

Tips

On the scent

To get the stubborn creases out when ironing, and make your clothes smell lovely, create your own lavender water. Just add a drop or two of oil to a spray bottle filled with water.

AMBER ROSS, VIA EMAIL.



No more splinters

The easiest way to draw out a stubborn splinter is to soak the area in half a cup of epsom salts mixed in two cups of warm water. You may need more to soak your foot. The splinter will soon poke out of the skin enough for you to pull it out. You can make a compress for hard-to-soak areas by immersing a cloth in the mixture and applying it to the affected area.

PAULA BARRY, BAULKHAM HILLS, NSW.

Lemon aid

To remove stains in your microwave, simply put a bowl of water with lemon slices inside the microwave, heat for 30 seconds to one minute, then wipe clean. It will also help to neutralise any food odours.

JASMINE ROSS, VIA EMAIL.



BAMBOO IN THE KITCHEN

Q I've noticed a lot of products made out of bamboo are now available in homeware stores. I need a new chopping board but wonder if a bamboo-style one will last as long as the wooden variety.

BETH SIMONS, VIA EMAIL.

A Move over, plastic, wood and glass! There's a new material in the house and it's becoming more popular by the day – bamboo. Best known for feeding pandas and growing rampant in forests all over the world, you'll now find everything from fashion to furnishing and flooring made from this environmentally friendly textile.

Innovations in bamboo homewares have increased with good reason. Bamboo is one of the most sustainable materials around – it needs no fertilisers, pesticides or insecticides to grow, and a plant is fully mature in three to four years and ready to be harvested.

It's also incredibly versatile and durable. In fact, a bamboo chopping board may be tougher than maple or oak wood.

Weigh up the benefits

The eco-friendliness of a bamboo chopping board is only one of its many pluses.

■ If you're tossing up between a wooden board and a bamboo one, and struggle lifting a heavy weight, you'll appreciate the lightweight material of the bamboo option. It's easier to use and to store.

■ A bamboo board is also gentler on your knives, especially when compared to those hard plastic boards. This means they'll stay sharper for longer.

■ Rest assured, the board's bamboo surface is suitable for all foods to be cut on. It's also safe when it comes to harmful bacteria as it's easy to keep the surface clean.

■ If you're short of serving trays for bread or cheese and biscuits, a bamboo board makes a stylish alternative. It can also do double duty as a surface protector for hot plates, saucepans and casserole dishes.

Bamboo at its best

With proper care, your bamboo chopping board will last longer. Here's what to do:

- Handwash it in clean, hot, soapy water and wipe it dry immediately.
- Keep the surface non-porous by oiling it with mineral oil, vegetable oil or olive oil. Massage the oil in with your hand, then wipe it dry with a clean cloth. Oil your bamboo board every four to six weeks.
- If it gets stained, put salt on a smooth, wet sponge and use it to rub the stain out.

Salad servers, \$19.95, by SunnyLife. Bread bin, \$79.95, from Howards Storage World. Coasters, \$9.99 (for a set of six), from Target.

INQUIRIES Howards Storage World www.hsw.com.au
SunnyLife www.sunnylife.com.au Target 1300 130 000



Craft

BAG IT!

Keep your plastic bags neat and tidy, as well as make them easy to reuse, with this sack sleeve

You'll need

- Tea towel (any size)
- Pins
- Scissors
- 25cm of 20mm-wide cotton twill tape
- 19cm of 6mm-wide elastic
- Safety pin
- Matching cotton
- Needle

- 1 Fold the tea towel in half lengthways, wrong side out. Pin along the edge that's opposite the fold. Pin the cotton twill tape to one open end, on opposite sides of the folded tea towel, to create the sleeve's handle.
- 2 Sew a seam down the pinned edge to create a tube. Stitch the twill tape in place.
- 3 Cut a small slit at the bottom of your tube, on the inside of the tea towel's existing hem. Flip the tube over and cut a second slit at the

end of the tea towel's hem. Tie a knot in the end of your elastic and pin the other end onto the safety pin. Thread the elastic and pin through the first cut you made, easing it all the way through until it comes out the second cut. Tie the elastic ends together and gather to form a closing for your bag.

- 4 Turn the sack sleeve in the right way. Fill it up with your plastic bags and then hang it in your pantry, laundry or kitchen.

