

BACKYARD BLITZ

Squatters Garden



David Woodward is a typical Aussie who loves nothing more than a barbecue and a game of cricket with friends and his children in the backyard. David and wife Tina have done all the renovations to their house themselves, including a large workshop beneath the house that David dug out by hand. Tina asked the Backyard Blitz team for help to makeover their garden as she wanted to thank David for all of his hard work on the house.



Landscape designer Andrew Davies created a rustic Australian garden using David's love of the bush as his inspiration. A covered area for a slab table was created by erecting a 'pioneer's hut' on some existing paving. Sandstone boulders, grass trees and native grasses are a sparse setting in front of the hut that inspire visitors to seek refuge within. Native shrubs and trees were planted as a dense screen along one side of the garden and to provide diversity of food and habitat for native wildlife. A large sawn log across a flagged sandstone path leading to the hut emphasises its informality.

Recycled fence palings attached horizontally to posts form rustic garden screens. Half wine barrels planted with lemon, orange and lemon-scented myrtle provide fragrance and, in the case of the citrus, fruit. This is truly an Australian garden created for a fair dinkum Aussie family.



Adapting this plan to your garden

Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard or the play area you want to revitalise (eg 1:100) showing the location of the house or main buildings and other major features. Then incorporate the desired elements from our makeover. As your backyard 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: many structures in the backyard require council approval as they can have an impact on your neighbours. Always discuss your plans with your local council before commencing building in the backyard.

Materials

Pioneer's hut: a rustic pioneer-style entertaining area was created using recycled timbers and roofing materials. The following timber types were used: hardwood tree stems (250mm diameter); hardwood bearers (F11, 250x50mm); pine rafters (F5, 50x100mm); oregon hip beams (F7, 200x50mm); oregon ridge beam (F7, 250x50mm); pine battens (F5, 50x50mm); hardwood bracing (F11, 100x38mm). Round galvanised post supports were placed in 800mm deep concrete footings and the base of each post slid over the post support. A corrugated iron roof was connected to the battens using roofing screws. **Blitz Tipz** Freshly sawn timbers such as tree trunks may shrink and split as they dry out. Always use dried or seasoned hardwood posts to avoid this problem.

Sandstone paths: two types of sandstone path lead to the hut: a flagged path and a series of stepping stones.

- **Flagged path.** Flagging paths look easy to lay but require strength and skill as stone is heavy and awkward to work with. A layer of compacted road base provides a stable sub-base. Each piece of stone was laid directly into a base of 4:1 mortar (4 parts sand, 1 part cement) and tapped down to the predetermined finished level with a rubber mallet. When laying a flagging path, lay one edge completely to define the shape and direction of the path. Next, lay the opposite edge to the desired width and shape, then fill in the middle with pieces that fit naturally or that you cut to shape.

A dry mix of sand and cement was swept through all joints. Any excess mortar was washed off with a light spray of the garden hose and a wet sponge.

- **Stepping stone path.** The stepping stone path involved laying sandstone pieces a step length apart on a bed of mortar, levelling each stone and allowing to set. A surround of river gravel (40mm) was raked around the stepping stones to bring the finished surface to level with the stepping stones.

Blitz Tipz As sandstone flagging is a natural product it comes in varying colours, textures and thicknesses. Always inspect the stone to ensure it is right for your needs before you purchase it.

Rustic screens: hardwood posts (F11, 100x100mm) were buried 600mm in the ground in concrete mix and allowed to set. Recycled hardwood fence palings were cut to length and attached horizontally, 50mm apart using a nail gun.

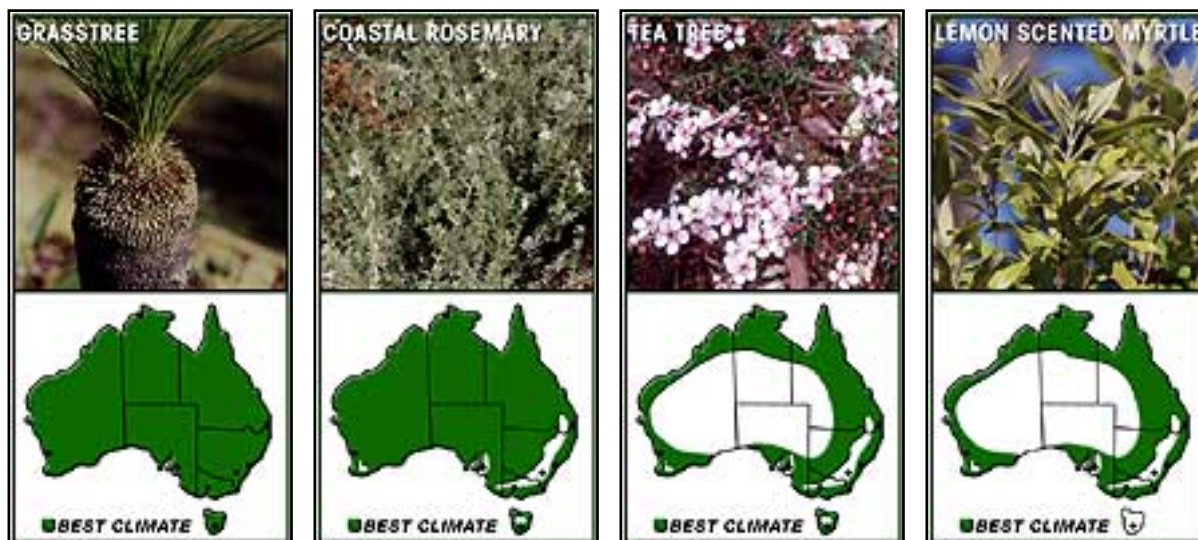
Turf: soft-leaf buffalo turf was laid over a base of 75mm of turf underlay. A sharp spade and hedging shears were used to cut rolls to fit. Ensure that turf is well watered after laying. **Blitz Tipz** The buffalo variety 'Palmetto' was used here as it is frost tolerant and holds its colour well through winter.

Garden beds: garden edges were defined with treated pine edging (120x19mm). Galvanised nails (50mm) and hardwood pegs (50x50x450mm) hold the edging in place. To create a curved edge, cut a series of notches a third of the way through the timber on the side opposite to your proposed bend. Place a peg in the middle of the curve and a peg at either end of the board on the opposite side and bend the board to fit.

As most of the plants used in this design were natives, drainage needed to be improved on the site. To achieve this a native soil mix was combined with a sandstone mix (particle size 40mm or less). The imported soil mix was dug into the site soil and pushed into planting mounds to aid drainage. A 100mm layer of pine flake was used as a mulch. Pine flake is available at most landscape suppliers and is an attractive alternative to pine bark with the added bonus of its soil binding properties. **Blitz Tipz** Add some interest to the garden by mounding the soil in planting areas. Mounding aids drainage of garden beds, can direct overland water flow and traffic through the garden as well as blocking or enhancing views.

Plants

A broad range of mostly Australian natives has been planted in this garden. Plants have been selected for their suitability to the local climate and soil but also for their range of flowering times. A constant source of food will be available to the local wildlife as the garden flowers throughout the year.



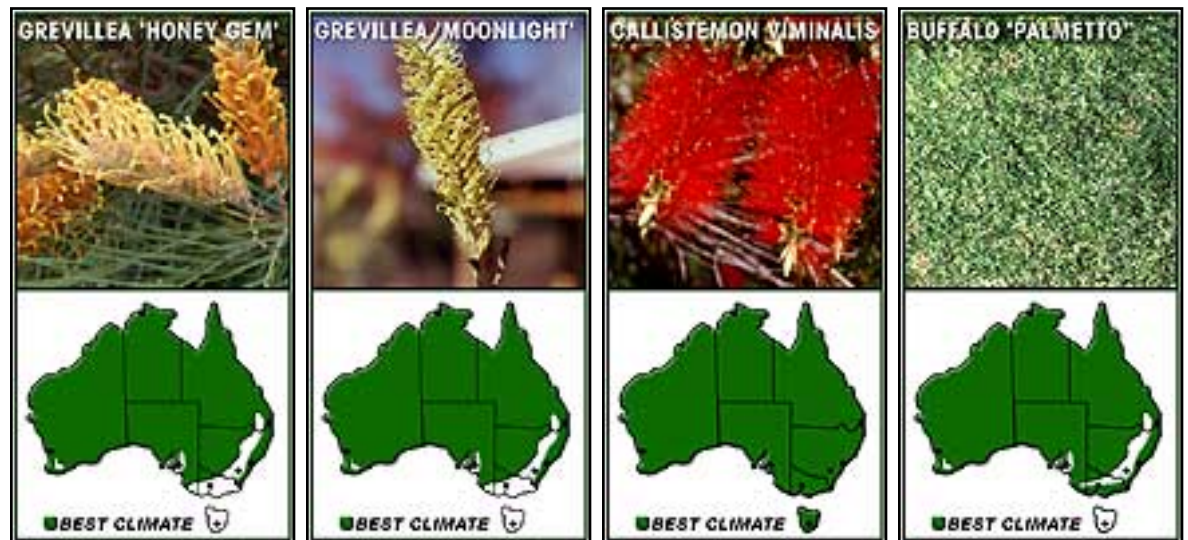


Trees: *Backhousia citriodora* (lemon scented myrtle), *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* (NSW Christmas bush), *Citrus limon* 'Eureka' (lemon), *Citrus sinensis* 'Valencia' (orange), *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (blueberry ash)

Shrubs: *Banksia marginata* (silver banksia), *Banksia serrata* (saw-tooth banksia), *Banksia spinulosa* (hairpin banksia), *Callistemon* 'Captain Cook' (bottlebrush), *Correa alba* (coastal correa), *Grevillea* 'Honey Gem' (grevillea); *Grevillea* 'Moonlight' (grevillea), *Kunzea ambigua* (tick bush), *Leptospermum polygalifolium* 'Cardwell' (tea-tree), *Lysiosepalum involucreatum*, *Isopogon anemonifolius* (drumsticks), *Syzygium* 'Southern Form' (lilly pilly), *Syzygium* 'Tiny Trev' (dwarf lilly pilly), *Westringia fruticosa* (coastal rosemary), *Xanthorrhoea australis* (grass tree)

Groundcovers:

Dampiera diversifolia (Kangaroo lobelia),
Grevillea 'Bronze Rambler' (Grevillea),
Grevillea 'Poorinda Royal Mantle',
Hardenbergia violacea (Australian sarsparilla),
Hardenbergia 'Mini HaHa' (dwarf Australian sarsparilla),
Myoporum parvifolium (creeping boobialla),
Viola hederacea (Australian native violet)



Grasses: *Carex hattoriana*, *Poa* 'Eskdale', *Poa labillardieri* (tussock grass). The turf chosen was 'Palmetto' buffalo.

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 \$11,233. This cost could be reduced to \$7589 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Half wine barrels from landscape suppliers and nurseries cost from \$60 each. Ensure you drill drainage holes in the base if you are planting into them.
- Rustic slab table was made to order by Dean Appleby from Wyong Demolishers using recycled timber. Phone: (02) 4351 9022 for details or to discuss your project.
- Large diameter building poles (2400x300mm) can be purchased from most timber yards instead of using freshly sawn trees. They cost about \$140 each.
- Australiana garden features were purchased from a second-hand yard in Richmond, Sydney. Phone: (02) 4572 5211. Most dealers are more than happy to haggle over prices, especially if you pay in cash.
- Split sandstone flagging costs from \$45 per square metre and is available from most landscape suppliers.
- 'Palmetto' buffalo is currently only available in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Contact your local turf grower for the best turf species to use in your area.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you or to 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. A bobcat and licenced driver costs from \$80 and hour to hire.

Getaway details

Accommodation

Rafferty's Resort

1 Wild Duck Drive via Rafferty's Road

Cams Wharf

Lake Macquarie 2281 NSW

Phone: 1800 811 712 (toll free), (02) 4972 5555

website: www.raffertysresort.com.au

Email: reservations@raffertysresort.com.au

Tours

Go Karts Go

Phone: (02) 4952 9129

Megamania Kids Centre

Phone: (02) 4954 4549

Acknowledgments

Design by Andrew Davies from Icon Exteriors, phone: (02) 9876 4632.

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

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



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