

BACKYARD BLITZ

Kiddies Corner



Sasha Williams has fitted a lot into her 29 years of life. A mother to four children, a wife for 7 years and currently fighting the biggest battle of her life having been diagnosed with Wegener's Granulomatosis just two years ago. Sasha attributes much of her success in life to the unwavering support of her husband Lucas. Lucas has maintained the home, his painting business and looking after the family enabling Sasha to focus on her recovery and enjoying life.

Sasha wrote to Backyard Blitz seeking help to complete the backyard that Lucas so wanted to build for his four children. Always keen to help those that help others the Backyard Blitz team jumped at the challenge.



Design intent

Landscape designer Matthew Cantwell from Secret Gardens of Sydney drew inspiration from the half completed projects in the backyard. It was obvious that Lucas aspired to build a low level deck at the rear of the house for entertaining and to create a play area for the kids with a built in sandpit. These practical elements have been included and improved with a touch of flair, form and colour.

Design Tip

Cheerful colours and curves give this garden design a light hearted feel. Paint is a great tool in the garden as it is cheap and can change the whole feel of the space with just a few hours of work.

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 excavated to sub-grade levels for paving. Post holes for the deck and fencing were created and the team got to work.

Garden elements



Deck: Scott constructed a low level deck directly off the rear of the house. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed directly in ground in rapid setting concrete support bearers (140x45mm). A sole plate (also known as a ledger or wall plate) was bolted to the back wall of the house, as a concrete footing beneath the external wall prevented the installation of posts in this area. Joists nailed perpendicular to the top of the bearers and connected to the sole plate with galvanised joist hangers provide the framework for decking boards to be nailed against. As this deck contained a curve, noggins (short joists) were run between the ends of joists to give support to the decking boards above. A sheet of fibre cement was nailed to the ends of joists to provide a barrier between the exposed timber and the backfilled soil.

Blitz Tipz: Consider drainage implications if you undertake excavation on your property. This site contained a sandy soil and sloped to the side of the house so drainage was adequate.



Sleeper paving: Nigel and Jamie created a secluded utility area for the clothes line, sandpit and childrens toys. The floor was comprised of treated pine sleepers (2400x200x100mm) nailed across three bearers embedded in the ground. Galvanised spikes (150mm) were used to connect the upper sleepers to the bearers beneath. Jamie built a sandpit into one end of the sleeper paving by excavating the site soil and lining the hole with builders plastic. Holes punched into the plastic provide drainage in the new washed sand installed in the pit.

Blitz Tipz: The weight of the connected sleepers on level ground will hold them all in place and negate the need to connect them to posts in the ground.

Sandstone retaining wall: A low brick wall was removed along the edge of the raised lawn and a single course of sandstone blocks (400x300x100) were laid in their place. The concrete footing beneath the old brickwork was retained and sandstone blocks were laid into a bed of 4:1 sand and cement on top of the footing. Nigel mortared the perpends (vertical joints) and backfilled with rubble and gravel to aid drainage. Clean water and a sponge were used to clean off any excess mortar.

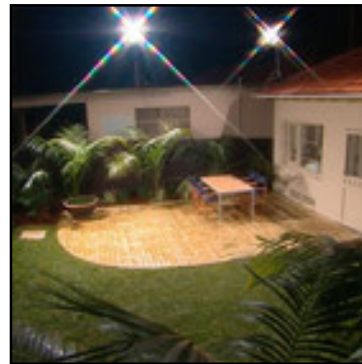
Blitz Tipz: The footing is the most important part of a retaining wall as it provides strength to the whole structure. If in doubt as to the footing type and size required, consult a licensed landscaper or builder.

Utility screens: Jamie created a series of aesthetic, practical and entertaining screens to disguise the utility area at the rear of the garden. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed vertically in ground in quick setting concrete support pine rails (90x45mm) nailed horizontally to the face of the posts. Sheets of fibre cement sheeting (2400x900x7mm) were attached to the rails with galvanised clouts. Stained decking boards (90x19mm) were attached to dress the joints and edges of the sheets. Two coats of blackboard paint were applied to the end screen above the sandpit to give the children an outdoor art room.

Blitz Tipz: Ensure you use only fibre cement sheeting that is appropriate for external use as internal sheeting will deteriorate over time.

Garden beds: Jody improved the existing sandy site soil with the addition of an organic garden mix. The composted organic matter will improve the structure of the soil while the decomposing manures will add nutrients. An organic pine mulch spread to a depth of 75mm will maintain soil temperature and moisture content.

Blitz Tipz: This red coloured mulch will provide a contrasting background to the striking foliage colours of the clumping shrubs above it.



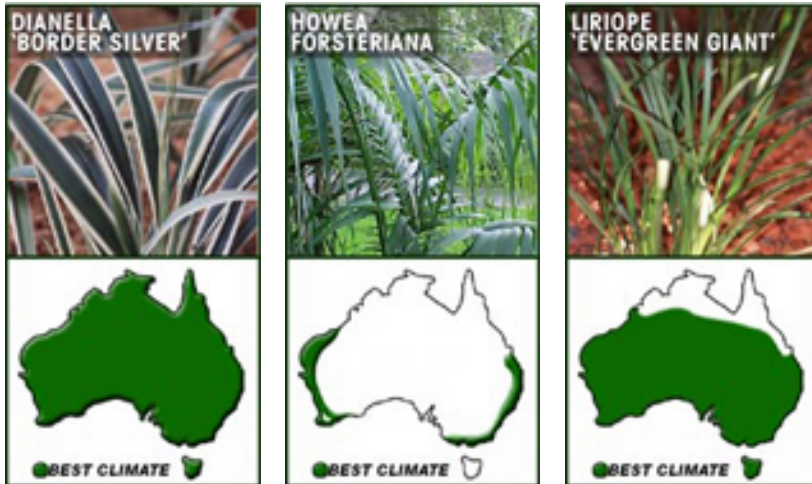
Plants

A simple palette of strappy foliage plants and classy mature palms provides a feeling of seclusion and interest in this small backyard.

Tree: kentia palm (*Howea forsteriana*)

Shrubs: Liriope 'Evergreen Giant' (*Liriope muscari* 'Evergreen Giant'), dianella (*Dianella* 'Border Silver'), New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax* 'Maori Chief')

Turf: Soft leaf buffalo 'Palmetto'



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 \$10,882. This cost could be reduced to \$8,092 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Treated pine sleepers are widely available from landscape and building suppliers. Costs vary from state to state but expect to pay between \$25-\$30 for a 2400x200x100mm sleeper.
- Sandstone blocks were purchased from Sandstone Sales in Sydney for about \$35 per block. Phone (02) 9652 1783 for more information on their great range of stone.
- All timbers used to construct the deck are preservative treated pine. This deck would cost about \$1700 to build yourself. Remember that council permission may be required to construct a similar structure on your property.
- 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

Accommodation:
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Acknowledgments

Design by Matthew Cantwell from Secret Gardens of Sydney;
phone (02) 9365 6533.
Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz).

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For more Step by Step Constructions click [here](#)

