

BACKYARD BLITZ

Terrific Thorndale



Brenda Bence is one of those special members of the community who volunteer their time to help others. Brenda has worked at the Thorndale Foundation for many years as a teacher's assistant and as a voluntary member of the board, providing the level of commitment that is needed to make organisations like the Thorndale Foundation continue to run. The Thorndale Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation, which provides services for people with intellectual disabilities. The Business Service Centre in western Sydney provides supported employment to 52 adults with intellectual disabilities and focuses on the abilities of their employees, rather than their disabilities. They commend achievement and accomplishment and operate as any other business.

Amanda Parberry has worked at the Business Service Centre for about 16 months and recognises the commitment shown by Brenda and her colleagues to improving the lives of their staff. Amanda contacted Backyard Blitz to seek some help in improving the lunch area at the Centre and the Blitz team was only too happy to help.



Design intent

Landscape designer Andrew Davies, from dig designs, has created an outdoor dining area for a large group of people. A woodland walkway and dry creek bed provide interest and a sense of discovery as staff members head outside for lunch or a bit of contemplation.

Design ideas

The existing trees in this space have helped to define both the garden style and location. Try to work with existing features of the garden such as rock formations, trees or depressions. Retaining these features will save both time and money and lend a more authentic and established feel to your design.

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, and 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 structures in the backyard. Always talk to your neighbours and the council before commencing your project as it could save you thousands of dollars and will help to make the project run smoothly.

Getting started

A bobcat was used to scrape grass away for new structures and pathways, while the rock breaker attachment was employed to break the concrete into manageable-sized pieces. Bulk materials were brought in with the mini loader and the team commenced construction.

Garden elements

Concreting: to blend with the existing paving, coloured concrete was installed as the new paving (80% slump, 20Mpa - Desert Buff colour). Scott and Nigel installed formwork, reinforcing steel and bar chairs to achieve a 100mm thick slab. A professional concreting team was employed to pump, spread and finish the concrete with assistance from the Blitz team.

Blitz Tipz: Concrete can only be ordered in increments of 0.2 of a cubic metre. So if you need 0.5m³ to complete your job you actually have to order 0.6m³.



Pergola: Scott built a massive, new roofed pergola for all the staff to use during their luncheons and regular barbecues. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed vertically in ground in rapid setting concrete support laminated beams (240x65mm) nailed and bolted in place with galvanised cup head bolts (170x10mm). Rafters (140x45mm) laid across the beams were skew nailed and speed braced in place, in turn supporting battens (70x35mm). Ultra violet resistant roofing, Deep Smoke in colour, was screwed to the battens and provides a weatherproof, shaded area above the new concrete slab.

Blitz Tipz: All timbers were pre-painted prior to being connected to the posts. This is a far more effective way of painting a pergola as well as being much safer.



Sleeper walkway: Nigel constructed a new meandering pathway by combining treated pine sleepers and decomposed granite. Sleepers laid flat into a bed of coarse washed river sand are surrounded with compacted decomposed granite to create a relaxing pathway beneath the existing trees. The pathway leads to a sleeper bridge laid across a dry river bed. Sleeper bearers support sleepers laid perpendicular and nailed to the top of the bearers with galvanised decking spikes (150x7mm). Jamie created a dry creek bed by laying Nepean river pebbles (75-300mm) and one man boulders into the lowest point of the garden to follow the existing drainage line.

Blitz Tipz: Arrange rocks so that the largest lie on the outside and so that they follow the lowest point in the landscape where rainwater would naturally flow



Tree seat: Jamie installed a great looking hardwood tree seat around an existing liquidambar. Provided as a pre-fabricated seat that bolts and screws together it was simple to install. The legs were installed vertically into quick setting concrete and the bench tops screwed in place.

Blitz Tipz: Make sure you leave enough room between the bench top and the trunk of the tree for it to grow in the future.



Garden beds: Jody improved the existing clay site soil by incorporating organic matter and crushed sandstone into the new garden beds. An organic mulch of eucalyptus mulch was used to help retain soil moisture, maintain soil temperature and reduce weed growth. Jody always applies mulch in a layer 75-100mm thick.

Blitz Tipz: Use different mulch and gravels to define different zones within the garden.

Plants

Refreshing foliage shapes and colours have been chosen to provide a calming and contemplative feel to this garden beneath established trees.

Tree: lilly pilly (*Syzygium 'Cascade'*)

Shrubs: bottlebrush (*Callistemon 'King's Park Special'*), cordyline 'Red Star' (*Cordyline 'Red Star'*)

Ferns: scaly tree fern (*Cyathea cooperi*), bird's nest fern (*Asplenium australasicum*)

Perennials: New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax 'Purpureum'*), lomandra (*Lomandra 'Tanika'*), flax lily (*Dianella revoluta*)

Bulbs: crinum lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*)



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 \$12,948. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$10,370.

Product details

- Hardwood tree seat was supplied by Moodie Marketing in Sydney. It cost about \$1500. Phone (02) 9816 1133 for more information.
- Coloured concrete costs about \$300 per cubic metre. We sourced our concrete from Hy-Tech concrete in Sydney. Phone 0438 004 279 for more details.
- Sandstone boulders were supplied by Benedicts Sand and Gravel. Boulders cost about \$45 per tonne with a minimum order of 12 tonne. Phone (02) 9986 3500 for information on their huge range of products.
- 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 tools used are commonly available for hire, including the mini loader and the nail gun.

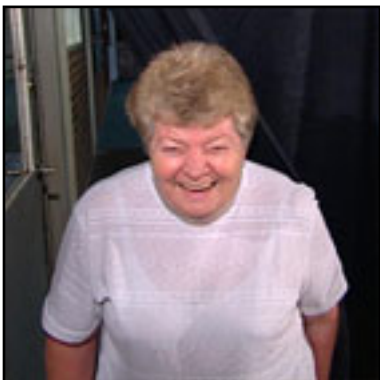


Getaway details

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Thorndale Foundation Ltd

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- by referring or contracting hand packaging and assembly work to the Thorndale workforce
- by registering your interest to become a member of Thorndale Foundation Ltd, a company limited by guarantee

For further information write to:

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Acknowledgements

Design by dig
design - ideas - gardens
Phone (02) 9416 6022

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

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