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Summer ready your backyard

Tips, gadgets and accessories to spruce up your backyard for summer entertaining.

A quintessential Kiwi summer would be incomplete without backyard games and BBQ. This is a natural outcome of our love for an outdoor lifestyle. Hence every year, around this time, we clean up the winter neglected backyard and garden, and get them ready for some serious summer fun.

So what's in order for this season?

"With the introduction of a dedicated food channel and popular TV cooking shows, such as MasterChef (in which Gasmate grills were used) it's likely that more and more of us will be keen to experiment with alternative cooking styles this summer," says Roydon Olynsma, Outdoor Sales Manager at Aber, who distribute a broad range of products and appliances, including Gasmate and Charmate outdoor living products.

Trying something different requires an understanding of new techniques, such as rotisserie roasting, smoking meats, trying new marinades, and using new accessories to do the job, such as beer can chicken roasters and smoker boxes.

"Look out for new cooking innovations this season and, if your barbecue or accessories cannot do what you want to do, think about making a change," says Roydon.

"It also seems that adding extra smoky flavours back into outdoor cooking is becoming popular, so charcoal cooking is likely to be in demand again. Be on the look out for Charmate charcoal barbecues and smokers that are safe, easy to use and easy to clean, as well as new charcoal fuel options that are easy to light and control."

Let's face it though, even the most delicious dish will lose its sheen in a scruffy and dark backyard. Roydon has some suggestions

to address this issue.

"Outdoor lighting is still proving popular, especially the use of flares to add extra ambience, with portable and fixed outdoor lighting options available for tabletop and stand alone types.

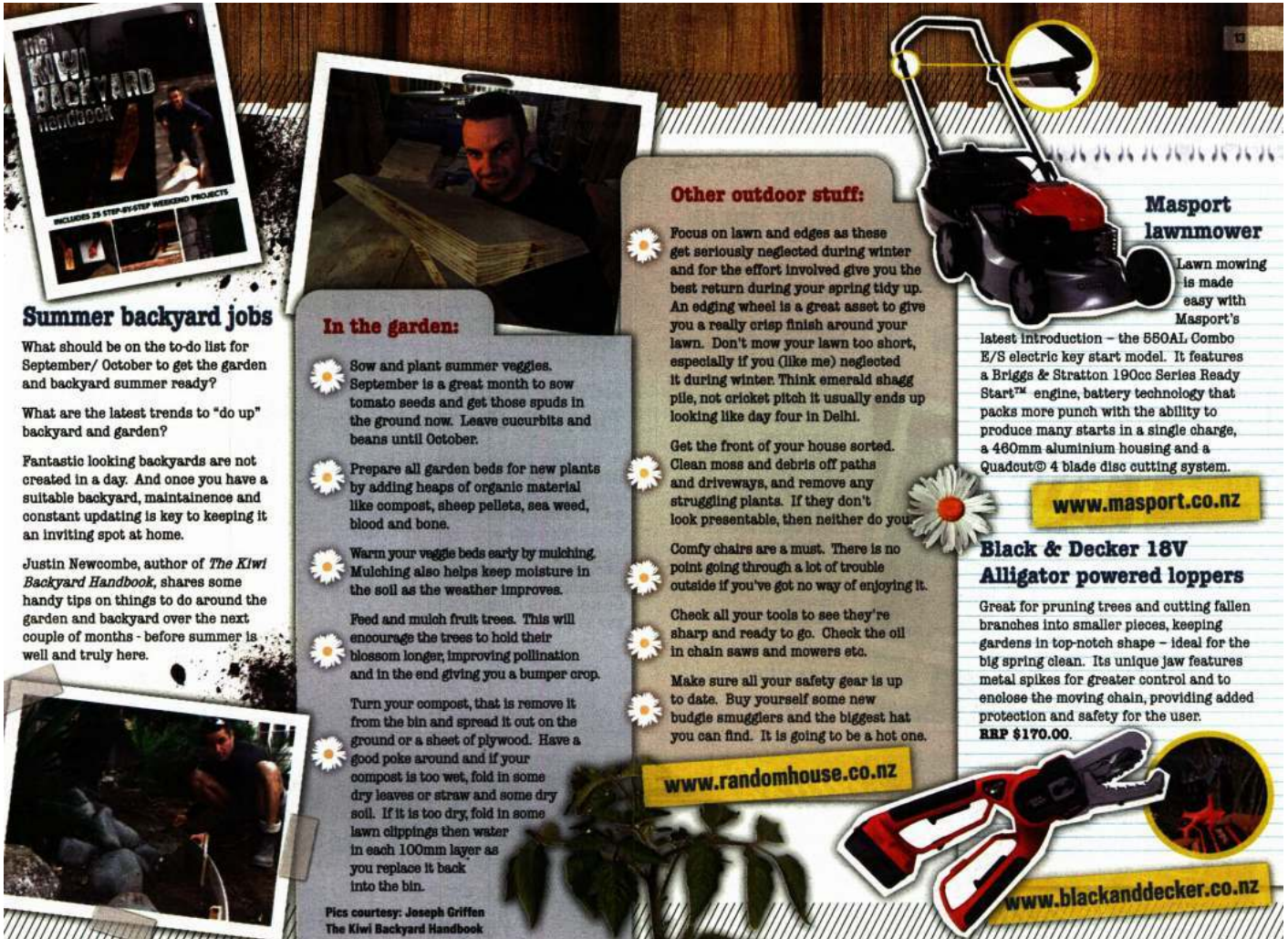
"To really get a warm and cosy glow around the outdoor entertainment area, Chimeneas and solid fuel fireplaces are sure to be popular this summer," he says. "These natural heaters add ambience to outside spaces as well as warmth, enabling the outdoors to be used more often and for longer."

With a broader range of outdoor living products available to respond to our widening interests and broadening needs, living outdoors is going to be made even easier and even more fun. Bring on summer.

www.gasmate.co.nz



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Summer backyard jobs

What should be on the to-do list for September/ October to get the garden and backyard summer ready?

What are the latest trends to "do up" backyard and garden?

Fantastic looking backyards are not created in a day. And once you have a suitable backyard, maintenance and constant updating is key to keeping it an inviting spot at home.

Justin Newcombe, author of *The Kiwi Backyard Handbook*, shares some handy tips on things to do around the garden and backyard over the next couple of months - before summer is well and truly here.

In the garden:

- Sow and plant summer veggies. September is a great month to sow tomato seeds and get those spuds in the ground now. Leave cucurbits and beans until October.
- Prepare all garden beds for new plants by adding heaps of organic material like compost, sheep pellets, sea weed, blood and bone.
- Warm your veggie beds early by mulching. Mulching also helps keep moisture in the soil as the weather improves.
- Feed and mulch fruit trees. This will encourage the trees to hold their blossom longer, improving pollination and in the end giving you a bumper crop.
- Turn your compost, that is remove it from the bin and spread it out on the ground or a sheet of plywood. Have a good poke around and if your compost is too wet, fold in some dry leaves or straw and some dry soil. If it is too dry, fold in some lawn clippings then water in each 100mm layer as you replace it back into the bin.

Other outdoor stuff:

- Focus on lawn and edges as these get seriously neglected during winter and for the effort involved give you the best return during your spring tidy up. An edging wheel is a great asset to give you a really crisp finish around your lawn. Don't mow your lawn too short, especially if you (like me) neglected it during winter. Think emerald shagg pile, not cricket pitch it usually ends up looking like day four in Delhi.
- Get the front of your house sorted. Clean moss and debris off paths and driveways, and remove any struggling plants. If they don't look presentable, then neither do you.
- Comfy chairs are a must. There is no point going through a lot of trouble outside if you've got no way of enjoying it.
- Check all your tools to see they're sharp and ready to go. Check the oil in chain saws and mowers etc.
- Make sure all your safety gear is up to date. Buy yourself some new budgie smugglers and the biggest hat you can find. It is going to be a hot one.

Masport lawnmower

Lawn mowing is made easy with Masport's latest introduction - the 560AL Combo E/S electric key start model. It features a Briggs & Stratton 190cc Series Ready Start™ engine, battery technology that packs more punch with the ability to produce many starts in a single charge, a 460mm aluminium housing and a Quadcut® 4 blade disc cutting system.

www.masport.co.nz

Black & Decker 18V Alligator powered loppers

Great for pruning trees and cutting fallen branches into smaller pieces, keeping gardens in top-notch shape - ideal for the big spring clean. Its unique jaw features metal spikes for greater control and to enclose the moving chain, providing added protection and safety for the user.

RRP \$170.00.

www.blackanddecker.co.nz

www.randomhouse.co.nz

Pics courtesy: Joseph Griffen
The Kiwi Backyard Handbook