

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## It Could Be You 2



The last thing Cameron and Maree Heales expected when they opened their door on Tuesday morning was to be confronted by a camera crew and the Backyard Blitz team. In another special Backyard Blitz feature - It Could Be You - the team landed in Melbourne and chose a garden at random to Blitz.

Cameron and Maree along with their two beautiful children, Kate and Emily, were whisked away on a family holiday to The Lakehouse in Daylesford, while Jamie and the team transformed the garden into a fun, family, entertaining area.



### Design intent

Landscape designer Jamie Durie has created an entertainer's delight with a family-friendly feel in this tiny backyard. A deck extension provides more room for outdoor dining, a sunken courtyard acts as a reflective zone complete with day bed, while behind the timber screen is a kids' play area.

### Design ideas

Combining multiple uses in a small space can work as long as the space is designed with all elements in mind. Jamie has actually made this small space seem larger by dividing it into zones that cannot be seen all at once. Partially screening parts of the garden creates a sense of intrigue and encourages visitors to venture out into the garden.

### 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 structures in the backyard. Always talk to your neighbours and the council before commencing your project as it could save you thousands of dollars and will help to make the project run smoothly.

## Getting started

There was minimal clearing out to do in this blank backyard. A mini loader excavated soil for the sunken garden, and trenches for the timbers screens were dug by hand once all underground services were located.

## Garden elements

**Deck and steps:** Scott expanded the existing deck to accommodate a new table setting and to get the deck out into the garden. A combination of treated pine framework and hardwood decking means the addition blends seamlessly with the existing deck. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) set vertically inground in concrete support bearers (140x45mm) nailed and bolted in place. Joists (90x45mm) laid perpendicular to the bearers and nailed in place support decking boards. These hardwood decking boards (68mm Merbau) were all pre-drilled and hand nailed to avoid splitting the boards. Scott used stainless steel, spiral shanked cup-head nails and painstakingly hand nailed the decking in perfect lines.

Two broad steps were built from the decking down into the sunken garden. The steps were built using the same techniques employed for the deck. They were designed and constructed to double as informal seating during relaxed gatherings in the garden.

**Blitz Tipz:** Steps in the garden often vary in dimensions from those inside houses. However, you should always ensure the risers are all the same height and never less than 150mm high.

**Marble paving:** Nigel laid large slabs of marble in the sunken garden to provide a soothing paved surface and to contrast with the primarily timber structures. Each slab was sawn into easily-managed pieces with an angle grinder and laid into a bed of 4:1 sand and cement mortar. Nigel used a long straight edge to maintain levels and spaced each piece to enable planting of a spreading groundcover between each slab.

**Blitz Tipz:** Marble is a naturally slippery material when wet. Nigel sponged a mixture of 10 parts water to one part hydrochloric acid onto each piece to etch it and remove the slippery surface.



**Timber palisade wall:** Jamie designed and constructed a fantastic privacy screen by combining treated pine sleepers (200x75x2400mm), some pine rails (90x45mm) and hardwood decking boards (68x19mm). A row of sleepers was spaced 300mm apart and nailed to three supporting rails along the back. Once nailed, the entire screen was lifted into a pre-prepared trench and backfilled with concrete from a waiting concrete truck. Once levelled, the screen was braced and the concrete allowed to go off overnight. A limewash was applied and decking boards were equally spaced between each sleeper and connected with the nail gun.

**Blitz Tipz:** Concrete can be ordered with an accelerant pre-mixed to the batch to speed up the setting time. We ordered 25mpa concrete for extra strength

**Day bed and bench seat:** Jamie built a great looking day bed and bench seat as focal points in the sunken garden. Treated pine was used for all framework and hardwood decking boards provided the finishing touch. Posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed in ground in concrete support a framework of bearers (140x45mm) and joists (90x45mm) nailed and bolted to the posts and connected to the palisade wall. Hand-nailed decking boards provide a bench component to the daybed and an angled back support for reading or relaxing.

A long bench seat was built by combining treated pine frames (90x45mm) built like two timber walls, connected with cross beams that in turn support decking boards as the bench top, sides and ends.

**Blitz Tipz:** Using a chair as a guide for heights and seat widths, Jamie made these benches 400mm high and 520mm wide.



**Garden beds:** Jody improved the existing sandy loam soil by incorporating organic matter into the new garden beds. An organic eucalyptus mulch was selected to retain soil moisture, maintain soil temperature and reduce weed growth.

**Blitz Tipz:** Choose your mulch type the way you do your paint colours as they can provide a dramatic influence on the style and mood of the finished garden.

## Plants

Colourful trees, shrubs and bulbs provide a romantic feel to this garden as well as some effective privacy screening.

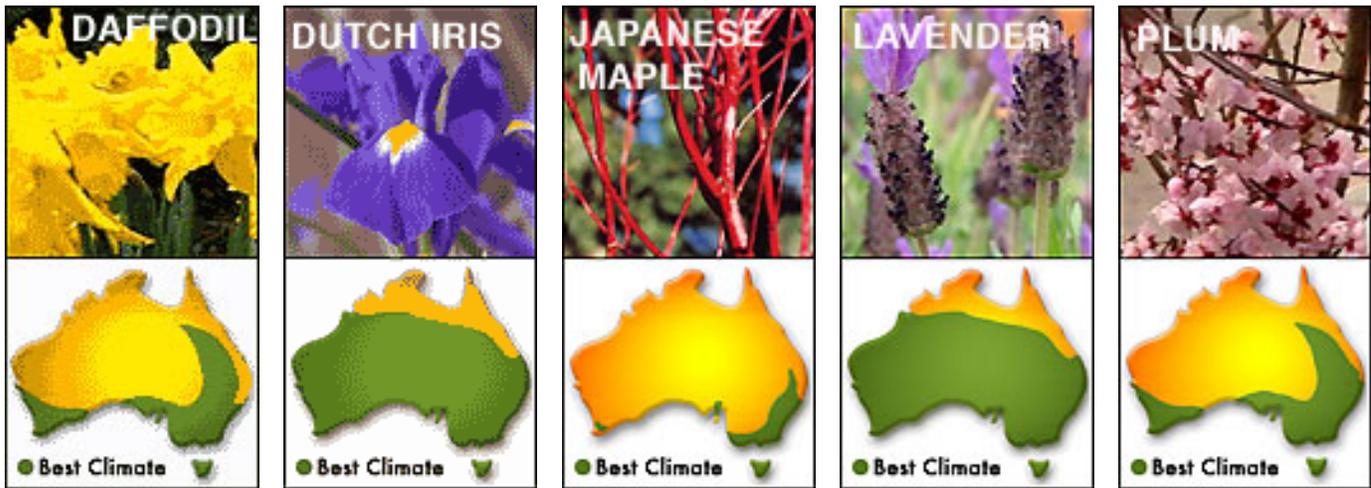
**Trees:** Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku'), purple-leafed plum (*Prunus x blireana*), pittosporum (*Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Sheen'), cinnamon wattle (*Acacia leprosa* 'Scarlet Blaze'), gordonia (*Gordonia axillaris* 'Silk Screen')

**Perennial:** lavender (*Lavandula stoechas* 'Avonview')

**Succulent:** sedum (*Sedum oxypetalum*)

**Bulbs:** hippeastrum (*Hippeastrum cvs*), daffodil (*Narcissus spp.*), Dutch iris (*Iris Dutch hybrids*)

**Groundcover:** twin-flowered knawel (*Scleranthus biflorus*)



## 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 \$15,658. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$10,268.

## Product details

- Cubby house was purchased from Aaron's Outdoor Creations. A basic cubby cost from \$600. Phone (03) 9460 6322 for further information or check out their website at [www.aaronsoutdoor.com.au](http://www.aaronsoutdoor.com.au)
- Slabs of marble were sourced from Granitek in Melbourne. Slabs cost about \$200 per square metre. Phone (03) 9558 9191 for more information.
- 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 commonly available for hire, including the mini loader and the nail gun.



## Getaway details

### Accommodation:

Lake House  
King Street, Daylesford  
Victoria 3460  
Phone: (03) 5348 3329  
Web: [www.lakehouse.com.au](http://www.lakehouse.com.au)

Ballarat Wildlife Park  
Corner York & Fussell Streets  
Ballarat East  
Victoria 3350  
Phone: (03) 5333 5933  
Web: [www.wildlifepark.com.au](http://www.wildlifepark.com.au)

Hepburn Spa Resort  
Mineral Springs Reserve  
Hepburn Springs  
Victoria 3461  
Phone: (03) 5348 2034



Web: [www.hepburnspa.com.au](http://www.hepburnspa.com.au)

## Acknowledgements

### Design by:

Jamie Durie - Patio  
Level 1/66-72 Reservoir Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Phone: (02) 9280 3550  
Email: [design@patiodesign.com.au](mailto:design@patiodesign.com.au)



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

© CTC Productions 11 2004

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

