

BACKYARD BLITZ

Garden Revival



Volunteers are the backbone of the local community. These are the unseen and often unsung heroes who keep things running smoothly. Beryl Taylor is one such person and a member of the team of dedicated volunteers at Manly Hospital in Sydney. Beryl has been helping out in the rehabilitation and aged care ward for the past 12 years. A visitor to the ward noticed the poor state of the courtyard outside the recreational room and contacted Backyard Blitz to ask for their help in a makeover and as a special thank you to Beryl.

Landscape designer Tracy Gilling has created a contemporary and comfortable garden room in which the inpatients can relax and recuperate. New paving, a large pergola and a stylish water feature make the space safer and more inviting. Screen plantings of formal hedging plants and free flowering perennials provide privacy and seasonal interest to the garden and bring some much needed style to this part of the hospital.

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.

Permits and approvals: 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.

Materials

The existing garden in this location had the vital elements of paving, planting and fencing but all were in disrepair and unsafe for the recovering patients to use. The old pavers were lifted and stockpiled for use elsewhere in the hospital. An aging wattle tree and stump was ground out and a rotting lattice fence was removed. The site was ready for its facelift.

Paving: large unit concrete pavers (600x600x40mm) from AA West Precast Concrete were laid over a compacted sub-base of roadbase and paving sand. A fine grouting sand (Sydney sand) was swept through the joints to bond the pavers together. A rapid set concrete haunch was laid around the perimeter of the paving to prevent sand from washing out from beneath the pavers. **Blitz Tipz** When estimating volumes to order for your paving project use the following formula: total area of paving in metres squared (m²) x thickness of base material (in metres) = volume needed in cubic metres (m³).

For example: If paving 10m² and you want 100mm or 0.1m of roadbase and 50mm layer of paving sand, you will need 1m³ of roadbase and 0.5m³ of paving sand.

Roadbase calculation: 10m² x 0.1m = 1m³

Paving sand calculation: 10m² x 0.05m = 0.5m³



Pergola: timber selection in pergola design and construction is very important. This pergola was built with preservative treated and structurally graded timbers. The following timber sizes were used: posts (H4, 90x90mm), beams (H3, 240x70mm), rafters (H3, 140x45mm), battens (H3, 70x35mm). All posts were installed vertically in ground using rapid set concrete and all timbers were connected using galvanised nails, cuphead bolts, washers and nuts. A lightweight polycarbonate roof covered half of the pergola area, providing shade and a weatherproof area.

Blitz Tipz Timbers are branded to specify the type of preservative treatment they have undergone and to grade their structural strength. Discuss your project with your builder, architect or timber yard to ensure you select the most appropriate and cost effective timber for the job.

Water feature: a large formal water feature provided the calming sound of running water and screened the carpark beyond the courtyard. The water feature was built with treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) and rails (70x35mm) supporting a decorative splashback made from an exterior grade fibrous cement sheet (9mm). Reinforced steel edging around the fibre cement sheeting provided a defined edge for plastering against. A prefabricated fibreglass shell was supported within a concrete block surround (400x200x200mm and 200x200x200mm blocks), capped with common bricks. The whole feature was bagged (4 parts brickies sand, 1 part cement) and painted.



A central motif of colourful tiles and a brass spout provide an elegant centrepiece to this formal feature. Water recirculates by low voltage submersible pump connected to an interior low voltage transformer.

Garden beds: new garden beds were created by removing areas of existing paving and the sub-base materials. All compacted roadbase material was removed and replaced with an organic garden mix to a depth of 300mm. Eucalyptus mulch was spread to a depth of 75mm to suppress weed growth and to act as a soil insulator. **Blitz Tipz** Good drainage is essential for optimum plant growth. Consider mounding your garden beds or installing an agricultural drain surrounded by gravel to prevent waterlogging of garden beds.



Brushwood fencing: defined boundaries in small gardens help create a sense of intimacy and enclosure. In this garden, brushwood fencing connected to an existing fence created a backdrop to immature plantings and provided some privacy from the surrounding buildings.

Paint: bold colours from the Dulux X10 range were used to brighten up the water feature and pergola. Combinations of blue, yellow and black were mixed on site to achieve the lime green of the water feature and the blue of the pergola. **Blitz Tipz** It is important to remember that not all paint colours are suitable for outdoor use. Always discuss the proposed use with a paint expert as some colours will not be appropriate to mix with the exterior base paints.

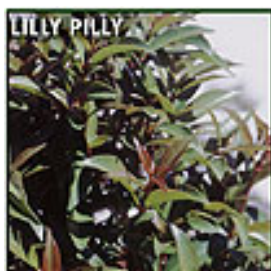
Plants

A combination of formal hedging plants and free flowering perennials provide privacy and seasonal colour.

Trees: Magnolia 'Little Gem' (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Little Gem'), lilly pillies (*Syzygium australe* 'Narrowleaf' and 'Bush Christmas'), New Zealand Christmas bush (*Metrosideros collina* var. *villosa*), lemon (*Citrus limon* 'Eureka')

Shrubs, perennials and potted plants: English box (*Buxus sempervirens*), sasanqua camellia (*Camellia sasanqua* 'Paradise Blush'), standard cumquat (*Fortunella japonica*), pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira* 'Miss Muffet'), hebe (*Hebe* 'Inspiration'), dwarf white agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox*), dietes (*Dietes iridoides*)

Groundcovers and trailing plants: ivy geranium (*Pelargonium peltatum* 'Weiber Perle'), convolvulus (*Convolvulus sabatius* 'White Gladys' and 'Full Moon'), verbena (*Verbena* 'White Sensation')



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 \$13,890. This cost could be reduced to \$10,344 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Large unit concrete pavers from AA West Precast Concrete cost about \$16. Phone: (02) 4577 4747 for availability and range of colours.
- Colourful tiles cost about \$12 each and were sourced from Country Floors in Sydney. Phone: (02) 9958 6041
- Outdoor furniture setting from White Chamber Furniture cost \$700. Phone: (02) 9310 4699 for information on the complete range.
- Fibreglass pond cost about \$900 and was constructed by Fibreglass Australasia. Phone: (02) 9820 1144 for a quotation.
- Brushwood fence cladding was supplied by Tim's Garden Centres, phone (02) 4626 7022 for further details. Alternatively, look under fencing in the *Yellow Pages* for suppliers.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you or advise 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 to you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire including the airless spray gun and the nail gun.

Getaway details

Beryl and Isabel had lunch at Le Kiosk Restaurant - Shelly Beach, Manly. Phone (02) 9977 4122 for bookings.

Acknowledgments

Design by Tracy Gilling, phone: (02) 9958 2469. Email: tgilling@bigpond.com

The Blitz Team would like to thank the staff and patients of Manly Hospital in Sydney and members of the Vietnam Veteran's Association for the help, assistance and support they received during the planning, construction and filming of this special makeover. Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz).

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