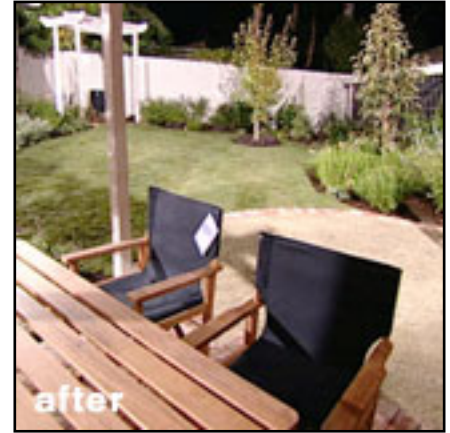


# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Mum's Melbourne Makeover



Corina La Riccia is the head of a household of men. As a mother of 6 boys aged between 5 and 17 years of age and the wife of Lou who works 7 days a week in their chicken take-away shop, she has little or no time to herself. Her eldest son James nominated her for a garden makeover to say thank you for her hard work - and for being a great mum!

We sent Lou and Corina away for a few days of solitude on their first trip without the children for 19 years. While they were away, Melbourne-based landscape designer Jim Fogarty created a peaceful retreat for Corina to enjoy when she has a moment to herself. Privacy has been ensured with the creation of a steel mesh and shade cloth screen running the length of the backyard. Second-hand bricks were used as paving beneath a timber pergola and arbour which divide the garden into an entertaining area and a reflective area. The romantic forms and colours of massed flowering perennials have softened the fence lines, and the new backyard has a gentle, feminine appearance.



### 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 approvals: Check with your local council regarding regulations about garden structures such as pergolas. Some items will require approval from your local council if they impinge on neighbours' privacy or affect their views.



## Getting started

A bobcat stripped unwanted vegetation and lifted a concrete path. Levels were established for a paved area and new lawn. Heavy materials such as roadbase and bricks were carried in and the team got to work on construction.

## Materials

**Paving:** Nigel created a rectangular entertaining area and limestone path using second-hand red house bricks. Compacted crushed rock (similar to roadbase) provided a solid sub-base to all paved areas. Levelled paving sand provided a bedding layer to pavers laid in a stretcher bond pattern with a header surround. Grouting sand (Melcann Gap sand) was swept through the pavers to bond them together. A concrete haunch was used to retain the perimeter and stop sand washing out from beneath the pavers.



**Blitz Tip:** Paving patterns help to define the theme in a garden. Stretcher bond was selected as it ties in well with the existing house and provides continuity to the design.

**Pergola and arbour:** a covered pergola was used to provide an all-weather entertaining area. An existing brick wall provides privacy and intimacy for the area, which is simple but effective in its construction. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed in-ground in concrete support beams (190x45mm) connected with stainless steel bolts. Pine battens nailed to the beams support a Custom Orb iron roof connected with roofing screws. A simple arbour using the same timber types and construction techniques was erected over a garden bench to create a reflective nook for observing the garden. **Blitz Tip:** Create a slope on covered pergolas to direct rainwater into an adjacent garden bed.



**Privacy screen:** treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed inground in concrete support beams (190x45mm) connected with stainless steel bolts. Reinforcing steel mesh (F72) connected vertically against the beams and posts with heavy gauge staples act as a frame to support scrambling roses. Dark-green shadecloth tacked to the back off the posts with mini-gangnails provide partial screening while allowing light and a breeze to flow through to the garden. **Blitz Tipz:** Discuss your proposed screen with your neighbours to ensure that it will not impact negatively on the enjoyment of their garden.

**Garden beds:** Jody incorporated an organic garden mix (with added gypsum) into the clay site soil to improve structure and drainage characteristics. A layer of mushroom compost was spread to a depth of 75mm to act as a mulch and to improve the soil as it breaks down.

**Blitz Tip:** Mushroom compost makes an excellent soil conditioner and mulch. It will provide a great head start for any new garden bed when spread in a 100mm layer and allowed to break down over a few weeks.



**Metal wall feature:** Scott added a sense of scale to an existing brick wall by attaching a square sheet of mild steel to create a false door. 10mm diameter dynabolts drilled into the wall were used to hold the steel sheet in place. Washed down with hydrochloric acid and water (1 part acid to 5 parts water) to create a rusted effect, the sheets were then protected with a coating of penetrol - an oil-based primer and surface conditioner. **Blitz Tipz:** Wear full protective equipment for your skin, eyes and lungs and always mix acid and water in very low concentrations in a well-ventilated area.

## Plants

Cool climate perennials, shrubs and trees will create a romantic haven for the whole family to enjoy.

**Trees:** lipstick maple (*Acer rubrum* 'October Glory'), michelia (*Michelia doltsopa*),

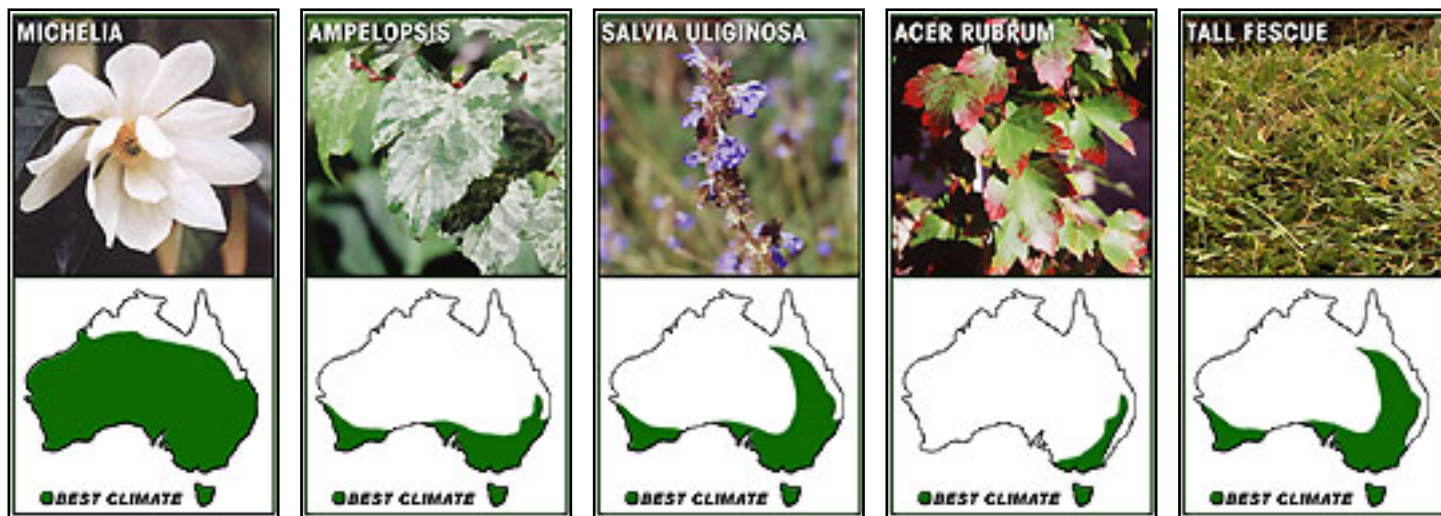
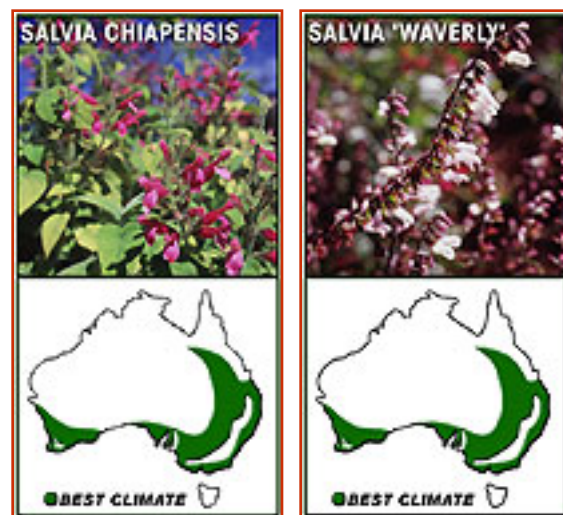
**Shrubs:** coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa* 'Smokie'), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii* 'Pink Delight'), penstemon (*Penstemon kunthii*, *Penstemon* 'Pink Cloud', 'Gladiator', 'Pennington Gem', 'Russian River', 'Thorn', 'Garnet') Chinese lantern (*Abutilon* 'Pink Cloud')

**Perennials:** heuchera (*Heuchera americana* 'Green Spice', *Heuchera* 'Plum Pudding'

*Heuchera americana* 'Velvet Night'), salvia (*Salvia* 'Golden

Fountain', 'Black Night', 'Waverly' *Salvia chiapensis*, *Salvia uliginosa*), dogsbane (*Plectranthus ornatus*)

**Climbers:** rainbow creeper (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* var. *maximowiczii* 'Elegans'), climbing rose (*Rosa* 'Manita')



## 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 \$12,525. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$7190.

## Product details

- Secondhand bricks are available at demolition yards and occasionally direct from manufacturers for about \$600 per thousand. You need 40 per square metre of paving. Check the local *Yellow Pages* for suppliers.
- Steel mesh is available at most large hardware stores for \$85 for 6 x 2.4m sheets. Ask about delivery details, as it is unwieldy.
- Lilydale toppings is a crushed limestone product that forms a solid pathway when compacted. It costs about \$80 per cubic metre in Melbourne. Ask your landscape supplier for similar products such as decomposed granite.
- 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 bobcat and the compound drop saw.

## Getaway details

Hyatt Regency Adelaide  
North Terrace, Adelaide  
Phone: (08) 8231 1234  
www.adelaide.hyatt.com

Barossa Valley Wine Tour  
Gray Line - The World Wide Sightseeing Specialist  
Phone: 1300 85 86 87 Fax: 1300 858 600  
www.grayline.com

## Acknowledgments

Design by Jim Fogarty Landscapes Pty Ltd  
Phone 1300 888 916  
www.jimfogartylandscapes.com.au

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

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.