



deck it out

Take your favourite summertime space and turn it into a warm and inviting winter retreat

With your bistro blinds rolled down and a heater fired up, your deck can be a cosy and comfy area in which to entertain or just enjoy over winter. This revamp is easy on the pocket, especially if you relocate or renovate the furniture for this space. The fixtures are not big-ticket items, and the rest – plants and ornaments – can be added over time.

These clear PVC blinds work with a pulley system so they keep the rain out and the warmth in, without blocking out the view. You can find them at large hardware stores. Just measure and pre-drill holes in your verandah beams, then use supplied coach bolts to fix in place. Next, mount wall anchors to the vertical posts for a neat fit. Simple!

Cutting down an old dining table, then painting and decorating it with a subtle floral design, has made it more accessible and a focus of the outdoor room (see over page for instructions). Concealed underneath are wicker storage tubs for shoes, towels and all supplies previously used in this landing zone.

Install an outdoor electric heater to keep you and your guests warm. Before doing this, it's best to get your electrician to assess the viability of installing one or more heaters in the area as you need to know they won't overtax the circuit.

Furnish your patio or deck with an outdoor rug made of synthetic yarn that's durable and able to withstand the elements. Go for a neutral colour so you can change your accessories without having to buy a new rug every few months.

Mood lighting at night is a must, creating a special ambience. When candles are lit in holders, such as this handsome wirework piece with glass tea-light cups, they cast dramatic shadows and silhouettes. Look locally at nurseries or large hardware stores for a similar sculptural piece for a spare wall.

For shopping details, see [Stockists](#) page

Coffee table

GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES

Wooden table; blue painter's tape; handsaw; sanding block; medium- and fine-grade sandpaper; spirit level; Dulux 1 Step Primer, Sealer & Undercoat; Dulux Wash & Wear 101 Advanced Low Sheen acrylic paint in Russian Toffee; Jo Sonja's Artists' Colours in Warm White; paintbrushes (including round artist's brush); small paint roller and tray; graphite paper

HERE'S HOW

STEP 1 Work out desired height of coffee table, keeping in mind that if legs have turnings, it is best to cut between 2 of them. Carefully measure legs from underside of tabletop.

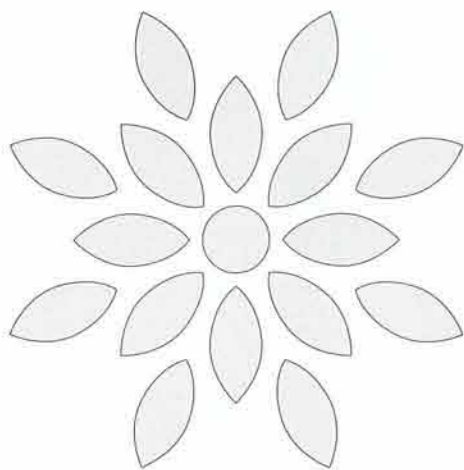
STEP 2 Mark with tape for accuracy. Cut off unwanted portions using a handsaw, then sand smooth. Check table is level.

STEP 3 Sand all surfaces smooth using medium, then fine-grade sandpapers and a sanding block.

STEP 4 Apply undercoat, then 2 topcoats to entire table, including undersides of legs. Use a brush for legs and edges, and a small roller for flat surfaces.

STEP 5 Enlarge Flower Diagram to suit. Using graphite paper, transfer pattern onto tabletop. Using a round artist's paintbrush, paint each flower white.

For project supplies, see Stockists page



Flower Diagram
Enlarge to desired sizes using a photocopier



How to revive wicker furniture

- Dust with a stiff bristle brush. Use a cut-off paintbrush to get into the weave and an old toothbrush for targeting tight bits.
- Wipe wicker with a cloth that's been dampened in warm, soapy water.
- Remove mould with white vinegar. If persistent, try a commercial mould cleaner, but take care, as it may discolour the cane. Wipe with a water-dampened cloth.
- Glue loose bits of wicker in position using a two-part epoxy adhesive or superglue.
- Sand sharp or fuzzy strands using fine sandpaper.
- Replace any missing or damaged cane and binding – these materials are available at selected craft stores or online (try www.wickerworks.com.au). Soak the cane for 30 minutes to make it pliable. Cut strands 5cm longer than the required length and use needle-nosed pliers to weave it in place.
- Use shellac or varnish to protect the finish.
- For stained wicker, touch up chips with oil stain and coat with a clear finish. Leave to cure for a few days, then polish with furniture wax.

1,2. Matchstick blinds are an inexpensive option for window treatments or screens. You can add to the look by painting on flowers using acrylic paint and a round artist's brush. Go wild and paint everything freehand, or enlarge the Flower Diagram (left) and paint it onto the blind. Make large and small variations of the flowers. You may need to use more than one coat of paint.



3. Wicker looks wicked. It gives a retro feel to the space, wears well and, unlike fabric, doesn't fade. You can revive someone's cast-off couch, making it good for the planet, too. The tart-up involves a wash, a bit of first aid and re-covered cushions.

4. Hang a trio of exotic lanterns to create a warm ambience. Try nifty, LED, battery-operated tea lights so there's no problem with heat, flames or smoke! Otherwise, ensure you position your candles a safe distance from the blinds.