

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Holiday at Home



If there is any truth in the saying "*when the going gets tough, the tough get going*" then Lee Millard is one tough cookie! Twice devastated by breast cancer, single mum Lee has devoted both her professional and personal time to women living with the disease. The founder and current president of the Coffs Harbour Dragon's Abreast rowing team, the Titivators, Lee runs workshops, support groups, fundraising events, newsletters and volunteer rosters, as well as being the breast care nurse at the local clinic.

Blitz creates a tranquil tropical escape for this incredible woman, and discovers along the way that there's a lot more to rowing a boat than they expected!



### Our design

Jamie decided it would be a good idea to create a resort style with a beachside feel. We incorporated two different level decks representing two pontoons adjacent to a four seater spa surrounded by lush foliage and with a timber walkway through the garden. The water feature circulated water which spilt off into a dry creek bed giving the feel of water flowing through the garden. The palisade wall of recycled timber sleepers was a feature near the end of walkway.



## Adapting these plans 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 amounts of materials you will require.

**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.

**Blitz Tipz:** Call 'Dial before you Dig' on 1100 and check council house plans to find the location of services.

**Permits and approval:** check with your local council regarding regulations about earthworks and drainage. If you are changing existing levels or installing drainage ensure no water run-off is directed toward neighbouring properties. Any water entering the storm water system must be free from debris and sediment.

## Getting started

We cleared the backyard and transplanted some existing golden cane palms.

## Garden elements

**Palisade retaining wall:** A trench was dug about 1m deep and recycled hardwood railway sleepers were placed in the trench on end, side by side. Timber framework was attached to hold the sleepers in place and then rapidset concrete was poured into the trench and allowed to go off overnight. Framework was removed the next day and galvanised cyclone strapping was attached to the inside of the sleepers to stop any unlikely movement.

**Water feature:** Recycled hardwood sleepers were laid on their flat side on a level screeded sand bed and were built to three sleepers high. A fiberglass pond was then fixed inside the sleepers and the edge was capped with hardwood decking boards. At the end of the water feature, Jamie put in a subsurface pit with a pump to circulate the water back to the pond. This pit was covered with a grate and pebbles. We then cut a channel in the sleepers and capped with a piece of sandstone to allow the water to flow over the edge into the subsurface pit.



**Spa:** We excavated a trench to about 600mm to run an electrical cable to the position of the spa. The soil was levelled and the spa was placed in position. A licensed electrician connected up the spa before it was filled with water.

**Deck:** Scottie built two levels of deck. He set out the areas for both decks, located position for posts and used an auger to drill the holes. The first level was one step up at the end of the sleeper walkway.

The lower of the decks was built with 140x45mm H3 treated pine bearers and 90x45mm H3 treated pine joists and 140x38mm merbau hardwood decking boards which were countersunk and screwed to the joists.

The second level was one step (150mm) up from the first deck. 200mm H4 treated pine rounds were concreted in at each corner and H4 90x90mm treated pine posts were used for the other posts. Scottie 140x38mm merbau hardwood decking boards.

Scottie measured up the height required with a laser level and a perimeter roof beam was attached to the poles with galvanised cuphead bolts. Pitched rafters were then attached with multigrips and our roofing contractors completed the roof with a unique roofing system. This Nu-lok system incorporates galvanised steel battens spaced at 306mm with link channels locked in place between. The ceramic tiles were then fitted onto the link channels and held in place. This roof is particularly low weight and slimline.

The poles were painted with merbau stain and hessian rope was

wrapped around the bottom 300mm.



**Sleeper walkway:** The area was excavated to 250mm and crusher dust was laid and compacted.

**Blitz Tipz:** Crusher dust is also known as blue metal dust, cracker dust, quarry sand, and 5mm minus (in Victoria). Crusher dust is left over at quarries when they are crushing blue metal (volcanic basalt) rock and can be used as a subbase in landscaping.

Nigel then laid H4 treated pine sleepers on their sides to act as rails and then laid H4 treated pine sleepers perpendicular and screwed to the rails with 100mm gap between to allow for planting.

**Dry river bed:** A dry river bed ran from the water feature through the sleeper walkway and into the garden and was filled with river pebbles. We used 20-24mm river pebble as well as 100mm and over.



**Turf and planting:** The area was prepared for turf by removing all debris and levelling. A good quality turf underlay soil mix was levelled and soft leaf buffalo, Sir Walter, was laid.

Jody replanted Lee's vegetables in the new vegetable garden in the area of the backyard that would get the most sun. Jody planted cos lettuce, zucchini, tomatoes, lettuce and herbs.

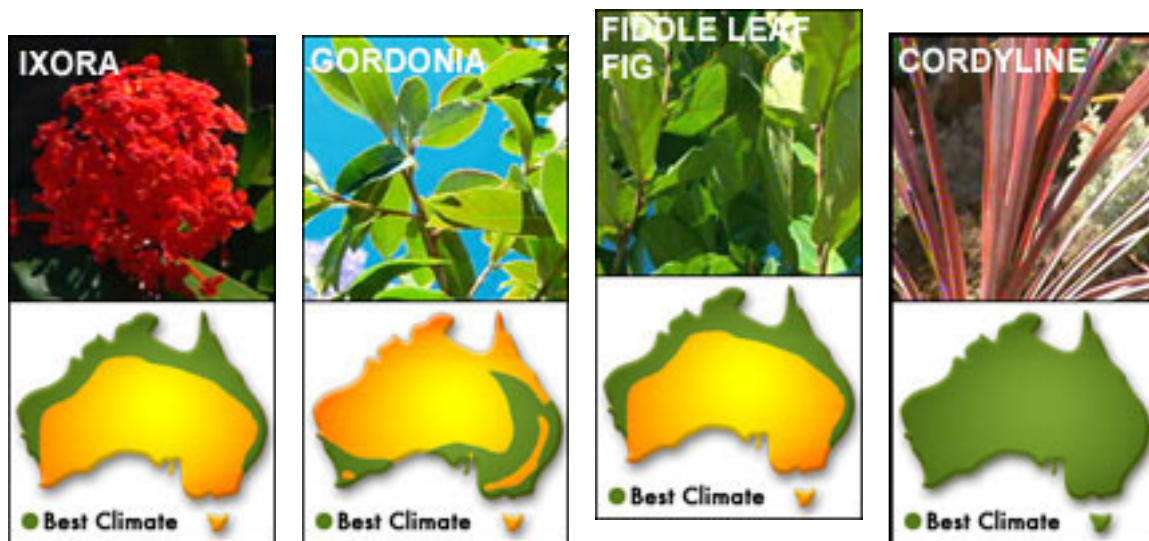
**Blitz Tipz:** Vegetables need full sun and shelter from winds - a north-facing situation is best with at least six hours direct sun.

There was an Alexander palm (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*) which Jody transplanted in the garden. It was covered with black sooty mould. This sooty mould grows in the honey produced by mealybugs. Mealybugs have small pink, yellow or grey bodies covered with white, powdery wax and fringed with waxy threads. They are very persistent, sap-sucking pests, which hide in protected places on the plant as well as underground. They feed on the leaves causing distortion and wilting. Jody recommended spraying with white oil (follow the directions on the bottle) or a soap solution and then feeding with a slow release fertilizer.

## Plants

**Trees and shrubs:** fiddle leaf fig (*Ficus lyrata*), tulipwood (*Harpullia pendula*), frangipani (*Plumeria acutifolia*), cordyline (*Cordyline 'Red Star'*), dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*), gordonia (*Gordonia 'Silk Screen'*), pandanus (*Pandanus tectorius*), philodendron (*Philodendron 'Xanadu'*), Miss Muffett pittosporum (*Pittosporum 'Miss Muffett'*), mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*), lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*), cotton lavender (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*), Bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), lilly pilly (*Syzygium 'Cascade'*), golden penda (*Xanthostemon chrysanthus*)

**Groundcovers:** ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*), variegated shell ginger (*Alpinia 'Variegata'*), black leaf elephant's ear (*Colocasia 'Black Magic'*), ground morning glory (*Convolvulus sabatius*), ctenanthe (*Ctenanthe 'Grey Star'*), Sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*), lomandra (*Lomandra 'Tanika'*), ixora (*Ixora chinensis*), fan flower (*Scaevola aemula*), dianella (*Dianella 'Little Jess'*)



## Cost

We used mature plants in this makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost for plants and materials was \$39,986. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$35,498.

## Product details

- 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.
- Nu-lok™ roofing system and ceramic roof tiles supplied by Nu-lok roofing systems; phone: (02) 9452 3344 or visit web: [www.nu-lok.com](http://www.nu-lok.com). Available in all states contact above for closest supplier.
- Metro spa supplied by Blue Haven Pools; phone: (02) 02 9728 0400 or visit web: [www.bluehavenpools.com.au](http://www.bluehavenpools.com.au)
- The large ceramic blue/green pot came from Gardenmania; phone: (02) 6658 3338.
- Fiberglass pond and pump from The Fish Works; phone: (02) 9986 2000 or visit web: [www.thefishworks.com.au](http://www.thefishworks.com.au).

- LINKedge garden and paving edging. For stockists phone: (08) 8347 4447 or visit web: [www.linkplus.com.au](http://www.linkplus.com.au)
- Outdoor furniture from Classique Leisure Products; phone: (02) 4372 1672 or visit web: [www.classique.net.au](http://www.classique.net.au)

## Contacts

If you would like more information on Dragons Abreast, need advice about cancer issues, or would to make a donation to a breast cancer research, please contact:

National Breast Cancer Centre  
Phone: (02) 9036 3030 or visit [www.nbcc.org.au](http://www.nbcc.org.au)

Dragons Abreast Australia  
Phone: 1300 889 566  
Web: [www.dragonsabreast.com.au](http://www.dragonsabreast.com.au)

Lee recommends the following book:  
Spirited Women - Journeys With Breast Cancer  
by Petrea King (1995)  
Random House  
ISBN 0-09 183067 2  
Price \$28

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Blue Haven Pools and Nu-lok Roofing Systems for their kind donation to Lee Millard.

## Holiday Details

### Accommodation

Crown Towers  
8 Whiteman Street  
Southbank Melbourne VIC  
Phone: 03 9292 6666  
Web: [www.crowntowers.com.au](http://www.crowntowers.com.au)

Crown Spa  
To make an appointment or for further information please contact Crown Spa on  
Phone: (03) 9292 6182  
Web: [www.crowntowers.com.au](http://www.crowntowers.com.au)



### Dining - (teppanyaki)

Koko  
Level 3, Crown Towers

8 Whiteman Street  
Southbank Melbourne VIC 3006  
Phone: (03) 9292 6886  
Web: [www.kokoatcrown.com.au](http://www.kokoatcrown.com.au)

**Dining - (seafood restaurant)**

Waterfront  
Ground Floor, Crown Complex  
8 Whiteman Street  
Southbank Melbourne VIC  
Phone: (03) 9686 9766  
Web: [www.waterfront.melbourneaustralia.com.au](http://www.waterfront.melbourneaustralia.com.au)



**Abseiling**

Kaykaze Adventure Experience  
Phone: (03) 9482 2433  
Web: [www.kaykaze.com.au](http://www.kaykaze.com.au)



**Harley Davidson Rides and Abseiling**

OnEdge Adventures  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: (03) 9376 0416  
Web: [www.onedge.com.au](http://www.onedge.com.au)



**MCG Tours**

Great Northern Stand foyer  
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Phone: (03) 9657 8864  
Email: [mcg\\_tours@mcg.com.au](mailto:mcg_tours@mcg.com.au)  
Web: [www.mcg.com.au](http://www.mcg.com.au)

**Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz).**

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