

BACKYARD BLITZ

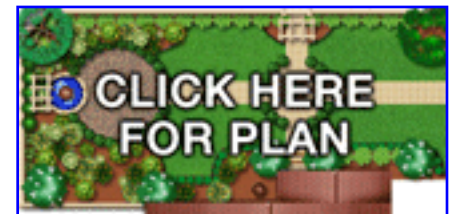
Olympic Gold



Water polo player, Debbie Watson, was a member of the team that won gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. For Debbie, winning the gold medal was a dream come true, and well worth all the years of blood, sweat and tears. However, Debbie said that much of the credit should go to her parents, Don and Janet, who made huge sacrifices so that she could achieve her goal.

Debbie thought it would be wonderful to give her parents a new backyard as a thank you for their love and support. When the Blitz team arrived they decided the front yard was in worse shape, so they made it a 'Frontyard Blitz' instead!

Landscape designer, Peter Bachak, used Australian native and exotic plants to create a contemporary, formal garden based on classic design principles. A central axis of paving links the front gate and house entrance to the long, narrow front yard. Perimeter plantings of hedging shrubs define the space and will add privacy and scale to the garden as they mature. Carefully placed ornaments complete the formal theme.



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: Check with your local council regarding regulations about water features. If your water feature is more than a certain depth, you may be required to erect a pool fence around it (the depths vary between council areas across Australia).

Getting started

A bobcat stripped all unwanted vegetation from the site and created sub-base levels for Nigel's paving and Jamie's water feature.

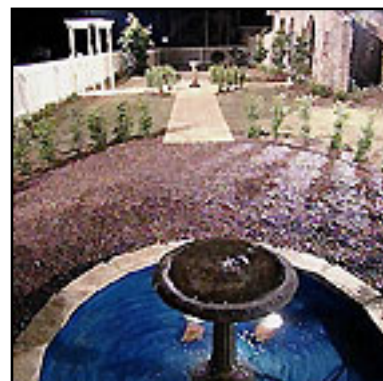
Materials

Paving: Nigel set the formal tone of the garden with a central axis of paving. Large unit Stonepave pavers (400x400x40mm) were laid over compacted roadbase and paving sand, providing a path from the entrance gate to the front door, and from the driveway to a formal water feature. The pavers were held in place with a mortar haunch (concrete edging strip) and bonded together with fine-grained, grouting sand. **Blitz Tipz:** A good garden path width is 1200mm. This allows two people to walk side by side, and also reduces the amount of cutting required if using 400x400mm pavers.



Garden arbour: Scott constructed two stylish garden arbours using lightweight treated pine. A simple entranceway to the garden was created by combining four posts, beams and rafters to define the gateway. The posts (H4, 90x90mm) were positioned vertically in-ground using quick setting concrete. The support beams (140x45mm) were bolted in place with galvanised, cup head bolts. Rafters (90x45mm) with decorative cut ends were skew nailed on top of the beams. Scott built a rectangular version of this arbour as a backdrop to the formal pond. **Blitz Tipz:** To ensure your garden structures are square, make diagonal distances between opposite posts the same length.

Water feature: Jamie built a formal water feature consisting of a pre-fabricated fibreglass pond (185mmx2000mm) installed in-ground, with a birdbath in the centre. The exterior of the pond was lined with a coping of pavers set in a 3:1 sand/cement mix. A low voltage pump and submersible lights were connected to a low voltage transformer. The pump powers the pond and the lights bring it to life when the sun sets. **Blitz Tipz:** Ensure your pump is powerful enough to send water over all edges of the birdbath at the same rate to achieve the best effect.



Double gates: Scott built a double-width gate in one piece across the driveway. Preservative-treated, hardwood posts were concreted in-ground. Vertical pickets were attached to a treated pine frame (70x35mm) using spiral shanked cup head nails. Galvanised drop hinges were used to support the gate, which was hung in one piece. Once hung, the gate was sawn in half to create two symmetrical gates.

Blitz Tipz: Gates naturally sag unless adequate bracing is provided. Always use diagonal bracing from the bottom post corner to the top corner of the gate.



Garden beds: Jody improved the existing soil by adding an organic soil mix. A bobcat was used to incorporate the soil mix to a depth of 200mm. A fine-grained wood mulch was spread to a depth of 75mm to provide a neutral backdrop to the plantings, and to help maintain soil temperature and moisture levels.



Sundial: A sundial provides a focal point in the centre of the pathway. The gnomon (brass plate of sundial) was positioned at the end of the job during darkness and was therefore not set accurately. To set the time on a sundial, position the gnomon at noon on a sunny day, so that the shadow cast shows 12 noon. Connect all elements with construction adhesive or stainless steel screws.



Blitz Tipz: To set the time accurately, you need to know the exact location of true north (as opposed to magnetic north) as well as your latitude - most sundials are sold with set-up instructions.

Plants

Rows of evergreen shrubs define the borders and pathways in this front garden, while hardy, evergreen trees provide a strong framework to the front of the house.

Trees: gordonia or fried egg plant (*Gordonia axillaris*), weeping lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda*), dwarf lilly pilly (*Syzygium paniculatum* dwarf form), leyland cypress (x *Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Leighton Green')

Shrubs: murraya (*Murraya paniculata*), lilly pilly (*Syzygium australe* 'Bush Christmas'), silver banksia (*Banksia marginata*), hair-pin banksia (*Banksia spinulosa*), grevilleas (*Grevillea* 'Honey Gem', *G. shiresii*, *G. 'Superb'*)

Perennials: carex (*Carex petriei*)

Groundcovers: creeping juniper (*Juniperus taxifolia* var. *luchuensis*), mondo grass



(*Ophiopogon japonicus*)

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 \$14,327. This cost could be reduced to \$9892 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Large, concrete Stonepave pavers (400x400mm) cost \$58 per square metre and were supplied by Stone Masonry. Phone (02) 4353 0036 for details on other pavers and masonry products.
- Pond components were sourced from Contour Ponds in Sydney. Phone (02) 9690 2600 or check your local *Yellow Pages* under Pools and Ponds.
- Sundials cost around \$120 for a simple concrete pedestal and brass gnomon.
- Roocycle plastic edging is available in a range of widths and thicknesses from Moodie Marketing. Phone (02) 9816 1133 for details.
- 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:

Cairns International Hotel

17 Abbott St

Cairns, Qld

Phone: (07) 4031 1300

Web: www.cairnsinternational.com.au

Wild World - The Tropical Zoo

Captain Cook Hwy

Clifton Beach

Phone: (07) 4055 3669

Web: www.wildworld.com.au

Acknowledgment

Design:

Peter Bachak

Art in Green

Phone: (02) 9453 3341

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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