

BACKYARD BLITZ

Family Space



Jim and Mary Reeves have had a hard time getting into their own home. They bought an old house with family friends with a view to redeveloping the site. After demolishing the existing house they built a duplex for each family. Unfortunately, the duplex took two years to build and the Reeves and their five children had to move in with their very accommodating friends, the Smiths.

Once the duplex was complete, more trouble arrived. Jim Reeves fell ill and was unable to work. Jim's daughter Johanna, contacted the Backyard Blitz team to ask for some help as she could not see the bare backyard being completed any other way. Jim and Mary went on a Blue Mountains retreat while the Backyard Blitz team transformed their garden.



Landscape designer John Happ has created a private retreat for entertaining and relaxing in the backyard of this new duplex.

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 fences and pergolas.

Materials

Paving: a combination of Urbanstone 'New Yorker' and 'Donnybrook' pavers (400x400x40mm) were used to define the herb garden and to retain the decomposed granite (Deco Gold) beneath the pergola. The paved area outside the kitchen utilised both pavers as well. Garden bed and pergola border pavers were laid on a 4:1 sand:cement mortar mix. The large paved area was laid over compacted road base and paving sand. A concrete haunch beneath the edge pavers retained the sand beneath the pavers. Fine grouting sand was swept through the pavers to bond them together. **Blitz Tipz:** to cut thick pavers, use a brick saw for a professional finish. A brick saw costs about \$130 to hire for a day.

Pergola: we used treated pine timber and galvanised nails and bolts to build the pergola. Posts were supported in the ground with rapid set concrete. The following timber sizes were used: posts (pink primed laminated pine 135x135x2700mm); beams and ridges (190x65mm); preframed lattice (1730x1800mm); decorative finials for tops of posts. The roof was made by suspending shadecloth sail with stainless steel wire, turnbuckles, eye hooks and screws between the posts. We painted all timber surfaces with Watty! Solarguard Plus 'Outback Earth'.



Garden beds: existing site soil was improved by digging a good quality organic garden mix through to a spade's depth. Horticultural pine bark was spread as a mulch to retain moisture and suppress weed growth. To keep grass out of the beds we constructed a treated pine timber edge (120x19mm) held in position with hardwood pegs (450x450x50mm) and galvanised nails (50mm). A low retaining wall was constructed in front of the fence using treated pine sleepers (200x75x2400mm). A kikuyu lawn was laid over the existing site soil. A lawn leveller was used to prepare the soil and a water filled roller was run over the grass to press the roots into the soil. The new lawn was watered thoroughly after laying.

Table: the existing wrought iron table was brought back to life by creating a colourful new table top. A moisture resistant timber table top made from 15mm compressed concrete sheeting was fitted to the existing metal frame. It was decorated with small ceramic tiles laid over flexible tile adhesive. The tiles were grouted then cleaned off with a sponge and clean water creating a colourful mosaic table top. The table was finished with a maple edging, which was tacked and glued into place. **Blitz Tipz:** to avoid having to cut tiles, work out the width and length of the table in whole tiles.

Dividing fence: treated pine fence posts, rails and palings with galvanised nails were used to build the dividing fence. All of the posts were held in place in the ground with rapidset concrete. The fence was painted with Dulux 'Agapanthus' (\$60 for 4 litres). **Blitz Tipz:** a compressor and nail gun make quick work of connecting fence palings. A fencing gun costs \$108 to hire for a full day, including a compressor and hose. 50mm round head nails cost \$9.60 for a pack of 250.

Plants

A combination of colourful annuals, herbs and rows of plantings has created a productive and formal entertaining area.

Pots: gardenia (*Gardenia augusta* 'Florida'), geranium (*Pelargonium* PAC 'Wendy').

Screening hedges: leyland cypress (*X Cupressocyparis leylandii*, 'Castlewellan Gold'), photinia (*Photinia x fraserii* 'Robusta'), murraya (*Murraya paniculata*).

Feature bed: Bull Bay magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora* 'Exmouth'), salvia (*Salvia splendens* 'Dwarf Red'), assorted herbs and vegetables.

Lawn: kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*).



magnolia



murraya



kikuyu



photinia



leyland cypress



geranium



gardenia



Cost and availability

We used some mature plants in our makeover to create an instant effect for television. As a result our total cost of plants and materials was \$12,900, however this cost could be reduced to \$8500 by using smaller plants.

- Concrete pavers from Urbanstone (400x400x40mm) cost \$45/m². We used 'New Yorker' and 'Donnybrook' quarry finish pavers. Contact Urbanstone at the head office in Sydney; phone (02) 9757 4644.

- Decomposed granite (Deco Gold) costs \$65 per tonne and is available from Australian Native Landscapes in Sydney; phone (02) 9450 1444. In other areas phone your landscape supplier.

- Large reconstituted sandstone pots (600x600mm square) from Elegant Garden World, Sydney; phone (02) 9723 1088. These pots cost \$115 each.

- Ceramic tiles were supplied by House of Ceramic and Stone in Sydney; phone (02) 9744 7735. These tiles cost \$32/m².

- Shadecloth for pergola cost \$333 and can be ordered from Agrifab Pty Ltd; phone (02) 9736 2777. In other areas look under 'Shadecloth' or 'Shade Structures' in your Yellow Pages.

- Paints used were Watty! Solarguard Plus 'Outback Earth' (pergola) which cost \$50 for 4 litres and Dulux 'Agapanthus' (fence) which cost about \$60 for 4 litres.

- Metal outdoor chairs are from Kmart. They cost \$80 each.

- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants or plants in advanced sizes. 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.

Getaway details

Accommodation: Novotel Brisbane, 200 Creek Rd, Brisbane. QLD, phone: (07) 9309 9309. Tours: Australian Day Tours, Brisbane, phone: (07) 3236 4155.

Acknowledgments

Design by John Happ, 3rd Dimension Designs; phone (02) 9744 2658.
Construction by the Backyard Blitz team.

For more **Step by Step Constructions** click here



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