

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## Our Little Hero

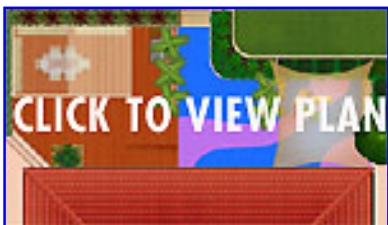


The brave story of three year old Sophie Delezio has captured the hearts of the nation. Just before Christmas last year, a car crashed through the front of a childcare centre in suburban Sydney and burst into flames. Sophie was caught underneath the car and suffered the worst injuries of all the young victims of this terrible tragedy.

Sophie has undergone more than 6 months of extensive operations and has many more years to go. The Backyard Blitz team wanted to show their support for Sophie and her family by building a garden to suit her new needs.

Backyard Blitz also recognises the extraordinary work that the staff of The Children's Hospital at Westmead has done for Sophie and thousands like her, by giving corporate and public Australia the opportunity to donate to paediatric burns units around the country.

Call the appropriate number in your state to donate to this worthy cause. [Click here](#) for all details.



## Design intent

Landscape designer, Jamie Durie, has come up with a fantastic, functional and fun garden design to suit the needs of the whole family. A colourful treatment of the concrete slab and a raised deck provides two distinct zones - one for play and one for relaxing. A shadesail as well as an automated Vergola will provide shade and weather protection all year round. Some clever plantings into raised garden beds provide further division of this exposed backyard creating a sense of excitement and mystery.

## Design ideas

Treat your garden as though it were a room in the house. It has walls, a floor, ceiling and empty corners. Treat all of these elements in your design and you will have a comfortable, functional garden that will work for years to come.

## 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

All furniture and kids' toys were removed before the concrete core drilling team commenced. Set-out was commenced and the team got to work.

## Garden elements

**Deck:** Scott created a large, floating deck to create a smooth transition from the play area to the outdoor dining room. A frame of treated pine (140x45mm) levelled on plastic wedges acts as both bearers and joists to support the Modwood decking. The recycled plastic decking boards (90x22mm) were connected with stainless steel, spiral-shanked nails fired from a finishing nail gun. The stability of the decking boards meant that they could be connected with just one nail per joist, as opposed to the usual two.

**Blitz Tipz:** Make sure that timber framing is not in direct contact with the ground as it will rot.

**Vergola:** An automated, weatherproof pergola was donated and installed by Vergola. A timber frame supports an internal guttering system, electric louvres, rain sensors and two motors. The roofing system acts like a chimney in the way it draws cool air into the space beneath, while forcing warm air out. The rain sensors close the roof louvres automatically and reopen them again when it stops raining.

**Blitz Tipz:** This Vergola has a retail value of around \$17,000, making it a significant contribution to Sophie's family.



**Shadesail:** A large, rectangular shadesail hangs above the play area offering excellent sun protection for Sophie and her friends. Galvanised steel posts (150mm diameter) were installed 1300mm deep into the sandstone bedrock and surrounded with concrete. The shadesail hangs off galvanised plates, which were attached to the rear of the house with threaded rod and bolts and a mechanical bonding agent called Chemset.

**Blitz Tipz:** The steel posts on shadesails are deliberately set at an angle to resist the tension imposed by the sail when it is windy.

**Softfall:** The extent of Sophie's injuries has implications for her mobility and her capacity to traverse high and low points on the ground. A colourful and functional solution to the large concrete area was found in the wetpour rubber system commonly known as softfall. Colourful rubber granules combined with a polyurethane binder enable a smooth surface to be created to lead from the rear doorsill to the raised deck.

**Blitz Tipz:** This fantastic product looks easy to lay but it requires skill and patience to install properly. Get the experts in to do it for you.



**Blackboard:** Jamie created a simple blackboard by combining some fibre cement sheeting, treated pine and some blackboard paint. Two timber rails dyna-bolted to the existing masonry wall support a length of fibre cement sheeting tacked in place with clouts. Two coats of blackboard paint provide the perfect blackboard surface. A surround of Modwood decking ties the blackboard in with the deck and provides a shelf to store chalk and dusters together.

**Blitz Tipz:** Make sure that you counter sink the head of the dyna-bolts into the surface of the timber frame, so that the fibre cement sheeting sits flush on the timber.

**Bench seats:** Jamie created some additional seating for large family gatherings by building three timber benches. Treated pine frames (90x45mm) built like two timber walls were connected with cross beams. These in turn support decking boards as the bench top, sides and ends. A limewashed paint job finishes the project off nicely.

**Blitz Tipz:** Using a chair as a guide for heights and seat widths, Jamie made these benches 400mm high and 520mm wide.

**Garden beds:** Jody added extra plants to the existing garden beds. She filled some new, raised garden beds with an organic planter box mix, before planting with palms and hippeastrums. A fine-grained mulch of shredded pine bark spread to a depth of 75mm will maintain soil moisture levels and reduce weed growth.

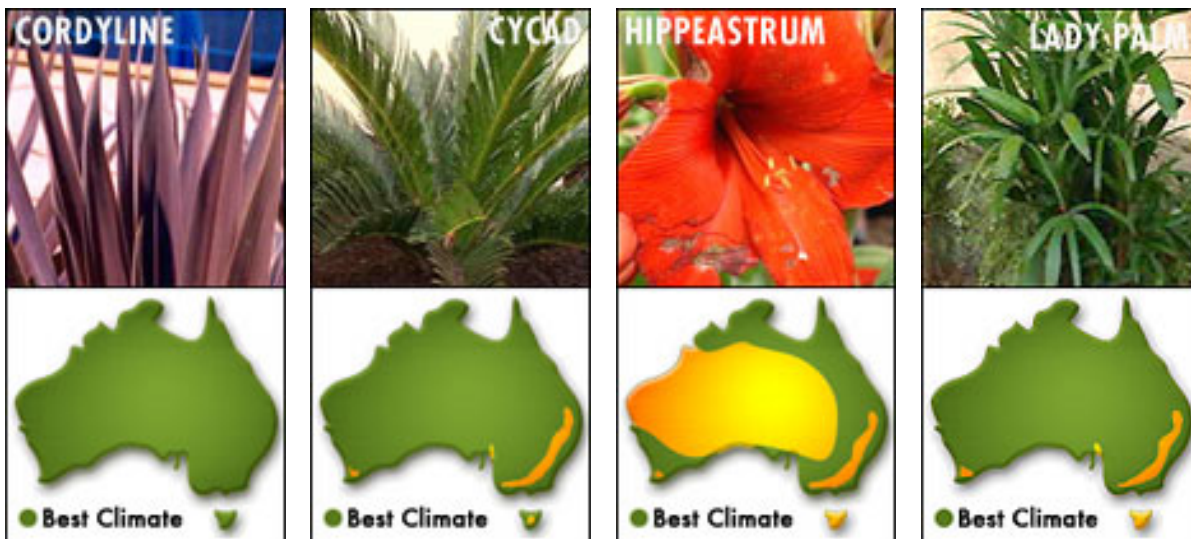
**Blitz Tipz:** Remember to firm soil into planter boxes as you fill them, otherwise all your plants will slump over time as the soil level drops.

## Plants

Hardy, low maintenance palms, cycads and perennials will provide colour and structure to this garden with minimal effort from the Delezio family.

**Palms and cycads:** golden cane palm (*Dypsis lutescens*), lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*), sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*).

**Perennials:** liriopie (*Liriope muscari* 'Evergreen Giant'), cordyline (*Cordyline* 'Red Sensation'), hippeastrum hybrids (*Hippeastrum* hybrids), calathea (*Calathea* 'Royal Picta').



## 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 (including the Vergola which was kindly donated, details below) was \$41,758.

## Product details

- Vergola kindly donated and installed the Vergola to the Delezio family. This size would normally have a retail value of approximately \$17,000. Phone (02) 9450 2520 for more details and design ideas.
- The colourful softfall area was installed by Lonaport Pty Ltd. This type of job would cost from \$80 per metre supplied and installed. Call (02) 9758 8966 for prices and colours.
- Modwood decking distributors details are available from Modwood Technologies Pty Ltd on (03) 9462 4333.
- The fibreglass planter boxes cost about \$1245 each and are available through Urban Ponds in Melbourne. Phone (03) 9588 2484 for more ideas and availability.
- The Hills Bark Blower operates across Sydney and is available for hire on large scale projects. Call (02) 9654 2288. for a quotation.
- 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.

- Low voltage mushroom lights are available from Constant Products in Queensland. Call Noel Constantine on (07) 5493 6500 for details.



## Getaway Details

### Accommodation:

Quay West Suites  
98 Gloucester St  
The Rocks, Sydney  
Phone: 02 9240 6000  
Web: [www.mirvachotels.com.au](http://www.mirvachotels.com.au)

Pavilion on the Park Restaurant  
1 Art Gallery Road  
Sydney  
Phone: 02 9232 1322  
Web: [www.pavilion.com.au](http://www.pavilion.com.au)

Sydney Aquarium  
Aquarium Pier  
Darling Harbour  
Ph: 02 9262 2300  
Web: [www.sydneyaquarium.com.au](http://www.sydneyaquarium.com.au)



## Acknowledgements

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



For more Step by Step Constructions click here

