



# NORMARKNEWS



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## Summer News

### Why outdoor rooms are all the rage ...

The latest trend according to the gardening public and also the real estate agents is the outdoor room.

Utilising your outdoor space can provide an extension of your home and lifestyle. An outdoor room can give the perception that your house is bigger than it really is. Outdoor rooms are ideal for small garden spaces, balconies or even within a larger garden.

Gardens are an integral part of Australian life. They are much more than just your backyard or an outside space; they are an extension of your home and lifestyle. The outdoor room continues to be an important part of the Australian lifestyle, with 71% of Australians recognising their garden as an outdoor living room.

It could be argued that the trend for hard landscaping is another symptom of the desire for low-maintenance gardening: when the plants have died and the weeds have taken over your outdoor room will look as good as new.

Normark has been inundated with requests for outdoor rooms especially as people prepare for summer and the months of entertaining ahead. If you want to find out how we can work together with you to design and implement your dream garden or outdoor area please call us on 03 9334 2212 or email us at [Normark@iprimus.com.au](mailto:Normark@iprimus.com.au), we have four designers to help you.



### 'Appreciating What You Have'

Recently Dean, joint CEO of Normark, recently attended a talk about appreciating what we as Australians have. Although obvious sometimes people can lose sight and Dean wanted to share what he heard.

In China the average worker saves 20% of his income and in India the average worker saves 30%. In America the average worker is actually minus 2%! (Through credit card debt, mortgages etc). In Australia we save 9% because the government makes it compulsory for us to contribute towards superannuation otherwise we would be like the Americans. A survey was recently undertaken with 10 of the highest paid businessmen in Australia, all of them claimed they were not paid enough! Look at the people in many Asian countries where they live in terrible conditions yet they are very happy and content people.

The moral of this story is to be happy with what you have, make the most of what you do have – family, friends, finances. If you want something badly, set goals, make sacrifices and you will achieve them if you are patient and go about it the right way (ie. get good advice). A person who is not happy with a little will never be happy with a lot.

We are very lucky to be living in a country with many choices and opportunities available. However too many people become greedy and too materialistic and are in the end are not happy as there is always something more to want. The lesson is to appreciate what you have.

# Normark's Latest Projects

*Commercial: Princess Park; Australian Air Express; Werribee Pool*



*Residential: Brunswick; Linay*



## Surviving Summer

Summer is the time we use our gardens most for entertaining. Regular short stints in the garden will keep them looking their best for when family and friends drop round. Summer gardening is a story of survival, both for the plants and for the gardener. The trick to enjoying the garden in summer is to work in the garden during the coolest times either in the early hours before the sun gets too hot or late afternoons and here's a guide to must-do summer jobs just to get you started:

Keep up the fertilizing regime and make sure to water the plants well after each application.

Continue removing dead flowers from shrubs, perennials and annuals.

If growing conditions are good, summer lawns may need mowing at least once a week, but don't cut too short. Leaving grass grow a bit longer will help it to shade the soil from the strong summer sun.

Weeds just love summer – it's their favourite time of year. Try to treat weeds in their early stages so that they don't have time to get too big and tough or reach the seeding stage.

Summer is show-off time for plants like hydrangeas, hibiscus, frangipani, fuchsias, dietes, gardenias, agapanthus and lots of climbers. After these summer bloomers have finished flowering, trim lightly to promote new growth.

Plant pots of summer colour at your front door for an inviting feel. Maybe plant some heat loving plants such as petunias and portulacas.

For all of those who are not looking forward to the upcoming months of mowing the lawns, keep in mind Normark also offer a maintenance service.

For all enquiries please contact Peter on 9334 2212.



### HANDY HINT...

When potting plants that will be sitting on a patio or tiled area insert at the bottom of the pot some fly wire, covering the watering holes at the bottom. This way when you water your pots, the dirt can't flow through and stain your porch.

## Remember there are ways you can help your water stressed garden:

There are some great garden products to help our gardens survive through the hot, dry summer. While they're all working towards the same ends – reducing water usage and saving plants – because they achieve this result in many different ways, they can be very confusing for the gardener.

☼ **Water Crystals** – These are dry crystals that absorb water, then swell up to many times their original size to become soft and gel-like and can hold hundreds of times their weight in water. Because they can absorb such a large amount of water, it's practical to soak the crystals in water for a few hours before mixing them into the soil or potting mix. Then, when more water is applied to the soil, the crystals are able to absorb moisture once again. Be sure that when using water crystals to never leave them sitting on top of the soil, otherwise they will pull moisture out of the soil and leave it drier than it was before you started. Also on the market are water crystal bags which hold up to 1.2 litres of water. These bags can be recharged time and time again. They can be placed in the bottom of the pot or plant hole.

☼ **Soil Wetters** – These work in a similar manner to detergents by breaking the surface tension and allowing the water to move easily into the soil. Applying a soil wetter encourages the water to move easily into the root system where it's actually needed, instead of running uselessly away over the soil surface.

☼ **Mulch** – Mulching the garden can be the critical factor that helps a plant to survive dry periods. During dry periods it's particularly important to water the soil well before applying mulch because when it's first laid the layer of mulch stops light showers or sprinklings from penetrating through to the roots where the water is needed.

☼ **Fertilising** – We are often frightened to fertilise gardens during dry weather but while plants are still growing they are going to need a supply of nutrients to keep them in good health. During dry periods, choose your fertiliser carefully. There are all-purpose fertilizers but it is best to get specialised fertilizers that are designed to provide balanced food for your plants.

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