

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Brady Bunch

Tracey Watkins is part of a real life Brady Bunch. Tracey, her husband Mark, their three children and the dog live in the lower half of a beachside duplex. In the upper half of the duplex, Tracey's sister Robyn Humphrey lives with her husband Scott, their three children and a dog. The Backyard Blitz team gave their garden a facelift while both families enjoyed a farm holiday.

The design by Matthew Cantwell, Secret Gardens of Sydney, creates a modern coastal garden by revitalising some of the existing surfaces, adding some new plantings and bringing it all to life with a sandstone and river pebble water feature. The existing concrete slab was paved, the brick walls of the house were bagged in an ochre colour and large charcoal coloured pots planted out with olives, coast rosemary and purple flax. As well the existing brick fence got a facelift with a cladding of horizontally arranged decking boards



## 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: council permission is required to remove some trees, and may be required for some structural work. 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:** charcoal Stepstones (400x400x60mm) from Amber Tiles were laid on a sand base over the existing

concrete slab. Fine grouting sand was swept through the pavers to bond them together, and a mortar haunch was run beneath the edge pavers to bond them to the slab and prevent sand from washing out. A bricksaw was necessary to cut these thick pavers to fit around the edges.

**Decking fence:** all timber was treated pine. Treated pine (75x50mm) studs were connected to the brick piers using dynabolts (10x100mm). Decking (90x19mm) boards were attached to the posts using 'twist-a-deck' galvanised nails. A capping board of laminated pre-primed timber (230x25mm) was connected to the top of the wall. All timber was then painted using 'Denim' from Dulux. The existing deck was painted using 'Aruba Ruby' from Dulux.

**Water feature:** a waterproof fibreglass shell (900x900x300mm) was installed at ground level. Fawn coloured sawn sandstone pieces (333x333x50mm) were drilled through the centre and stacked vertically with a length of 19mm clear tubing run up the centre and connected to a 'Hozelock' low voltage submersible pump. We used a construction adhesive to glue the pieces of stone together. A stainless steel sheet of mesh (1220x1220mm, 19mm aperture, 2.5mm diameter) was laid over the first block of stone to create a base on which to arrange large river pebbles. The pump was connected to a transformer and plugged into an existing power point.

**Garden beds:** as the site soil was sandy, lots of organic matter was added to the garden beds in the form of a humus mix. Black dyed woodchip was used as a mulch.

**Bagging:** a 4:1 mix of sand and white cement with some yellow oxide was used to bag the brick walls of the house. Use a bucket to measure sand and cement quantities and a cup to measure the oxide. Make sure the proportions are the same or you will end up with a wall in several different shades. Mix to a creamy consistency and apply with a sponge or hessian rag in broad sweeping strokes.

**Groundcover:** the poorly performing turf was lifted using a turf cutter and a layer of different sized gravels was laid in its place. 30-40mm and 75-300mm Nepean river pebbles were used.



## Plants

Japanese fatsia (*Fatsia japonica*), sweet viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum*), swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*), coast rosemary (*Westringia fruticosa*), dietes (*Dietes grandiflora*), gymea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*), brachyscome (*Brachyscome multifida*), blueberry ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Prima Donna'), flax lily (*Dianella revoluta*), blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*), New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax* 'Purpureum'), common european olive (*Olea europaea* var. *communis*), variegated giant yucca (*Yucca elephantipes* 'Variegata')



fatsia

sweet viburnum

swamp lily



coast rosemary

New Zealand flax

olive



blueberry ash

flax lily

variegated yucca

### Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. Our total cost of plants and materials was \$7555 (or \$6219 using smaller plants).

- Charcoal Stepstone pavers (400x400x60mm) cost about \$40/m<sup>2</sup>. Contact Amber head office in Sydney, phone (02) 9831 7271.
- Black woodchip mulch from Australian Native Landscapes cost \$80/m<sup>3</sup>. Phone (02) 9450 1444 or ask your nursery or landscape

supplier to order it for you.

- Our water feature was built using sawn sandstone (333x333x50mm pieces) from Bundanoon Stone for \$105/m<sup>2</sup>, phone (02) 9637 2300.
- Large concrete planters from El Rancho Garden Products in Sydney: charcoal trough (1000x400x400mm) cost \$150; square planter (650x650x600mm) cost \$198. Phone (02) 9809 2265.
- 316 stainless steel mesh (1220x1220mm), 19mm aperture, 2.5mm diameter cost about \$210 from Melwire in Sydney, phone (02) 9609 4800.
- Timber was painted with a Dulux self-priming acrylic paint for outdoor use (colours 'Denim' and 'Aruba Red'), which cost about \$65 for 4 litres.
- Most of the selected plants are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you.
- Most other materials are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire.

### Getaway details:

**Accommodation:** Historic Lansdowne Park, 35 Bungonia Rd, Goulburn, NSW, phone: (02) 4821 8653 web: [www.midac.com](http://www.midac.com).

au/farmstay/se/lansdowne

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Team.

For more **Step by Step  
Constructions** [click here](#)



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