

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Chippie's Jubilee



Malcolm and Beverley Thebridge raised their four children and spent their entire married life in the home that they built 42 years ago. They lived in the granny flat in the backyard (which is still there!) while Malcolm built the house. Malcolm is celebrating his golden jubilee as a carpenter, equating to 50 years in the building game.

Their daughter, Sandra McDonald, would like to see her father relax a little in his senior years and enjoy some of the good things in life. She believes Malcolm has been one of Australia's Aussie Battlers, an honest, hard working bloke who is generous to a fault. Sandra recognises the huge sacrifices her parents have made in raising their family, the love and support that was always there, and would like the opportunity to give something back.



## Design intent

Matthew Lacey, from Landart Landscapes, has designed a water wise garden with a native feel. A corrugated iron water tank will collect water from the rooftop and store it until it is pumped out for garden use. Hardy native grasses and shrubs will attract birds and wildlife back into the backyard, while slabs of sandstone surrounded by decomposed granite allow water to infiltrate into the soil beneath.

## Design ideas

Several zones have been created within the one small garden by the clever use of plants, colours and surface treatments. Using level changes and alternative materials for different zones is a simple way to define areas within 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

A large amount of soil needed to be moved around the site and new fill brought in. A bobcat and mini-excavator carried out the heavy work and brought bulk materials in so the team could get started.

## Garden elements

**Paving:** Nigel completed a big job of paving around the pool for Malcolm. Much of the preparatory work had been undertaken already with surface drainage and sub grade levels set up. Nigel simply had to screed sand to the required levels and slopes, lay the pavers and cut in along the edges. An oatmeal coloured paver (Havenslab, 400x200x40mm) from Amber was laid in a stretcher bond pattern and the header course was glued to the existing block wall using a construction adhesive.

**Blitz Tipz:** Ensure new paving slopes away from the pool to prevent surface water running into the pool.

**Sandstone steppers:** Nigel laid large slabs of sandstone to provide a smooth paved surface from the rear steps out into the garden. Each slab was laid into a bed of 4:1 sand and cement mortar. Nigel used a long straight edge to maintain levels and spaced each piece sufficiently to appear as though they were randomly placed.

**Blitz Tipz:** These slabs were extremely heavy and required both machinery and several people to move them into place. Always ask the supplier how much slabs weigh before you place an order.



**Water tank and feature:** A 2000 litre capacity water tank was installed and tapped into the existing roof guttering system. Water from one section of the roof was diverted into a downpipe that flows through a coarse filter into the top of the water tank. The water can be pumped out into the garden hose or directed into the recycled wine barrel water feature in front.



A low voltage, submersible pump placed on top of a layer of blue metal inside a wine barrel forms the basis of this water feature. Water directed from the barrel out through a recycled cast iron water pump and back into the wine barrel provides sound and movement. Both the submersible pump and the water tank pump are connected to an outdoor, weather proof power point.

**Blitz Tipz:** This is a technical job and one best left to the experts.



**Sleeper retaining wall:** Jamie built a treated pine sleeper retaining wall to provide access to the split-level garden. Large areas of sandstone beneath the wall prohibited the use of posts so a stacked wall with 'dead-men' was constructed. Sleepers (200x75x2400mm) were laid flat on the ground on a bed of compacted sand to achieve a level base. Sleepers stacked on top of each other and nailed into the sleeper beneath form the wall. Several sleepers laid perpendicular to the face of the wall back into the embankment provide an additional key to the slope. These 'dead-men' have a crosspiece nailed onto them to anchor the wall in place.

**Blitz Tipz:** If you have any doubt about how to construct a retaining wall seek the advice of a qualified landscaper or builder.

**Filter box doors:** Scott helped to complete the pool filter box for Malcolm by building some doors. Treated pine framing (70x35mm) supports pine panelling nailed in place and fixed with stainless steel butt hinges. A timber handrail along the steps required replacing, so Scotty completed this fiddly job for Malcolm as well.

**Blitz Tipz:** Build your double doors or gates as one piece then saw them down the middle for a perfect fit.



**Half-tank planter:** Jody planted a specimen grass tree into a raised planter formed out of a corrugated metal ring. A native garden mix (crushed sandstone and organic garden mix) was used to fill the planter and an organic mulch over the top will reduce weed growth and regulate the soil temperature.

**Blitz Tipz:** Raised planters like this are a simple way to elevate specimen plants above the surrounding plants. Make sure any planters have sufficient drainage.



**Garden beds:** Jody improved the existing sandy loam site 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. Mulches can provide a dramatic influence on the style and mood of the finished garden.

## Plants

A broad selection of hardy natives and colourful perennials will provide year-round interest and attract native wildlife back into the garden.

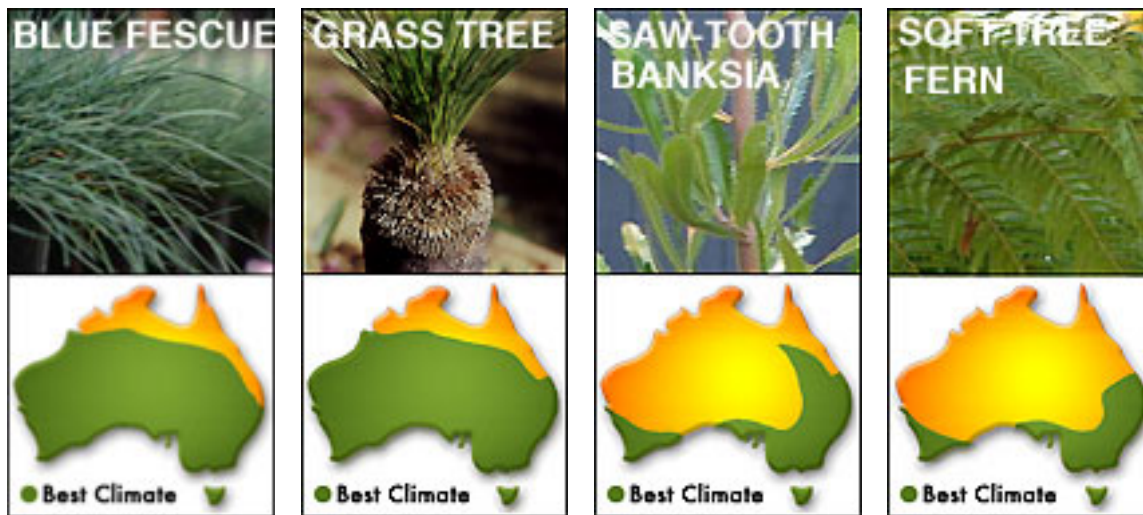
**Trees, ferns and cycads:** saw-tooth banksia (*Banksia serrata*), austromyrtus (*Austromyrtus* 'Aurora'), soft tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), cycad (*Cycas revoluta*)

**Shrubs:** banksia (*Banksia* 'Birthday Candles'), coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*), Gippsland waratah (*Telopea oreades*), eremophila (*Eremophila* 'Silky Bells'), mint bush (*Prostanthera magnifica*), golden grevillea (*Grevillea chrysophaea*)

**Perennials:** burgundy sugar cane (*Saccharum* 'Violaceum'), lomandras (*Lomandra* 'Tanika' and *L. longifolia*), kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos manglesii*), grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*)

**Grasses:** poa (*Poa* 'Kingsdale'), blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*)





## 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 \$12,530. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$9659.

## Product details

- The rainwater tank was supplied and installed by City Rainwater Tanks in Sydney. Call (02) 9623 2414 for further information and prices.
- Large sandstone slabs were supplied by Capricorn Stone on the NSW Central Coast. These slabs cost about \$80 per square metre. Call (02) 4340 4377 for prices for your project.
- Havenslab pavers from Amber Tiles and Pavers cost about \$25 per square metre.
- Corrugated metal planter was supplied by Steel Line Roofing. Phone (02) 6495 6968 for further details.
- Large concrete troughs cost \$175 each and were purchased from Four Seasons Nursery in Sydney. Phone (02) 9450 1606 for further 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:

Crown Towers  
8 Whiteman Street  
Southbank  
Phone: 03 9292 6666  
Toll Free: 1800 811 653  
Web: [www.crowntowers.com.au](http://www.crowntowers.com.au)

"The Producers"  
Princess Theatre  
163 Spring Street  
Melbourne

Box Office: (03) 9299 9800  
Web: [www.marrinertheatre.com.au](http://www.marrinertheatre.com.au)

Melbourne on the Move  
Phone: 1300 558 686  
Web: [www.melbourneonthemove.com.au](http://www.melbourneonthemove.com.au)

The CafÈ Bar  
Melbourne Observation Deck  
Level 55, 535 Collins Street  
Melbourne  
Ph: (03) 9629 2461  
Web: [www.observationdeckservices.com.au](http://www.observationdeckservices.com.au)

National Gallery of Victoria  
Impressionist Exhibition  
Phone: (03) 8620 2222  
Web: [www.nga.vic.gov.au](http://www.nga.vic.gov.au)



## Acknowledgements

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

For more Step by Step Constructions click here

