

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Super Mum



Mary Sweeten is an amazing single mother to her 10 children. The purchase of a three bedroom home following the sale of their previous home with eight bedrooms has meant a few changes to sleeping arrangements! Mary and the kids have all adapted to the move and pitched in to make the house a home.

Mary leaves for work every morning at 6am meaning the seven children at home must work together to get themselves organised for school and work. The eldest daughter, Kate, recognises the sacrifices her mother has made to keep the family going and asked the Backyard Blitz team for a little help in saying thank you to an amazing woman.



### Design intent

Landscape designer, Natasha Burrows from Flora & Fauna Garden Design, has designed a family-friendly garden with something for everyone. A hardwood boardwalk leads from the rear door out into the garden and is on the same level as the new entertaining area. A central water feature bordered by timber bench seats and flowering perennials provides a relaxing spot to contemplate the garden from, while a broad expanse of lawn enables the kids to continue their love of backyard cricket.

### Design ideas

Level changes in a garden add interest and can create an air of mystery by encouraging visitors into the space. Use existing level changes to your advantage or create them with the use of decking and sunken rooms.

## 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 to work.

## Garden elements

**Sleeper retaining wall:** Scott built a treated pine sleeper retaining wall to create a level transition between the paved area and the adjacent boardwalk. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed vertically in-ground in quick setting concrete support treated pine sleepers (200x75x2400mm) nailed against them. The top of the sleeper wall is set at the same level as the finished height of pavers and the new boardwalk and provides an attractive meeting point between the two.

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

**Boardwalk:** Scott utilized the posts of the new retaining wall as posts against which to attach his bearers (140x45mm). Joists (90x45mm) were laid perpendicular to the bearers and skew nailed on top of the bearers to support the hardwood decking boards (Kwila, also sold as Merbau, 100x22mm). Once the ends were pre-drilled and nailed by hand the remainder of each board was nailed in place with a compressor driven nail gun.

**Blitz Tip:** Order short lengths of decking board if your deck is only narrow. Lay all of the boards with an overhang and then trim along the edge for a straight, quick finish.



**Paving:** Nigel removed the existing, multi-coloured, concrete paving slabs and laid new pavers. A 100mm deep layer of compacted roadbase covered by a 30mm layer of coarse washed river sand provides a stable level bed to the pavers. 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 (C&M - Stepstone, 400x400x40mm) was laid in a stretcherbond pattern. The perimeter of the entire paved area was retained with a mortar haunch to prevent the bedding sand from washing out.

**Blitz Tipz:** Even under covered areas ensure new paving slopes away from the house to prevent surface water running inside.



**Water feature:** Jamie installed a simple water feature as a focal point at the end of the boardwalk. A paver bedded into a blob of mortar provides a level footing upon which the fountain is placed. A low-voltage, submersible pump placed in the bottom of the pond pumps water from the sump up into the spillover level where it cascades back to the bottom sump providing the soothing sound of running water. A low-voltage transformer plugged into the household power runs the pump.



**Bench seats:** Scott knocked up some simple bench seats from which to enjoy the entire garden. Short lengths of treated pine posts (H4, 90x90) support rails (90x45mm) nailed in place. The bench top is simply wide boards (140x45mm) screwed in place with a 10mm gap between each piece.

**Timber screens:** Jamie created some simple timber screens to provide a backdrop behind the barbecue and to stop the cricket ball from belting into the fence behind. Treated pine posts installed vertically in-ground support pink-primed timber (188x22mm) laid with a 50mm gap between each. Painted a chocolate brown colour, they blend into the background while providing visual interest.

**Garden beds:** Jody improved the existing sandy loam site soil by incorporating organic matter into the new garden beds. An organic, fine-grained pine bark 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. They can provide a dramatic influence on the style and mood of the finished garden.





## Plants

A selection of quick-growing screening plants and romantic perennials bring life and privacy to this great, family backyard.

**Trees:** evergreen magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Exmouth'), pink flowering lilly pilly (*Syzygium* 'Cascade')

**Shrubs:** coast rosemary (*Westringia brevifolia*), serruria (*Serruria* 'Blushing Bride'), lavender (*Lavandula* 'Avonview'), rosemary (*Rosmarinus* 'Tuscan Blue' and *R. officinalis*), cordyline (*Cordyline petiolaris*), correa (*Correa* 'Marian's Marvel'), chef's hat correa (*C. baeuerlenii*), sweet viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum*), lomandra (*Lomandra hystrix*)

**Perennials:** kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthos* 'Bush Pearl'), Japanese windflower (*Anemone x hybrida*), spider lily (*Hymenocallis littoralis*), New Zealand iris (*Libertia paniculata*)



## 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 \$15,574. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$10,863.

## Product details

- The Lotus Flower Fountain and pump was purchased from the Living Planet Garden Centre in Sydney. Phone (02) 9627 2525 for more details.
- C&M - Stepstone, 400x400x40mm pavers were laid beneath the existing pergola. Phone C&M Bricks and Pavers on (02) 9748 1024 for prices and colour range.
- 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:

Milton Park Country House Hotel  
Hordens Road  
Bowral  
Phone: (02) 4861 1522  
Web: [www.milton-park.com.au](http://www.milton-park.com.au)

Statford Park Lavender Farm  
Pearson's Lane  
Wildes Meadow  
Phone: (02) 4885 1498  
Web: [www.statford.com.au](http://www.statford.com.au)



Bradman Museum  
St Jude Street  
Bowral  
Phone: (02) 4862 1247  
Web: [www.bradmanmuseum.com.au](http://www.bradmanmuseum.com.au)

Bistro Mont  
250 Bong Bong Street  
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## 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

