

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Fragrant Pavilion



Belinda Dollin and Dean Walkom have just built a brand new home and are about to be married. Things were almost perfect until 12 months ago when 25 year old Belinda was diagnosed with viral encephalitis. A potentially fatal disease that can cause permanent brain damage. She had to stop work and is only just recovering now. Dean has had to become the sole bread-winner, taking on extra overtime, while still caring for Belinda. This garden was an expression of Belinda's love and gratitude to Dean. Knowing his love of fishing, the Blitz team arranged for a two-day trip for Belinda and Dean to Moffat's Fishermans Village Resort at Port Stephens, NSW.

John Happ's design for Belinda and Dean transformed their yard from a barren clay pit to a beautiful and functional garden. A spectacular paved entertaining area now receives filtered sunlight under a generous pavilion. Fragrant flowering shrubs and small trees frame the yard. A centrepiece planting of lily-of-the-valley tree and low flowering shrubs is nestled in a soft-leaf buffalo lawn.



**What we did:** Prior to starting works, we had landscapers construct a retaining wall along the fence line under the guise of being works paid for by their neighbour. Our work began with excavation of the garden beds to provide room to incorporate soil mix and organic clay breaker. Treated pine garden edges were constructed and beds planted. Pavers were laid on mortar around the edges of the entertaining area. A gable roof pavilion with polycarbonate roofing was constructed and mounted on stirrups in concrete footings. Gold decomposed granite with crushed golden pebbles was laid on compacted road base under the pavilion. The garden was finished with a beautiful soft-leaf buffalo lawn.



## Materials:

**Garden beds:** premium garden mix and organic clay breaker. *Tools:* bobcat (optional), spade, mattock, wheelbarrow.

**Garden edging:** 150x25mm treated pine edging, 50x50mm treated pine posts, galvanised nails.

*Tools:* tape measure, stringline, saw, hammer, sledge hammer.

**Fence painting:** Bristol Weathertough 'Egyptian Red' low sheen acrylic paint. *Tools:* brushes, roller and tray, or spray gun, disposable mask.

**Paving:** road base, Urbanstone 'Donnybrook Quarry' 400x400x40mm pavers, gold decomposed granite, crushed golden pebbles, off white cement, cement, brickies sand. *Tools:* vibrating plate compactor, topsoil leveller, larry hoe or shovel, rake, brickie's trowel, wheelbarrow, spirit level, marker paint, sledge hammer, stringline and rubber mallet.

**Drainage:** 90mm PVC stormwater drainage pipe with junctions, bends and fittings to suit your application, 50mm PVC pipe and fittings to suit, stormwater pit, agricultural drain, PVC primer and solvent cement. *Tools:* Hacksaw, spade.

**Pavilion:** 120x120x2400mm laminated treated pine posts, 200x75mm dressed pine bearers and ridge, 100x50mm dressed pine rafters and ties, 38x25mm dressed pine battens, 160x20mm dressed pine barge board, 100x20mm dressed pine fascia board, decorative post skirts, decorative post brackets, 50x25mm dressed pine slats, 100mm galvanised post stirrups, rapid set concrete, 115mm quad, low-profile, Colorbond gutter, Colorbond ridge cap, Colorbond barge cap, 2400x1260mm sheets 'Suntuf Greca' grey polycarbonate roof sheets, 50mm PVC downpipe and fittings to suit, roofing screws, bolts and nails to suit, PVC primer and solvent cement, Bristol Weathertough 'Egyptian Red' low sheen acrylic paint. *Tools:* spud bar and post hole shovel or Kanga with auger attachment, adjustable square, pencil, handsaw or circular saw, hammer and optional nail gun, adjustable spanner or socket driver set, spirit level, tape measure, screwdriver or cordless drill, electric drill, nibbler or electric nibbler.

**Turf:** turf, turf underlay. *Tools:* wheelbarrow, spade, rake, topsoil leveller, hedge shears.

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**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. Dial the 'Dial before you Dig' line on 1100 for information.

**Blitz Tipz:** Your existing house plans are a great place to start when making your site plan.

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## Step-by-step

**Getting Started:** Any rubbish, old structures, paving, weeds, etc should be removed and the site levelled. If your site requires levelling ensure adequate slope away from the house to prevent flooding in heavy rain. If your soil is of poor quality it can be mixed 50:50 with a good organic garden mix. If it is high in clay dig in gypsum or organic clay breaker.

### Garden beds

**Step 1** Due to the high clay content at our site, we excavated the planting areas to around 300mm deep and incorporated a 50:50 mix of premium garden mix and organic clay breaker.

**Blitz Tipz:** Organic clay breaker costs about \$48 per cubic metre from landscape suppliers. Dig clay

breaker thoroughly into the soil to at least a spade's depth.

**Step 2** Position your plants prior to planting. When you are happy with the layout, plant one at a time, ensuring that plants are placed at the same depth in the soil as they were in their containers.

**Step 3** Mulch by spreading a 50mm layer of organic mulch (we used composted pine bark mulch) over the garden beds and then water.

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## Garden edging

**Step 1** Set up stringlines to mark out garden edges.

**Step 2** Drive in posts along stringline using a sledge hammer. Use saw to cut posts off just below finished edge level.

**Step 3** Set up edging in place and nail onto posts. Cut to length where needed, ensuring joins are at posts.

**Blitz Tipz:** Use a sledge hammer to support the back of the post while nailing the edging on.

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## Fence painting

We used an airless spray gun to spray paint the fence. These are available for hire at around \$100 for 4 hours. Disposable masks are available at paint shops or hardware stores for around \$16 for a pack of 50. We used Bristol Weathertough 'Egyptian Red' low sheen acrylic paint. If you are experienced and use a thick nozzle, one coat with the airless spray gun equals two coats with a roller.

**Blitz Tipz:** To relate the fence to the garden, pick a paint colour that sets off the colours in your plants.

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## Paving

**Blitz Tipz:** We used Urbanstone 'Donnybrook Quarry' pavers (cost around \$52 a square metre or \$8.20 each) to provide the surrounds for our paved area. Available nationwide from Urbanstone.

**Step 1** Mark out area to be paved, then lay edge pavers on a bed of 4:1 mortar (four parts brickies sand to one part cement). Use a rubber mallet to gently tap pavers level and into line.

**Step 2** Excavate, if needed, to around 110mm below top of pavers.

**Step 3** Bring in road base and compact to 60mm with a vibrating plate compactor.

**Blitz Tipz:** A vibrating plate compactor costs about \$78 per day to hire.

**Step 4** Bring in decomposed granite layer and rake through with offwhite cement. Compact to finished level with a vibrating plate compactor.

**Blitz Tipz:** The decomposed granite we used is called Deco Gold, available from Australian Native Landscapes in Sydney, phone: (02) 9450 1444. Decomposed granite also comes in pink or brown.

**Step 5** Lightly water paved area.

**Step 6** Bring in crushed pebbles and spread evenly into surface with a topsoil leveller.

**Blitz Tipz:** The 5mm 'sand' we used is made from crushed Cowra Gold river pebbles and costs around \$85 a tonne from landscape suppliers in NSW. Similar products are available from suppliers in other



states.

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## Drainage

**Step 1** Check with your local council prior to laying pipe-work or connecting into the existing stormwater. If you are unsure what you are doing, contact a licensed plumber.

**Step 2** Lay out your pipe-work to confirm that you have all the fittings you need and that your pipe-work all falls evenly down to the stormwater service. Prime both sides of all joints with PVC primer prior to applying solvent cement.

**Step 3** We ran 50mm PVC from our downpipe for the pavilion into a stormwater pit which we located under our paved area. This also received water from an agricultural drain under our decomposed granite paving.

**Step 4** We ran a 90mm PVC pipe from our stormwater pit and connected into the existing stormwater service.

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## Pavilion

Our pavilion comprised six 120x120mm posts with 200x75mm bearers. This supported a gable roof covered with polycarbonate sheeting.

**Blitz Tipz:** A gable roof has two sides pitched on a triangular frame.

**Step 1** Setup stringlines to mark-out pavilion. Ensure lines are square and horizontal. Mark out location for 6 posts.

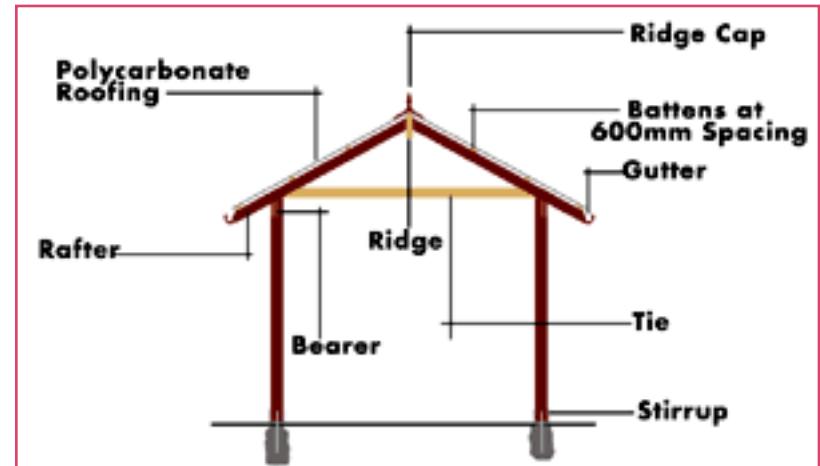
**Step 2** Dig out post holes to about 600mm deep.

**Blitz Tipz:** We used a Kanga loader with an auger attachment to dig the holes. These are available for hire and cost about \$260 per day. Delivery, if required, and fuel are extra.



**Step 3** For each post, one at a time: half-fill hole with water and pour in rapid set concrete, adding extra water if needed. Insert stirrup, ensuring that it is vertical in both directions and aligned with the stringlines at the right height. Hold or clamp in place for around 4 minutes (until stable). Concrete starts to set in 15 minutes. Leave overnight.

**Blitz Tipz:** Stirrups. 100mm galvanised post stirrups cost about \$12 each from hardware stores. We hid them using decorative post covers.



**Step 4** Timber posts. Check stirrup against posts for fit, trimming the base of each post if needed. Carefully measure and cut each post to the desired height. Then cut out a ledge to fit the bearers flush to the post (this is called a housing). You should be left with a square stub of timber at the top of the post to bolt on the bearers.

**Step 5** With the help of a friend, mount and bolt posts onto stirrups. Then lift and bolt the bearers onto the posts. Remember to offset the bolts where two beams are bolting into the same post.

**Step 6** Rafters. Carefully plan out your gable roof. Ours was built at an angle (pitch) of 26 degrees.

Calculating your rafter dimensions and the angle of your cuts requires some precise geometry and mathematics and is best handled by an experienced professional. At the very least, seek help in preparing a template that you can use to cut all of your rafters.

**Step 8** Paint the structure. We used Bristol Weathertough 'Egyptian Red' low sheen acrylic paint.

**Step 7** Ridge. Erect some temporary supports to hold the ridge in place. Get some friends to help you lift it up there, then fasten rafters at both ends of structure, skew nailing into the ridge and bearers. (Skew nailing is nailing at an angle through the side of one piece of timber into the one below.) Attach other rafters in between at even spacings then nail battens onto the rafters running parallel to ridge at 600mm spacing. Install trim and detail timbers to finish 'dressing off' your structure.



**Step 9** Cut roofing to required length using a nibbler - a cutting tool which punches out small pieces of material at high speed. Available as a drill attachment or as a dedicated tool which is available for hire. Install roofing in accordance with manufacturer's instructions using roofing screws (these come complete with rubber washer to seal hole).

**Blitz Tipz:** 'Suntuf Greca' grey polycarbonate roof sheets retail for around \$72 per 2400x1260mm sheet. They block out 99.9% of the harmful UVB rays.

**Step 10** Install Colorbond ridge and barge caps. Install guttering with a slight slope down towards your downpipe.

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## Turf

**Blitz Tipz:** In some areas subsurface drainage may be required prior to turfing. If in doubt, check with your local landscape professionals.

**Step 1** Prepare the area for turf by removing all debris and levelling. If your soil is poor, spread a layer of a good quality turf underlay soil mix and level with a topsoil leveller.

**Blitz Tipz:** Turf underlay soil is spread about 100mm (4") thick and costs around \$34 a cubic metre.

**Step 2** Roll out the turf starting along the longest straight edge and cutting to shape with hedge shears or spade where required. Roll with a lawn roller and then water well.

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## Our plants

Agapanthus 'White' (*Agapanthus praecox* 'White' sold as *Agapanthus orientalis* 'White' or *Agapanthus* 'White'), blueberry ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Prima Donna'), silver bush (*Convolvulus cneorum*), crinum lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*), hebe ('Hebe Inspiration'), lantana (*Lantana montevidensis*), lily-of-the-valley tree (*Clethra arborea*), osmanthus (*Osmanthus* 'Heaven Scent'), viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum*), soft leaf buffalo 'Sir Walter'.



blueberry ash



silver bush



hebe



osmanthus



viburnum



soft leaf buffalo



## Cost and availability

We used mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. Our total cost of plants and materials was \$14,384. Considerable savings are possible using smaller plants, reducing the total cost to \$8,350.

- Bristol Weathertough 'Egyptian Red' low sheen acrylic paint is available nationwide from Bristol Decorator Centres.
- 'Donnybrook Quarry' pavers. Cost around \$52 a square metre. Available nationwide from Urbanstone.
- Cowra Gold pebbles are available in NSW. Equivalent products are available from landscape suppliers in other states.
- Deco Gold decomposed granite is available from Australian Native Landscapes in Sydney, phone: (02) 9450 1444. Decomposed granite also comes in pink or brown. Check with your local landscape suppliers for availability in your area.
- Colorbond products and 'Suntuf Greca' grey polycarbonate roof sheets retail for around \$72 per 2400x1260mm sheet. Available nationwide from roofing suppliers or major hardware stores.
- Most of the selected plants are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building suppliers, or landscape

suppliers.

- 'Sir Walter' soft-leaf buffalo grass currently only available in NSW, Queensland and Victoria for around \$6 per square metre. However it should also be available in SA and WA in the next year or so. Check with your local turf suppliers or contact the Buchanan Turf Supplies in NSW phone: (02) 4930 0159.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire.

**Acknowledgments:** Design by John Happ, 3rd Dimension Designs, phone: (02) 9744 2658.

Construction by the Backyard Blitz team.

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