

BACKYARD BLITZ

Kids Under Cover



Thousands of children sleep on the streets of Australia every night, because they don't feel safe at home. Kids Under Cover is a charity organisation that has been helping disadvantaged kids for the past 13 years. It provides children with safe, clean homes and adult supervision. This newly constructed house in suburban Melbourne is the 100th home built as part of this wonderful scheme.

Kylie Miller is the primary carer in this new house and will be responsible for the raising and managing of 4 children ranging in age from 10 - 16 years. The Backyard Blitz team caught wind of this worthy project, and decided to surprise Kylie and help out some great Aussie kids by giving them a brand new backyard.

Melbourne-based landscape designer, Jim Fogarty, has created a series of rooms within this suburban backyard to provide both recreational and reflective areas. The garden has been divided into rooms by the clever use of level changes, open-slatted screens and plant material (see pics below). Exotic plantings of deciduous trees and colourful shrubs will provide form and seasonal change to this cool climate garden.



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 deeper 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. An organic soil mix was incorporated into the garden beds. Post holes were drilled for the arbour, retaining wall and screens.

Materials

Paving: Nigel laid large Riverstone pavers (Marigold, 495x495mm) over compacted roadbase and coarse, washed river sand. As per the manufacturers specifications, Nigel mixed cement through the paving sand before screeding, to provide a solid base. Pavers were laid 3mm apart, then fine sand was swept between the gaps to bind the pavers in place. A mortar haunch, or edging strip, around the perimeter prevents sand from washing out from beneath the pavers, whilst a gravel-filled trench along the lowest edge of the paving acts as a rubble drain. **Blitz Tipz:** Some pavers will stain if cement is mixed with the bedding sand. Always check the manufacturers laying recommendations prior to starting your project.



Arbour: Scott built an open-topped arbour to create a link between the house and garden (see pics above). Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) were installed in-ground in rapid set concrete. The posts support a beam (140x45mm) bolted in place with galvanised cup head bolts. The entire structure was painted with an exterior low sheen acrylic paint. **Blitz Tipz:** Pre-cut decorative ends before clamping beams in place to enable safe drilling of holes for bolts.

Retaining wall: a low retaining wall constructed from red gum sleepers (2400x200x50mm)

separates the raised lawn area from the paving below. The sleepers were cut into thirds (800mm long) and installed vertically in-ground in rapidset concrete at 1200mm centres, to provide a solid connection point for the sleeper rails. Sleepers were attached horizontally with galvanised cup head bolts, then backfilled with blue metal (20mm). **Blitz Tipz:** As a general rule, do not attempt to construct retaining walls that are over 1 metre tall without advice from a qualified engineer or licensed structural landscaper.

Timber screens: treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed in-ground in concrete support two rails (H3, 90x45mm) nailed in place. Pine decking boards (90x19mm) nailed against the rails provide partial screening both to and from the secret garden behind. **Blitz Tipz:** Staggering screens into sections will create informal entrances and add extra interest to your design.

Water feature: Jamie installed a child-friendly and textural water feature which will provide the soothing sounds of running water. Purchased as a complete unit, the water feature consists of a base and a vertical shaft of coiled steel, over which the low voltage pump gently pushes the water. **Blitz Tipz:** As low voltage pumps are plugged into existing power points, a non-licensed person can install them.

Garden beds: Jody incorporated an organic soil mix to improve the site soil. An organic mulch of horticultural grade pine bark (15mm) was spread to a depth of 75mm, to insulate the soil against temperature and moisture fluctuations and to suppress weed growth. Coarse-textured sugar cane mulch was spread over the herb garden to help deter snails and slugs. Recycled plastic garden edging (100mmx8mm) was installed to provide a barrier between the turf and garden beds.



Gravel paths: crushed limestone (Lilydale toppings) spread between the garden edging provides an informal pathway that sounds great underfoot. All vegetation was removed and the soil surface raked to achieve sub-base levels, so that water sheds off the path toward the garden. Crushed limestone spread to a depth of 100mm was compacted with a plate compactor to create a soft, permeable pathway. **Blitz Tipz:** Crushed gravels are popular for pathway construction all over Australia - names vary depending on your location. Check with your local landscape supply yard to see if they can add some cement into the mix to add stability.

Plants

Cool climate trees, shrubs and perennials create a variety of spaces that can be utilised by a number of independent groups at the same time.

Trees: flowering gum (*Eucalyptus* 'Summer Red'), Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Sango Kaku'), mandarin (*Citrus reticulata* 'Ellendale'), woollybush (*Adenanthos sericeus*)

Shrubs: viburnum (*Viburnum tinus* 'Anvi'), 'Limelight' wattle (*Acacia cognata* 'Limelight'), arthropodium (*Arthropodium* 'Parnelle')

Perennials: rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Blue Lagoon'), liriopie (*Liriopie muscari* 'Evergreen Giant'), dietes (*Dietes bicolor*), limonium (*Limonium perezii*)



Vegetable and herb garden: spinach, lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, celery and mixed herbs.



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 \$13,068. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$9810.

Product details

- Marigold pavers (495x495x40mm) from Riverstone cost about \$45 per square metre in Melbourne. Prices will vary in other cities because of transport costs. Call your local Amber centre, or contact Riverstone on (03) 9587 4446 for your closest distributor.
- Roocycle plastic edging is available in a range of widths and thicknesses from Moodie Marketing Pty Ltd. Phone (02) 9816 1133 for product details.
- The steel water feature cost about \$300 (excluding the pump and transformer) from WT. Grants in Melbourne. Phone (03) 9596 4367 for more information.
- Large mudstone boulders cost about \$190 per cubic metre from Chris Cross Landscape Supplies. Phone (03) 9859 2666 for more details.
- Lilydale toppings is a crushed limestone product that forms a solid pathway when compacted. It costs about \$80 per cubic metre in Melbourne. Ask your landscape supplier for similar

- products, such as decomposed granite.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at - or can be ordered from - nurseries. Nurseries can also advise on similar varieties more 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 airless spray gun and the Kanga mini excavator.

Getaway details

The Lakehouse
Kings St
Daylesford
Phone: (03) 5348 3329
Web: www.lakehouse.com.au

Hepburn Springs Spa Complex
Main Rd
Hepburn
Phone: (03) 5348 2034
Web: www.hepburnspa.com.au

Acknowledgments

Design by Jim Fogarty Design Pty Ltd
Phone: 1300 888 916
Web: www.jimfogartylandscapes.com.au

Construction by the Backyard Blitz team with help from a special team of celebrities (all gardens are gifts from Backyard Blitz).



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



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