

BACKYARD BLITZ

Summerhouse Garden



The Backyard Blitz team transformed this average backyard into a bountiful garden that invites you to sit and relax.

Landscape designer Colin Brown created the design which would utilise the good points of the garden and introduce some other functional and attractive elements as well. The plan was to retain the established lawn trees and shrubs, to create a kitchen garden at the back steps, a summerhouse for entertaining and relaxing surrounded by a bog garden and a cottage garden filled with flowering plants.

Adapting this plan to your garden



Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard (eg 1:100) showing the location of the house and major features then incorporate the desired elements from our makeover. As your garden 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 - council permission is required to remove some trees, and may be required for some structural work. Neighbours need to be consulted about new boundary fences. If they don't agree with your proposed fencing idea, you are legally entitled to build your new fence on your own property - eg just on your side of the boundary line - provided it meets local council requirements.

Materials

Paving: concrete paths were laid using concrete with an accelerator to aid in rapid curing. The concrete had more moisture than normal to aid in placement and manoeuvrability (these changes are only recommended for experienced tradespeople). Reinforcing steel mesh (F62) was placed in the summerhouse floor to increase strength.

Fencing: hardwood fence posts and rails were used to repair the fence following removal of the tree stump. The existing palings were re-used to blend the new section with the old.

Espalier: 2.4m x 100mm round treated pine logs, rapid-set concrete, galvanised wire, eyebolts and gripples, gripple tensioning tool.

Summerhouse: galvanised post stirrups and dynabolts, 90x90mm treated pine posts, pre-fabricated framed lattice, 90x45mm studs and 90x90mm posts for the bench seating with pine decking as the bench tops. All timbers were connected using a nail gun and galvanised nails. We painted the summerhouse in 'Asparagus Fern' and 'Slate Grey' colours which costs \$60 for 4 litres from Pascol Paints. Sarlon Polyshade was used as a roof to allow light and air to flow through the summerhouse whilst reducing direct sunlight.

Clothesline: a Hills Paraline was attached to the fence with screws. A range of sizes are available from most hardware stores from about \$150.

Soil: 50:50 combination of cow manure and mushroom compost was used to improve the site soil. This mix cost about \$40/cubic metre. Soil mixes are available at landscape suppliers and some nurseries as bagged products and cost about \$7 for a 30 litre bag.

Mulch: Bags of lucerne chaff were used. Lucerne is available as a bagged or baled product from most landscape suppliers and nurseries from \$15 for a 100 litre bag. **Note:** lucerne may sprout when used as a mulch as it can contain seeds. If this happens in your garden, don't panic, just gently fork it over to dislodge the grassy shoots, they will quickly break down and further enrich the soil.

Plants

We used a range of flowering and fruiting trees, mixed perennials, herbs and water loving plants.

White mulberry (*Morus alba* 'Pendula'), NSW Christmas bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum* 'Albery's Red'), rough tree fern (*Cyathea australis*), mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*), lemon (*Citrus limon* 'Eureka'), orange (*Citrus sinensis*), flowering plum (*Prunus cerasifera* 'Pissardii'), blueberry ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Prima Donna'), juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Grey Owl'), gold dust plant (*Aucuba japonica* 'Variegata'), hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), marguerite daisy (*Argyranthemum frutescens*), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*), yesterday-today-tomorrow (*Brunfelsia australis* previously *B. bonodora*), agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox* 'Blue'), daylilies (*Hemerocallis* cultivars), oyster plant (*Acanthus mollis*), hellebore (*Helleborus orientalis*), dwarf arum lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica* var. *childsiana*), dusty miller (*Senecio cineraria*), gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*), shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum x superbum*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), edging lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*), crimson fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), mixed herbs and vegetables.



NSW Christmas bush

marguerite daisy

oyster plant



agapanthus

fountain grass

flowering plum



Getting started: Any rubbish, old structures, paving, weeds, etc should be removed and the site levelled. This site contained a large Camphor laurel stump which was removed by an arborist. To find an arborist look under 'Tree Surgery' in your Yellow Pages and select members of the National Arborist Association of Australia.

Step-by-step

Plan your project out on paper before commencing work. Think about the nature of the work you will be doing and the logical steps required to complete it.

Prepare a day-by-day schedule of the materials, equipment and estimated time required to complete each task. This way you can reduce hire costs by completing as many jobs as possible using equipment for a number of tasks.

Landscape materials and equipment are bulky and heavy. If you are ordering materials think about where you will store them and how quickly you can use them, as this will save you from double handling or constantly moving them.

Planning your job will save you time and money. Organisation plays a large part in the rate at which you complete the project and on how much enjoyment you get from the do-it-yourself experience.

Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. Our total cost of plants and materials was \$9109. This cost could be reduced to \$7112 by using smaller plants.

- Concrete costs about \$150/m³ plus delivery.
- A concrete pump costs about \$100/hr for a minimum of three hours. This fee includes two operators.
- Our pre-fabricated lattice for the summerhouse was supplied by Lifestyle Treated Pine, Sydney, phone: (02) 9772 1499 and cost \$2389.
- 'Asparagus Fern' and Slate Grey' by Pascol paints were used on the summerhouse. These cost \$60 for 4 litres.
- A Hills Paralane was purchased from Hardwarehouse for \$150.
- Sarlon Polyshade was used as a roof over the lattice summerhouse. We purchased it made to our specifications from Agrifab in Sydney for \$300, phone: (02) 9736 2777.
- Lotus bowl cost \$115 and was purchased from Arcadian lily ponds in Sydney, phone: (02) 9655 1670
- Most of the selected plants are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building suppliers or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire.

Getaway details: Our couple were sent to Melbourne to attend Wine Australia 2000 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre where 470 exhibitors and 43 wine regions from around Australia are showcased. This is bi-annual event.

Acknowledgements: Design by Colin Brown. Construction by the Blitz team.

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



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Details on the fact sheets are accurate at the time of publishing, however prices and contact information are not updated and may change.