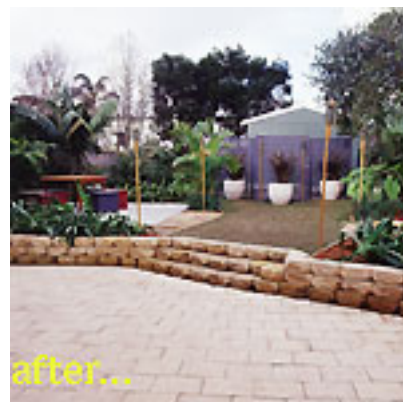
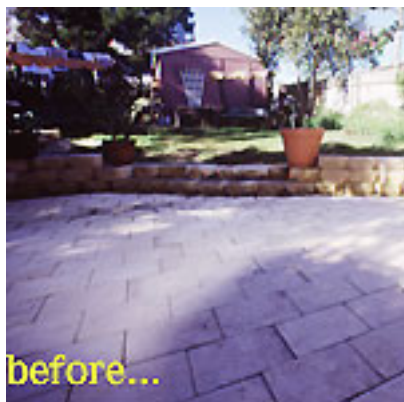


BACKYARD BLITZ

Jungle Magic



The James family have a unique living arrangement. Three generations and six members of the adult family live under the one roof in a newly renovated home. The garden, ruined during building works, was in need of a makeover so Kathleen James asked Backyard Blitz to help. Kathleen was inspired by the approaching 25th wedding anniversary of her brother Michael and sister-in-law Keryn and thought a garden makeover would benefit the whole family.

Landscape designer Matthew Cantwell from Secret Gardens of Sydney has designed a lush, tropical oasis for this suburban backyard. Massed groupings of colourful and textured plants provide a relaxing backdrop to a sleeper-paved entertaining area and a jungle inspired water feature. Timber screens provide informal boundaries to the newly created space.



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: 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.

Getting started

When the Blitz team arrived the garden was an unusable area of perimeter plantings, concrete blocks and an old concrete slab. An extra step was built using leftover blocks. Extra soil for fill was brought in with a bobcat to level the lawn area.

Materials

Sleeper paving: treated pine sleepers (2400x200x100mm) were cut to the same length, 2000mm long. As the ends of the sleepers were cut, a timber preservative (Timber Plus) was applied to all cut surfaces. A level layer of compacted road base provided a solid sub-base. A bed of coarse washed river sand (paving sand) was levelled and the sleepers laid in a basketweave pattern over the top. Each sleeper was skew nailed to the next, and a strip of galvanised perforated hoop iron was wrapped around the perimeter to hold it all together. A fine grouting sand (Sydney sand) was swept through the sleepers to help them bond.

Blitz Tipz: While treated pine sleepers are sold in a standard size there is some variation in finished lengths. Measure and cut each one to the same length and square both ends before using them in this project or you will have unsightly gaps between the ends of sleepers.

Water feature: a circular prefabricated fibreglass pond (2000mm diameter, 185mm deep) provided the basis for this water feature. A low voltage submersible pump powered by a low voltage transformer circulates water from the pond through a basalt headpiece. A bagged (4 parts brickies sand, 1 part cement) brick plinth supports the basalt headpiece. Sandstone flagging lines the perimeter of the pond as a natural looking coping. It has been laid over a 3:1 mortar mix with 15mm mortar gaps between each piece.

Blitz Tipz: Increase your mortar strength by adding Bondcrete to the mix. It costs about \$27 per litre from hardware stores.



Sandstone stepping stones: sandstone flagging laid over a level bed of mortar provides a decorative path leading to the entertaining area. Nepean River pebbles (40mm) were swept between each stone as a decorative mulch.

Blitz Tipz: Lay sandstone pieces out in your proposed pattern to ensure the steppers are comfortable to walk along.

Timber screens: simple timber screens create a visual barrier to the utility area behind the new garden. Two treated pine posts (H4, 100x100mm) installed in rapid set concrete 800mm in the ground provide a vertical frame. Treated pine decking boards (90x20mm) are connected horizontally across the face of the posts with a nail gun.

Blitz Tipz: Connect the lowest decking board horizontally to the posts first. Ensure it is level before laying a spacing timber on top of this first board to support the next while you connect it. Using this technique one person can quickly and accurately connect the remaining boards.

Seating cubes: stylish timber cubes provide informal seats and low tables on the entertaining area. Treated pine (70x50mm) and decking boards (90x20mm) were combined to create covered cubes. These were finished with a coat of low-sheen Weathertough paint from Bristol for further weather protection.

Blitz Tipz: If hand nailing, pre-drill nail holes or the decking boards can split.



Paint: Four colours from the Bristol Weathertough low-sheen range were used to paint the seating cubes and the sleeper paving. The sleeper paving was painted with 'Silver Star' while the cubes were painted with 'Scotland Green', 'Equinox' and 'Claret'.

Garden beds: garden beds were improved with a commercial organic garden mix and mounded to improve drainage.

Plants

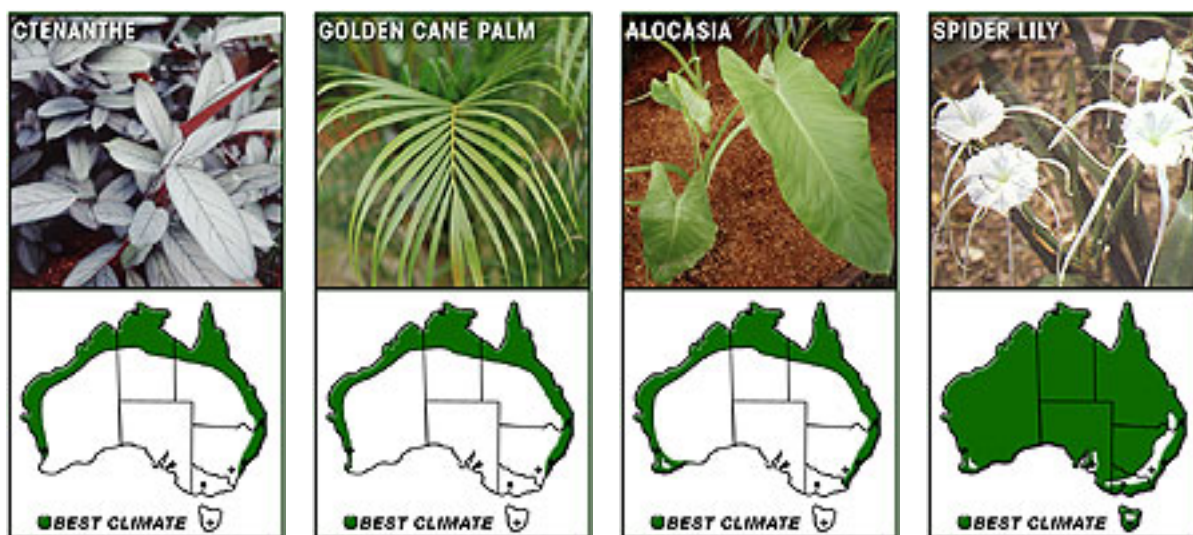
Variation in habit and contrasting foliage textures create interest in this small space. Most of the plants provide a tropical ambiance but are growing well in the temperate Sydney climate.

Palms: bangalow palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), golden cane palm (*Dypsis lutescens*)

Feature plants: New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*)

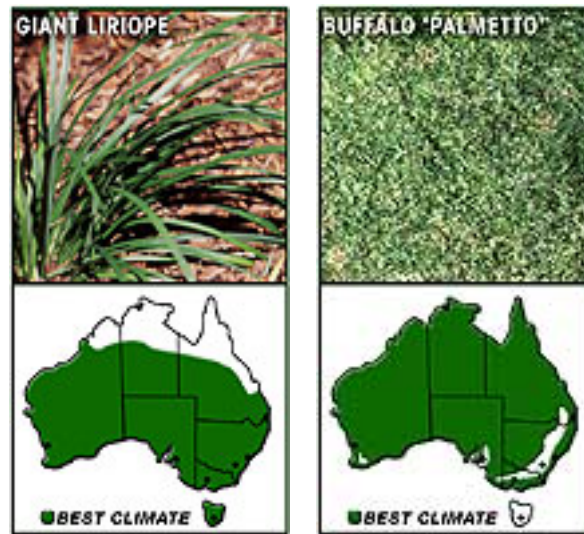
Clumping shrubs: Giant liriopse (*Liriope muscari* 'Evergreen Giant'), ctenanthe (*Ctenanthe* 'Grey Star'), spider lily (*Hymenocallis littoralis*)

Fleshy groundcovers: ornamental ginger (*Alpinia caerulea*), cunjevoi (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*)



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 \$12,100. This cost could be reduced to \$8367 by using smaller plants.



Product details

- Garden decorations in the Balinese style such as the basalt fountain headpiece can be sourced from a number of outlets around Australia. Check under 'Garden Equipment and Supplies' in the Yellow Pages for suppliers.
- The two metre circular fibreglass pond shell cost \$320 from Contour Ponds, Sydney. Phone: (02) 9690 2600; or look in your local Yellow Pages under 'Pools and ponds' for alternative suppliers.
- Large white egg pots are available at pot retailers or large nurseries from about \$120.
- Sandstone flagging is available at leading landscape supply yards from about \$50 per square metre. It comes in a wide range of colours and thicknesses and is well worth inspecting before ordering.
- Citronella bamboo torches are available at hardware stores and barbecue retailers from \$15 each.
- Most of the plants we used are readily available at nurseries or ask your nursery to order them for you or advise similar varieties suited to your area. You may need to contact specialist nurseries for some plants. Your local nursery should be able to provide contacts to you.
- Most other materials such as mulch and pebbles are available from large hardware stores, building or landscape suppliers.
- All tools used are commonly available for hire including the airless spray gun and the Kanga mini-excavator. No specific licence is required for this machine.

Acknowledgments

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Construction by the Backyard Blitz team (all gardens are a gift from Backyard Blitz)



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



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