

BACKYARD BLITZ

Border Brilliance



All Australians can be proud of young people like Paul and Rebecca Beck. Having met as volunteers through the children's cancer organisation 'Camp Quality', they are also active members of their local community. Paul is a firefighter with the Surfers Paradise Fire Brigade, while Rebecca is currently under consideration for a national 'Excellence in Teaching' award - she was nominated by the parents of the school at which she teaches.

Like many young couples, Paul and Rebecca have saved and worked hard toward building their dream home. Tragedy struck at 1.45am, Christmas morning 2001, when they received a call to say that their home had been burnt to the ground - two teenage arsonists were later apprehended. Instead of being an idyllic first year of marriage, 2002 has been a stressful and financially draining experience, as Rebecca and Paul have struggled to rebuild their home. Rebecca's father, Mike Hogan, is enormously proud and full of admiration for this couple. Their community-mindedness and commitment to young children are rare qualities. Mike contacted the Backyard Blitz team to find a way to help these two people who give so much to others.

Sydney based landscape designer, Matthew Cantwell, has designed a garden that maximises the elevated views from the site and uses some dramatic tropical foliage that grows well in the area. Massed palms disguise a shale-filled embankment and tree ferns soften the walls of the house. A stepped walkway leads from the rear deck up into a level area of the garden. This design illustrates that any site can be turned into an attractive, functional area despite its apparent drawbacks.



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 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 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 was used to level the garden area, incorporate an organic soil mix and drill post holes into the shale soil.

Materials

Deck: Scott extended the large rear deck up to the new garden. A treated pine framework incorporating posts (H4, 90x90mm), bearers (H3, 140x45mm) and joists (H3, 90x45mm) was constructed parallel to the house. Jarrah decking boards were laid over the framework on a 45-degree angle to match the existing deck. Two steps from the lower deck to the new deck were built using stringers (240x45mm), treads (240x45mm) and threaded steel rod. **Blitz Tipz:**



Laying decking boards at a 45-degree angle will increase the amount of waste (as opposed to laying them perpendicular to the joists) and will need to be taken into account when ordering your timber.

Water feature: a prefabricated, black fibreglass pond (1800x900x300mm) was installed in-ground, providing a waterproof base to this formal water feature. A low-voltage, submersible pump (3600 litres per hour) and a three-in-one mister were connected to a transformer and plugged into an external, weatherproof power point. Copper pipe was fitted to the rear of two brass fire spouts housed in brick piers and water is ejected to a centrally placed paver within the pond. **Blitz Tipz:** Discuss your proposed pond design with the pump supplier to ensure you purchase a pump large enough to throw the water the desired distance.



Garden beds: Jody utilised the power of the bobcat and a mini-loader to bring an organic soil mix up into the site and incorporate it into the compacted site soil. Tea-tree mulch spread to a depth of 75mm will help to retain soil moisture. As the mulch breaks down over time it will also add much needed organic matter to the soil. **Blitz Tipz:** Cut and fill styles of construction tend to leave the subsoil of the site exposed. Ask the builder to stockpile the site soil and to supervise distribution throughout your new garden area following completion of construction.



Retaining wall: Nigel and Jamie built a low retaining wall using treated pine sleepers (2400x200x75mm). Posts were installed vertically in-ground to 600mm deep. They were surrounded with concrete support sleepers stacked horizontally and connected with galvanised cup head bolts (200mm long).



Agricultural pipe (65mm diameter with filter sock fitted) surrounded with blue metal (20mm) provides adequate drainage. A commercial soil mix was used to backfill the garden and provide a good start for

the large palms planted in this area. **Blitz Tipz:** Place posts at 1200mm centres to enable connection of sleepers neatly in front of, or behind each post.

Paving: large unit concrete pavers (Riverstone 'Buff', 495x495mm) were laid from the deck to the water feature, providing a framework to the formal water feature. Compacted roadbase and coarse washed river sand was used to provide a level, firm base to the paved pathway. A concrete haunch was constructed around the perimeter of the path to hold all the pavers in place. Bullnose pavers laid on a bed of 4:1 sand and cement provide a formal capping to the pond. **Blitz Tipz:** Pavers around ponds always look best when extended over the edge of the pond. A 50mm lip is an attractive overhang.

Plants

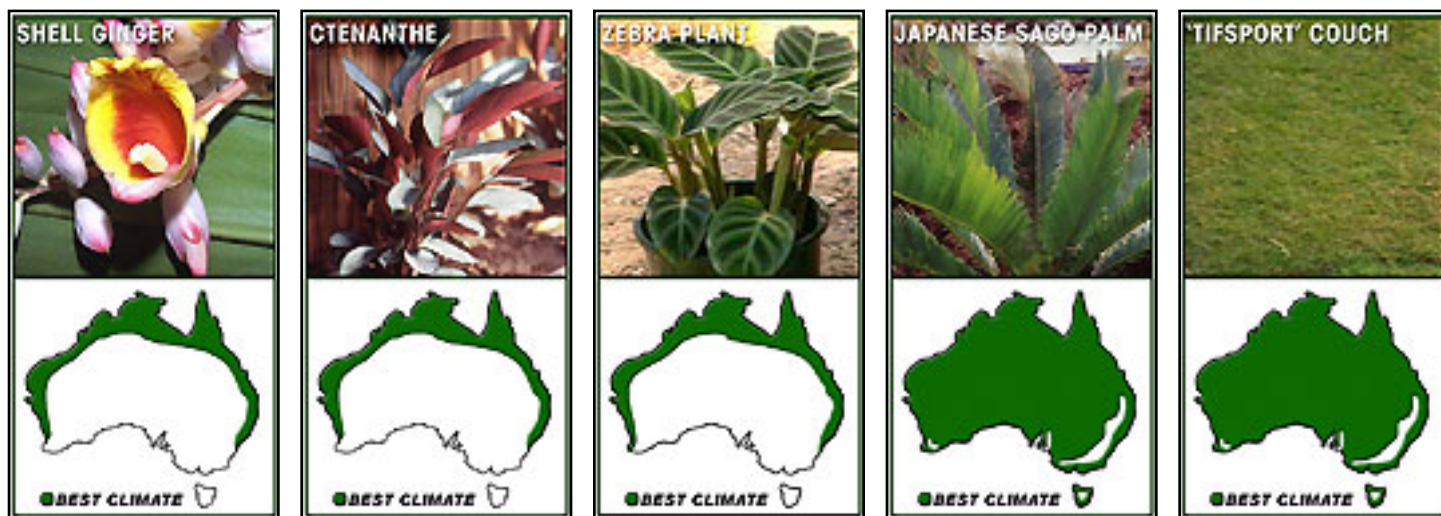
Bold foliage and contrasting colours dominate the planting in this modern, tropical garden.

Palms, ferns and cycads: golden cane palm (*Dypsis lutescens*), Japanese sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*), scaly tree fern (*Cyathea cooperi*)

Perennials: calathea (*Calathea zebrina*), ctenanthe (*Ctenanthe 'Grey Star'*), shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*)

Ornamental grasses: liriopie 'Evergreen Giant' (*Liriope muscari 'Evergreen Giant'*), mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*)

Turf: 'TifSport' Couch



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 \$10,498. This cost could be reduced to \$8,455 by using smaller plants.

Product details

- Large reconstituted sandstone pots are available from Pacific Sandstone for about \$210 each. Phone (07) 3807 1999 for further details on these and other pots.
- Riverstone pavers cost between \$45 and \$65 per square metre. Call Head Office on (03) 9587 4446 for more information.

- Treated pine sleepers are available at most landscape yards and timber suppliers. Lightweight sleepers cost from \$12 for 2400x150x50mm or \$26 for 2400x200x100mm.
- All components for the water feature are available from Contour Ponds in Sydney. Phone: (02) 9369 1511 for prices and details of their other products.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries. If unavailable, ask your nursery to order them for you or advise on similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery can provide you with contacts.
- Most other materials such as mulch and pebbles are available from large hardware stores and building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire, including the nail gun and the bobcat.

Accommodation:

Villa Alba
191 Duke Road
Noosa Valley
Phone: (07) 5449 1900
Web: www.villaalba.com.net

Noosa Ocean Rider
Phone: 1800 001 386
Web: www.oceanrider.biz

Ricky Ricardo's River Bar & Restaurant
Noosa Wharf
Quamby Place
Noosa Heads
Phone: (07) 5447 2455
Web: www.rickyricardos.com

Acknowledgments

Design by Matthew Cantwell from Secret Gardens of Sydney; phone (02) 9365 6533.

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