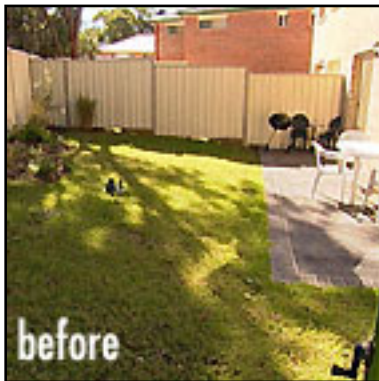


BACKYARD BLITZ

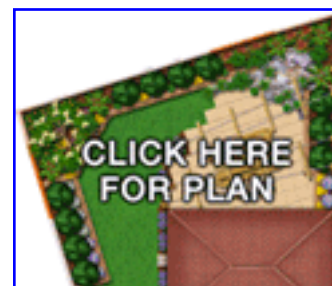
Elvis Fever



After spending most of her life in the bush, Joy Stepto moved to Sydney with her young family. Last year her son, David, and daughter-in-law, Joanne, helped to fund the building of a new townhouse, so that Joy would have more room and be closer to her extended family. The property was described as 'fully landscaped' on completion. However, the landscaping was so poor that David wrote to Backyard Blitz asking for some help.



Landscape designer, Prue Keen, has created a restful, native garden appropriate to the small scale of this backyard. Screening lilly pillies, grass trees and Gynea lilies have been planted in raised garden beds. A naturalistic, sandstone water feature provides the soothing sounds of running water and will be a cooling influence in summer. Large unit pavers laid at an angle to the house create the illusion of space, while native climbers supported on overhead wires provide a shaded entertaining area. This simple design will help Joy feel at home by bringing a little piece of the bush to the big smoke.



Adapting this plan to your garden

Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard (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: a large amount of excavation was necessary to create the finished levels for this project. If level changes are required for your project, ensure that good drainage is maintained and no excess water is directed into neighbouring properties.

Getting started

A bobcat stripped all unwanted vegetation and a concrete path from the site and excavated to sub-base levels beneath the paved area and the retaining walls. The backhoe attachment was used to rip all garden bed areas to a depth of 200mm and the lawn area was backbladed to finished contours.

Materials

Paving: Nigel directed the bobcat to excavate levels to 190mm below finished paving height, enabling a 100mm layer of compacted roadbase and 50mm layer of paving sand to be spread prior to paving. Villastone pavers ('Limestone', 500x500x40mm) were laid at an angle to the house with a mortar haunch (edging strip) to contain the bedding sand. Fine grouting sand was swept between the pavers to help bond them together. **Blitz Tipz:** Large unit pavers can make a small area seem larger and further increase the illusion of space when laid at an angle to the house.



Wire pergola: a stylised climbing frame was erected over the paving to support native climbers. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) were installed in-ground in quick setting concrete. Wire rope to support the native climbers was attached to eyelet screws with swages and shackles. Bamboo poles (40mm) were threaded horizontally across the wires to provide an imaginary roof to the structure and create a sense of intimacy beneath. **Blitz Tipz:** Wire rope grips are an alternative to swages for fastening wire and can be connected with an adjustable spanner.

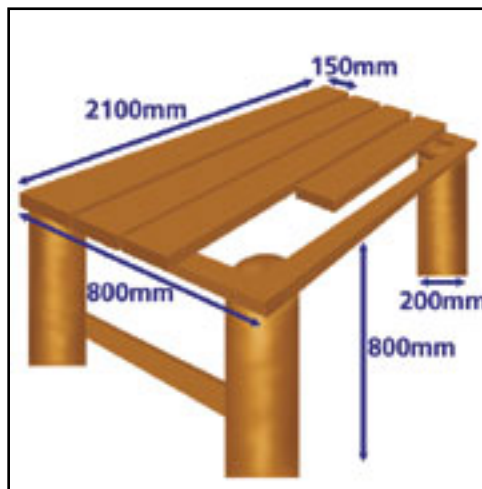
Garden beds: Jody created raised garden beds behind a sleeper retaining wall to improve the drainage in the clay soil. An agricultural drain was laid directly behind the wall and covered with blue metal (20mm). The drain was run alongside the edge of the paving in the lowest point of the garden and was connected into an existing retention pit. An improved soil comprised of 65% organic soil mix and 35% sandstone mix was incorporated into the garden beds to a depth of 200mm and a mulch of composted leaf litter was spread to a depth of 75mm. **Blitz Tipz:** If installing stormwater and retention pits make sure the outlet pipe is at least 50mm above the bottom of the pit. This will allow soil sediments to settle out of the stormwater before it flows off-site. The pit should be regularly cleaned as sediment builds up.



Retaining walls: the raised garden beds were created using treated pine sleeper (2400x200x100mm) retaining walls running parallel to the fence line. The first course was set level and used to define the slope and height of the remaining courses. Each course was connected to the course below with galvanised spikes (120mm) with all joints overlapped by a full-length sleeper above. We used 'dead men', or anchoring beams, in the embankment perpendicular to the wall, thus utilising the weight of the soil above to hold the wall in place. **Blitz Tipz:** Dead men are best located in the bottom third of the wall height to maximise the effect of the soil weight above.

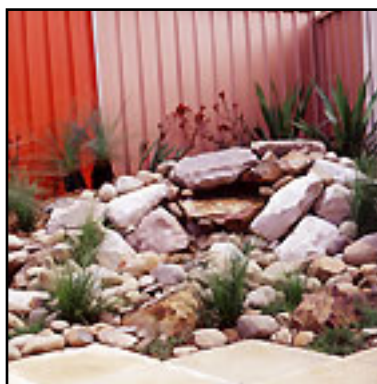


Outdoor furniture: Scott knocked up some rustic bush furniture from de-barked turpentine logs (200mm diameter) and some hardwood planks (150x50mm). A frame of hardwood was supported with posts of equal length, with hardwood boards as a tabletop. Similarly, benches were constructed from hardwood planks, with supporting posts at either end, and a third post in the middle for stability. Galvanised coach screws were countersunk to hold all parts together. All edges were arrised with a hand-held plane and a belt sander was used to remove rough edges and splinters on the tabletop and benches.



Blitz Tipz: Because of the weight of the timber, Scott built the table so that the centre three planks could be removed as a panel, enabling the table to be moved in two parts with ease.

Water feature: Jamie created a naturalistic sandstone water feature by combining sandstone boulders and large river pebbles. A large sump (600x600x600mm) catches water as it runs down the face of the boulders and onto a butyl rubber liner concealed beneath pebbles. A low voltage pump submerged in the sump recirculates the cascading water through 19mm polypipe and discharges it from beneath the stacked boulders. A low voltage transformer plugged into a weatherproof external power point powers the pump. **Blitz Tipz:** Place spare patches of butyl pond liner between the boulders and the base pond liner to prevent the risk of a puncture.



Turf: a new lawn provides a soft recreational area for visitors to the garden. Interest was added by utilising the existing site contours rather than levelling the lawn. Soft-leaf buffalo was chosen to provide a shade tolerant and disease resistant lawn that will stay green all year round. **Blitz Tipz:** Even if described as shade tolerant, grasses still need a minimum of 6 hours direct sunlight per day to grow.

Plants

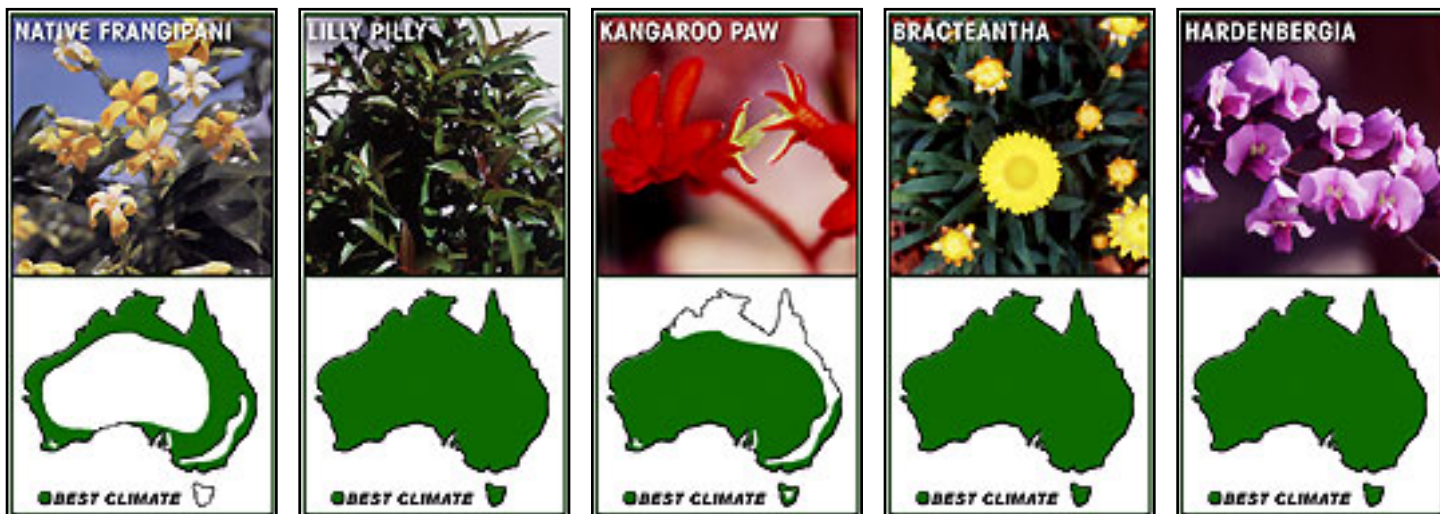
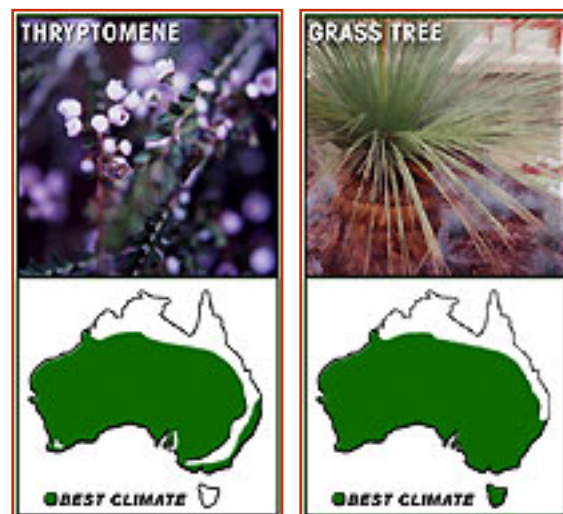
Hardy natives set the tone in this small backyard. They provide privacy along fence lines and add splashes of colour at ground level.

Trees: native frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*), lilly pilly (*Syzygium australe* 'Narrowleaf')

Shrubs: boronia (*Boronia filifolia*), Gynea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), thryptomene (*Thryptomene saxicola* 'F.C Payne'), grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea johnsonii*), kangaroo paw (*Anigozanthus* 'Bush Tango'), brachycome (*Brachycome* 'Country Lights'), carex (*Carex hattoriana*), everlasting daisy (*Bracteantha bracteata* 'Gold')

Groundcovers: creeping boobialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*), grevillea (*Grevillea* 'Allyn Radiance'), hardenbergia (*Hardenbergia violacea*)

Turf: Soft-leaf 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 for plants and materials was \$11,311. This cost could be reduced to \$6878 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Large unit Villastone pavers ('Limestone', 500x500x40mm) from Amber Tiles retail for about \$55/m2. Call 1300 362 241 to be put through to your nearest Amber outlet.
- Sandstone boulders in a range of sizes can be selected and purchased from most landscape

suppliers for about \$70 per tonne.

- Butyl pond liners cost about \$30/m², and are available from specialty irrigation suppliers and some nurseries. They come in a range of sizes and thicknesses and can be made to order for specific projects. Contact Contour Ponds and Pumps in Sydney on (02) 9690 2600 for further information.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries. If not, ask your nursery to order them for you or to advise you of 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 for you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores and building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire including the bobcat and the nail gun.

Getaway details

Accommodation:

Hotel Richmond,
128 Rundle Mall,
Adelaide, SA

Phone: (08) 8223 4044.

Website: www.hotelrichmond.com.au

Tours:

Gray Line - the World Wide Sightseeing Specialist

Phone: 1300 85 86 87

Fax: 1300 858 600

Email: reservations@grayline.com.au

Website: www.grayline.com

Jolleys Boathouse

Jolleys Lane

Adelaide

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Fax: (08) 8223 1739

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Elvis Impersonator

David Cazalet

Phone: 02 4774 9041

www.davidcazalet.com

Acknowledgements

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Leichhardt, NSW

Phone: (02) 9572 8311

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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