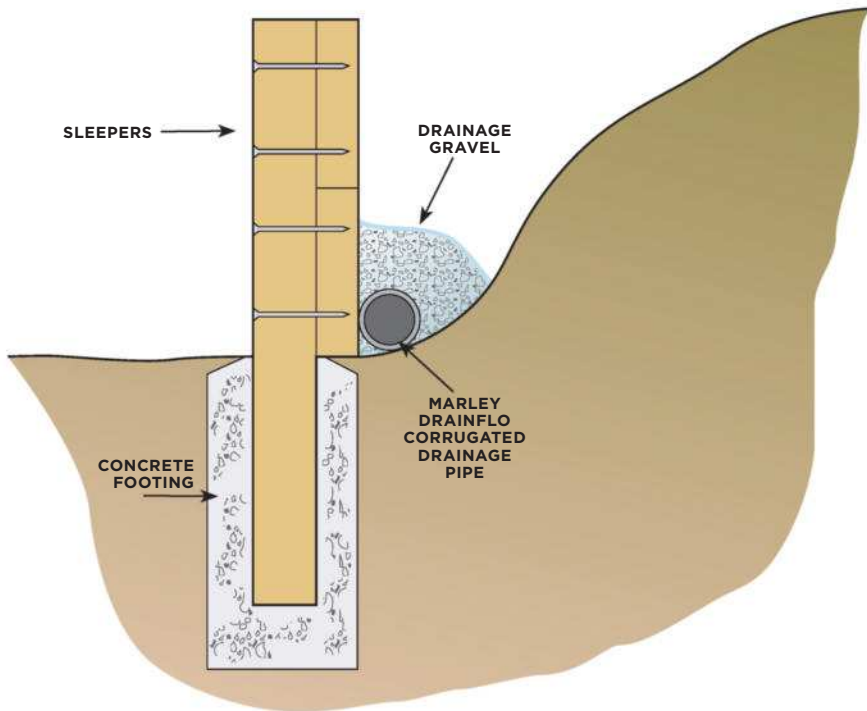
But it's still going to require the diversion of water so that pressure doesn't build up behind it and weaken it. Here's how to construct an effective drainage system behind it.

- ◆ **ADD A LAYER** of drainage gravel, about 20mm deep, to the back of the base of the wall.
- ◆ **LAY** Marley Drainflo corrugated drainage pipe along the length of the wall and direct the output appropriately. The pipe should have a degree of fall, but the gravel bed itself can provide this, so adjust as needed.
- ◆ **COVER PIPE** with at least 50mm of drainage gravel and then lay drainage fabric over this before backfilling with soil. The water will then be diverted around the wall.

PREVENTION IS BETTER

Sometimes drainage may be added to avoid future problems. An example of this is a drainage pan underneath a deck that is close to the ground.

A drainage pan (see next page) will prevent the decking materials from contact with the soil and ensure water can run away when heavy rains occur. ▶



DIY TIP

Only connect drains to an appropriate stormwater outlet that is capable of handling a downpour, never to a sewer.

BUILD A DRAINAGE PAN

1 2 3

This sub-deck drainage pan was installed under a low deck beside a pool.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Excavating and levelling tools (we rented a skid-steer mini excavator for a day)
- Large roll of drainage fabric
- Bulk quantity of drainage gravel from a landscape supplier

THE PITS

Drainage pits can either be used as a surface collection point or as a junction box for drains to act as silt-traps. In the latter case, incoming and outwards drains are connected reasonably high up the pit wall. As water flows through the pit, sediment will drop into the bottom. They are fitted with a top grate and should be cleaned out regularly.

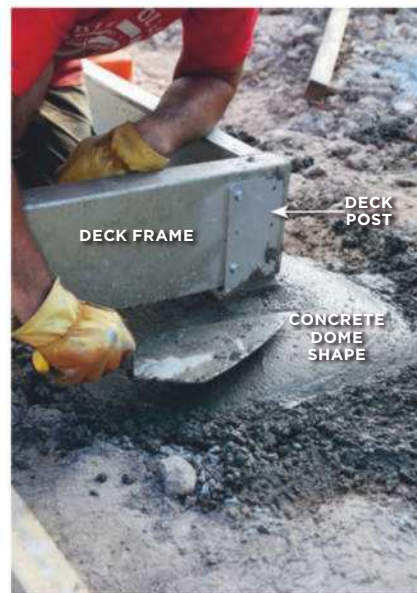
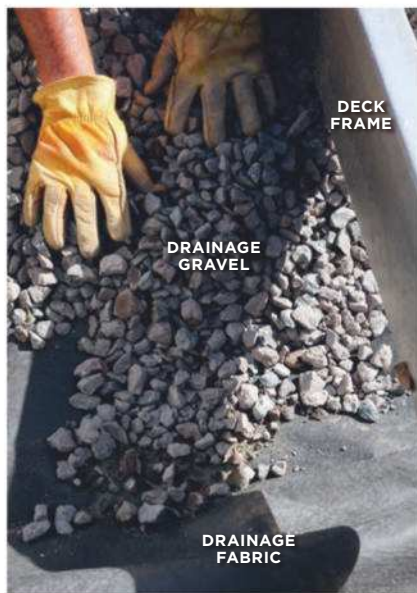


1 Prepare the ground

Clear the area for the sub-deck drainage. Profile the soil so that it has a fall in the desired direction. Dig post holes and secure deck posts with concrete.

2 Lay the gravel

Lay drainage fabric over the area and then distribute drainage gravel over the fabric. It should be to a depth of at least 40mm.



3 Buffer the frame

Once the frame is in place, ensure the gravel is evenly spread, covering all areas of drainage fabric. Having the frame in place makes it easier to check clearances. You can now lay your deck. ♦

TIP When adding the concrete to post heads, always shape the concrete to a domed top so that water cannot pool against the supporting posts.

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The garden features a bench seat near the pool and fireplace, but two single seaters hidden away behind mounds of greenery provide a more private space.

BEST IN SHOW

For serious garden inspiration, go no further than the recent Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show

WORDS AND PICTURES
ADAM WOODHAM

Every autumn in the grounds of Melbourne's historic Carlton Gardens, Australia's best and brightest garden designers set out to wow the world. Their gardens may take years to plan and conceive but are built, amazingly, in just a week. They are then on display for only five days before being broken down again.

The logistics of these constructions are astounding - but it's the gardens themselves that are the showstoppers. It's hard to believe that they haven't been there for years, such is the quality and feeling of permanence. They are judged, too, potentially receiving awards that carry great cachet for the winners.

Here's a tour of this year's best.



There is nothing fussy or complicated about the plantings. Many of the plants are in fact old-fashioned favourites and superbly layered with distinct bands of texture and colour.



Low-growing dichondra provide a belt of soft texture between granite crazy paving and recycled brick steppers.




 AND THE WINNER IS...

The aptly named Australian Case Study Garden, designed by Eckersley Garden Architecture, swept the awards pool, including the Award of Excellence for Best in Show.

Contemporary in design, it still pays homage to many classic Aussie garden elements with the exposed sandstock bricks around the outdoor fireplace-come-barbecue, galvanised steel sheeting around the pond, and mixed materials and textures hinting at found and re-used materials.

It also features a classic clothes hoist, a gum tree or two and a patch of lawn for a game of cricket.



The pond doubles as a natural plunge pool. It provides a perfect mirror of its surrounds, including a classic esky. ▶




WHITE NOISE

You can see why this garden is called Harmony. Beautiful, natural and earthy hues are the order of the day from this design by Meg Geary and Ben Harris (and sponsored by Aquascape).

Even though it won a Bronze Show Garden Award, it was probably my personal favourite – a garden that draws you in and invites you to lay on the lawn with your feet dangling in the gurgling creek, as the beautiful white noise created by the waterfall cascade washes over you.

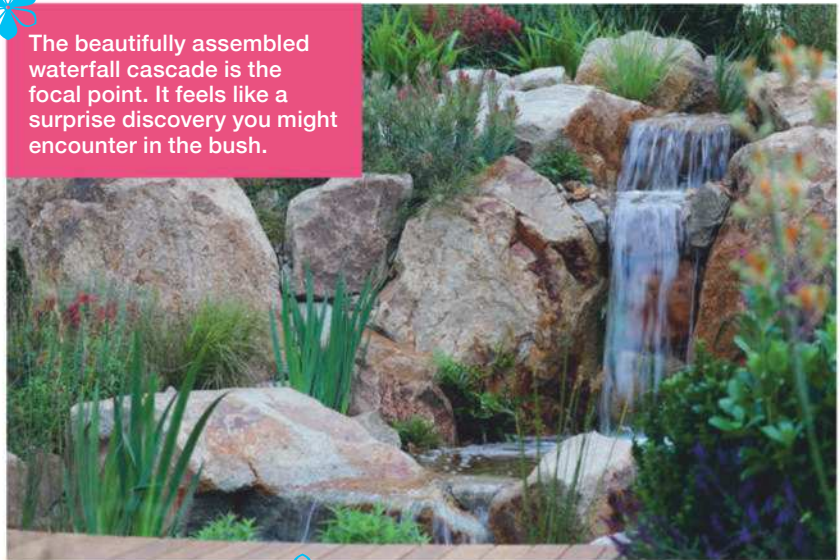
This garden is naturalistic escapism at its most sublime. Best of all, it can be achieved in even a small area.



Timber boardwalks wind their way through the garden, with a delicately arched bridge over the creek.



The beautifully assembled waterfall cascade is the focal point. It feels like a surprise discovery you might encounter in the bush.



The choice of plants used throughout the garden is superb. There are loads of classic Australian natives such as kangaroo paws, but these are mixed with splashes of cottage garden colour from plants such as salvias, hydrangeas and hostas.



TIME OUT

With its traditional Asian colours, textures and inclusions, it comes as little surprise to find that this striking garden, called Inspired By Time, was designed by Chinese company Orisis.

Despite the strong traditional themes, the garden blends many contemporary materials and elements, such as the cantilevered pergola. The extensive use of water is also a feature.

The landscape creates an awesome sense of place, clearly impressing the judges who gave it a Gold Show Garden award, and the viewers who gave it the People's Choice Award.



Water is a major element in the garden both visually and audibly. The source of the interconnected water features is the multi-cascade and backlit water wall. The rusty hues of the water wall are then repeated in other features such as the modern take on a traditional moon gate.



Traditional elements are mixed superbly with contemporary style and materials. The bold combinations of colourful plants add serious drama and impact. ▶



 **HEALTHY HABITAT**



The domed pergola provides dappled shade for the oversized hammock while the living space is beautifully embraced by the wildlife-friendly native gardens.

This glorious sustainable Living Garden, as it was called by Stem Landscape Architecture & Design, was conceived as a habitat for humans *and* animals.

A mixture of native plants ranging from ground covers to trees, and materials and zones from gravel to waterways, ensure that everything from birds to amphibians can find a haven.

People are well catered for, too: the outdoor room drew lots of positive comments from viewers and earned the design a Silver Show Garden Award.



BALANCING TRICKS

Blending starkly contrasting design styles can be risky but worked wonderfully in the hands of Landscape Design Group and RnR Outdoor Living, who created Finding Your Balance. The overarching theme was Asian, with pools, a gentle water cascade, ancient-looking materials and Japanese maples.

The large living space is a dramatic contrast with its angular lines, yet the use of both traditional and connecting colours pulls it together. Visitors had to cross over a reflecting pool, creating a distinct feeling of departing one space for another.



ABOVE The seating space is next to a shallow pond, which is surrounded by a walled garden.
LEFT The minimalist water feature pours a perfect, soothing cascade.
BELOW The combination of weathered features with natural and faux finishes creates an aged yet contemporary feel. ❖





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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large clump of dark, rich soil. A single earthworm is visible, curled within the soil. The person is wearing a green, textured sweater. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor garden setting.

WORM MAGIC

It's time to recognise the wonders of worms

WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Earthworms are essential for the health of your garden. As they burrow into the soil they break down root mats and open up tunnels for oxygen and water to penetrate. The roots of plants take advantage of this wriggle room, while the increased air supply also makes it possible

for bacteria, fungi, viruses, insects and microorganisms to survive. The worms' tunnels are also coated with a nitrate-rich mucus secreted from the surface of their bodies, which is a rich source of nutrition for your prized plantings. It's win-win, but the benefits don't stop there. ►

Earthworms eat the equivalent of their own body weight each day and produce the same amount of vermicast, called castings. These castings are even richer in minerals than the earth the worms ingest, and act as fabulous fertiliser. The worms' deposits are our rewards, boosting the nutritional value of the soil.

As organic gardeners know, soil without earthworms isn't alive. It holds less moisture and requires constant applications of fertiliser to maintain productivity. That's why they refer to

earthworms as your garden's heroes.

But worm magic isn't restricted to the underground varieties of these amazing creatures. Compost worms, different to earthworms, eat fresh organic materials and live close to the surface. Housed in a worm farm, they can devour the organic leftovers from your kitchen while producing the best-quality fertiliser for recycling in your garden. Win win win.

Worm farms are ideal for city living, offering a real alternative to traditional composting.

The secret to a bountiful garden lies just below the surface.



Nurture the soil

A well-mulched garden will usually support a host of worms, but you can make their home more comfortable.

◆ GARDEN ORGANICALLY

Earthworms don't like chemicals.

◆ **CHECK YOUR pH** Worms prefer a soil pH between 5.5 and 8.5, with 6.5 being the most suitable (7 is neutral).

◆ IMPROVE SOIL DRAINAGE

Worms don't like badly drained clay soil, so add some gypsum and lots of organic matter to help drainage.

◆ **FEED REGULARLY** Worms won't live in dry sandy soil, so it's essential to regularly build up these types of garden beds with lots of organic matter.

Feed your earthworms

If your garden is lacking in earthworms, it simply means that you're not providing them with enough food.



Feeding worms is as simple as adding organic matter to your soil

Feeding encourages them to multiply. You don't have to be a master chef, because feeding worms is as simple as adding organic matter such as manure, leaf mould, organic mulches and compost regularly to your soil. The result is twofold: organic matter not only keeps these workhorses happy, it also conditions your soil as it breaks down.

When you harvest flowers or vegies, don't uproot them. Just cut them off at ground level and leave the roots to decay. The worms will do the rest. ►





Earthworm facts

- ◆ There are about 6000 species of earthworms. About 1000 are native to Australia and 171 species native to New Zealand.
- ◆ Worms don't have lungs - they breathe through their skin.
- ◆ A worm's skin exudes a lubricating fluid that helps with burrowing and keeps them moist.
- ◆ Earthworms are hermaphrodite (male and female), producing both eggs and sperm. But it takes two earthworms to reproduce.
- ◆ Baby worms emerge from eggs and reach full size in about a year.
- ◆ Worms are able to repair their bodies. If a worm loses its head end in a mishap, for instance, it can regenerate.



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START A WORM FARM

If you don't have room for traditional composting in your garden, worm farms offer a great alternative. You'll also be doing the environment a favour, as you'll reduce waste going to landfill.

Compost worms are the ultimate recyclers. They transform your organic kitchen waste into rich fertiliser for your plants.

Compost worms devour organic waste and turn it into liquid fertiliser and castings. Both can be used on your garden and on your pot plants.

Simply add your vegetable scraps to the worm farm bins and let the compost worms do all the work. They produce a rich, black concentrate oozing with nutrients.

You can make your own worm farm, but tidy units can be bought that are easy to assemble.



The Worm Cafe is a simple design for small spaces.



Add a soaked coir brick, your packet of worms and fresh vegie scraps, and hey presto!



What to feed them

- ◆ **DO** feed them coffee grounds, tea leaves, crushed eggshells, fruit (except citrus), cooked grains, bread, pasta, chopped fresh and cooked vegetable scraps, shredded egg cartons, cardboard (uncoated) and newspaper.
- ◆ **DO** chop up their food as small as possible so the worms can eat it faster.
- ◆ **DON'T** feed them citrus, onions, garlic, meat, cheese, oil, fish, bones or too much dairy.



Keep compost worms happy

Compost worms will thrive if given the right food and conditions.

- ◆ **PLACE** the bin in a cool area away from direct sunlight.
- ◆ **KEEP** the contents of the bin moist, but don't overwater.
- ◆ **MIX IN** some dry shredded newspaper to help dry it out. If lots of worms are hanging out on the sides or lid of the bin, its contents are too soggy.



Did you know?

Unlike earthworms, compost worms don't live deep in the soil but thrive in the surface litter. Only when it's really hot or cold do they burrow deeper down and form a ball, covering themselves with slime to protect themselves from drying out.

Reap the rewards

After about two months, the rich castings will be building up and worm juice will accumulate.

Mix the worm juice with nine parts of water and use to water pot plants, flowers and vegetables.

Carefully remove the castings and dig into moist soil or add to potting mix.

Make a compost 'tea' by stirring a trowel of castings into a full watering can. Use it on your vegetables or pot plants. It's perfect nutrition.

TIP You can bottle your excess juice and give it away as a present with instructions on how to use it. ❖



PICTURES (MAIN) ISTOCK (BOTTOM) CHERYL MADDOCKS



220L Tumbler
\$199.00

Pictured

150L Compost
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Compost Cage
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150L Compost



220L Tumbler



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TOTAL
\$1472
IN PRIZES

a compost tumbler or worm farm

Handyman is giving away 4 Compost Tumbler prize packs and 5 Tumbleweed Worm Cafe prize packs to 9 LUCKY READERS

4
TO WIN



COMPOST TUMBLER PACKS

The no-mess, no-fuss 200L **Compost Tumbler**, \$199, is made from 100% recycled plastic and features a galvanised steel frame with stainless steel breaker bar. Measuring 117 x 85 x 65cm, it is vermin proof and composts organic waste fast.

5
TO WIN



WORM CAFE PACKS

Designed for both indoor and outdoor use, the three-tier **Worm Cafe**, \$99, with its sleek new design and easy to use, no-mess features, is a clever way to recycle organic waste into rich worm tea for your garden.



ENTER AT HANDYMANMAGAZINE.CO.NZ/TUMBLEWEED

BY 25 JULY 2018

Get all you need to start up your own worm farm or compost organic waste fast by entering our competition to win one of four Tumbleweed Compost Tumbler prize packs, worth \$213 each or one of five Tumbleweed Worm Cafe prize packs, worth \$124 each.

Each Tumbleweed Compost Tumbler prize pack contains a 200L Compost Tumbler and Worm Farm & Compost Conditioner.

Each Tumbleweed Worm Cafe prize pack contains a Worm Cafe, Worm Farm Bedding Block, Worm Blanket and Worm Farm & Compost Conditioner. (Worms are not included, but are available for purchase off the shelf at Bunnings in New Zealand).

For your chance to win, visit the website handymanmagazine.co.nz/tumbleweed and come up with a fun slogan in 10 words or less about composting or worm farming.

Entries close 25 July 2018. Winners will be notified and announced on our website, handymanmagazine.co.nz. For the full terms and conditions, visit the website.



Made from 100% natural coconut fibre, this **Worm Farm Bedding Block**, \$8.95*, will expand up to 10 times its original size in water. It contains no nasty chemicals or salts, and creates the ideal bedding to start your own worm farm.



By creating the dark, moist, aerated environment in which compost worms thrive, the **Worm Blanket Rectangle**, \$10.90, increases activity in your farm. It is thicker than a hessian bag, made from breathable 100% natural fibres and comes with a convenient handle.



The **Worm Farm & Compost Conditioner**, \$14.90, helps neutralise acidity and balance pH levels so that worms can digest larger amounts of food waste faster.

Made from a specially selected blend of natural minerals, it helps soil bacteria preserve nutrients and increases their availability for plants. It also helps to reduce odours and pest infestations. ❖

PICTURES (TOP, BOTTOM LEFT) iSTOCK * THIS PRODUCT COMES WITH THE WORM CAFE, BUT IS ALSO AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE SEPARATELY



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COOL CITRUS

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WORDS CHERYL MADDOCKS

Thank goodness for citrus. Not only high in vitamin C and ready in winter when colds and flu are rife, citrus are easy to grow. No wonder they are the most popular homegrown fruit: all citrus trees have beautiful,

glossy foliage and aromatic flowers, followed by tasty fruit. They're the perfect size for growing in today's shrinking gardens and also perform well in pots. Choose from lemon, lime, mandarin, orange and grapefruit. ►



Citrus trees, like this orange, provide a rich bounty and look great. BELOW RIGHT Planted in pots, lemon trees are ideal in small spaces.

How to grow

♦ **POSITION** All citrus like a sunny location sheltered from wind. The majority prefer a frost-free climate and free-draining soil is essential. Before planting, loosen the ground and dig copious amounts of compost or cow manure into the soil.

♦ **PLANT** Water the potted tree and allow it to drain. Dig the planting hole twice as wide as the pot and position the tree so that the soil level is the same as it was in the pot. Backfill the hole and water in with Seasol, to help prevent transplant shock.

♦ **WATER** Newly planted trees need a thorough watering twice a week for six weeks until they are established. Once they have safely taken hold, water the trees well every week, especially while the fruit is ripening.

♦ **MULCH** Citrus have shallow root systems (a reason why they suit potting). A mulch of lucerne hay or pea straw will keep the soil around them moist and prevent weeds growing and competing for nutrients. Leave at least a hand's span clear around the trunk to prevent collar rot.

♦ **FEED** Citrus are heavy feeders and need a complete citrus food, cow manure or blood and bone applied under the mulch in early spring, early summer and again in early autumn. Always remember to water before and after applying fertiliser.

The roots of citrus trees spread to the outer perimeter of the branches, so apply water and fertiliser this distance away from the trunk. Do not feed newly planted trees for at least six weeks or until new growth reveals that the roots have become established.

HOW TO POT



1 HALF FILL the pot with a premium potting mix for citrus. Carefully remove the tree from its container.



2 PLACE the tree in the pot so the soil level will remain the same as in the new pot. Fill around the tree with more potting mix.



3 WATER in the plant with a seaweed solution such as Seasol, and top up the potting mix if it has sunk.

Pruning

Citrus don't need annual pruning for fruit production but, on young trees in their first and second years, prune half the developing fruit to prevent the tree exhausting itself.

Trees can be pruned into any desired shape after fruiting has finished. If branches become crowded, thin them out to allow in more light and airflow.

Old, neglected trees can be rejuvenated in late winter by cutting them back to a framework of branches just 1m from the trunk. If the ensuing new growth is excessive, remove all except a well-spaced selection of strong branches.

Grow in pots

Dwarf citrus are ideal for growing in pots in tiny backyards and on balconies.

Choose a pot with a diameter of at least 40cm, remembering that you can increase the size of the pot as the tree grows. Water the tree thoroughly an hour or two before removing it from its container.

Feed in spring, summer and autumn with a three-month controlled-release

fertiliser designed for citrus. Check the soil moisture regularly and water often, daily during the hot summer months. ▶

BOOST GROWTH

Remove any fruit on small citrus trees in the first year so that the tree's energy will go into making new growth.



WHAT TO GROW

Lisbon

'Lisbon' produces a prolific amount of juicy, highly acidic lemons. A vigorous, thorny tree, it can reach 8m high, so also lends itself well to screening or as a pretty feature tree. Its main crop of fruit is produced from midwinter to early spring.

- ♦ CLIMATE Tolerates light frost but needs protection while young.

LEMONS

There are three main varieties of lemon grown in Australia and New Zealand: 'Lisbon', 'Eureka' and 'Meyer'. Choose according to your climate.

Meyer

Not as bitter as other lemons, 'Meyer' trees produce plenty of juicy, thin-skinned fruit. Thorn free and growing to just 2.5m high, the tree is ideal for small spaces and large containers. Its main cropping time is winter, but it produces fruit throughout the year.

- ♦ CLIMATE 'Meyer' is cold hardy but also withstands heat.

Eureka

These trees can grow to 3-4m but can be pruned to shape. 'Eureka' has few thorns and produces an abundance of large, thick-skinned fruit throughout the year, with its heaviest crop in winter.

- ♦ CLIMATE It likes frost-free areas and will grow well in coastal districts, as long as it is protected from wind.

LIMES

By weight, limes contain about 1.5 times more acid than lemons, making them an excellent source of vitamin C. They are usually smaller trees than lemons.

Finger lime

Chefs love the Australian native finger lime (*Citrus australasica*). Its fruit contains a mass of juicy, strongly flavoured citrus pearls, or juice vesicles, that look like caviar. When the skin is cut, these burst out staying as one piece. In the kitchen, they can be used to garnish chicken and seafood. The tree reaches 2-5m in the garden but lower when grown in a large pot.

- ♦ CLIMATE Grows wild as an understorey rainforest tree. Keep it free of frost and wind.

Kaffir lime

The Kaffir lime (*Citrus hystrix*) is an essential ingredient in many Thai recipes, including green curries, fish dishes and soups. The leaves are used for flavour and the zest is also delicious, but the flesh of the knobbly fruit is not eaten. The tree reaches a height of 1.5m, but it usually remains small in size, as the leaves are constantly picked for cooking.

- ♦ CLIMATE Kaffir limes prefer hot summers and mild winters.

Tahitian lime

The widely grown Tahitian lime (*Citrus latifolia*) produces green, thin-skinned fruit 5cm in diameter. It ripens over a five-week period in autumn and early winter and is at its juiciest when the skin is just turning light yellow.

- ♦ CLIMATE It thrives in the heat but will grow in cool areas if given frost protection.

RECIPE TIP

Use limes in seafood, chicken and meat dishes, as well as in drinks, desserts, cakes, biscuits and marmalade. Substitute for lemon in a gin and tonic.

MANDARINS

Mandarins are low in calories and bursting with vitamins A and C. They contain calcium, magnesium and potassium and are also a good source of dietary fibre.

- ◆ 'Imperial' is a favourite as its tasty fruit has few seeds, is easy to peel and ripens over autumn and winter.
- ◆ 'Emperor' has puffy skin that makes it easy to peel. The fruit ripens in midwinter after 'Imperial' has finished.

ORANGES

Orange trees are one of the most beautiful small trees, especially when covered in ripening fruit.

- ◆ 'Washington Navel' is the most popular variety and produces sweet, seedless fruit in midwinter.
- ◆ 'Lanes Late Navel' has identical fruit to 'Washington Navel' and ripens in late winter and early spring.
- ◆ 'Valencia' fruits from midwinter until late spring.

GRAPEFRUIT

Grapefruit are loved for their succulent but sweet and sour taste. Picking one fresh from the tree for breakfast is always a treat.

- ◆ 'Marsh' has nearly seedless fruit with a sweet but tangy taste. It ripens over winter and early spring.
- ◆ 'Rio Red' has red flesh and sweeter fruit than other grapefruit. It ripens in winter and spring.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

Healthy, well-maintained, organically grown citrus trees are largely resistant to insects and disease. But issues can arise.

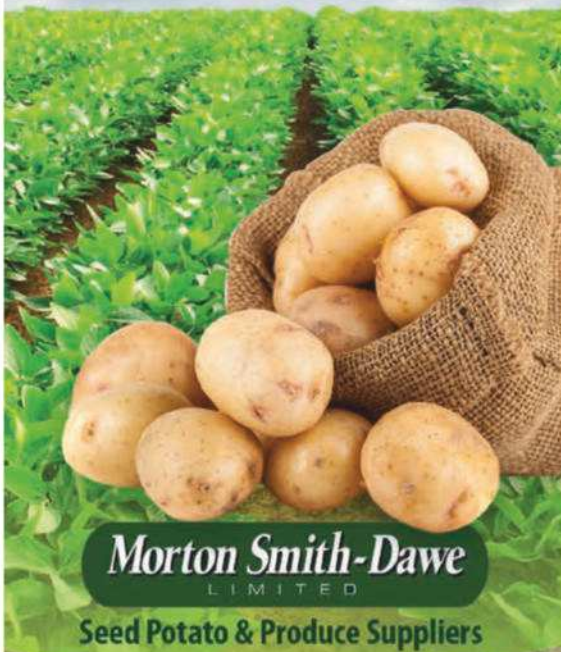
- **DROPPED OR FAILING FRUIT** indicates a lack of water, while too much water causes the fruit to split.
- **YELLOWING LEAVES** mean the tree needs feeding with a plant food designed for citrus.
- **DAMAGE ON THE LOWER TRUNK** and yellowing foliage is a sign of collar rot, a fungal disease that attacks the trunk just below soil

level. Scrape back the bark to healthy growth, and keep the trunk free from weeds and other plants. Do not overwater.

- **FLOWER AND FRUIT FALL** are caused by bronze orange bug. Manually remove the bugs from the tree, wearing gloves and eyewear. Spray during winter with Yates Success Ultra Insect Control.
- **SMALL BUMPS ON STEMS** are scale insects. Remove with your fingernail or spray with Yates Conqueror Oil if there are a lot.

- **SWOLLEN AND MISSHAPEN AREAS** on branches are due to the developing larvae of the citrus gall wasp. Prune and dispose of the infected limbs.
- **SILVER TRAILS ON NEW FOLIAGE** signal the presence of the citrus leaf miner. Spray with Yates Conqueror Oil or remove infected leaves.
- **ROTTEN FRUIT** is caused by fruit fly. Use Kiwicare Organic Insect Control to prevent fruit fly and protect the tree. ✦

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