

BACKYARD BLITZ

"It Could Be You"



It is back – the show where we choose one house in Australia at random from the air and ask one simple question – Do you want a free backyard makeover?

We have taken this show to Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and now it's Brisbane's turn. However in an unexpected twist the first house we knocked on said thanks – but no thanks!

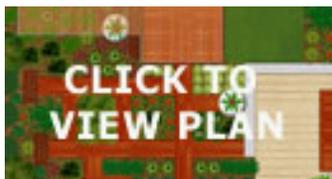
Proving that these shows really are selected at random – the Blitz team had to hit the pavement to find another Australian in need of a free backyard makeover and a holiday.

Luckily, during the confusion, Jane Gamble spotted the Blitz team in her street and jokingly asked the obvious question, "When are you going to do my yard?"

The teams answer? How about right now!!

Design intent

Jamie was excited to discover that Jane was an artist who enjoyed ceramics, screen printing, sculpture and botanical art and that Todd, a draftsman, also played the flute and so Jamie's design of the garden needed to reflect the interests of this highly creative couple. Jamie designed an artist's retreat - it needed to be a sanctuary, to be peaceful, intimate and inspirational and have places to display some of the art; and it also needed to have an area for their daughter Alice. The garden is completely shaded and will be filled with beautiful plants.



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 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.

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.

Design: The design included a main deck with a series of boardwalks across the backyard, leading to the central feature and linking up to other features with timber screens and a a platform around the tree for a cubby area for Alice.

Getting started

The garden was cleared of all unwanted vegetation.

Sunken seating area: Bench seat of hebel blocks.

A trench 400mm wide x 400mm deep was excavated, and a concrete footing was poured. Steel reinforcement was used and the concrete was left to go off overnight. The first course of aerated concrete Hebel block (600mmx200mmx300mm) was laid on a 4:1 mortar bed to make a small wall. This helped to establish an even first course, which subsequently makes it easier to keep further courses level. A string line with a block was used to keep the blocks straight. Remaining courses were laid using a thin bed adhesive from Hebel. Adhesive was scraped on about 3mm thick with a toothed trowel and the next course of blocks laid in place.

To prevent the Hebel blocks from absorbing moisture, we clad them with limestone pavers in stretcher bond pattern and placed sandstone capping on the top.

Paving: To create a sunken intimate area Nigel excavated and laid sandstone pavers on a compacted bed of roadbase and screeded bed of sand and cement. The sandstone was selected randomly so that there was a mixture of colours. We achieved a clean, modern look with 'sawn' sandstone, for a rougher surface ask for 'honed' sandstone.



Boardwalks: Scottie built the boardwalks throughout the garden.

Firstly he concreted 90x90mm posts in ground. Then using 140x45mm bearers bolted to the posts, 90x45mm joists were then nailed to the bearers at 450 centres.

The job was finished using hardwood 90x19mm decking boards.

Boardwalks or decks over 900mm off the ground require a handrail.



Screens: Jamie built decorative screens in the garden. He marked out screen locations and located post positions. H4 treated pine posts were concreted in ground using a spirit level to ensure each post was exactly vertical. Jamie then attached two lengths of rope to the top of each post and wove the rope around decking boards creating a venetian blind effect. The end of each rope was then secured to the ground.

Cubby house: Scottie built a cubby house/platform beside the tree for Alice to play in for many years to come. Posts (H4 90x90mm) were concreted in ground. 140x45mm bearers were then bolted to the posts and then 90x45mm joists nailed to the bearers. Hardwood decking (90x19mm) was nailed to the joists.

Roof beams were constructed of 140x45mm timber and 90x45mm rafters were attached to the beams.



Garden

We discovered a very unusable shady area at the rear of the house. It could be viewed from the balcony and was quite an eyesore so Jamie decided to create a series of intersecting boardwalks surrounding grid like garden beds. Todd and Jayne were interested in art so it was an obvious choice to make the space quite modern and inject some colour in the form of foliage.

We added a sandy organic mix to the garden beds and kept them raised to improve drainage in the rather dank area. Special attention was paid to the many bromeliads. Each planting hole was dug double the width and depth and lined with pine bark and backfilled with the same to create an open well drained media for them to thrive in.

The bold forms of the *rhapis* and *spathiphyllum* added deep green texture and the dampest part of the garden was planted out with upright elephant's ears that thrive in boggy conditions. Huge feature bowls contained spectacular imperial bromeliads and assorted *neoregelias*, whilst 3 metre high bamboos will grow to form a serene canopy of feathery foliage.

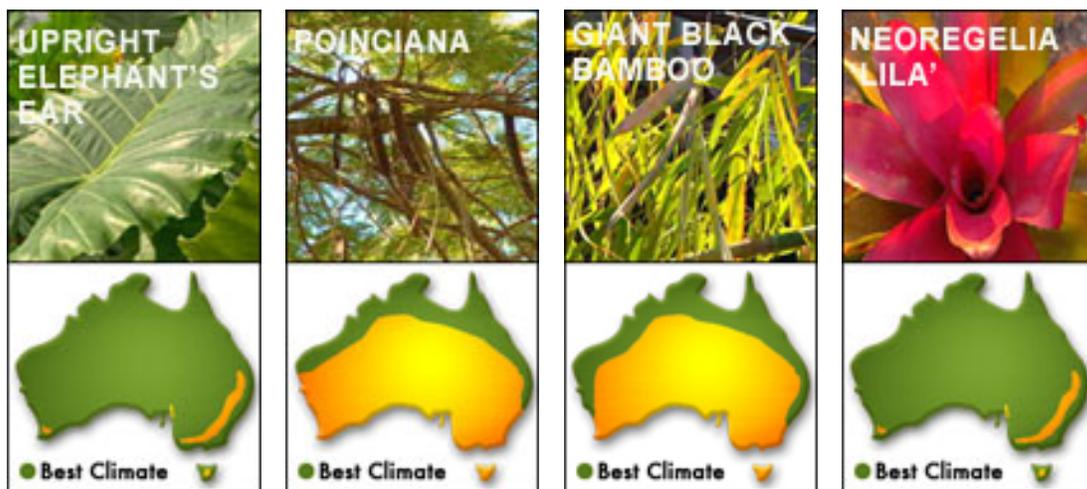


Bromeliads: Imperial bromeliad (*Alcantarea imperialis* 'Rubra'), Neoregelia (*Neoregelia* 'Grace'), (*Neoregelia* 'Fosperior Perfection'), (*Neoregelia forsteriana*), (*Neoregelia* 'Lila'), (*Neoregelia* 'One And Only'), *Vriesea* (*Vriesea forsteriana*), (*Vriesea* 'Charlotte'), (*Vriesea ospinae* var. *gruber*), (*Vriesea* 'Kuulei')

Bamboo: Giant buddha belly bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris* 'Wamin'), painted bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris* var. 'Vittata'), giant black bamboo (*Bambusa lako*)

Shrubs: upright elephant's ear (*Alocasia x portora*), philodendron (*Philodendron* 'Xanadu'), peace lily (*Spathiphyllum* 'Sensation'),

Palm: lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)



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 \$16,498. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$14,728.

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.
- Our bromeliads came from Brisbane Bromeliad Centre – a wholesale production nursery. Visitors by appointment; phone (07) 5433 0303
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores or building or landscape suppliers.
- Thanks to Midcoast Timber Centres; www.midcoasttimber.com.au
- All tools used are commonly available for hire, including the mini loader and the nail gun.
- Cane balls and concrete pots and wooden bench came from Simply Living Home & Garden, 407 Progress Road, Wacol. Qld. 4076; phone (07) 3271 5661 or email info@baufarm.com.au
- Copper cylinder lights and light installation from Backyard Concepts, Shop 5b Indooroopilly Central, 34 Coonan Street, Indooroopilly, Qld. 4068; phone (07)3378 8277 or visit www.backyardconcepts.com.au
- Timber from Finlayson's Timber & Hardware Pty Ltd, 135 Wellington Road, East Brisbane, Qld 4169; phone (07) 3393 0588.
- Landscape supplies from Camp Hill Timber & Landscapes, 50 Bennetts Road, Camp Hill, Qld; phone (07) 3398 6288.

Bromeliad Societies

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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

