CREATING a GARDEN for your KIDS

AUSTRALIAN OUTDOOR LIVING

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your guide to developing fun and safe garden designs to get your kids outdoors

CREATING a GARDEN THAT'S SAFE AND FUN for your KIDS

Any parent will be familiar with the array of concerns about letting their child loose on an untamed garden. There are a multitude of things to think about, including the sharp shards of bindi seeds, any nearby busy roads and access to these, the possibility of nasty falls, and the potential for sunburn.

There's a fine balance between exercising caution and becoming too overprotective. Every parent wants their child to benefit from the outdoors and locking them inside for fear of external hazards is the last thing you want. Children learn new skills, have fun, exercise, and develop self-confidence when they're in the garden.

A few scrapes and bruises are a part of growing up. But as a parent you'll want to minimise these occurrences, not just for your child's own safety, but for your own peace of mind. We all know how difficult it can be to calm a kid down once they're worked up!

It's not difficult to transform your garden into a nurturing and enjoyable environment for your children. You only have to think about what potential risks there are for your child and how you can address them.

This eBook is here to help you maximise child play outdoors while minimising hazards. It will cover ways to make your garden safe and fun so that your kids feel inspired to get out there in the first place.

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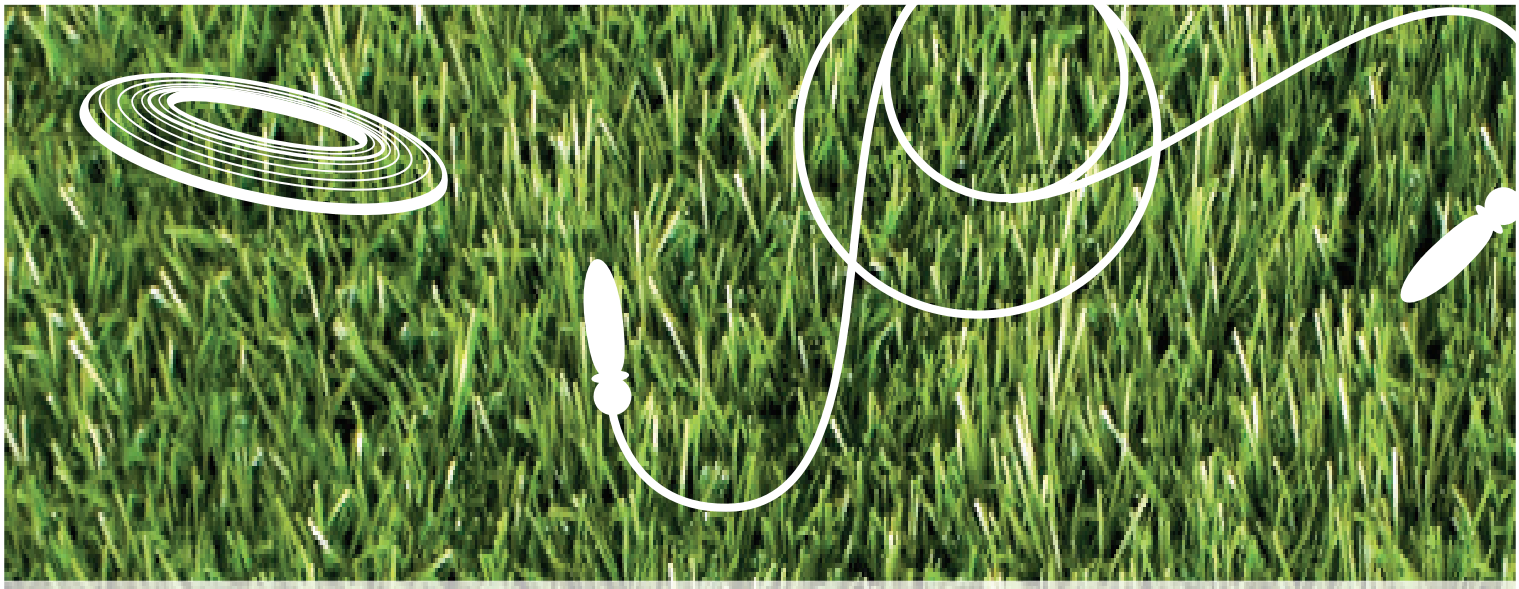
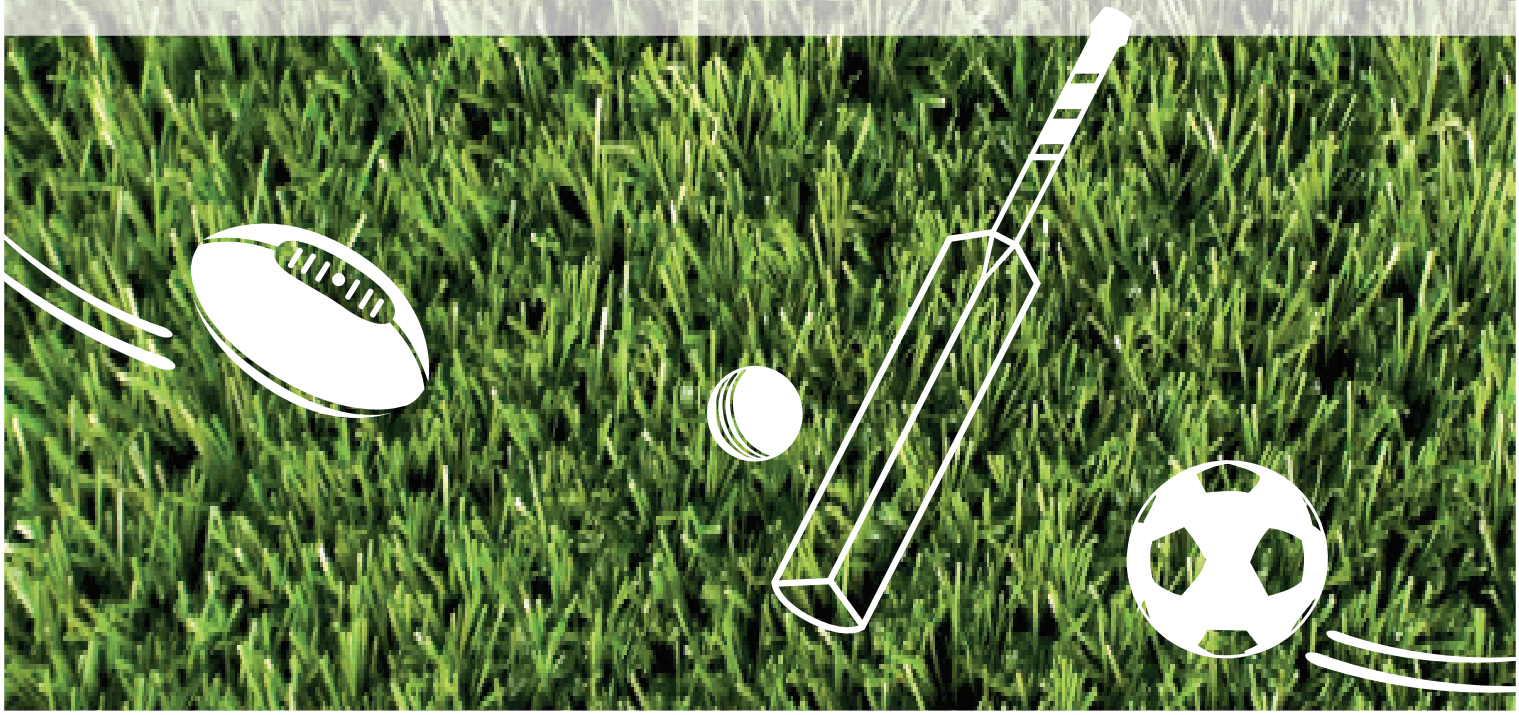


A soft surface MEANS HARD PLAY



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FINDING THE RIGHT

GROUND COVER FOR YOUR KIDS

As much as you encourage the little tyke to put on shoes before heading outdoors, there are always going to be those times when the kids slip out without heeding your advice.

We all love the feel of bare feet on soft grass. The problem with grass in Australia though, is that it is rarely soft. In fact, if you've ever stepped on a bindi, you know how troublesome grass can be – especially on your child's soft feet.

Concrete, tiles, and gravel are some ways to combat the hassles of grass (most notably, the need to mow). But gravel is hardly gentler on the soles of your feet and if your child trips and falls, gravel rash can be a huge pain (literally *and* figuratively!) to clean out. Other alternatives to grass, such as concrete and tiles, also prove troublesome – can anyone say 'stubbed toe'?

For ground cover where kids are likely to take a tumble, such as beneath play equipment, a cubby house or a trampoline, old bark is a common choice to soften a fall. But before you begin littering the lawn with tree shavings, consider carefully if you're prepared to apply the tweezers and needles on your kid to pick out those nasty splinters.

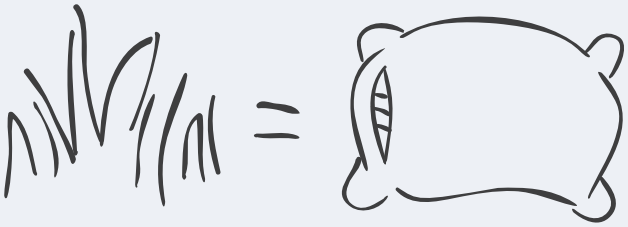
This brings us back to grass. Grass can often be the biggest hassle in a garden. But it is also a vital component of a child-friendly backyard. Kids love to run around and play sport – they cannot do this without a lawn. It is also the softest surface for children to fall upon, which makes it ideal beneath a trampoline or play set.

the PERFECT SOLUTION

Today, artificial lawn is a perfect, manageable surface that mimics nature and still looks good. It doesn't require watering, so it will be mud free. Nor does it need the pesticides and chemicals for upkeep that could otherwise cause allergies. It is also 100 percent lead free.

Artificial grass boasts the springy, supportive characteristics of natural grass – it can even come with an underlay that cushions children when they fall. Even better, before artificial lawn is installed the area is completely levelled, meaning that your child will have a flat surface to play on which can assist in reducing tumbles!

Finally, the traction provided by grass even makes it an increasingly attractive option around poolsides, where parents are careful of slipperiness. Unfortunately decking and tiling can often become very slippery when wet. Artificial grass is an effective alternative to protect the young - and the older - from an unexpected, and potentially dangerous fall.



7 REASONS

WHY ARTIFICIAL LAWN IS GREAT FOR THE KIDS

1. It doesn't harbour bindis or other unpleasant surprises
2. Its springiness is ideal to cushion kids from falls, especially when placed beneath a cubby house or a trampoline
3. It provides great traction so kids are less likely to slip – ideal near a pool!
4. Its soft surface means no splinters, grazes or stubbed toes
5. It's mud-free
6. It doesn't need lawn maintenance chemicals that could aggravate allergies
7. Allows you to get creative with coloured lawn patches, etc

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GET

CREATIVE WITH GRASS

The biggest reason that lawn triumphs over other garden surfaces, is the opportunity to get creative with it. Children have an insatiable appetite to fuel their imaginations and creating a garden that nurtures this inclination will ensure they'll want to go out and explore. We've put together some fun garden ideas designed to coax the kids outdoors.

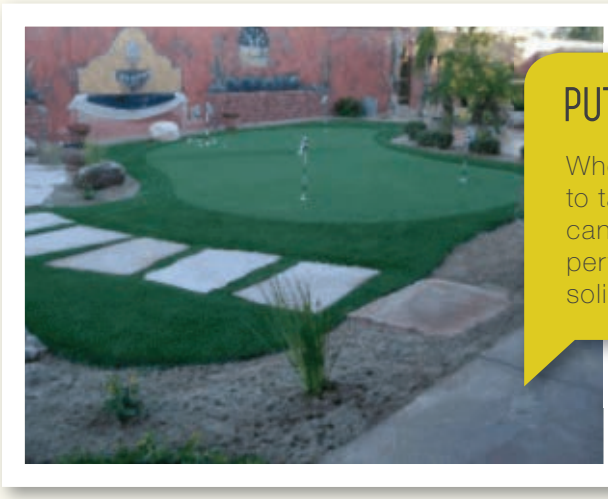
SUNKEN TRAMPOLINE

Kids seem naturally attracted to bouncing, but it can cause a great deal of angst for parents watching their kids soar to great heights. Lower the playing field - literally - by sinking your trampoline so that it's flush with the surrounding ground. You'll have no more need for unsightly protective netting as you can wrap artificial grass around the trampoline so the kids' falls are padded should they stray outside the bouncing zone.

A CAMOUFLAGED TREE HOUSE OR FORT

Kids are drawn to caves, holes, and any other cosy space that will allow them to believe they are alone and let their imaginations run riot. Give them a space that is all theirs and you'll find it difficult to remove them from it!

Why not build them an underground fort or Hobbit hole? Before putting down your lawn, create a large, hollowed-out molehill and lay the turf over the top of it. Your children will have their very own secret bunker – like a cubby house, but far more mysterious.



PUTTING GREEN

Who doesn't like a bit of mini golf? But you don't have to take them to the nearest green for all the fun – you can create one in your own backyard. Artificial lawn is perfect for this, since it provides a completely flat but solid surface for putting.

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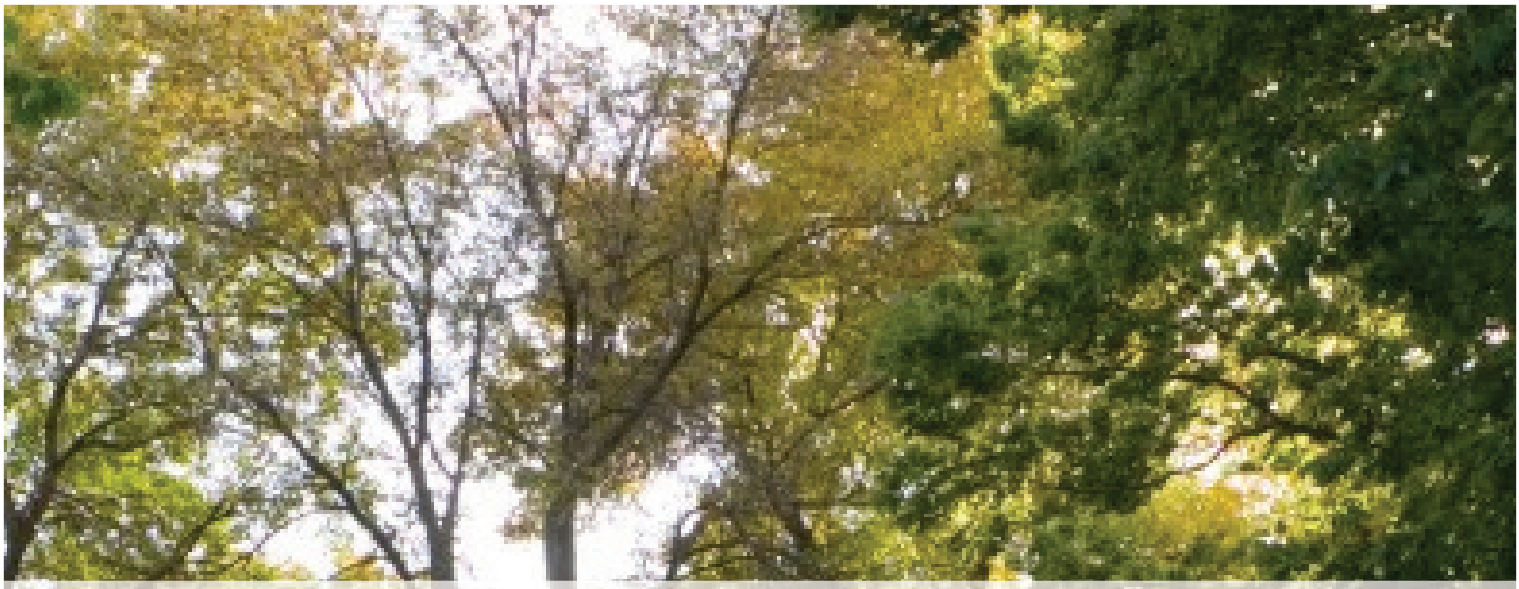

A garden MADE FOR SHADE

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KEEPING YOUR KIDS OUT OF THE ELEMENTS AND YET

OUT OF THE HOUSE

Potential hazards for kids don't just occur underfoot – concerns come from overhead as well. You want to ensure you have enough sheltered spaces in your garden so your kids can venture out all year round.

The sun's rays are one of the most important things a parent has to consider when their children are outdoors. According to the Queensland Cancer Fund, almost two thirds of skin cancers can be attributed to over exposure to the sun during the first eighteen years of a child's life.

It doesn't matter how much you slip, slop, and slap; excessive exposure to the sun can be damaging. But we also know how difficult it is to get the sunscreen on the child when they're itching to run free.

It has been recommended that children spend minimal amounts of time in the sun between 10am and 3pm – but that's prime time for kid's play! And keeping a kid cooped up indoors is bad not only for their health but for your sanity!

the PERFECT SOLUTION

Trees are an excellent natural way to shade the garden. But they can take a long time before they're tall enough to provide shade, and they still don't block out the rain and cold. Umbrellas can also be useful as long as they're secured properly, but they can be bothersome to move, erect and dismantle.

Pergolas and verandahs are an excellent, no-fuss way to provide shade when little ones are outdoors. They can be built away from the home over a play area, or attached to the house to keep the kids close.

Verandahs are particularly useful because blinds can be placed around the walls to create a wind shelter, protecting the kids from gusts, rain and chill. Shade blinds usually incorporate a UV protection factor that provides further protection to your loved ones when they are outdoors. Transparent PVC blinds also allow you to watch the children play whilst giving the kids the impression of being alone.

5 REASONS

WHY PERGOLAS AND VERANDAHS ARE GREAT FOR THE KIDS

1. They're permanent fixtures so there's very little risk of them falling (providing you've entrusted a quality and trustworthy builder)
2. They can be placed over a kid's play area to keep them outdoors longer
3. They're hassle-free so there is no need to erect or dismantle them – once they're up, they're up!
4. They give shelter from sun and rain alike
5. Create an outdoor room without the hassles of building on.

"Mum always says don't play ball in the house!"

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GET

CREATIVE UNDER SHELTER

It can be difficult to find ways to coax the kids outdoors while keeping them under shelter. Here are a few ideas we thought you'd like.

A WEATHERPROOF CHALKBOARD

Since chalk was invented, children have been busily amused decorating neighbourhood footpaths. So why not give them their very own weatherproof drawing wall? Put up a blackboard on your house wall sheltered by a roofed verandah, provide some coloured chalk, and watch them release some of their inner creativity. It's also a good way to provide a scoreboard for other games.

YES please

A BELOW-DECK CUBBY HOUSE

No children's backyard is complete without a cubby house. Kids love to be – or at least think they are – independent. They revel in playing "Mums and Dads", so giving them their own spaces to play house and they'll be lost in their imaginations for hours.

For something different, why not utilise that space below a raised deck? If you have a sloping garden, you may find that there's enough room beneath your deck for children to stand upright. You can erect a few walls to cover this underground space, completing the effect with kid-sized doors and windows.

A SHADED SANDPIT

Sandpits are easy play spaces to shade. You can build and fill a wooden box or even sink a sandpit into a deck. Place a pergola over the area and you're ready to go. Your children can have the benefits of sandcastle-building fun whilst staying clear of those nasty UV rays.

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CREATING a safe way to ENCOURAGE PLAY

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TOP TIPS FOR

KEEPING YOUR GARDEN SAFE

Children simply love to be outdoors. Outdoors play can provide benefits for your children's motor skills, confidence, creativity, and health. But the right environment is needed to create a kid-friendly backyard that caters to a child's wild imagination.

A safe garden allows you to minimise rules and regulations so that your child feels free to roam, touch and play with practically any element in the garden – and if you want your kid to play outdoors, they have to feel welcome.

Children revel in natural play areas that boast opportunities for exploration, challenge, and learning. Creating a garden that will nurture a child's development can reap rewards for years to come. Coax them outside today with a diverse range of interesting and safe play areas designed specifically for their needs.

Here are our top tips for keeping your garden safe so that the kids can't resist venturing into the wild.

TOP TIPS

1. Remove poisonous plants (The Poisons Information Centre can supply a detailed list of common poisonous plants found in gardens around Australia – call 13 11 26)
2. Level the playing field – literally
3. Remove bindis and other underfoot hazards with artificial lawn
4. Avoid using unnatural chemicals or pesticides that could cause allergies
5. Keep concrete surfaces to a minimum
6. Place a soft surface beneath high play equipment
7. Keep them under secured shade between 10am and 3pm
8. Keep them in sight, but make sure they don't feel watched

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ABOUT

AUSTRALIAN OUTDOOR LIVING

At Australian Outdoor Living, we help Australians improve their lifestyles and build the dream outdoor home environment they've always wanted.

We have a dedicated team of manufacturers, designers and installers passionate about our products and services. We pride in offering the best quality product on the market.

Much of our range is manufactured in Australia under the strictest Australian manufacturing standards. We know that every job is different and every client unique so we take responsibility for every stage of the process according to each client's wishes.

Our biggest asset is our workers; with our highly trained, qualified and experienced staff, we're here to make your dream home become a hassle-free reality.

OUR LOCATIONS

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
589 South Road,
Regency Park SA 5010

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
2/35 Prosperity Avenue,
Wangara WA 6065

NEW SOUTH WALES
2/1 Grex Avenue,
Minchinbury NSW 2770

QUEENSLAND
2/11-17 Cairns Street,
Loganholme QLD 4129

TASMANIA
5/14 Kennedy Drive,
Cambridge TAS 7170

VICTORIA
10 Connection Drive,
Campbellfield VIC 3061

And I get a FREE measure and design! Doesn't get any easier than this!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL OR VISIT
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