

He didn't get bitten, and I'm glad. But it was the wrong time and the wrong gear.

Most people make one of three mistakes. They tidy up in the warm months, when snakes are most active. They lift things towards themselves. Or they clean up the far paddock and forget the junk right by the back door.

The Old Bush Way

- 1 **Dress for the job.** Wear gloves, long pants and covered shoes. The Queensland Government advises the same for gardening. Do the big jobs in the cool months if you can.
- 2 **Lift from the far side.** Grab the far edge of any sheet of tin, board or ply. Lift it so it opens away from you. If something's under there, it's facing away from your legs.
- 3 **Get it off the ground.** Stand old sheets of iron on their edge against a fence. Or take them to the tip. Do the same with old boards, pallets and bits of ply lying flat.
- 4 **Stack the woodpile neat.** The Queensland Government says to stack timber neatly, so rodents and snakes can't hide in it. I keep mine up off the dirt and well away from the house. Do the same with old bricks and pavers.
- 5 **Cut the grass and pull the beds back.** Keep the lawn short, especially near the house. The Queensland Government says to keep garden beds and shrubs away from your home. I like a clear strip round the house where I can see the ground.
- 6 **Clear under the house and shed.** Old furniture, boxes and timber make good hiding spots. Clear it out, or put it up on shelves so you can see underneath.