



Where the wind blows...

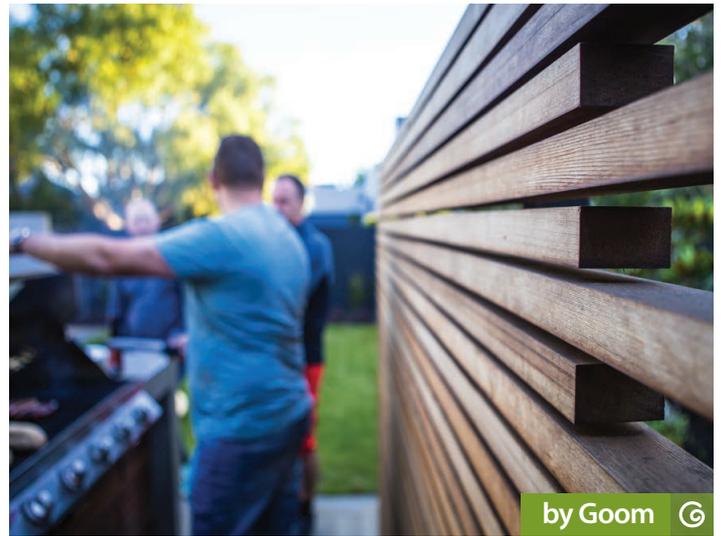
It might be Wellington which is known as wind-battered, but Christchurch also gets its fair share of bluster. Although temperatures are rising, and the clocks going forward gives us more time to enjoy the outdoors, remember that wind can provide the death knell to comfortable outdoor entertaining.

The Canterbury nor'wester commonly peaks at this time of year. The distinctive arch cloud formation signals its arrival, as do hot, dry and often ferocious gusts. Whilst the nor'west might warm things up, its strong and unpredictable nature can hamper enjoyment of the outdoors. An even bigger curse on outdoor entertaining is the notorious Christchurch easterly. The sun can be beating down with not a cloud in the sky, but an easterly will soon rob all heat from your party and have guests scurrying inside for warmth. Let's be honest, in a bitter Southerly, the best place is indoors so there's no need to tackle this one!

Protection from wind is just as vital as from sun and rain to maximise the comfort of your outdoor living. Effective shelter from wind not only benefits your guests - but also young, or less wind tolerant plantings in your garden.

Direction

The first thing to consider with screening is wind direction. If you are planning to build, think carefully about the best orientation and design to mitigate the impact of wind. If revamping an existing outdoor space which isn't ideally located, consider how plants and screening can be used to minimise the wind. Post quake Christchurch has seen a significant increase in new subdivisions, many of which have been designed and constructed without any trees or vegetation. This has created major wind tunnels. Without any trees or vegetation as a barrier, the wind will slam your property with force! Wind screening around your property will not only allow increased enjoyment of outdoor spaces, but it will also protect your home. Banging doors, slamming windows, flying umbrellas - all have potential to cause damage.



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Types of wind shelter

- **Walls and screens:** Although more costly than a planted shelter, a man made shelter will be effective as soon as completed. Wind can be very efficiently deflected from often-used outdoor spaces like decks and patios. Heat can be trapped around swimming pools and spas. Timber and metal provide strong barriers but using clear material such as glass will ensure views are preserved. Care must be taken to ensure man made wind screens are constructed with sufficient strength to withstand the exertion of wind.
- **Blinds & Vertical louvres:** Both functional and stylish, louvres and blinds have the advantage of being movable, and able to accommodate changes in wind direction (or opened completely in still weather).
- **Planting:** Plantings such as hedges and shrubs can be used to protect your entire property (for example the classic agricultural 'shelter belt') or smaller sections within your property. Planted shelter will block 25-60% of the wind but some permeability may be desired in spaces where a cooling breeze will provide relief in stifling heat. Your landscape architect will advise you on which wind-resistant plants will work best with your specific site.
- **Hardscaping:** With clever planning, larger structures such as pools, spas and outdoor rooms can be constructed to divert wind from your outdoor living areas. You can even design wings around your BBQ to block wind and get food sizzling far more efficiently! A different approach is to create a sunken courtyard or living area - providing exceptional wind protection as well as a cosy feel.

Call Goom Landscapes to discuss mitigating wind at your home.

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