

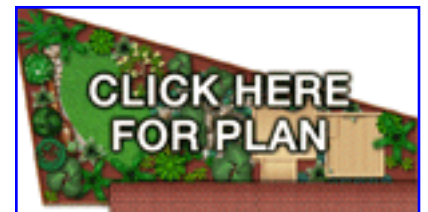
BACKYARD BLITZ

Rainforest Retreat



Driven by a desire to contribute to their local community, both Kane and Lara Lambkin devote many hours to their local Rural Fire Brigade. It is a huge commitment for them, as they both work and they have a 17 month old baby girl. Like many of our local firemen, Kane worked almost 3 weeks straight through the Sydney 2001/02 Christmas fires, missing his daughter's first Christmas Day. Kane's parents wanted to show how proud they are of their son and daughter-in-law by giving them a surprise they will never forget. The Backyard Blitz team was happy to help and to say thank you to Kane and all Australians like him for their selfless acts as community volunteers.

A tranquil rainforest painting created by Kane provided inspiration for landscape designer Peter Bachak, from Art in Green. A split-level deck leads from the rear of the house and extends over a billabong, complete with large sandstone boulders. Screen plantings of tropical trees and palms create a secluded rainforest environment in this small backyard.



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 required amounts of materials.

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 approvals: Check with your local council regarding regulations about water features. If your water feature is deeper than a certain depth, you may be required to erect a pool fence around it. The depths vary between council areas across Australia.

Getting started

The initial site clear-out was performed by a bobcat. Excavation for the water feature was carried out and the large log and boulders carried in. A kanga-mounted excavator was used to dig holes for the mature plants.

Materials

Decking: timber decks should always be constructed with appropriate structurally graded timber that has been treated with preservatives. This deck was built using posts (H4, 90x90mm), bearers (H3, 140x45mm), joists (H3, 90x45mm) and decking boards (H3, 90x19mm). Perspex (3mm) balustrading held between posts and top and bottom rails with beading (35x35mm) provides a contained play area for children. All timbers were connected with galvanised bolts and decking boards were nailed down using spiral-shanked nails and a nail gun. **Blitz Tipz:** The Building Code of Australia requires any deck that is more than 1 metre above the surface beneath to have an appropriate balustrade. Contact your local council for specific details.



Water feature: Jamie created a spectacular, naturalistic billabong with EPDM (1.2mm thick) pond liners and sandstone boulders. Designed to mimic a rainforest stream, the water feature was excavated to a depth of 300mm. A liner was smoothed into the contours and held in place with large sandstone boulders, which were lowered into position by the bobcat. The water flows into a sump from where it is recirculated to the top of the feature. Smaller boulders and river pebbles reduce the water depth and disguise the non-kink pipes (25mm) and outlets. A large sump (1500x600mm) hidden beneath the deck and covered with wire mesh houses two large submersible pumps (7200 L/hr), which power the water flow. **Blitz Tipz:** Pond liners are available in a range of sizes and thicknesses to suit different projects. They can also be joint welded or moulded to fit formal features. Look under ponds in the local *Yellow Pages* to find a supplier near you.

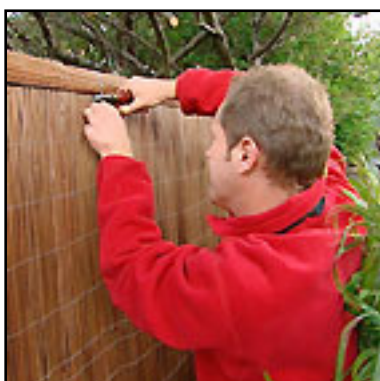


Garden beds: the existing site soil was sandy and contained some builders rubble. Jody added organic matter and nutrients in the form of a commercial, organic soil mix, which was incorporated

into each planting hole. A mulch of horticultural grade pine bark was spread to a depth of 75mm to reduce weed growth, and provide a neutral backdrop to the different forms and colours of tropical foliage. **Blitz Tipz:** Sandy soils are free draining, which is beneficial to many plants. However, it can also mean that nutrients are lacking or move through the soil quickly. The addition of organic matter helps to retain soil moisture and nutrients.



Natureed fencing: the existing fences gave only limited privacy, so Nigel installed a stylish, Natureed fence. The framework consisted of galvanised pipes (40mm) installed in-ground in quick-setting concrete, with a rail connected across the top with Downee fittings. Wire rope was stretched taut between the posts as attachment points for the Natureed rolls, which were connected with fine gauge galvanised wire. The job was finished with Natureed cut lengthways and rolled across the top to protect the ends from the weather. **Blitz Tipz:** Natureed is long lasting but will fade over time if exposed to the sun. Should you wish to revive the original colour apply a coat of exterior decking oil.



Plants

Rainforest palms and evergreen trees combined with ferns and clumping grasses bring a stylish tropical ambience to this suburban backyard.

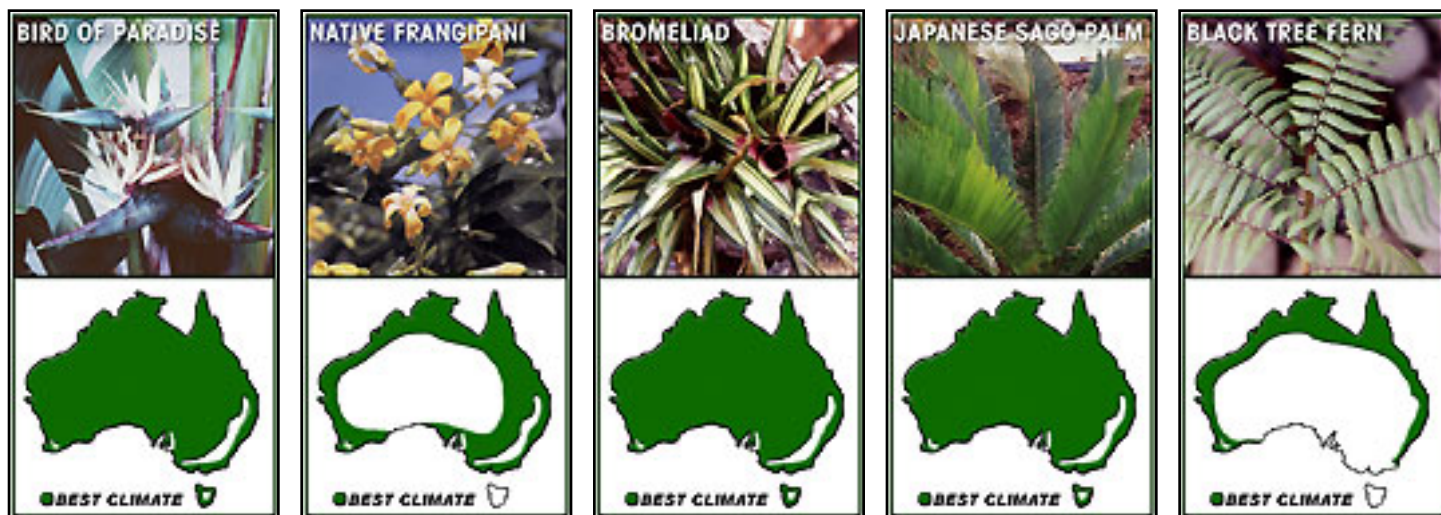
Trees: weeping lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda*), native frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*), rose apple (*Syzygium jambos*), ivory curl tree (*Buckinghamia celsissima*), willow myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa*)

Palms, ferns and cycads: alexandra palm (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*), Chinese fan palm (*Livistona chinensis*), bird's nest fern (*Asplenium australasicum*), black tree fern (*Cyathea medullaris*), sago palm or cycad (*Cycas revoluta*)



Others: carex (*Carex hattoriana*), ctenanthe (*Ctenanthe* 'Grey Star'), giant bird of paradise (*Strelitzia nicola*), lomandra (*Lomandra longifolia*), Louisiana iris (*Iris sp.*), poa (*Poa poiformis*)

Turf: Soft-leaf buffalo 'Palmetto'



Cost and availability

We used mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost for plants and materials was \$13,740. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$9953.

Product details

- Natureed fencing is available at the House of Bamboo in Sydney from about \$140 per roll. View other products at www.houseofbamboo.com.au or phone (02) 9666 5703 for further details.
- EPDM rubber liners and large flow pumps are available at Contour Ponds. Phone (02) 9690 2600 for more details on their pond products.
- Large sandstone boulders were sourced from Benedict Sand and Gravel. They cost about \$70 per tonne and a minimum of 12 tonne cartage rate is charged. Phone 1800 300 003.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at, or can be ordered from, nurseries. Nurseries can also advise on similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide you with contacts.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores or building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are comm only available for hire, including the bobcat and the nail gun.

Getaway details

Terralong Terrace
129 Terralong St
Kiama
Phone: (02) 4232 3711

Web: www.terralong.com.au

Zumo Taste Australia
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Kiama, NSW
Phone: (02) 4232 2222

Acknowledgments

Design by Peter Bachak from Art in Green
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Email: artingreen@bigpond.com

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

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.