

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Impossible Garden

The Blitz team look for an impossible garden – nothing will be too difficult to attempt – a cliff face, an overgrown jungle, bogs, moonscape or flood plain and they find a candidate on the central coast of NSW.



Yvonne English is a single mum, and self-confessed greenie. After renting for many years, in 2003 Yvonne bought a cheap and almost vertical block of land. She struggled to finance the pole kit house she had built, and had no further funds to landscape the block, improve the drive or build a carport. Currently she cannot get her car up the drive, and has to use her neighbour's steps to get to her front door.

For the Blitz team, it is a great opportunity to landscape the impossible garden – a very difficult site with a slope of up to 70 degrees. The team are able to transform this hillside into a completely functional driveway and garden.

### Design

To provide a safe, easy access onto the property by building a concrete driveway and using huge sandstone boulders as retaining walls to keep the landscape looking as natural as possible while retaining structural integrity. And to provide a native garden with a wide range of bird attracting plants.



## 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 approval:** check with your local council regarding regulations about earthworks and drainage. If you are changing existing levels or installing drainage ensure no water run-off is directed toward neighbouring properties. Any water entering the storm water system must be free from debris and sediment.

### Driveway and walls

With a site as difficult as this one there are a number of steps that you should take. The first is to get in touch with an engineer and check with the local council to find out their requirements before constructing a driveway. A geotechnical investigation may need to be carried out to determine subsoil conditions and provide base information for design of the structural elements.

Our surveyor gave the engineer a detailed contour plan of the site so that the engineer was able to ascertain the acceptable slope of the driveway and structure of the retaining walls.

Have an idea of what you want to achieve and how many cars will use the driveway, etc.

To landscape such a steep site we needed to know the angle of repose – the angle or slope at which the soil and material will sit naturally, unsupported. The design then incorporated boulders for stabilisation and to create a visual effect while containing the new free draining soil in our garden beds.



We contacted an excavator/operator who was experienced in placing boulders. We then cleaned out loose material on site and established a firm base for the first row of boulders. We had already ordered 100 tonnes of boulders to retain the high and loose sections of the site. This was achieved by methodically placing boulders in position and juggling sizes to fit. The boulder wall has a batter - the wall is stronger when slightly angled towards the material to be retained.

We made sure that the excavator had steel tracks so that he could cope with the slip factor of the site.

We added garden lighting for highlighting the edge of the driveway by having an electrician install a transformer for our stainless steel bollard lights.

**Blitz Tipz:** Always put a number of service conduits under a concrete driveway for current and future services, e.g. electrical, irrigation



The driveway was prepared by screeding roadbase to level it out and provide a uniform foundation, essential to the long term performance of a concrete driveway.

Formwork was then put in place. Steel reinforcing mesh was placed in position leaving about 50mm from the edge of the concrete so the steel is not subject to water and rust which leads to concrete cancer. The reinforcing steel was placed on plastic chairs to keep it off the ground. All steel was overlapped at least 300mm and tied together.

We used 20mpa concrete (MPA stands for Mega Pascal – a measurement unit for strength and hardness of the concrete) containing nutmeg colour oxide. Colour oxide adds approx. \$5 - \$8 per sq. metre to the cost of the concrete. We used concrete without much slump (moisture content) so that it would not move on the slope. Moving this amount of concrete onto the site required a concrete pump. The concrete was finished with a rough broom surface to provide skid and slip resistance.



## Internal house floor

Master Building Works Pty Ltd installed a floating floor of Boral Silkwood, spotted gum, three strip 188mm wide x 2400 long x 15mm thick. Installation of this floor over an existing pineboard floor, including underlay and the supply costs around \$114 per sq. metre.

Before installation make sure the floor is clean of dust and debris.

**Blitz Tipz:** These floorboards can be sanded back and resealed two times.



## Garden

On bush blocks there will be weeds and plants that you may want to get rid of e.g. camphor laurels. One of the best ways to do this is the cut and paint method.

Cut stems close to the base and paint immediately with glyphosate or herbicide.

**Blitz Tipz:** Add a dye to your poison to indicate which stems have been treated.

When clearing vegetation from a steep slope it is important to plant the area as soon as possible with hardy plants that will bind the soil together, e.g. *lomandra* and other clumping perennials with fibrous root systems, so that the soil doesn't wash away causing erosion. To help avoid erosion, Nigel used a thick leaf litter mulch which will bind together and dissipate the rain and allow it to filter into the soil. A thick leaf litter mulch will bind together and be less likely to wash away than a finer mulch.

At the bottom of the retaining wall we formed up a dish drain at the edge of the concrete driveway to allow the water to run away and made sure there was a cross fall to allow the water to run to the dish drain. Good drainage is essential to driveway stability and erosion control.

**Blitz Tipz:** If there is poor access to your site enquire about getting mulch pumped in.

Jody brought in a small amount of extra free draining soil mix suitable for natives made up of 90% crushed sandstone and 10% organic mix.





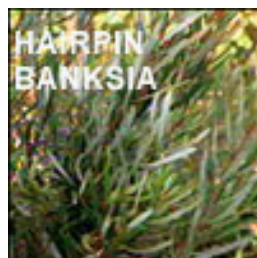
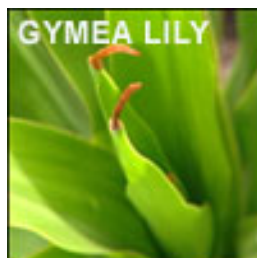
## Plants

We used bird-attracting native plants and clumping perennials:

blueberry ash (*Elaeocarpus* 'Prima Donna'), willow myrtle (*Agonis flexuosa* 'After Dark'), lemon-scented myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*), water gum (*Tristaniopsis laurina*), lilly pilly (*Waterhousea floribunda*), gymea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), bird's nest fern (*Asplenium australasicum*), grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*)

grevilleas (*Grevillea* 'Honey Gem'), (*Grevillea* 'Superb'), grevillea (*Grevillea* 'Pink Midget'), grevillea (*Grevillea* 'Lady O') sticky hop bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* 'Purpurea'), tea tree (*Leptospermum* 'Cardwell'), twiggy heath myrtle (*Baeckea virgata* 'Miniature'), (*Banksia spinulosa*)

lomandra (*Lomandra hystrix*), blue berry flax lily (*Dianella* 'Tasred'), common tussock grass (*Poa labillardieri*), crinum lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*) purple fountain grass (*Pennisetum* 'Rubrum'), (*Grevillea* 'Poorinda Royal Mantle')



## Product Details

- Most of the plants we used are readily available at, or can be ordered from, nurseries. Nurseries can also advise on similar varieties 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 timber supplies and information supplied by Midcoast Timber Centres; [www.midcoasttimber.com.au](http://www.midcoasttimber.com.au)
- All tools used are commonly available for hire, including the mini loader and the nail gun.
- Doyle Beatty Concreting installed our driveway. They service the NSW Central Coast, the Hunter Valley and Sydney's north shore; phone (02) 4323 9999.
- The concrete was supplied by Hymix Australia who have 26 concrete plants nationally; phone NSW (02) 9407 7443; Qld (07) 5591 3000; Vic (03) 5447 7311.
- Timber flooring from [www.boraltimberflooring.com.au](http://www.boraltimberflooring.com.au); phone 1800 818 317
- Timber floor installed by Master Building Works Pty Ltd, phone (02) 4388 6211.

## Holiday information

Sheraton Noosa Resort and Spa  
Hastings Street, Noosa Heads, Qld 4567  
Phone: (07) 5449 4888  
Fax: (07) 5449 2024  
Web: [www.sheraton.com/noosa](http://www.sheraton.com/noosa)

Lloyds Gourmet Condiments – Cooking School  
Paul & Kathryn Lloyd  
96 Wust Road Cooroy, Qld 4563  
Phone: (07) 5447 6332  
Mobile: 0412 742 045  
Email: [lloyds@lloyds.net.au](mailto:lloyds@lloyds.net.au)  
Web: [www.lloyds.net.au](http://www.lloyds.net.au)

Everglades Noosa River Cruises  
Leonie & Trevor Sinclair  
Gympie Terrace, Noosaville, Qld 4566  
Phone: (07) 5449 7362  
Email: [info@noosaevergladescruises.com](mailto:info@noosaevergladescruises.com)  
Web: [www.noosaevergladescruises.com](http://www.noosaevergladescruises.com)  
Web: [www.noosaontheriver.com.au](http://www.noosaontheriver.com.au)

Sails Beach Restaurant  
Cnr Park Road & Hastings Street, Noosa Heads, Qld 4567  
Phone: (07) 5447 4235  
Email: [info@sailsrestaurantnoosa.com](mailto:info@sailsrestaurantnoosa.com)  
Web: [www.sailsrestaurantnoosa.com](http://www.sailsrestaurantnoosa.com)

Riva  
Quamby Place Noosa Wharf, Noosa Heads, Qld 4567  
Phone: (07) 5449 2440  
Email: [welcome@riva-noosa.com](mailto:welcome@riva-noosa.com)  
Web: [www.riva-noosa.com](http://www.riva-noosa.com)

### Bistro C

'On the Beach', Hastings Street Noosa Heads, Qld 4567

Phone: (07) 5447 2855

Email: [info@bistroc.com.au](mailto:info@bistroc.com.au)

Web: [www.bistroc.com.au](http://www.bistroc.com.au)

### Aromas

Shop 7, 32 Hastings Street, Noosa Heads, Qld 4567

Phone: (07) 5474 9788

Web: [www.aromas.com.au](http://www.aromas.com.au)

### **Blitz on Tour Activities:**

#### Glenworth Valley Horse Riding

Cooks Rd, Peats Ridge, NSW

Phone: (02) 4375 1222

Web: [www.glenworth.com.au](http://www.glenworth.com.au)

With over 2500 acres of rainforest, lush valleys and waterways, this is Australia's largest horse-riding centre.

#### Australian Reptile Park

Wiseman's Ferry Rd, Somersby, NSW

Phone: (02) 4340 1146

Web: [www.reptilepark.com.au](http://www.reptilepark.com.au)

The zoo with more bite.... make some furry friends, or come and meet the largest reptile collection in Australia! Eric the Croc makes everyone feel welcome!

#### Central Coast Miniature Steam Trains

Lot 10, Showground Rd, Narara, NSW

Public Open Days – 1st Saturday of every month, 11am – 4pm

Closed shoes must be worn

Step back in time and take a ride down memory lane....

Enjoy a little bit of history on wheels, and share a picnic with family in the restful bush surrounds.

#### Long Jetty Catamaran + Boat Hire

Tuggerah Lake foreshore

Cnr Tuggerah Pde & Pacific St, Long Jetty, NSW

Phone: 0408 506 661

Web: [www.cathire.bigpondhosting.com](http://www.cathire.bigpondhosting.com)

A large range of facilities to suit all ages and abilities, this is fun for the whole family!

### **Acknowledgments**

#### **Design by:**

Osmosis Design

Phone: (02) 9344 4154

Web: [www.osmosisgardens.com.au](http://www.osmosisgardens.com.au)

Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are gifts from Backyard Blitz).

For more Step by Step Constructions click here

