

# AUSTRALIAN HOUSE & GARDEN

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CUBBYHOUSES

# Little worlds

Furnish a cubbyhouse with a fertile young imagination and children can become anything they want to be, writes Elizabeth Wilson.



Text by Elizabeth Wilson. Photography by Chris Warnes (this page), Nick Watt (opposite). Styling by Jessica Hanson (this page). For Where to Buy, see page 190.



Children love to create little worlds of their own. They'll make one using a blanket draped over the furniture - and suddenly they're princesses in a castle. Or they'll find it inside the hollow of a tree, where they are forest elves protecting the world from evil. And, if they're really fortunate, they might just find themselves the proud owners of a cubbyhouse.

The beauty of a cubbyhouse or a tree house is that they are dedicated spaces for child's play; an escape from the world of adults. When children enter their miniature home, they become doctors, school teachers, chefs, mermaids sipping on tea and pirates sailing the high seas. There's a magic about cubbyhouses for every child - and every child within.

### Huff and puff

In the *Three Little Pigs*, the house made of sticks suffers a sad fate, but that's not the case with this little place (opposite). Made from tea-tree saplings, it was created by Spirit Level Designs as part of a landscaping scheme for the garden of a home in Sydney's Surry Hills. This sturdy hut is a hideaway for Jack, six, and his sister Ava, five. "We didn't want anything too cutesy. We wanted to keep it simple but fun," says their mother, Cathy Walton. "We wanted it made from natural materials as an antidote to all the plastic out there." Designer Hugh Main says he was inspired by the thought of "a romantic *Gulliver's Travels*-style hut".

**Spirit Level Designs, Redfern, NSW; (02) 8399 0660 or [www.spiritlevel.com.au](http://www.spiritlevel.com.au).**

### Home sweet home

Sitting in a Sydney garden, this cubby (above) is straight out of a picture book. "I wanted a cubby that looked like a little house," says Berry, who bought the Homestead model, from Custom Outdoor Creations on the NSW Central Coast, for children Isabella, seven, Rose, five, and Louis, 19 months. "I wanted to create a place where the girls would love spending time," she says. The house has its own place in the garden, and its own garden, landscaped by Secret Gardens of Sydney. Berry is happy that the passionfruit and *Stephanotis* are making themselves at home here. "It makes it look even more like a miniature house." ➤

**Custom Outdoor Creations, Kincumber, NSW; 0415 282 297 or [www.customcubbies.com.au](http://www.customcubbies.com.au).**