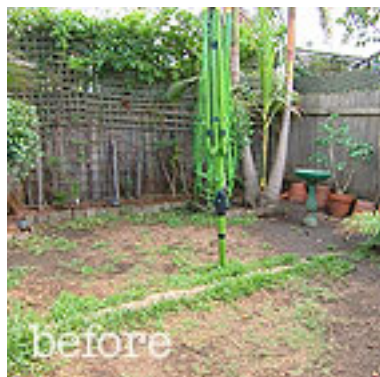


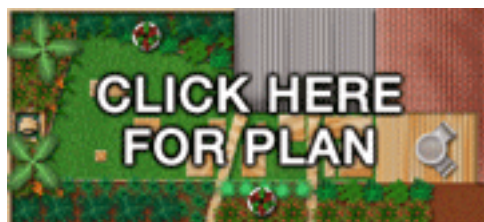
BACKYARD BLITZ

Urban Oasis



Brett Russell has always had a passion for the theatre. At the age of 8 he was taking over school plays and directing his classmates. Having performed in numerous musicals such as 'Les Miserables' and '42nd Street', Brett was fulfilling his dream of directing 'Crazy For You' when 6 weeks out from opening night he was diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma. The quick diagnosis and aggressive treatment of the cancer enabled Brett to make a remarkable recovery and get back into his life.

Brett's flatmate, Rado, has been welcomed to Australia and this theatrical home with open arms. As a sign of both support and thanks he contacted Backyard Blitz to ask for some help in making the tiny backyard a bit more livable.



Design intent

Landscape designer, Greg Bell from Rare Earth Landscape Design, has created an urban oasis using clever design ideas and stylish foliage plantings. Sandstone flows through the garden in the form of stepping stones, low retaining walls and a central water feature. A low timber deck reduces the number of steps out from the back door, while a new paint job helps to blend the back of the house with the new garden. **Design ideas:** Use the same building material for different elements throughout the garden to create unity in your design. Well-placed mirrors in the garden create an illusion of space and can make the garden feel as though it goes on forever.

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 required amounts of materials.

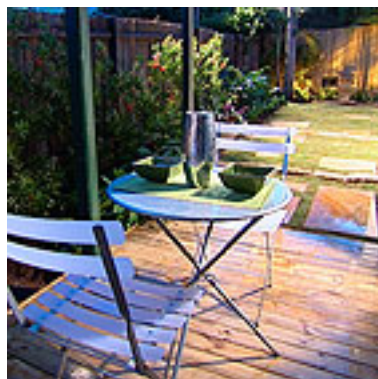
Note: On your plan show the locations of any services (water pipes, sewerage, power, phone, etc) so you can avoid damaging them during the makeover.

Permits and approvals: trees in urban areas are covered by Tree Preservation Orders administered by the local council. You may need permission from the council to prune or remove a tree. Your tree care professional will be able to offer advice on this process.

Getting started

Three large cocos palms were removed by an arborist. Other unwanted vegetation was removed by hand, along with some garden furniture.

Garden elements



Deck: Scott created a small floating deck to create a smooth transition from the back of the house into the garden. A frame of treated pine (90x45mm) supported on plastic wedges was connected to the existing slab with a specialised nail gun. Treated pine decking boards (90x20mm) laid over the top and perpendicular to the joists were connected with stainless steel, spiral shanked nails fired from a finishing nail gun. **Blitz Tipz:** Make sure that timber framing is not in direct contact with the ground, as it will rot.



Sandstone steppers: sawn sandstone slabs provide stable stepping stones with a touch of class. Random sizes staggered through the lawn appear to dissipate then regroup in the form of a stacked water feature.

Laid on a 4:1 brickies sand and cement mix, the back face of the sandstone was smeared with a cement and water slurry to create a strong bond. The gentle slope on the site was broken into two shallow terraces by laying sandstone ballast blocks across the slope to act as low retaining walls. **Blitz Tipz:** No matter how low the retaining wall, it is essential to install weep holes by leaving a gap between some blocks for water to move from behind the wall.

Water feature: Jamie constructed a sculpted water feature using stacked sandstone slabs. A prefabricated fibreglass pond (1200x1200x300mm) was threaded over a galvanised pipe (50mm diameter) set into a concrete footing. Sandstone slabs of varying thickness and size were core drilled and threaded over the galvanised pipe once it was sealed into the base of the pond. A low voltage, submersible pump (4200 l/hr) forces water through a non-kink pipe (19mm). The water cascades down the outside edges of the sandstone creating a steady and rhythmical noise to offset the surrounding hum of the city. **Blitz Tipz:** Install a large pond base to minimise the loss of water in this style of water feature.



Garden mirror: a laminated safety glass mirror (2000x1000mm) was connected to exterior ply with construction adhesive and mirror fixings. The ply was then bolted to two treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed inground in rapid setting concrete. **Blitz Tipz:** Garden mirrors are most effective when hidden from view by foliage and when people cannot see their own reflection.



Garden beds: the existing site soil was a sandy loam, which is great for establishing new plants as it is free draining and easy for roots to grow through. Jody incorporated a composted organic soil mix throughout the new planting areas to give the new plants a healthy kick-start. A fine-grained mulch of shredded pine bark spread to a depth of 75mm will help maintain soil moisture levels and reduce weed growth. **Blitz Tipz:** If you have existing trees in the garden, do not be tempted to increase soil levels around their root zones.



Lawn: a fine-leaved winter green couch lawn was laid over turf underlay to provide a soft spot to enjoy the sun. A 90/10 underlay mix (90% coarse washed sand/10% black soil) was spread to a depth of 50mm to improve drainage and provide some additional nutrients to help establish the new turf. **Blitz Tipz:** If you have a sloping lawn, lay rolls of turf across the slope to avoid water running between the rolls and washing out your soil.

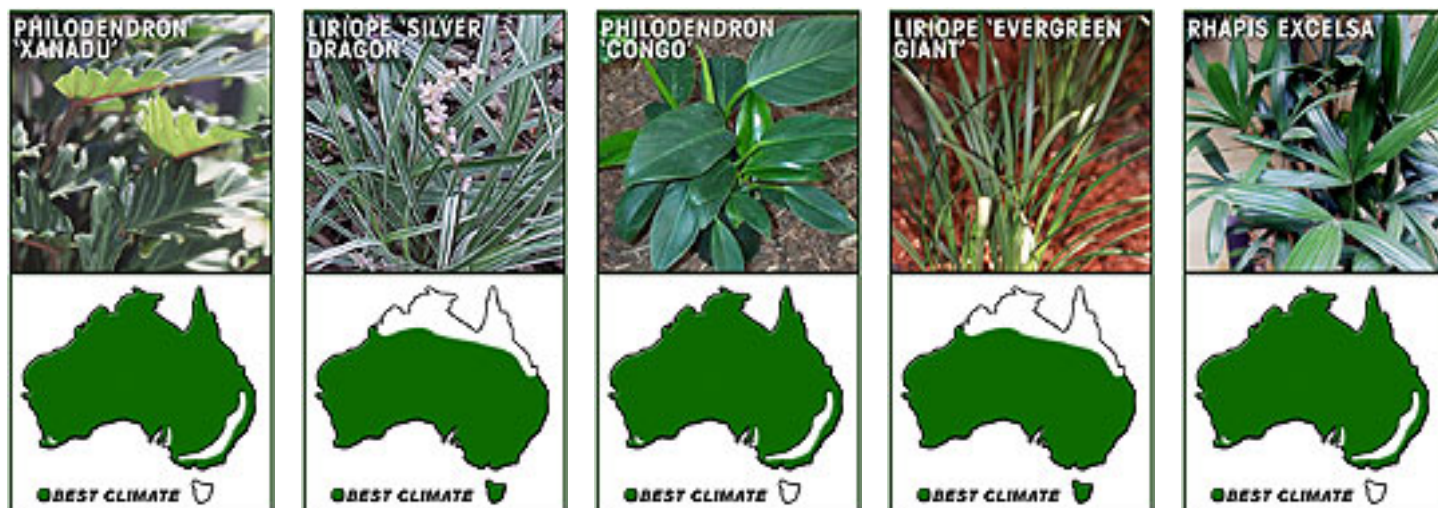
Plants

Palm: lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)

Shrubs: bottlebrush (*Callistemon 'Endeavour'*), philodendron (*Philodendron 'Congo'*), philodendron (*Philodendron 'Xanadu'*)

Groundcovers: lirioppe 'Evergreen Giant' (*Liriope muscari 'Evergreen Giant'*), lirioppe 'Silver Dragon' (*Liriope spicata 'Silver Dragon'*), clivia (*Clivia miniata*), moses-in-the-cradle (*Tradescantia spathacea*)

Lawn: winter green couch



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 \$8014. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$5562.

Product details

- Sandstone slabs cost about \$150 per square metre and were supplied by Positive Earth Moving in Sydney. Phone (02) 9652 1783 for more details.
- Bamboo cladding from the House of Bamboo cost \$125 for a 1.8x1.8m roll. Phone (02) 9666 5703 or view the website at www.houseofbamboo.com.au
- Laminated safety mirror cost about \$250 from Sydney Glass Pty Ltd. Phone (02) 9790 2830 for more information.
- The replacement door blank cost about \$140, from large hardware outlets.
- 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 concrete mixer and the nail gun.



Getaway details

Accommodation:

Hopewood Health Retreat
103 Greendale Rd
Wallacia

Phone: (02) 4773 8401

Fax: (02) 4773 8735

Web: www.hopewood.com.au

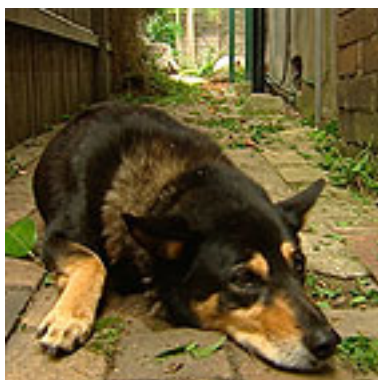
Acknowledgments

Design by:

Rare Earth Landscape Design.

Phone: 0404 043 788

Email: rareearthlandscape@hotmail.com



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

For more Step by Step Constructions click here

