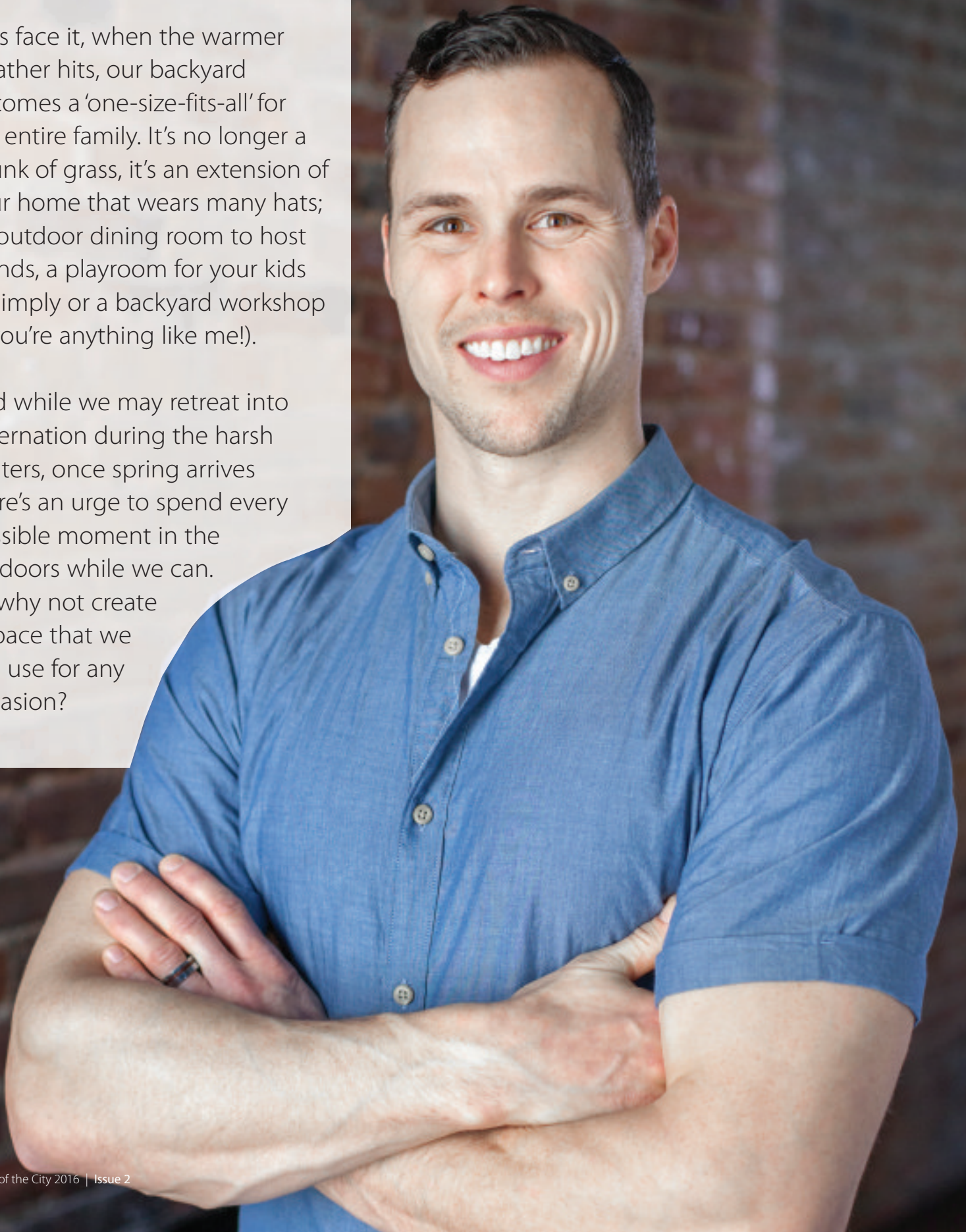


How to create a multi-functional

Let's face it, when the warmer weather hits, our backyard becomes a 'one-size-fits-all' for the entire family. It's no longer a chunk of grass, it's an extension of your home that wears many hats; an outdoor dining room to host friends, a playroom for your kids or simply or a backyard workshop (if you're anything like me!).

And while we may retreat into hibernation during the harsh winters, once spring arrives there's an urge to spend every possible moment in the outdoors while we can. So why not create a space that we can use for any occasion?



BACKYARD



“I’m a big advocate for getting the most function out of every piece— especially those you can make yourself!”
- Chris Palmer

Here are 3 tips from Canada’s favourite handyman, Chris Palmer to create the ultimate multi-functional backyard retreat that will help you save pennies and space!

1 STICK TO ONE SURFACE MATERIAL

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not saying your backyard should look boring! Far from it. However, if your yard has multi-functional spaces, using one material will help create a cohesive aesthetic. This can be especially helpful if you’re dealing with a small yard, as a single colour can create the illusion of a bigger space.

Plus, creating a unified surface gives you a blank canvas to play with, and allows you change up the look of your backyard at a moment’s notice. Instead, get creative with your backyard accessories, incorporating items such as upcycled furniture to add a personal touch.

If you’re sticking with one building material, I’m a big fan of MicroPro Sienna (pictured) as the wood of choice for outdoor projects. It’s a pressure treated wood that is environmentally-friendly and certified low VOC that comes ready-to-build in a beautiful brown tone, without initial staining. Plus, Sienna can be used above or below ground and in fresh water, giving you that versatility to use it on a variety of projects. It’s great for big projects like decks or docks, it’s also a great option for fun side projects like raised planters or even children’s play sets. Whatever’s on your DIY bucket list this season, don’t be afraid to think a little ‘outside the (wooden) box’! »

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2

**I can't stress
this enough -
simplicity is key
when selecting
those anchor items."**
- Chris Palmer

CHOOSE OUTDOOR FURNITURE WITH VERSATILITY

Multi-purpose outdoor furniture is not only fun to experiment with; it maximizes your space. I'm a big advocate for getting the most function out of every piece— especially those you can make yourself. Luckily, my DIY go-to is the perfect addition to your yard - a multi-function raised planter box that can be used in 3 ways; a planter, bench and storage box!

The beauty of this DIY piece is that it allows you to easily switch up its utility based on your mood or activity. With yards getting smaller, planters are increasingly becoming the go-to alternative for gardening enthusiasts short on space. I love building with MicroPro Sienna - it's certified as an Environmentally Preferable Product (EPP) making it a better choice for urban gardening.

Instead of taking up unnecessary space, this planter easily transforms into a bench, giving you additional seating for outdoor entertaining. Your guests will thank you!

I'm also a huge fan of hidden storage. While yards were made to get messy, too much clutter can take away from the natural setting! If you're hosting a last minute barbecue for friends, an outdoor storage box allows you to stash those toys or gardening tools at a moment's notice. Plus, it's a great place to keep blankets for those cooler summer evenings spent lounging on the deck.



3

INVEST IN SIMPLE PIECES

You wouldn't skimp on a bed or dining room table inside your house, so don't pinch the pennies for those important purchases for your yard either! Just like a good quality couch, certain staple pieces can anchor your outdoor space while creating a multitude of possibilities at the same time.

I can't stress this enough - simplicity is key when selecting those anchor items. Invest in a harvest table, for example, and you'll automatically inject some versatility. Its look can be elevated to a host formal dinner party with a nice table runner and some quality dishware or used as a buffet table serving up veggie platters and mini-burgers for your child's birthday party.

Moving from dining to lounging, a good outdoor living room set can go far, especially with the increasingly popular "chat and chill" model of furniture. You can get the best bang from your buck by investing in furniture with a variety of configurations - comfy lounge chairs and sectional pieces that can be grouped with ottomans, coffee tables or side tables or separated off into intimate vignettes.

Ultimately, your backyard is the most coveted 'room' of your house once the warm weather hits - don't let the space go to waste! Invest in simple anchor pieces and materials that can be complimented by multifunctional items and clever use of accessories. This will help boost the functionality of your outdoor space and open up its potential year after year.

Often billed as Canada's favourite handyman, Chris Palmer has quickly become a household name through his thoughtful and creative DIYs. With a strong focus on handcrafted woodwork, Chris has turned his passion into a career -- creating custom projects through his company "Handcrafted by Chris Palmer". He made his national debut on the hit HGTV show Canada's Handyman Challenge, and is now a regular guest expert on Global Morning Toronto. You can check him out at www.handcraftedbychrispalmer.com. Visit microprosienna.com for stocking dealers. 📍



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Chris Palmer's step-by-step instructions
to building a multi-functional

RAISED PLANTER BOX



MATERIALS

7 - MicroPro Sienna 1x6x6' (fence boards)
3 - MicroPro Sienna 5/4x6x8' (deck boards)
2 - MicroPro Sienna 2x4x8'
Box of 250 x 1.5" woodscrews
Box of 100 x 2.5" wood screws
Paint Brush
Thompson's WaterSeal Advanced
Cut-N-Seal® Sealer for Pressure Treated
Wood (Sienna colour)

Step 1

Establish the preferred size of your box, then cut the 1x6's to the height of the planter box, to act as the exterior walls.

Tip: I set up a stop block on my miter saw to make this easier and accurate. Once you have all the pieces cut, move onto cutting the boxes frame pieces to size using the 2x4's.

NOTE: After every cut please make sure you use Cut-N-Seal to help preserve the exposed wood.

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Step 2

Assemble your frame by screwing together your 2x4's creating two identical rectangular frames. Now take short cut pieces of 2x4 to space them apart creating the essential height of your box, less 6". This less 6" will allow you to create the recessed platform for your planter box option.

Step 3

Next you can now screw the 1x6's to the frame creating the enclosed box.

Time to construct the finishing trim and lid...

Step 4

Take a deck board (5/4x6) and rip it in half to create an exterior trim. Be sure to use cut n' seal on the cut edge. Now, cut these pieces to match the length and width of your box and screw it to the top edge creating a trimmed appearance. A wood clamp can help hold it in place. Tip: I used my 2.5" screws from the inside, so that you won't see the screws on the outside of the box.

Step 5

Repeat step 4, but use a 1x6 to create a bottom trim piece.

Step 6

Take your 5/4 x 6 board and cut it to the full interior length of your box, so that it can rest on the edge of the 2x4 frame inside. Repeat the cut until you have enough boards to cover your opening. I drilled out a hole in one of the boards to act as a finger pull, to remove the board for access to the storage below. This will now act as your planter box shelf.

Step 7

Create a lid by cutting the 1x6 lumber to short lengths, so that they span the width of the box opening. Then take a 5/4x6 board cut to the interior longest length and rip it in half. Cut 4 short blocks of 5/4 x 6 to act as legs for the lid to stand on inside the box. Remember to cut the short blocks not the full depth of the interior, you need to subtract the thickness of the top 2 layers of

boards. Screw the ripped pieces of 5/4 x 6 to the short leg pieces creating a "U" shape.

Step 8

Now with your 2 "U" shaped lid frames, space them the same width apart as your short cut 1x6 boards. Begin to lay your 1x6 boards on the lid frames, screwing each one in place, making sure to keep it parallel and square. An option for easy lid removal is to drill a finger pull into either end of the lid, this allows the top to remain flush surface.

Step 9

Finally, drop your lid in place and it should be flush with the top of the box. If you don't find it flush, just go back and double check your measurements for the height.

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