

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Miracle Mum



Moira Kelly has been dedicated to helping others for most of her life. Her efforts over the last ten years have included working in Calcutta with Mother Teresa, in Botswana with the Kalahari bushmen and helping babies suffering from AIDS in the Bronx. Moira's efforts have culminated in the creation of the Children First Foundation farm in the rural outskirts of Melbourne. A local Rotary member donated 40 acres of farmland, and over two years with the help of a massive team of volunteers created a 10-bedroom farmhouse to accommodate disadvantaged children from around the world.

Rotary contacted Backyard Blitz to seek some help in completing the garden around the house and raising the profile of this amazing woman and her team of volunteers.



### Design intent

Landscape designer, Jim Fogarty, designed a fruitful rural garden that meets the needs of all people staying at the farmhouse. Large areas of fully irrigated lawn blend with a stylish gazebo and screen. Structured planting differentiates the recreational garden from the vegetable patch and helps to screen the working sheds. A ramped pathway provides access to children with different degrees of mobility. This clever design offers elements that would translate well to any garden space.

### Design Tip

Hardy plant selection and rural materials were selected to blend into the surrounding countryside and to survive in this harsh environment. Try to maximise the positive attributes of your site by maintaining vistas and running with pre-existing themes, as this approach lends a sense of permanency to a garden.

## 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:** many garden structures such as privacy screens and decks require council approval. Always discuss your project with neighbours and the council prior to starting work. It may save you money and will help the project to run smoothly.

## Getting started

A bobcat cleared all unwanted vegetation from the site and fill was spread to create sub-grade levels for turfing and paving. Post holes for the arbour and fencing were created, and then the team got to work.

## Garden elements



**Gazebo:** Scott built a stylish new gazebo using treated pine and mini-orb corrugated sheets. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed vertically in ground support treated pine beams and roof framing. Beams (140x45mm) were skew nailed and fastened in place using galvanised cup head bolts. Rafters (90x45mm) were butt jointed in the centre of the roof and battens nailed perpendicular to the top of the rafters to support the mini-orb roof. Scott used a nibbler to cut triangular pieces of roofing to fit the eight sides of the gazebo and covered the gaps with ridge capping. Pink primed fascia (290x19mm) connected to the end of the rafters disguises the framework and provides a neat finish to the structure. All timberwork was painted with Dulux Thunderclap as the finishing touch.

**Blitz Tipz:** This structure is a complicated piece of carpentry and should only be attempted by an accomplished handy person. A simpler project is to create a square gazebo.



**Paving:** Nigel created two areas of paving to enable visitors to the garden to pause and reflect beneath the gazebo or to enjoy the winter sunshine. Large Bluestone pavers from Riverstone and small clay pavers from CSR were combined to create a mosaic effect. A sub-grade of compacted roadbase supports coarse washed river sand, screeded to achieve appropriate falls. Dried grouting sand swept between the gaps locks the job in place while a concrete haunch surrounds the perimeter of the pavers and prevents the bedding sand from washing away.

**Blitz Tipz:** If using two different types of pavers make sure they are the same thickness.

**Irrigation:** A professional irrigation team installed a fully automated irrigation system to support the new plantings. Fed by the existing dam and an electric pump, the system utilises pop-up sprinklers in the lawn and drip irrigation on the garden areas.

**Blitz Tipz:** Irrigation is a trade in its own right and it is best to consult and employ professionals for anything other than the simplest domestic project.

**Sleeper paving:** Nigel laid treated pine sleepers flat on the ground to provide an entrance way to the vegetable garden. A layer of compacted roadbase overlaid with coarse washed sand supports sleepers laid in a herringbone pattern. Each sleeper is skew nailed to the sleeper beside it with 65mm galvanised nails.

**Vegetable bed:** A raised planter bed constructed using treated pine sleepers and filled with organic soil will provide the house with a range of fresh new herbs and vegetables all year round. Jamie laid sleepers on edge and nailed them together to create a large box before a team of volunteers planted out the herbs and vegetable seedlings.

**Blitz Tipz:** Overlap the ends of the sleepers (similar to brickwork) to maximise the strength of the joints and add stability.

**Turfing:** The existing sub-grade was ripped (broken up) and fill sand spread to provide a level base. An organic underlay spread to a depth of 75mm will improve drainage and provide nutrients for the new turf.

**Blitz Tipz:** Choose a lawn species that meets the needs of the garden visitors. We chose a hard wearing, drought and frost tolerant fescue/bluegrass blend.



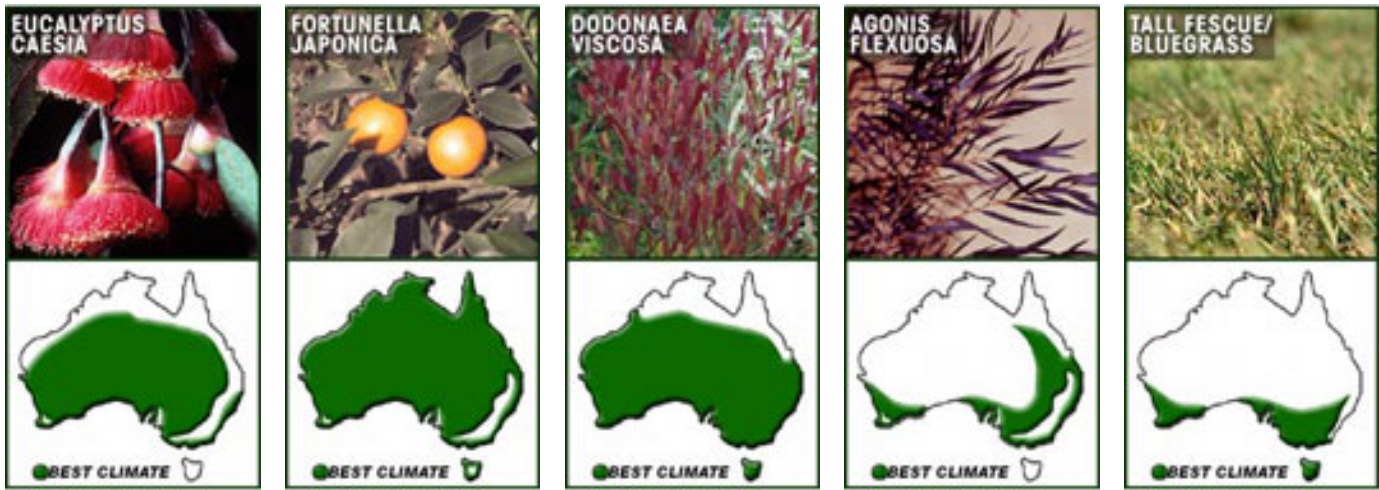
## Plants

Hardy and colourful trees, shrubs, groundcovers and grasses were incorporated into the design to fulfil the range of needs of all the garden visitors.

**Trees:** agonis 'After Dark' (*Agonis flexuosa* 'After Dark'), gungurru gum (*Eucalyptus caesia*), cumquat (*Fortunella japonica*), eureka lemon (*Citrus limon* 'Eureka'), valencia orange (*Citrus sinensis* 'Valencia'), Tahitian lime (*Citrus aurantifolia* 'Tahiti').

**Shrubs:** leather leaf sedge (*Carex buchananii*), diosma (*Coleonema album*), sticky hop bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* 'Purpurea'), licorice plant (*Helichrysum petiolare*), bush germander (*Teucrium fruticans*), eulalia (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'), coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*)

**Turf:** fescue/bluegrass blend



## Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost of plants and materials was \$20,390. This cost could be reduced to \$14,967 by using smaller plants.

## Product details

- CSR-PGH rustic gold pavers cost about \$35 per square metre. Call 1800 012 121 for more information on their whole range of pavers.
- Nigel laid Bluestone pavers from Riverstone. They cost around \$65 per square metre depending on which state you live in. Phone Riverstone on (03) 9587 4446 for further details.
- Kentucky Turf Nursery in Victoria provided the turf blend. Phone 1800 069 229 for details on their range of turfs.
- Eltham Water House kindly donated the irrigation materials. Phone (03) 9439 8218 for further information on all your irrigation queries.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you or advise similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide contacts to you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire including the mini loader and nail gun.



## Getaway details

Blue Mountains Hotel School  
1 Chambers Rd  
Leura NSW  
Phone: (02) 4780 1600  
Web: [www.bmihms.nsw.edu.au](http://www.bmihms.nsw.edu.au)

## Acknowledgments

**Design by:**  
Jim Fogarty Design Pty Ltd  
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Malvern, Victoria



Phone 1300 888 916

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Eltham Water House

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Byahmee House



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