

BACKYARD BLITZ

Baby Blitz

In 1997, Helen Brooks visited Australia from England and loved the place so much she decided to stay. It was then she met David the man of her dreams. David and Helen got married in England and then again in Australia. They have settled into their first home in Wollongong and were expecting their first baby as the Blitz team worked on their garden. We sent David and Helen to the Star City Casino in Sydney to relax and prepare for the challenges of parenthood. David and Helen left for the weekend as a couple and returned to their new garden as a family, following the birth of their baby boy Samuel.

This design by Andrew Davies has created a tropical refuge with a seaside flavour inviting all visitors to the house to step outside. A stepping stone path leads from the house to a paved entertaining area overlooking a rustic timber shelving and swing set.

Recycled wharf timbers have been utilised to create a large bench seat and are vertically placed along a winding stepping stone path. A sleeper boardwalk runs alongside a billabong water feature, complete with bronze cranes. Tree ferns, birds nest ferns and palms provide lush foliage, with stream lilies and swamp lilies swaying to the sound of trickling water.



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 - council permission is required to remove some trees, and may be required for some structural work. Check with your local council regarding regulations about water features. If your water feature is deeper than a certain depth, you may be required to erect a pool fence around it. The depths vary between council areas across Australia.

Materials

Paving: 'Stylestone' pavers (400x400x40mm) from Amber were used. The pavers were laid over a road base sub-base and washed river sand. Fine grouting sand was swept through the pavers and a concrete haunch (edging strip) was laid against the outside edge to retain the pavers.

Stepping stone path: A path outline was created using pine edging (125x19mm) and hardwood stakes (450x50x50mm). 'Stylestone' pavers were laid over a level bed of sand with a dusting of cement throughout. Large river pebbles were randomly placed around the stepping stones and coarse sand was washed through.

Boardwalk: H4 treated pine sleepers (2400x200x75mm) and 100mm galvanised nails were used to create the boardwalk. H4 treated pine sleepers are rot resistant and are necessary when the timber comes in contact with the ground

Water feature: A heavy duty pond liner, a low voltage pump and transformer created the shape and services of the pond. Large river pebbles, recycled timber, a rustic tap and two bronze crane sculptures complete the picture. A licensed electrician installed an external power point for the pond.

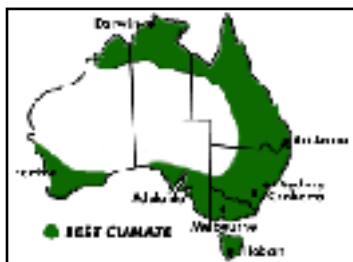
Rainforest shelves and swing set: Treated pine posts (150mm diameter) were used for uprights with a length of treated pine (250x50x2400mm) used to hang the plastic children's swing from galvanised coach screw eyelets. Raw timber branches, hardwood shelves (250x50x1000mm) and galvanised screws were combined to create the shelving.

Garden beds and lawn: the existing site soil was improved using a premium garden mix high in organic matter. A leaf litter mulch was supplied by local tree contractors to complete the rainforest feel of the garden. Turf underlay provided a good base on which to lay the soft-leaf buffalo 'Sir Walter'.

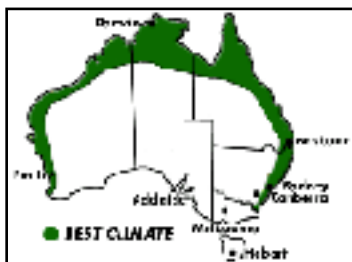


Plants

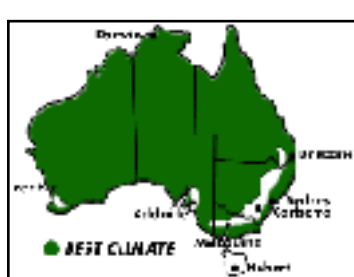
We used tropical palms, ferns and creek dwelling natives to create the rainforest garden. Bangalow palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), alexandra palm (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*), soft tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*), bird's-nest fern (*Asplenium australasicum*), lemon-scented myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*), carex (*Carex riparia*), common rush (*Juncus australis*), grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*), swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*), stream lily (*Helmholtzia glaberrima*), native violet (*Viola hederacea*), old-man's beard (*Tillandsia usneoides*), soft-leaf buffalo 'Sir Walter'.



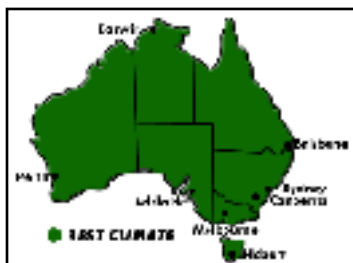
Soft Tree Fern



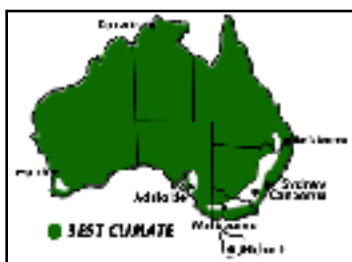
Bangalow Palm



Stream Lily



Native Violet



Soft-leaf buffalo



Old man's beard



Getting started: Any rubbish, old structures, paving, weeds, etc should be removed and the site levelled. Mark out any services on the site with a timber peg to avoid damaging them during construction.

Step-by-step

Plan your project out on paper before commencing work. Think about the nature of the work you will be doing and the logical steps required to complete it.

Prepare a day-by-day schedule of the materials, equipment and estimated time required to complete each task. This way you can reduce hire costs by completing as many jobs as possible using equipment for a number of tasks.

Landscape materials and equipment are bulky and heavy. If you are ordering materials think about where you will store them and how quickly you can use them, as this will save you from double handling or constantly moving them.

Planning your job will save you time and money. Organisation plays a large part in the rate at which you complete the project and on how much enjoyment you get from the do-it-yourself experience.

Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. Our total cost of plants and materials was \$9509 . This cost could be reduced to \$7615 by using smaller plants.

- Recycled wharf timbers from Thunderbird Constructions in Sydney vary in price depending on timber size. Phone: (02) 9571 8299.
- Large feature rocks and river pebbles can be purchased from landscape suppliers across Australia.
- The large feature bowl used in the rainforest shelves was sourced from Menduni Garden Artistry in Sydney for \$65. Phone: (02) 9798 5155.
- 'Stylestone' pavers from Amber, phone: QLD (07) 3290 1655, ACT (02) 6253 1545, NSW (02) 9831 7271, retail for about \$50/m2.
- Bronze crane sculptures supplied by designer Andrew Davies, cost \$400 each.

Getaway details

Accommodation: Star City Casino, 80 Pyrmont St, Pyrmont, NSW, phone: (02) 9777 9000 web: www.starcity.com.au

Acknowledgements:

Design by Andrew Davies, Icon Exteriors, Sydney, phone: (02) 9876 4632, email: icon@pip.com.au
Construction by the Blitz Team.

For the Revisiting Old Friends fact sheet click here

For more **Step by Step Constructions** click here



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Details on the fact sheets are accurate at the time of publishing, however prices and contact information are not updated and may change.