

BACKYARD BLITZ

One Good Turn Deserves Another



The Rollins family has lived in a rented home for nearly eight years. Kathy is a single mum with one son, Jye, who has Downs Syndrome.

Jye is best described as a very cheerful, creative and active young boy. He watched our program about Sophie Delezio in August, 2004 and was so moved he made it his mission to raise money for her treatment. His efforts caught the attention of the residents of his home town, Toowoomba, and over the next couple of weeks he raised over \$800!

One of the Toowoomba residents took it upon herself to post the newspaper articles about Jye to the Backyard Blitz team. Jye's great story inspired the team to head to Toowoomba to help out with the backyard.



Design intent

Designed by Patio, the new garden meets all the dreams and practical needs of both Jye and his mother. This colourful, functional space is complete with a stunning selection of plants, a performance stage and a feature dressing room.

Design ideas

Incorporating existing structures in your new garden design will save both money and time and will lend a sense of permanence to your garden. A style or theme can be adapted by moulding your ideas with your current plant materials.

Adapting this plan to your garden

Make a detailed scale drawing of your backyard (e.g. 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: Check with your local council regarding regulations about structures in the backyard. Always talk to your neighbours and the council before commencing your project as it could save you thousands of dollars and will help to make the project run smoothly.

Getting started

The existing uneven lawn and paving was removed and sub-grade levels established with a bobcat and mini-excavator. Heavy landscape materials like roadbase, turf underlay and decomposed granite were brought in with the machinery to reduce the heavy workload of the team.

Garden elements

Dressing room and stage: Scott built a simple dressing room and performance stage using treated pine framing and sheets of exterior ply. The rectangular framing consisted of posts (H4, 90x90mm) bolted to bearers (140x45mm) using 150x10mm galvanized cup-head bolts. The frames were made to accommodate the existing ply sheet size (12mm x 2400x1200mm). The ply sheets were screwed to the top of the frames and oiled with tung oil. The floor of the dressing room was constructed using the technique described above and four stud walls were screwed to the floor. The roof comprised five main rafters (140x45mm) and several battens (70x35mm) to support the mini-orb roof. A few coats of bright coloured paint and a set of barn doors completed this great play space.

Blitz Tipz: Scott built this dressing room and stage in distinct units that can be unscrewed and removed from the garden when the family moves house.



Secret garden: Jamie installed some pine building poles (250mm and 300mm diameter) inground in a circular arrangement, as a play area for Jye and his friends. Painted bright blue and set just 300mm above the finished ground levels, they provide a relaxed focal point to Jye's special play area.

Paving: Nigel renewed and extended the existing paved area. He started by lifting the existing paving but retained the compacted subgrade beneath. Additional roadbase was brought in and compacted to a depth of 120mm. Coarse washed river sand was screeded level with a slight slope toward the rear garden bed, to support newly laid concrete pavers (400x400x50mm). A grouting sand was swept through the paving joints to lock the job in place, while a mortar haunch around the perimeter of the job prevents the bedding sand from washing out.

Nigel also laid a great looking grid pattern of stepping stones in the new lawn as a feature panel. Laid onto a blob of mortar and kept just below the finished level of the lawn, they add interest to the space and will enable the lawn to be easily mowed.



Garden beds: Jody improved the existing clay site soil with the addition of an organic garden mix. The mini-excavator was utilized to dig the new garden beds to a depth of 300mm to make planting easier. Eucalyptus mulch was spread to a depth of 75mm to reduce weed growth and help retain soil moisture.

Decomposed granite: A large area around Jye's play area was covered with decomposed granite to reduce maintenance and provide a smooth surface for play. The decomposed granite was delivered to the site with cement pre-mixed. It was spread to a depth of 75mm, moistened and then compacted using a plate compactor. A second layer of 75mm deep was then spread and compacted once again with the plate compactor.

Blitz Tipz: If rain is imminent do not request a large delivery of decomposed granite with cement premixed, as it may set in your driveway before you can move it.



Plants

A simple selection of screening shrubs, feature trees and colourful perennials will provide year-round interest and privacy in this fun-filled garden.

Trees and shrubs: dwarf scrub cherry (*Syzygium paniculatum* Dwarf Form), Eumundi quandong (*Elaeocarpus eumundi*), Fijian fire plant (*Acalypha* 'Raggedy Ann')

Tall accent plants: giant bird of paradise (*Strelitzia nicolai*), black bamboo (*Bambusa lako*)

Annuals and perennials: cordyline (*Cordyline* 'Rubra'), licorice plant (*Helichrysum petiolare*), strawberry (*Fragaria x ananassa*), black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens'), petunia (*Petunia x hybrida*)

Succulents: agave (*Agave attenuata*), sedum (*Sedum* 'Gold Mound')



Cost and availability

We used mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result, our total cost for plants and materials was \$13 423. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$9 807.

Product details

- Nigel laid Palamino pavers from the Santa-Fe range (400x400x50mm). These pavers are available from Garden City Landscape Supplies in Toowoomba. Phone: (07) 4633 7933.
- The team laid Palmetto turf, which cost about \$7.50 per square metre.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at, or can be ordered from nurseries. Nurseries can also advise on similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide you with contacts.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores or building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire, including the mini loader, airless spray gun, concrete saw and the compression nail gun.



Getaway details

Ruffles Lodge
423 Ruffles Road
Willow Vale 4209
Phone: (07) 5546 7411
Web: www.ruffleslodge.com.au

Pavilion Garden Restaurant & Crafts
32 Eagle Heights Road
Nth Tamborine 4272
Phone: (07) 5545 1274



Acknowledgements

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

For more Step by Step Constructions click here

