

BACKYARD BLITZ

Elegantly English



Fiona and David Clarke met while they were skiing in France. He was from Australia and she from England. The couple married and settled in Australia. Fiona felt very homesick so the young family decided to return to the UK. However after weeks of planning, packing and farewell parties, Fiona changed her mind and decided she could not leave this wonderful place she now calls home.

To give Fiona a reminder of home, landscape designer Andrew Davies has created a formal English garden, complete with box hedges, white trellis timber work and a fragrant kitchen garden. The symmetrical garden has a broad formal set of stairs, green lawn, a wall fountain and stepping stones set in gravel. David and Fiona will be able to relax and rejoice in this little piece of England in their own front 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 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 access and delivery and storage of materials during the construction of your garden. All public areas should be kept clean and safe following the delivery and use of landscape materials.

Getting started

When the Blitz team arrived, the garden had a distinctive Spanish feel with white walls and palms. A brick and wrought iron wall was removed to open up the front garden. The lower section of the wall was retained as the base for the formal stairs. A large palm and some tree ferns were also relocated using the help of a bobcat. They were moved to a garden bed with other palms.

Materials

Planter boxes and formal steps: an existing brick fence was removed and the lower courses retained as the foundation of a new set of formal steps. Concrete footings (200x200mm) were poured and single skin brick walls (extruded commons) were laid to create a square brick planter box and step treads and risers. All brickwork was bagged with a mortar mix (4 parts yellow brickies sand, 1 part off-white cement, yellow oxide). Formal, bullnose step treads (680x450x50mm) were laid over a mortar bed with 10mm mortar joints between each tread. **Blitz Tipz** For comfort and safety, outdoor step heights (risers) should be between 150-180mm, and treads between 300-450mm.

Stepping stones: pre-cast concrete pavers (450x450x40mm) were laid on a 3:1 mix of brickies sand and cement. The stepping stones were spaced by measuring out a comfortable length of stride. To lay stepping stones in a level plane, extend a string line between two pegs over the proposed location of your stepping stones. Lay the stepping stone onto the mortar pad and tap down with a rubber mallet until it sits just under the string. **Blitz Tipz** Use a sponge and clean water to clean off excess mortar from the pavers.

Water feature: a freestanding framework was erected to support a garden mirror, trellis and the water feature. The frame was made using two posts (90x90mm treated pine) and horizontal studs (70x35mm treated pine). A sheet of compressed fibre cement (1200x1200x7.5mm) was attached to the frame using 8mm galvanised bolts. A reconstituted sandstone half bowl and lion's head were then mounted onto the board. An acrylic mirror (2mm thick), which can be cut with a jigsaw, was glued and screwed to the fibre cement sheeting. A low voltage submersible pump (Hozelock 500) connected to a low voltage transformer pumps water from the bowl up a hose concealed behind the screen so it trickles out of the lion's mouth. A sheet of white trellis cut to shape is mounted to the front of the feature.

Blitz Tipz Acrylic mirrors are safe to use outdoors as no glass is used in their construction, however for durability and to avoid corrosion of the silvering sheet, use non-acetic glues and seal with a waterproof silica sealant.



Trellis screens: treated pine posts installed in ground in concrete and pine framing (70x35mm) provided a framework. Trellis (100mm) was attached with a nail gun.

Formal pots and plinths: a range of reconstituted sandstone plinths and pots were placed throughout the garden. Bricks laid in a mortar pad provided a firm and level base for each plinth. **Blitz Tipz** Rapidly age new pots by applying a mix of liquid fertiliser and milk to encourage moss and lichen growth over the surface.



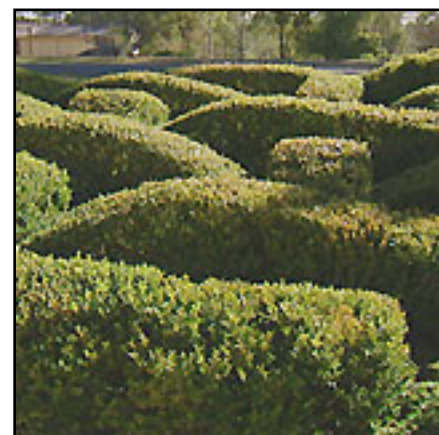
Timber retaining walls: treated pine posts (100x100mm) installed 600mm in ground in rapidset concrete support horizontal, treated pine sleepers (2400x200x75mm) connected with galvanised nails and cup head bolts. **Blitz Tipz** Reduce cutting by placing post centres exactly 2400mm apart to enable sleepers to be connected behind the posts.

New garage wall: the unstable brick wall was removed and replaced with a timber stud wall (pine 70x35mm) and fibre cement sheeting (2400x900x9mm). To weatherproof, top coat finishing paste should be applied over all joins. Sand once dry. The boards were then painted white with an exterior flat white paint.

Garden beds: as the site soil was a heavy clay, raised garden beds were created to aid drainage. An organic garden mix was dug through the soil and treated pine timber edging (120x25mm) was held in place with hardwood pegs (450x50x50mm) and galvanised nails. A 50mm layer of pine bark was spread as a mulch to help retain soil moisture and suppress weeds. **Blitz Tipz** To help improve the workability and improve drainage of clay soils, add organic matter and gypsum. Dig these elements through your soil and mound the garden bed to enable water to drain away.



A knot garden is a complex form of topiary. It involves careful pruning of dense hedging plants over many years to create



an interwoven hedge. Dwarf, English and Japanese box are an excellent plant choice for this type of garden feature.

Plants

The formal structure of an English garden was created with plantings of dense growing compact shrubs that can be heavily and regularly clipped to form hedges.

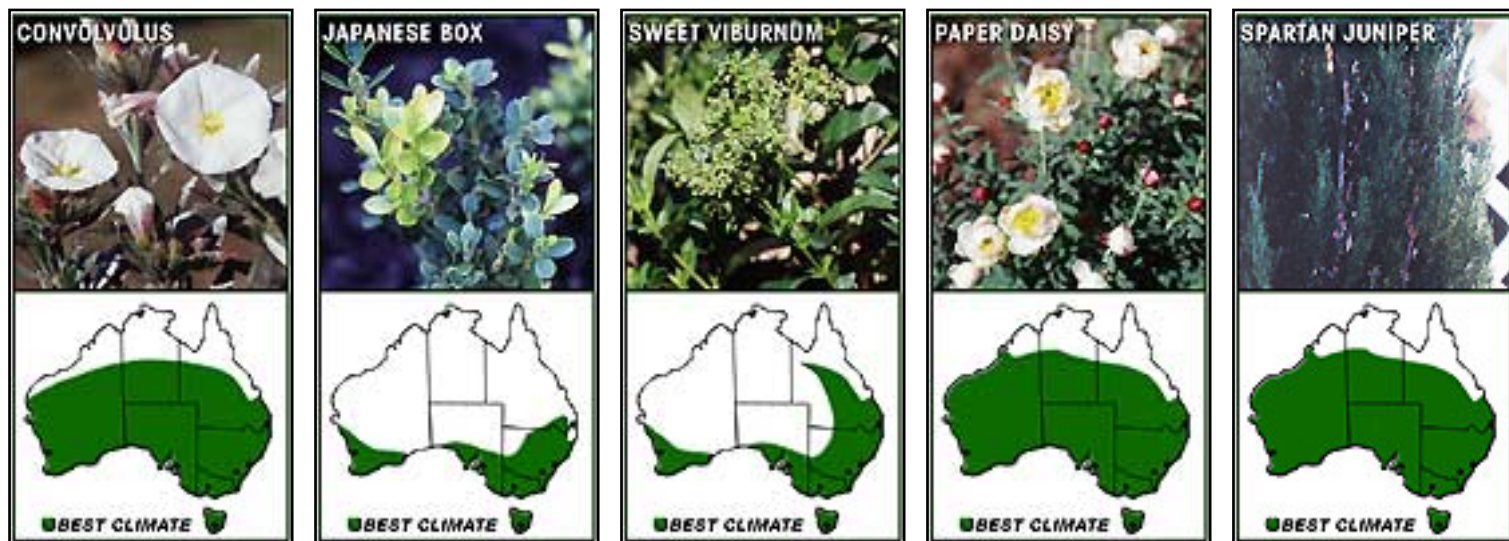
Hedging plants: Japanese box (*Buxus microphylla* var. *japonica*), English box (*Buxus sempervirens*), dwarf box (*Buxus microphylla* var. *microphylla*), murraya (*Murraya paniculata*), sweet viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum*)

Feature plants and shrubs: Spartan juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Spartan'), convolvulus (*Convolvulus cneorum*), Italian lavender (*Lavandula stoechas* 'Avonview'), Ornamental kale (*Brassica oleracea* Acephala Group) and potted colour including paper daisies (*Rhodanthe anthemoides*)

Climbing plants: star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*)

Kitchen garden: assorted herbs and vegies including coloured loose leaf lettuce (we selected 'Anita', 'Purple Oakleaf' and 'Cos')

Turf: Soft 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 \$11,750. This cost could be reduced to \$8760 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Reconstituted sandstone pots and plinths were sourced from Elegant Garden World in Sydney. Phone: (02) 9723 1088 for more details.
- Wilsonstone provided the bullnose step treads (680x450x40mm). They cost about \$40-\$45 each or \$65 a lineal metre. Phone: (02) 4943 5479.
- An acrylic mirror (1000x800mm) from Cadillac Plastics in Sydney cost \$110. Phone: (02) 9714 1111 (head office) for more information, or look in your local *Yellow Pages* under 'Plastic Fabricators'.
- Instant hedges are available at some specialist nurseries or may be ordered in for you. Try Q Nursery and Gardens, Dural, NSW, phone: 0500 877 755; Lintons Garden and Home, Mt Eliza, Vic, phone: (03) 9787 2122; or Trethowan Nursery, Melton, Vic, phone: (03) 9747 1818.
- 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 Bobcat and driver from about \$80 per hour.

Getaway details

Accommodation:

Megalong Australian Heritage Centre

Megalong Road

Megalong Valley NSW

Phone: (02) 4787 8188

Website: www.megalong.com.au

Acknowledgments

Design by:

Andrew Davies

Icon Exteriors

Phone: (02) 9876 4632

Email: icon@pip.com.au

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

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



© Burke's Backyard 2003

Burke's Backyard and Backyard Blitz do not accept payment to promote products. All recommendations are genuine.

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