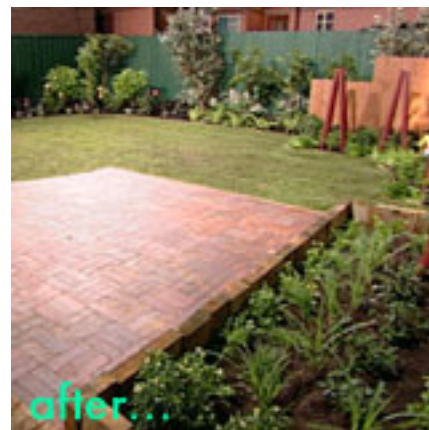


BACKYARD BLITZ

Tropical Feast



Vincent and Eva Huang have led the most amazing lives. To escape the communist regime in Vietnam in the 1970s, they crossed the mountains on foot with their three children to end up in Laos. When Laos fell to communism, the Huang family moved on to Thailand where they lived in a refugee camp for two years. They eventually settled in Australia where they initially lived in a hostel and their only possessions were two extra sets of clothes.

Daughter Sally contacted the Backyard Blitz team to ask for their help. She wanted to thank her remarkable parents by giving them a ready made garden in which to enjoy their retirement.

Landscape designer Colin Brown has created a unique Asian edible garden. Tropical fruit trees grown along the fence line provide privacy and delicious fruits throughout the year. A parquetry style timber deck and covered pergola produce a raised space from which to view the garden and to entertain friends and family. Brick paving surrounds a mango tree and leads to a vegetable and herb garden with a timber screen supporting kiwi fruit.



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 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

Paving: reject face bricks (Austral - dark chocolate mottle) have been laid on their face edge in a basket weave pattern over a compacted base of roadbase and paving sand. Grouting sand with expanding silicon crystals (Melcann gap sand) has been swept through gaps between the bricks to bond them together and reduce weed growth. A rapid setting mortar haunch is laid around the perimeter of the paving to retain the bricks and sand in place.

Blitz Tipz: House bricks have the following standard dimensions - 230mm long, 110mm wide, 76mm deep. When laying house bricks on edge allow for the 110mm dimension of the brick during excavation.



Covered deck: timber decking should always be constructed with appropriate preservative treated, structurally graded timber. This deck was built by combining posts (H4, 90x90mm), bearers (H3, 190x45mm), joists (H3, 90x45mm) and decking boards (H3, 140x45mm). The posts were installed in the ground using rapidset concrete and all timbers connected using galvanised bolts. The roof was constructed by extending the perimeter deck posts up to roof height. A wall plate (140x45mm) attached to the rear of the house and a bearer between the front posts supports rafters (90x45mm) and battens (70x35mm).

A colorbond metal roof connected to the battens with roofing screws shades the rear of the house and enables the deck to be used during wet weather. Plastic lattice at one end of the deck provides privacy and has the added advantage of never rotting or twisting.

Blitz Tipz: Timber merchants and landscape suppliers can provide advice on the appropriate timber dimensions and types to use for your deck. Alternatively, contact the Timber Development Association on 1800 044 529 (Toll free) or (02) 9360 3088 for specific information.



Sleeper screen: treated pine sleepers (H4, 2400x200x100mm) installed vertically in a concrete filled trench create a screen and climbing frame for the vegetable garden.

Blitz Tipz: A rule of thumb with this type of timber wall is to ensure that at least a third of the sleeper is buried in solid ground. These 2400mm long sleepers are 800mm in the ground.

Garden beds: the existing site soil was improved with an organic garden mix and mulched with composted pine bark fines to reduce weed regrowth. This organic mulch breaks down over time and can be turned through the soil to improve soil structure.

Blitz Tipz: Adding organic matter in the form of compost and mulches improves plant health by encouraging soil fauna, increasing aeration and improving water-holding capacity.



Water feature: a prefabricated polyethylene trough (900x400x400mm) has been installed in ground and filled with river pebbles (20-40mm) to reduce the water depth. Two concrete moulded temple dogs mounted on a mortar pad face the pond and eject water from their mouths through 12mm plastic pipe. A low voltage submersible pump (Contour - 3600) and low voltage submersible pencil light are connected to exterior transformers plugged into a weather proof outdoor power point.

Blitz Tipz: Low voltage power is the safest to use in the garden. A licenced electrician can install an exterior power point or wire in an exterior transformer so you can switch the water feature on from inside the house and still have low voltage power running through the garden.

Stepping stones: large unit concrete stepping slabs (600x600x40mm) laid onto a 4:1 brickies sand and cement mix have been used as stepping stones through the utility area.

Blitz Tipz: Pace stepping stone placement out in a relaxed walk to get the right spacing. Lay a string line along one edge and tap down level.

Plants

Tropical inspired fruit trees and asian herbs and vegetables make this a garden of both form and function. Selected trees and shrubs perform well in a range of climates from tropical to cool temperate given an appropriate microclimate.

Trees: mango (*Mangifera indica* 'Kensington Pride'), flat seedless persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*), red cherry guava (*Psidium littorale* var. *longpipes*), feijoa (*Feijoa sellowiana* 'Duffy'), loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica* 'Nagasaki Wase'), pomegranate (*Punica granatum* 'Wonderful'), curry leaf (*Murraya koenigii*), macadamia (*Macadamia integrifolia*)

Shrubs: cleyera (*Cleyera japonica*), tamarillo (*Cyphomandra betacea*), Chinese goddess bamboo (*Bambusa multiplex* 'Riviereorum'), tea (*Camellia sinensis*), adhatoda (*Justicia adhatoda*)

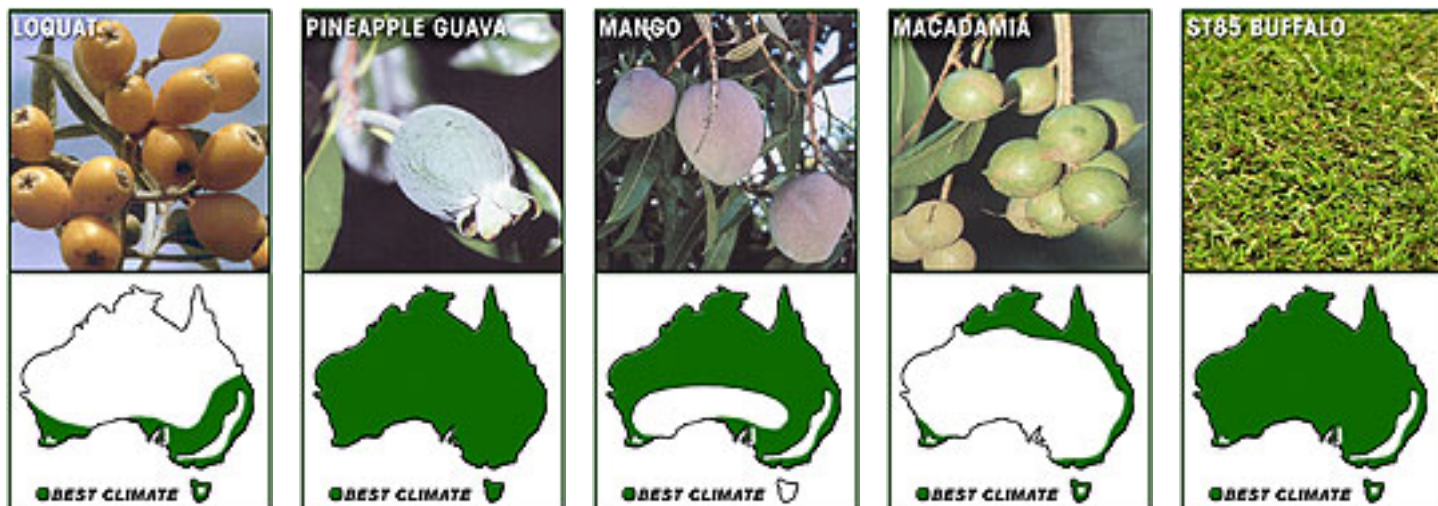
Groundcovers and climbers: society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea* 'Silver Lace'), kiwi fruit (*Actinidia chinensis* 'Monty'), arthropodium (*Arthropodium cirratum*)

Herbs and vegetables: banana passionfruit (*Passiflora mollissima*), tomatoes (*Lycopersicon esculentum*), chillies (*Capsicum annuum*).

Turf: ST 85 Buffalo

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 \$12,044. This cost could be reduced to \$10,283 by using smaller plants.



Product details

- Plastic lattice from Southern Cross Merchants in Sydney cost about \$125 per sheet (1200x2400mm). Phone 1800 688 500 for more details.
- Reject bricks for paving were supplied by Austral Brick Co. Phone 9830 7700 or Free-call 1800 424 838 for prices and availability.
- Temple dogs from Cement Mouldings in Sydney cost about \$200 each. Phone: (02) 9997 8935 for further details on these and other products.
- 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 of the fruit trees. 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 nail gun and the bobcat.

Getaway details

Accommodation:

Salamander Shores, Soldiers Point, NSW
147 Soldiers Point Rd, Soldiers Point NSW 2317
Phone: (02) 4982 7210 for details
Web: www.salamander.shores.com

Imagine Cruises
Phone: (02) 4984 9000 for bookings
Web: www.imagineportstephens.com.au

Acknowledgments

Design by Colin Brown.
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.