

helpdesk

For all your renovation queries, email us at renohelp@sunherald.com.au

Q I have recently bought a six-year-old house with pergola, covered in smoky, corrugated plastic sheeting. The sun comes straight through and it is very hot. Can I paint the sheeting (Bunnings type) or have you any other suggestion to block out the sun? Would covering either underneath the pergola or over the top of the sheeting with shade cloth be an option?

A Yes, you can paint it, but it depends on what you want to achieve: reduce the amount of heat transferred or block out the sun. The reason it gets hot underneath is because the sheeting absorbs the heat of the sun, trapping it underneath the sheeting, causing a greenhouse effect.

As your house is not old, the laserlite should be in pretty good condition. Although painting it with a reflective paint would diffuse some of the heat, it will make it darker and require maintenance. Installing standard shade cloth would reduce the amount of UV light getting through.

However, some believe shade cloth actually contributes to the amount of heat being absorbed, worsening your problem. There is an agricultural greenhouse material that has been used extensively throughout Europe for decades and is now available in Australia. It works by reflecting the heat back out. Its application would be well suited to pergolas as the offending heat is diffused without light being compromised. It is distributed by Living Shade and you can contact them for distributors' details on 9477 6955 or email them directly at info@livingshade.com.au.

Q Our relatively new showerscreen is marked with what appears to be shower scum. I have tried just about everything (including most of the latest proprietary products) to get it off, but with no success. Any suggestions?

A Depending on how severe your problem is, soap scum can be successfully removed with a variety of cleaners combined with a good amount of elbow grease. For stubborn problems repeat applications are required and rinsing with very hot water in between applications helps to break down the white film of soap scum. CLR Clear, which can be purchased at most supermarkets, is very effective for treating soap scum and a plethora of other stains.

Borax is another very cheap and effective cleaning agent for ultra-stubborn stains. To prevent soap scum build up, visit a respected tile and bathroom showroom and pick up a product called **Enduroshield**. This is designed to prevent the build-up of soap scum by providing a protective film that is too slippery for it to adhere to. It comes with all the necessary instructions on how to prep your surface.

Q Stainless steel everything in the kitchen seemed like a good idea at the time, but it is proving to be a nightmare to clean without scratching. Is there anything on the market that you can recommend for an easy clean?

A Citro Clean is a multi-purpose cleaner. Spray onto the surface and wipe down with a soapy sponge. It will remove all your oil and cooking splatter in the kitchen and eliminate many lingering cooking smells. Be warned, it is very strong and should be used with care or it will remove any painted-on information on your appliances, especially when used with a scourer. Citro Clean can be found in major supermarkets or via their website: www.citroclean.com.au.

DISCLAIMER: Readers should note that this column is intended to provide general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice.

remember The ice chest

Strange as it may seem, the metal cabinet containing a cool - was invented long ago.

The world's first refrigerator beer cool in a brewery, was expected, by an Australian, J. The ice chest didn't appear a century and continued to be in general use long after the 1920s, when domestic refrigerators arrived.

In many Australian homes, the fridge was beyond the reach of the battler and seen as a needless luxury. After all, the ice chest never broke down and the iceman called every week, lugging blocks of ice with his enormous tongs. Today, antique dealers will sell you an old ice chest for between \$500 and \$800, but no matter how long you wait the iceman won't come.

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