

BACKYARD BLITZ

Spring Spectacular



June Sharp bought a simple cottage on half an acre of land in the Blue Mountains with dreams of creating a period home and extensive landscaped gardens. The breakdown of the building company contracted to perform the work and the collapse of the builder's insurance company left her with a half-finished house, minimal funds and plenty of frustration. June's daughters recognising her difficulties contacted the Backyard Blitz team hoping they could resurrect both the garden and her spirits. This colourful and cheerful makeover will provide inspiration to both June and her family for many years to come.



Design intent

Landscape designer John Happ has created a colourful, formal design to reflect the period in which this beautiful home was built. Massed perennials, a cream coloured picket fence, new lawn and a sandstone flagged pathway has revived this garden to its former glory, while a professional paint job across the front of the house makes this home as pretty as a picture.

Design ideas

A return to classic plants, straight lines and conservative colours take this home back to the romantic era in which it was first built. Matching your garden design with the style of your house can greatly increase both the value and appeal of your home.

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: new structures in the garden can require council approval prior to the commencement of construction. Discussing your project with the council and your neighbours can save thousand of dollars and improve relationships within your community.

Getting started

A bobcat was used to clear unwanted vegetation from the site and to excavate to sub-grade levels for the formal planting areas and lawn. Bulk materials were transported into the site and fence post holes were drilled with a mini-excavator.

Garden elements



Picket fence: Jody built a beautiful new picket fence running up one side of the garden and across the front of the whole property. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm rougher header) were installed vertically in rapid setting concrete to a height of about 1200mm above ground level. Treated pine rails (90x45mm) were nailed and bolted to the back of each post with galvanised cup head bolts (10x150mm). Treated pine, square topped pickets (70x19mm) were attached vertically to the outside face of the rails. The whole fence was painted with an exterior acrylic called Portland Stone from Dulux. A gate was constructed from rails and pickets as used in the fence and hung on two galvanised hinges.

Blitz Tip: Use a picket turned on its side to enable equal spacing of all pickets. Plan ahead as you approach the end of each panel to ensure that you do not end up with a large gap before the post.



Sandstone pathway: Scott laid a great looking sandstone flagging pathway on a base of compacted roadbase. A layer of 4:1 sand and cement mortar provides the bedding medium for each piece of sandstone. A dry mix of sand and cement swept through the completely laid pathway binds each piece in place and fills the holes between each piece of sandstone. Once all the excess has been swept from the sandstone a light hose provides the moisture required to make the mortar mix set hard. This task is best performed at the end of the day's work to enable it to set overnight.

Blitz Tip: Stretch a stringline down either side of the pathway to determine your finished heights and to enable you to lay the outside pieces to this height, then simply fill in the gaps with more sandstone.



Gravel driveway: Jamie directed the construction of a new driveway with the help of a skid-steer loader (commonly known as a bobcat). The existing gravel driveway was excavated to a depth of 180mm to enable roadbase to be spread 150mm thick and compacted with a vibrating plate compactor. A 30mm layer of gravel thinly spread over the roadbase provides an attractive parking area that sounds and feels good underfoot. Treated pine edging retains the gravel on the driveway and prevents it from being spread into the new lawn area.

Blitz Tipz: Install your edging first to provide an edge to the gravel as it is spread.



Garden beds: Nigel busily planted hundreds of new plants into the newly created and improved garden beds. An organic garden mix high in nutrients was incorporated into the existing soil and this will aid establishment of the new garden. A horticultural grade pine bark mulch spread to a depth of 75mm will insulate the soil against temperature fluctuations and moisture loss while providing a neutral backdrop for the new plants.

Blitz Tipz: Landscape suppliers will often give you a small sample of their mulches to take home to match against your garden or house colours.

Turf: Large maxi-rolls of turf were professionally laid across the front nature strip using a small tractor. Turf underlay spread to a depth of 100mm will encourage quick establishment and provide good drainage to the new lawn area. We laid a soft leaf buffalo turf called 'Palmetto'.



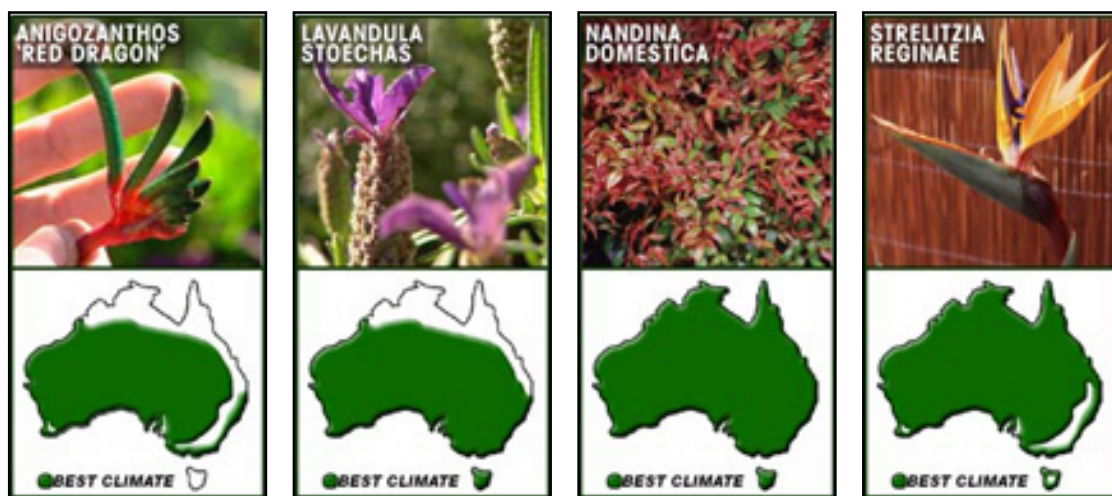
Plants

Trees: *austromyrtus* (*Austromyrtus* 'Blushing Beauty')

Shrubs: *Gardenia* (*Gardenia augusta* 'Florida'), *hebe* (*Hebe* 'Lavender Lace'), *pittosporum* (*Pittosporum* 'Miss Muffett'), *Indian hawthorn* (*Raphiolepis* 'Apple Blossom'), *viburnum* (*Viburnum tinus*), *argyranthemum* (*Argyranthemum* 'Buttercup'), *azalea* (*Azalea* 'Red Wings'), *diosma* (*Coleonema pulchellum* 'Compactum'), *convolvulus* (*Convolvulus cneorum*), *Italian lavender* (*Lavandula stoechas*), *statice* (*Limonium perezii*), *lavender* (*Lavandula angustifolia* subsp. *angustifolia*), *osteospermum* (*Osteospermum fruticans*), *polygala* (*Polygala chamaebuxus* var. *grandiflora* 'Fairy Lights'), *eriosstemon* (*Eriosstemon* 'Cascade Star'), *nandina* 'Gulf Stream' (*Nandina domestica* 'Gulf Stream'), *bird of paradise* (*Strelitzia reginae*), *grevillea* (*Grevillea lanigera* 'Nana'), *thryptomene* (*Thryptomene* 'Supa Nova'), *kangaroo paw* (*Anigozanthus* 'Red Dragon'), *diets* (*Diets iridioides*, *Diets bicolor*), *hebe* (*Hebe* 'Wiri Image'), *pelargonium* (*Pelargonium x hortorum* 'Wendy')

Note: Italian lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*) is a noxious weed in parts of Victoria.

Groundcovers: agapanthus (*Agapanthus* 'Snowball'), arctotis (*Arctotis* 'Plum'), lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*), gardenia (*Gardenia augusta* 'Radicans'), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*).



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 \$13,188. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$11,664.

Product details

- Sandstone flagging cost about \$65 per square metre and is available directly from stone suppliers or large landscape suppliers.
- Maxi-rolls of turf were supplied by Millers Turf in Sydney. Phone 1800 044 510 for further information on this service and their range of turfs.
- The stepping stones we laid cost about \$10 each and were supplied by Urbanstone in Sydney. Phone (02) 9907 2382 for more details.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at, or can be ordered from, nurseries who 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 commonly available for hire, including the concrete mixer and the nail gun.



Getaway details

Accommodation:

Westin Hotel

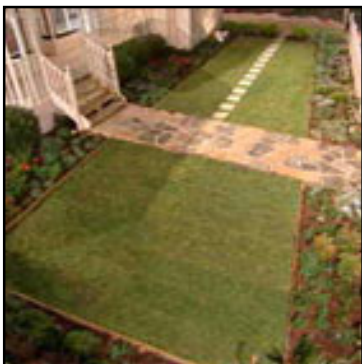
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Acknowledgments

Design by John Happ, 3rd Dimension Designs; phone (02) 9744 2658.
Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are gifts from Backyard Blitz).

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