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Issue 3: Shelter

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For The Love of a Canopy

Words by **Jane Stark** / Images by **Georgina Reid** (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/contributors/jane-stark/>)
 (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/contributors/georgina-reid/>)

Freddie Mercury once sang ‘Open your eyes. Look up to the skies and see.’ An old art teacher of mine also banged on about looking up and not just straight ahead (although not as melodically as Freddie). He was right, however, and I’ve been looking up ever since.

The botanical world is ruled by the canopy. The Shelter king is the mighty tree. Their pure majesty, beauty and protective canopy makes them the cream of the crop for me.

The density and type of a tree canopy determines the lifecycle in and under it. From towering timber to forest floor, botanical shelter is a delicate balance – they’re all looking after one another. There’s also the humanly constructed canopy to consider: shelter belts, green walls, green ceilings and green roofs to enclose us and our livestock.

“ Nothing sends a shiver down my spine as the aggressive whine of a chainsaw and the resulting nude horizon. Give me a gauzy, tree-filtered view any day rather than a full frontal! There’s nothing as sad as having to cut down a sick tree and the resulting loss of shelter to all the fragile lives depending on it.

Leafed or nude, indigenous or exotic, flowering or fruity, I’m nutty about trees. They house exquisitely crafted bird’s nests, epiphytic feeders, tree-houses, gazillions of insects and dastardly possums. They provide food for plants and animals alike. I love a lone tree in a paddock. I love a whole bunch of them – nature’s bushland, forest and jungle, and the human constructs of arboretums, orchards and plantations.



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From Twitter

Tattoos, beards, AND flowers. An interview photographer Brock Elbank by @ambercre (<http://twitter.com/ambercreswell>) on TPH : (<http://t.co/9vASBNVIJZ>) (<http://t.co/9vASBNVIJZ>) hour ago (<http://twitter.com/ThePlanthunter/statuses>)

DIY Love-O-Saurus. Make one for your Val #guaranteedtogetyoulaid (<http://twitter.com/qjly0TKXhd>) #TPHplay: (<http://twitter.com/search?q=%23TPHplay>): (<http://t.co/qjly0TKXhd>) (<http://t.co/qjly0TKXhd>) 23 hours ago (<http://twitter.com/ThePlanthunter/statuses>)

Well there you go. Hydrangeas are hallucinating nabbing 'em in France & police are in a fix (<http://t.co/q26oZxHwga>) (<http://t.co/q26oZxHwga>)

Some very established trees sealed the deal for me when I chose my current home. The garden of my small semi-detached house is home to an established *Platanus × acerifolia* (London plane tree), the ubiquitous hedge of *Cupressocyparis leylandii* ('Leightons Green' cypress) and a borrowed giant, a heritage protected *Eucalyptus microcorys* (turpentine). There is a tree view from every window and door and my upstairs study feels like a treehouse. However, after moving in, I could see that many years of neglect had taken their toll.

My new pets badly needed some grooming, shaping, and pruning to rid them of their deadwood and tangled branches. Their canopies needed lifting too, to let the light in.

So, I started at the front. The dank and dark courtyard was enclosed by hedged Leighton's Green cypress. Whilst they did a superb job of muffling traffic noise, they were visually oppressive and light restricting. For the lower foliage, every day was a bad hair day and they needed smartening up.

To inject some light, I removed a metre and a half of the lower branches and created an aerial hedge. I then placed mirrors on every wall, creating a disorienting Escher effect and added some shiny Viburnum and the much maligned 'petrol station plant' – brilliant lime *Duranta repens* 'Sheena's Gold' to further bounce the light around.

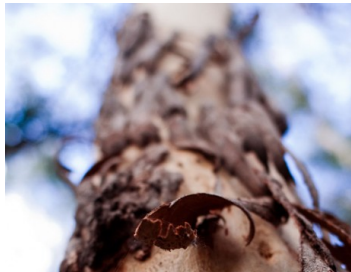
Arborists have deftly edited both my neighbour's tree and my old plane tree. And to continue the story, I planted two more small trees – *Michelia × alba* (White Champaca), so there's life after my plane tree gives up the ghost.

“ Trees can suit the smallest of spaces; if your garden can only afford one plant, let it be a tree. Their branching and leaf shapes, bark patterns and dramatic shadows add sculptural beauty to any space. Their shade provides a cooler microclimate and a delicious canopy for outdoor meals. And don't forget sense of scale! A larger plant choice can make a space feel so much more generous whilst diminishing the mass of a building.

If canopy can't be – then borrow one! Neighbours' trees can be designed into your garden too with clever complimentary plant selections.

Don't forget the mighty tree's inclusion in your garden, however small. Like any urbane pet they need to be wisely chosen for their suitability and need to be feed, watered, groomed and pruned. Like any pet they bring years of joy. Recently I was ever so glad when disembarking at Barcelona airport's transit lounge, the first thing I saw was a tree. How fantastic! The lounge was designed around a huge outdoor courtyard oasis of trees – a joyful respite from a celestial desert. Genius!

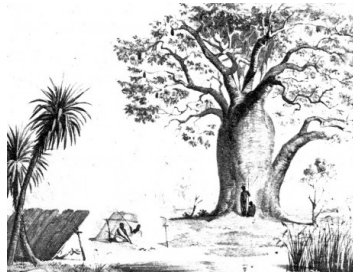
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(<http://theplanthunter.com.au/botanica/patriotism-exaggeration/>)

No Patriotism in Exaggeration (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/botanica/patriotism-exaggeration/>)

On the second-last day of the 1888-1889 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition a new photographic exhibit appeared in the picture gallery that caused an instant sensation. The photograph was an enlarged print of a mammoth Dandenong Ranges gum tree, photographed



(<http://theplanthunter.com.au/botanica/boabs-ancient-trees-modern-needs/>)

Boabs: Ancient Trees, Modern Needs (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/botanica/boabs-ancient-trees-modern-needs/>)

The boab is the plant world's most ardent multi-tasker. This native tree might tread the line between ugly and beautiful thanks to branches that resemble gnarled fingers and outrageous hourglass curves but its true



(<http://theplanthunter.com.au/gardens/designing-for-death/>)

Designing For Death (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/gardens/designing-for-death/>)

Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf designs for all seasons, embracing winter 'garden death' with enthusiasm usually reserved for spring and summer. No drab dead winter perennials for Piet. No dead-heading and cutting back. He celebrates the beauty of a dying seed head just as much as their flowering forms.

days ago
(<http://twitter.com/ThePlanthunter/statuses>)



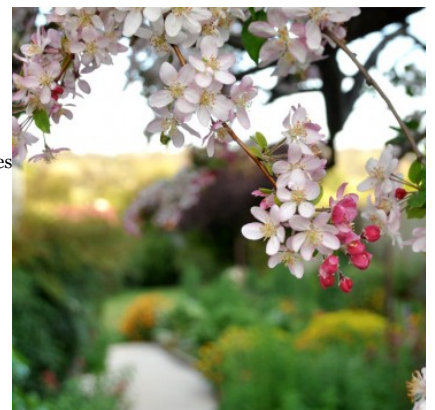
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A Beautiful, Purposeful Anarchy (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/gardens/beautiful-purposeful-anarchy/>)

My mum used to have a garden where heritage Turpentine trees reached to the sky, orchids climbed their sides. The earth was covered in large leafed camellia trees in reds, pinks and whites forming like collars around the trees. Rambling and dishevelled glasshouses ran down the back filled with delicate orchids from the previous owner. My mother is an artist and her garden was her gentle protest against a unimaginative suburban culture.

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36 Edward Street (<http://theplanthunter.com.au/gardens/36-edward-street/>)

I'm not sure what I expected. She died a few months ago. I had been back to her house on the day of her funeral. I had to bite my lip to stop myself crying. I managed to keep my composure, however the

by prominent Victorian landscape photographer Nicholas John Caire. The picture's caption noted that the tree depicted was a specimen of *Eucalyptus amygdalina* var. *regnans* (a.k.a *Eucalyptus regnans*, the mountain ash), which had been measured at a staggering 466 feet (142 metres) high.

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magic stems from its ability to address a baffling range of modern-day afflictions. Here are five crises best solved by an encounter with Adansonia gregorii.

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veiled. I returned with my mother in spring. The beautiful it broke my heart. It knocked for days. I am still limping and I'm surprised.

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