

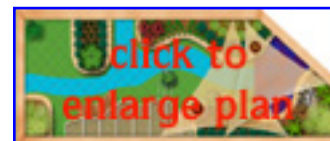
BACKYARD BLITZ

Garden Therapy



Cameron Zipf is only 12 but he has had a tough few years. He was seriously injured in a farm accident on the family property and was told by his doctors that he may never walk again. After many months in hospital he has made a remarkable recovery and has defied the doctors and is up and walking. He is an inspiration to all who meet him. Cameron's mother Valerie contacted the Backyard Blitz team to ask for their help in thanking the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane for all of their care and support during the ordeal.

Landscape designer Jamie Durie has created a pleasant and functional interactive space in a small rooftop courtyard and adjacent room. Before the team arrived this was a little used, hot and exposed area. Now a large curving aviary and deck runs the length of one wall while shade sails cover the area cutting out the hot sun and winds and a contemporary water feature cools and enlivens the area. Curving garden beds and some brightly coloured painted containers house hardy plants. Bright paint brings fun and interest to the ground while some large rubberised pavers in a checkerboard pattern define a seating area and create a softfall spot to play.



In a Backyard Blitz first, the team ventured inside to do some interior decorating. Large welcoming lounges, a change of paint colour, rugs and a beautiful aquarium make this space feel like a home away from home. The room will provide a relaxing retreat for parents as they watch their children enjoying the new garden.



Adapting this plan to your garden

Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard or courtyard area (eg 1:100) showing the location of the house or main buildings and other major features. Then incorporate the desired elements from our makeover. As your backyard will be a different size, you will need to estimate the amounts of materials you will require.

Note: on your plan show the locations of any services (water pipes, sewerage, power, phone, etc) so you can avoid damaging them during the makeover.

Permits and approval: many structures in the backyard require council approval as they can have an impact on your neighbours. Always discuss your plans with your local council before commencing building in the backyard.

Materials

This courtyard has a waterproof membrane beneath the tile floor covering. As a result, no disturbance to the tile floor was allowed and everything was built on top.

Aviary: galvanised water pipe (20mm) was bent to shape using a hydraulic pipe bender and spot welded to create a curving, streamlined framework. The water pipe was spot welded to prefabricated steel base plates, attached to the concrete walls with dynabolts. Bird mesh (1/2", 15 gauge) was connected to the pipe frame with Tek screws (self drilling screws). All aviaries require a waterproof and shaded area to enable birds to escape from the weather. This was achieved by screwing timber rafters (75x50mm) to the top of the framework to support timber battens (50x25mm). Clear polycarbonate roofing was connected to the battens with roofing screws. **Blitz Tipz** Bend pipes easily by hiring a hydraulic pipe bender from \$44 a day.

Decking: a simple, curved viewing deck was built in front of the aviary. Bearers (90x45mm) laid at angles to create a curve and levelled as required using pack wedges, support cantilevered decking boards (40x20mm) connected with galvanised, spiral shanked nails. **Blitz Tipz** Create a curved edge to your decking by running decking boards beyond the end joist. Mark out your shape and trim the decking boards, being careful not to cut into the joist beneath. For safety reasons, decking boards should not be cantilevered more than 150mm.

Garden beds: a concrete miniwall system was laid in a curved shape to define two garden beds. The top and bottom courses are held in place with construction adhesive. A layer of plastic drainage cell (1200x330x40mm) was fitted into the bottom of the bed and geotextile fabric was laid over this and up the back of the wall. The beds were then filled with a potting mix, planted out and mulched with 50mm of composted pine bark. **Blitz Tipz** It is essential that water can drain from raised garden beds. Plastic drainage cells provide a void for water to move into, while a layer of permeable geotextile fabric stops soil washing into the plastic cells.



Water feature: a striking water feature has been created by combining synthetic and natural elements. A stainless steel frame supports columns of large white pebbles threaded onto stainless steel wire. A stainless steel trough above the pebbles enables water to run down over the pebbles into a hidden sump below (600x600x600mm, stormwater pit). A low voltage submersible pump recirculates the water via a pipe up the rear of the stand. The pump is connected to an external transformer buried in the garden bed and plugged into an external powerpoint. To ensure the safety of children, a wire mesh covers the sump and gravel weighs it down in place. **Blitz Tipz** The sound of running water is often the most attractive element of a water feature. To make it safe for children disguise the pump and body of water in a below ground sump.



Shade sails: two large shade sails have been attached to three walls of the courtyard to create shade and bring scale to what was an open void. Large funnels connected to the sails provide some vertical relief to the space and direct some water run-off into two concrete pots below. Connecting shade sails to existing structures requires the guidance of experts as the sails can place a tremendous load on their anchor points especially in windy conditions. A structural engineer designed and specified the attachment points at the walls and also the type of connections used (10mm stainless steel chain and shackles). **Blitz Tipz** As large pressure may be exerted on sails under tension or during windy weather, always consult a builder or structural engineer to discuss your proposed connection points prior to ordering your sails.



Large planters: large diameter (750mm) concrete stormwater pipes were used as large scale pots. The supplier cut a four metre length of pipe into five different lengths and cut weep holes into the bottom of each for additional drainage. Plastic drainage cell (1200x330x40mm) was cut to fit into the bottom of the pipe and covered with geotextile fabric. The planters were then filled with potting mix and planted. **Blitz Tipz** Large unconventional containers make great planters. However, make sure you have adequate drainage or your plants will suffer.

Talking handrail: a copper pipe (12mm) was bent to form a wavy handrail. Stainless steel uprights spot welded to the underside of the handrail held it in place above the block wall. But this was no ordinary handrail. An electric circuit was created by connecting a receiver (a recorded message and speaker are built in) to the copper rail by an earth wire. Visitors to the garden can interact with the copper rail by attempting to trace a circular hand piece over the curving handrail. If the copper rail is touched by the hand piece, it completes the circuit and activates the recorded message. **Blitz Tipz** Similar self-contained products are available at large electronic retailers such as Dick Smith Electronics.

Exterior paints: existing tiles were painted with paver paints from Nu-tech. Pavecoat 'Grass Green' and 'Sky Blue' were the colours used. **Blitz Tipz:** a large range of paver paints in different colours and textures are available in the paints section of leading hardware outlets. Nu-tech paints are available from Sydney (02) 9638 7089.

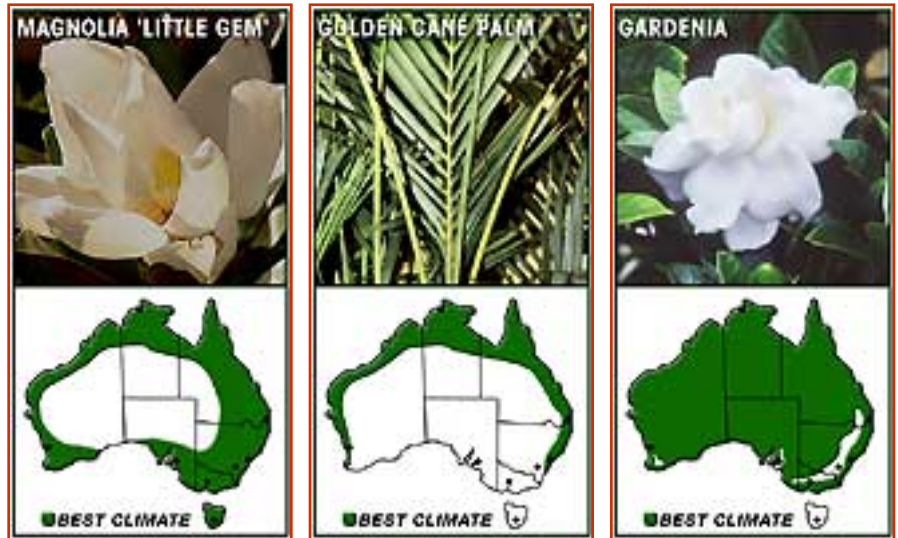
Interior room: new lounges, a new coat of paint, a magnificent specially commissioned painting and a beautiful new aquarium (1200x380x450mm) on a timber stand have brightened up a room adjacent to the garden. **Blitz Tipz** Using one light colour to paint both walls and ceilings can visually increase

the size of the room.

Plants

A combination of architectural feature plants and massed groupings of the same species provides interest and drama to this garden.

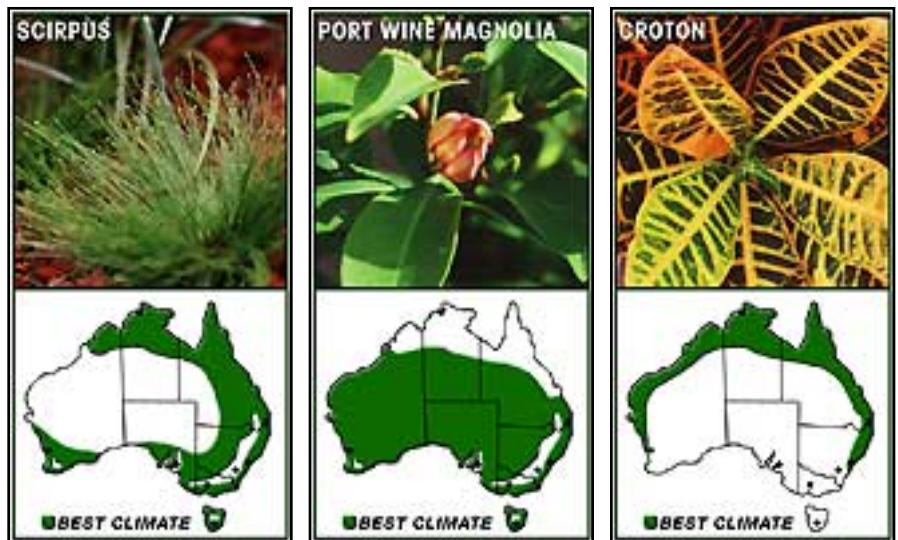
Trees: dracaena (*Dracaena reflexa* 'Variegata'), cumquat (*Fortunella japonica*), magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Little Gem'), port-wine magnolia (*Michelia figo*), golden-cane palm (*Dypsis lutescens*), lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)



Shrubs: cordyline (*Cordyline fruticosa* 'Nigra' and 'Rubra'), gardenia (*Gardenia augusta* 'Florida'), dwarf philodendron (*Philodendron* 'Xanadu'), croton (*Codiaeum variegatum*), bromeliad (*Neoregelia* spp.), fairy lights (*Scirpus* 'Fairy Lights')

Groundcovers: mini mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Mini'), mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*), liriopse (*Liriope muscari* 'Evergreen Giant'), gazania (*Gazania x hybrida*), mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*), ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*), rhoeo or Moses in a basket (*Tradescantia spathacea*)

Climbers: star jasmines (*Trachelospermum jasminoides* and 'Tricolor')



Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost of plants and materials was \$27, 201. This cost could be reduced to \$23, 909 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Large shade sails and funnels cost \$3750 and were created by Moodie Innovative Solutions in

Sydney. Moodies also supplied large rubber pavers. They cost from \$65 each plus adhesive. Phone: (02) 9816 1133 for more details.

- Apollo Landscape Supplies in Brisbane provided landscape materials in large bulk bags to enable them to be lifted by crane onto the rooftop. Phone: (07) 3275 1195 for more information.
 - James Hardie Pty Ltd provided concrete stormwater pipes cut to length. They cost about \$500 for a 4 metre length of pipe.
 - Aquarium and tropical fish supplied by Aquariums 'R' Us in Brisbane. Phone: (07) 3857 1716.
 - C&M miniwall is available in SA, Vic, NSW, and Qld from Amber and other accredited distributors. It costs from \$3.20 per block. Contact head office in Sydney on (02) 9748 1024 or look for your nearest Amber store.
 - Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you or advise similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide contacts to you.
 - Most other materials such as mulch and pebbles are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
 - All tools used are commonly available for hire including the hydraulic pipe bender and arc welder.
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Getaway details

The Zipf family spent several days seeing the sights of Sydney.

Accommodation

All Seasons Hotel Darling Harbour
17 Little Pier Street
Darling Harbour
Phone: (02) 8217 4000
Website: www.allseasons.com.au

Tours

Sydney Aquarium
Darling Harbour
Phone: (02) 9262 2300
Website: www.sydneyaquarium.com.au

Fox Studios
Moore Park
Phone: (02) 9383 4000
Website: www.foxstudios.com.au

Taronga Zoo
Bradleys Head Road
Mosman
Phone: (02) 9969 2777
Website: www.zoo.nsw.gov.au/taronga

Acknowledgments

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The Blitz Team would like to thank the staff and patients of the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane for the help, assistance and support they received during the planning, construction and filming of this special makeover. They would also like to thank the staff and patients at General Hospital, Nambour, Qld.

As well special thanks to the following individuals who helped to make the makeover such as success.

- Jen Grainger, apprentice carpenter and Brisbane Apprentice of the Year - 2001.
- Ashley Walters, Brisbane Hospital trade co-ordinator and painting staff.
- Artist Amanda Brookes, who created the beautiful painting for the redecorated room adjacent to the garden.
- Dr Mark Coghlan, Cameron's doctor.
- Milton Ludlow, budgerigar breeder and member of the Queensland Budgerigar Society.
- Humphrey B. Bear, who entertained the children (for more on Humphrey see his website www.humphreybear.com).

Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz).

For the **Revisiting Old Friends** fact sheet [click here](#).

For more **Step by Step Constructions** [click here](#)

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