

home & design

on the shelf



Step outdoors

Looking for durable outdoor flooring? Squarefoot, a flooring and interiors company, has launched a new range of outdoor wooden flooring, available in tiles and planks and requires minimal maintenance. In ipe and pinewood. Priced at Rs 350 per sq ft, plus taxes. Details: 080 41101012



Special effects

Jotun Paints has launched Lady Effects, a range of special effects paints. Think silver/gold sparkles, metallic sheens and stucco appearances. The Lady Effects Glaze collection allows for innovative painting techniques like colour washing, glazing, sponging, marbling, flame and ragging. Available at Faizal Paints. Priced from Rs 700 onwards. Details: 9840248861



Made to match

Add a touch of glamour with cooling advantage. The new range of Electrolux air-conditioners comes with interchangeable colour panels. Think shades of burgundy red, silver and champagne gold. Priced between Rs 22,990 and Rs 27,290. Details: 26161892



SPY

Damro has launched a new showroom at Porur to celebrate its 25th anniversary. Expect 25 per cent off on the range, till March 31. Details: 24768885

Hanging garden

The 'greening the walls' concept is getting quite popular in the city and here's why



RE your ambitious garden plans driving you up the wall, all due to lack of space? The concept of vertical gardens, also known as a green or living wall, gives you foliage minus the wide open spaces. This is an urban solution to making our homes and cities green.

Pretty yet practical

The green wall exists either as a free standing item or as a part of any building, partially or completely covered with plants. Besides beautification of vertical spaces, these walls help conserve energy by insulating the building, absorbing and filtering storm water, reducing local water body pollution and even filtering the air and reducing heat. The green wall doesn't just have to be about being pretty. Exnora, a non-governmental environmental service outfit, is introducing a different kind of green wall that implements fruit bearing creepers. "You get the best of both worlds this way," says MB Nirmal, Exnora. "Along with making your home beautiful and green, you get to enjoy the fruits of nature," he explains.

A simple process

All you need is a structure to

hold up the creepers against the wall. The structure could be a bamboo panel, a coir mesh or even a net that is fixed on your wall. Fast growing, fruit-bearing creepers would include bitter melon, snake melon, beans and ivy gourd (known as *kovakkai*). The seeds for these plants are available locally and at the seed bank at Exnora. They have to be germinated in a plant bed, created just below the vertical structure. Germination takes about a week and once you see



the first few leaves sprout, be assured that the plants will naturally grow onto the vertical structure in about 12 days. "The key is to be patient, nothing grows overnight. And once you give the plants time, the results will amaze you," promises Nirmal.

No fuss maintenance

When it comes to choosing the best ornamental plants for your

green wall, it's best to choose a variety that doesn't require constant attention. "For large scale projects, it takes about four to eight weeks to achieve full effect. In India, plants grow continuously and to maintain them vertically in a limited growth media is a challenge in itself. But with the proper care, which includes controlled irrigation, timely trimming, application of organic liquid fertilisers, the green effect lasts all through the year," says Anuradha Barpande, co-owner, ELT India, a landscaping enterprise that develops and promotes novel concepts in architecture and horticulture.

ELT India developed a DIY living wall kit for home gardeners, which includes supports, two living wall panels on a solid stand and a simple irrigation system. This kit is handy and ensures that moisture does not seep onto the wall surface. The size of the kit can be customised. "We want to educate people about the advantages of the green wall to help make our homes and cities greener," offers Barpande, whose projects include the vertical garden at Mughal Gardens, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. The cost of the kit is Rs 6,000.

Details: Exnora International: 28153376, ELT India, Chennai: 9500076968

— Nissin Laby
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urban living

Keep it green

- Sprinkle water on the green wall
- Trim at the right level at the right time
- Use organic liquid fertilisers

What to plant

- Abelia: Known for its arching branches densely clothed with glossy leaves
- Chlorophytum: A perennial herbaceous plant also known as Spider plant
- Ruelia: An evergreen shrub also known as wild petunia that bears blue and purple flowers
- Cuphea: A perennial flowering plant ideal for tropical climates
- Cyperus: Commonly known as nutsedge or purple nutgrass
- Gardenia dwarf: Blooms in May and June

first look

Expect classic and modern pieces with a twist at the flagship Versace Home store in the capital

Opulence gets a name

THERE is nothing minimalist about the new Versace home collection but then again, no one expects anything less than full-on luxury from Donatella Versace. The bright colours and funky prints are explosive, as are the gilt prints (think tiger print cushions and the Berlin sofa, an affair with crowded face prints.)

Abhay Gupta, executive director, Blues Home,

which franchises Versace Home in India, says, "The 3,568 sq ft stand-alone store stocks flooring, linen, furniture, bed and bath, tableware

and gift solutions in modern and heritage styles."

Pieces from the collection include Sunburst, a crystal table that incor-



porates 14 chromed metal elements that are meant to convey the effects of a solar explosion. Characterised by 21st century Versace, the collection reflects its own history. A best-seller is the 'harem chair', with loose cushions and paisley prints set in bright colours (featured).

To offset the grandiose fare, Versace also has the Art de la Table range, which abounds in femininity and pastel shades. The Rosenthal porcelain table ware comes with 24K gold and platinum plating. Orders can be placed online, with three months for delivery. Home design and furnishing services are offered.

Priced between Rs 4,000 and 50,000,00. Details: 011 40765597

— Reshma Iqbal