

# SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

## 20 ways to make your life easier



Inspirational ideas to make your home and garden beautiful for indoor and outdoor summer entertaining



### FOUR WAYS TO GIVE YOUR OUTDOOR FURNITURE A FACELIFT

- 1 If you need to freshen up a plastic outdoor dining set, mix washing-up liquid with one part bleach to four parts water. Scrub with a sponge and rinse with a hose.
- 2 For mildew on wooden furniture, wash down with soap and water. Once it's dry, apply a sealant or preservative to protect.
- 3 Metal patio furniture can be cleaned with soapy water. To remove rust or stains, rub with sandpaper and touch up with paint.
- 4 Sunshine stops moss and mildew from growing, so make sure you let your furniture out of the shade and into the sunlight throughout the summer months.

### 5 BANISH BOBBLES

Remove bobbles on knitwear by rubbing a Velcro hair roller over them. It will pick up the pesky pills, without damaging your clothes.

### 6 PEST CONTROL

Heat vinegar and leave in a bowl on your worktop to repel wasps – they detest the smell. Lemon slices studded with cloves will also keep them at bay.

### 7 THREE TRIED-AND-TESTED KITCHEN TIMERS

- ➔ **BEST DESIGN** A classic mechanical timer with a simple, but unique, look that comes in six colours. A09 Kitchen Timer, £19.50, [alessi.co.uk](http://alessi.co.uk).
- ➔ **BEST MECHANICAL** A striking and funky timer that can be set with a quick two-step process. Joseph Joseph Pie Timer, £12.50, [josephjoseph.com](http://josephjoseph.com).
- ➔ **BEST DIGITAL** The Heston Blumenthal Gourmet Timer is a must-have for anyone who loves slow cooking. £14, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com).



### Three tasty tips - asparagus

w&h food editor Jane Curran shares her asparagus secrets...

- 8 Don't overcook it - steaming for three to five minutes is enough.
- 9 Eat asparagus as fresh as possible, as it becomes tough over time. If it's older, it will need to be cooked slightly longer.
- 10 It's great as a starter with hollandaise, melted butter, olive oil or Parmesan.



### 11 TOOL TIP

Look after gardening tools by rubbing a thin coat of general-purpose oil on the metal part of your spades, shovels and trowels. This will prevent rust and make dirt less likely to cling to them. >>

## 12 TWO OF THE BEST SELF-WATERING PLANT POTS

✦ Orchids are stunning house plants, but need lots of care when it comes to watering. The new Glossy Pot range by Ebertsankey includes drainage space to prevent wet roots, and a clever see-through water level indicator so orchids can be topped up by the right amount. From £14.99, ebertsankey.com.

✦ No time to water outdoor plants? Try a self-watering planter box. There are several designs with cleverly hidden wall brackets, and large water and soil storage capacity. Simply add compost and plants, water from above for a few weeks until roots have reached the water reservoir, then watering time should be halved. From £24.99, ebertsankey.com.

## Six garden tips

### THINGS TO DO IN YOUR GARDEN NOW

By Jane Curran, w&h food editor and a passionate gardener

13 If you grow lilies, keep an eagle eye out for lily beetles. Easy to spot – they are bright red – they can demolish your favourite lily overnight. Rather than spray, I prefer to pick them off and crush them underfoot – apologies to the squeamish!

14 It's never too late to add more colour to the garden with pots of different bedding plants. Trailing lobelia looks gorgeous planted around an olive tree (or other tall plants) in a pot and should give you colour into October, weather permitting.

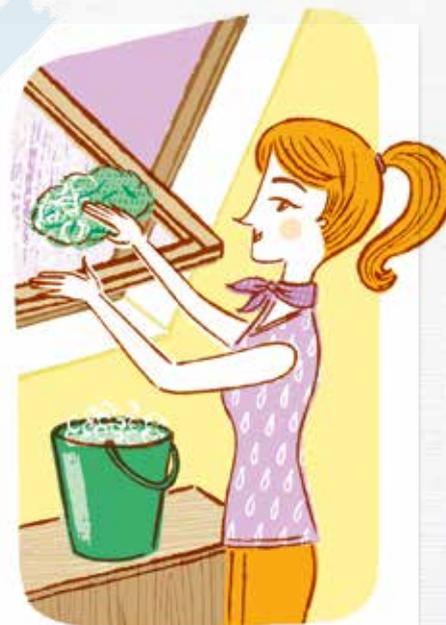
15 I had great success last year with grafted tomato plants from Suttons. The yields from grafted ones are bigger and more disease resistant. Plant up until mid-May. "Juanita" is a cherry variety, which tasted delicious. See [suttons.co.uk](http://suttons.co.uk).



16 It's also a good time to get flat-leaf parsley and basil seeds in. Keep them well watered for best results.

17 It's really not too late to get something growing in the kitchen garden. Why not try a few simple pots? Either buy small plants from the garden centre or plant pea seeds – Kelvedon Wonder is a small, sweet-tasting pea that isn't too tricky to grow. Make a wigwam of bamboo canes in a large pot and plant a seed either side of each cane. Keep well watered and make sure you protect plants from pesky slugs. Small French beans grow in the same way. Aim to plant at least eight to ten plants to ensure you have enough peas to cook with.

18 Aphids or greenfly are every gardener's pest. Try spraying frequently with an organic fatty acid spray (widely available). The birds love to eat aphids, too, so you don't want to poison them.



## 19 Want shiny skylights?

Wait for the summer showers. Tilt the window inside and wash the outside with soapy water before shutting it to let the rain rinse the soap away.

### 20 SUMMER SCENT

Need a fresh seasonal scent for your home? Try the new, revitalising Bergamot & Geranium candle from Floris. It smells divine! £40, [floris.london.com](http://floris.london.com).



## Classy cleaner

The garden is starting to bloom, so it's time to get it shipshape before the summer really kicks in

### VACUUM UP THOSE LEAVES

There is nothing worse than dead leaves everywhere, so make it easy on yourself and invest in a garden vac to clear them up. Choose one that blows as well as sucks, then you can clear up after parties too. Bosch ALS 25 Garden Vac, £69.98, [diy.com](http://diy.com).

### PAINT JOB

Give a wooden shed a colourful new lease of life with a coat of Cuprinol Garden Shades, £22.99 for 2.5l, [cuprinol.co.uk](http://cuprinol.co.uk). For rusty metal garden furniture, Hammerite Direct To Rust metal paint, £8.99 for 250ml, is great and there's no need for primer. Paint in your chosen colour; [hammerite.co.uk](http://hammerite.co.uk).

### CLEAN UP

Grimy patio or green decking? An easy and inexpensive way to get them looking lovely again is to use a pressure washer. This model is easy to carry and has a specific patio cleaner attachment to make cleaning quick and thorough. K4 Home Pressure Washer, £239.99, [karcher.co.uk](http://karcher.co.uk).

### IN THE GROOVE

Aren't those dandelions that grow between the paving stones an eyesore? Try the Fiskars Garden Light Patio Knife, £29.99, [capitalgardens.co.uk](http://capitalgardens.co.uk). It's a lightweight tool with an aluminium shaft and a clever shaped blade made from hardened steel – show no mercy! **w&h**