

smart Living

Make your outdoors a WINTER wonderland

We are lucky to live in a temperate climate where we can still utilise our outdoor space throughout winter, just by making a few little adjustments here and there.

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Below are some tips for making the most of your garden and outdoor area during winter.

OUTDOOR HEATING

Australia has been slow to jump on the outdoor heating bandwagon with many people not realising it is now readily available and accessible to the everyday consumer. From rustic chimineas to the sophistication of patio heaters, any of these options will ensure year round entertaining:

CHIMINEAS

Chimineas are wood burning heaters made from wood-fired, hand-pressed clay. They are one of the cheapest of all the outdoor heating devices, costing about 50 cents per hour to run. When alight, chimineas radiate character, ambience and warmth and their terracotta finish makes them an attractive feature even when not in use. However chimineas are dangerous to touch and produce the majority of heat at ground level, therefore are not suitable if you have young children in close proximity.

GAS-FIRED PATIO HEATERS

Chic restaurants and bars pioneered gas-fired patio heaters, but they're also available for domestic use. They work by radiating heat - warming people and objects without heating the surrounding air. They are excellent as far as safety goes due to their stability and the hot parts are over

two metres high, well out of the reach of small children. However, windy conditions affect their performance and most will automatically switch off in strong winds. Only certain models can be connected to your home gas supply, with the majority requiring their own independent gas supply from a bottle. Costing around \$2 per hour to run, these are on the more expensive side!



BRAZIER

Finally, braziers are an old-fashioned style of outdoor heater made from tempered steel

that is painted or powder-coated black. Fuelled with briquettes, they are stylish, small and easy to store and their glowing embers add warmth and atmosphere to outdoor entertaining. Braziers cost approximately \$1 per hour to run and carry the same safety warning for young children as chimineas.

SCREENS AND SHELTER

Not everyone can grow big trees to provide shade in the summer and shelter from the elements in winter. Fortunately, there are a number of outdoor fabrics on the market that provide practical, cost-effective and attractive shelter. Shade sails and wind-protection fabrics vary in strength and space, so you can choose how much water or wind you want to allow through. Many of these forms of protection can now be made on moveable posts allowing you to customise the level of protection you wish to receive and respond to the environmental factors you are facing.

ADD SOME COLOUR

In winter, people often gravitate to darker colours, for example navy, mulberry, deep cherry. Why not inject some vibrant colours into your soft furnishings outdoors? Some new bright cushion covers for your outdoor setting, a multi-coloured umbrella or even some bright outdoor wall art can immediately freshen up an outdoor space, not only making it more attractive in the cooler winter months but also assisting to create the light and cheery mood we all love so much in summer.

"Colour is such an easy way to create a feeling of warmth in a space during winter," says Prue Royle, founding director of the International School of Colour and Design (iscd). "Winter definitely does not need to be dark, gloomy and grey. When styling in the cooler months consider adding some texture to your outdoor space. For example a chunky, bright throw over outdoor lounges immediately brings depth and the feeling of warmth. It is all about perception and creating the illusion that the outdoors area is warm," says Prue. **P.**

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