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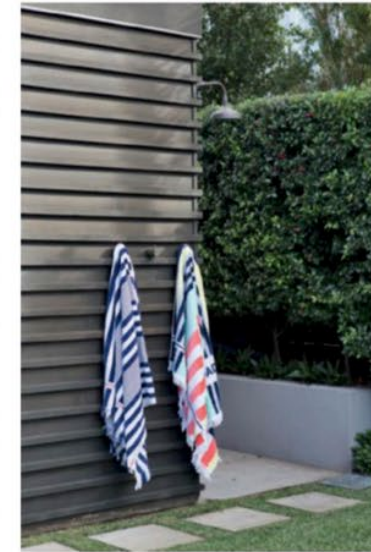


Nick Crowe

# TALKING timber

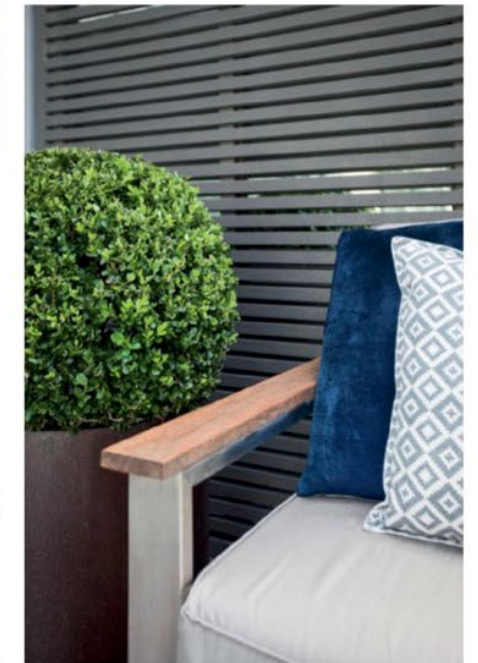
Include this versatile, timeless material in your outdoor space for a modern or traditional look

Words Nick Crowe



come straight off the shelf or be manipulated into different forms using age-old techniques such as steam bending. I've built some pieces over the years and it can be very rewarding, but much research is needed to perfect this.

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design, and can act as a feature on their own.

The appeal of timber in garden design and construction is its strength as well as its natural hue. Timber is a relatively inexpensive material that can be quickly built into a design. The beauty of timber is that it engages all our senses — it's rich and warm, has a tactile surface, and has superior strength that's ideal for use underfoot in our gardens or decks. Timber is timeless, economic and stylish — a beautiful inclusion in garden design.

Timber's unique properties are often an obvious and sensible choice for use in decking, as privacy screens, fences, built-in bench seats and bespoke furniture and other features.

There are plenty of different timbers available but not all are suitable for outdoor use. The timber you choose should be durable and sustainable. The properties of the timber need to be suitable for the specific requirements of the job. The right timber choice will assist durability and longevity.

Timber species are rated into four classes of durability and a number rating for strength. This is the rating of the timber's natural resistance to attack by wood-destroying fungi and insects and its structural properties.

An F rating will refer to its structural integrity followed by a 1-4 class rating, for example, spotted gum F17-F34 Class 1. This method of classification is an important aid in the selection process, ensuring appropriate timber choice for specific structural design purposes.

Timber can add both practicality and beauty to your garden or outdoor room. It can

broad leaves. These timbers are an ideal choice for strength and durability.

Australia produces various kinds of native hardwood timber, most of which are incredibly attractive and highly durable.

Australian hardwood timber has a long above-ground life cycle. Examples are jarrah, blackwood and red gum, which can often be recycled into different forms for a whole new life, such as the railway sleeper. These are in demand for use in retaining walls, driveways or garden steppers because of their aged and weathered patina. They look brilliant in most environments and enhance functionality and

The secret to building a gorgeous garden is planning. All elements need to be carefully considered and planned to ensure the desired design outcome is achieved, and all inclusions need to be in harmony with one another. Material usage and plant palettes make up a core ingredient of this process. Timber is one of those versatile materials that add warmth and texture to any outdoor space. Australian hardwood timber is both stunning in looks and functional.

Hardwood simply means that the tree produces seeds that are enclosed, such as fruit or nut. Hardwood trees also have

## Expert tips

- Use timber for privacy by creating screening. A beautiful timber screen adds to the design and functionality of your garden and can hide unwanted eyesores.
- Timber decks add beauty, functionality and strength to outdoor rooms. Where possible, incorporate bench seating, providing purpose to this design element.
- Before staining or coating a finished product, test the colour on a few different toned offcuts. The colour in a small pot or picture can look different on a large area such as your new deck. This can save you making a big mistake.
- Timber adds warmth and texture to your garden design, but plan and research well. Correct timber selection is vital to meet the specific needs of any outdoor project.

## Remember

Not all timber can be used outdoors. Australian timber usually suits Australian gardens. Class 1 or 2 timber is the most durable and check the F rating when looking at structure. If in doubt, or your project is larger than your capabilities, use qualified tradesmen. Importantly, enjoy all the benefits of timber in your outdoor space.