

# BACKYARD BLITZ

## SES Hero



Originally from Italy, Sergio Ballarin is passionate about helping others. Sergio is a real community man and a valued member of the State Emergency Service since he joined in 1989. His involvement extends to numerous rescue operations, training of volunteers and undertaking extensive training for himself.

Sergio's wife Angela wanted to surprise him with a new garden, as both a reward for all his hard work and to ease his mind about the state of the garden.



### Design intent

Peter Bachak from Art in Green has designed a formal garden with a Mediterranean influence, to remind Sergio and his family of their beloved Italy. A sloping lawn has been turned into a series of level rooms and privacy has been created with the use of quick growing hedging plants.

### Design ideas

A sloping garden can be turned into useable space with the clever use of retaining walls and decks. The designer has increased the usable space at the rear of the house by extending a deck into the garden. The sloping lawn has been graded and the slope decreased to provide more useable space for the kids.

## 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 earthworks and drainage. If you are changing existing levels or installing drainage ensure no water run-off is directed toward neighbouring properties. Any water entering the stormwater system must be free of debris and sediment.

## Getting started

A full clear out was needed, so to make access for the excavator and bobcat, a couple of fence panels were removed. Once the turf was all gone, the set-out could begin.

## Garden elements

**Timber deck and day-bed:** Scott put together a great combination of deck with built in seats and a day bed. 90mm x 90mm H4 treated pine posts were set in concrete 600mm in ground. 190mmx45mm bearers were bolted to the posts with galvanized cup head bolts, onto which 90mmx45mm joists were skew nailed. 90mm x 22mm decking boards were nailed down with a 50mm stainless steel twisted shank nail fired from the nail gun. The day bed was built following the same principles as the deck. Between the two, soil needed to be retained to help form the pebble walkway, H4 sleepers were attached to the posts of the deck and day bed to serve this purpose.

**Blitz Tipz:** Always treat any cut ends of treated pine with a preservative treatment before installing them in the ground. Appropriate products are sold at timber yards or hardware stores.



**Timber bench seats:** Scott built two long bench seats on top of the deck to provide seating and a sense of enclosure. Posts from the deck frame were extended through the decking to support a frame of bearers and joists. Decking boards were laid over this framework and nailed off with the decking gun.

**Blitz Tipz:** Under the Building Code of Australia any deck more than 1000mm above natural ground level requires a balustrade around the perimeter to be installed.



**Feature screens:** two different style screens were erected in the garden. Slatted timber screens provide a break to the hedges and add a horizontal focus to the garden beds. Treated pine posts (H4, 90x90mm) installed vertically in ground support treated pine decking boards (90x22mm) nailed horizontally across the face of the posts. A feature wall behind the day bed was constructed using exterior fibre-cement sheets, ceramic tiles and paint. A post and rail frame supports fibre-cement sheets attached with galvanized clouts. Jointing tape and a topcoat plaster mix covers the horizontal joint and provides a smooth surface to attach the tiles to. A flexible adhesive will absorb any movement in the wall and binds the tiles to the sheet behind. White grout between each tile covers the mesh and helps to bind them in place.

**Blitz Tipz:** Ensure the jointing compound is allowed to completely dry before you sand and paint it.

**Hebel barbeque:** Nigel built a great block-work barbecue on the existing slab using lightweight Hebel blocks (600mm x 200mm x 200mm). The blocks were laid on top of the existing concrete slab, and set up to accommodate a 5 burner BBQ from Barbeques Galore (Beefmaster 5). A concrete, charcoal coloured paver was laid as a capping and a table top on a mortar bed. All Hebel blocks were bagged using a 4:1 brickies sand and cement mix.

**Blitz Tipz:** If not building on a concrete slab, then a concrete or brick footing is needed to support the block-work.





**Concrete:** the existing concrete slab was given a much needed face lift with a coat of paving paint from Berger. The paint we used was Jet Dry – Grey.

**Blitz Tipz:** Clean the concrete thoroughly prior to painting.

**Turf:** We laid a new lawn of Palmetto a type of soft leaf Buffalo. A turf underlay mix approximately 75mm deep was spread evenly over the entire area to be turfed.

**Blitz Tipz:** Prior to laying the rolls of turf the soil should be firm, enough so that your foot doesn't sink more than a few millimeters.

## Plants

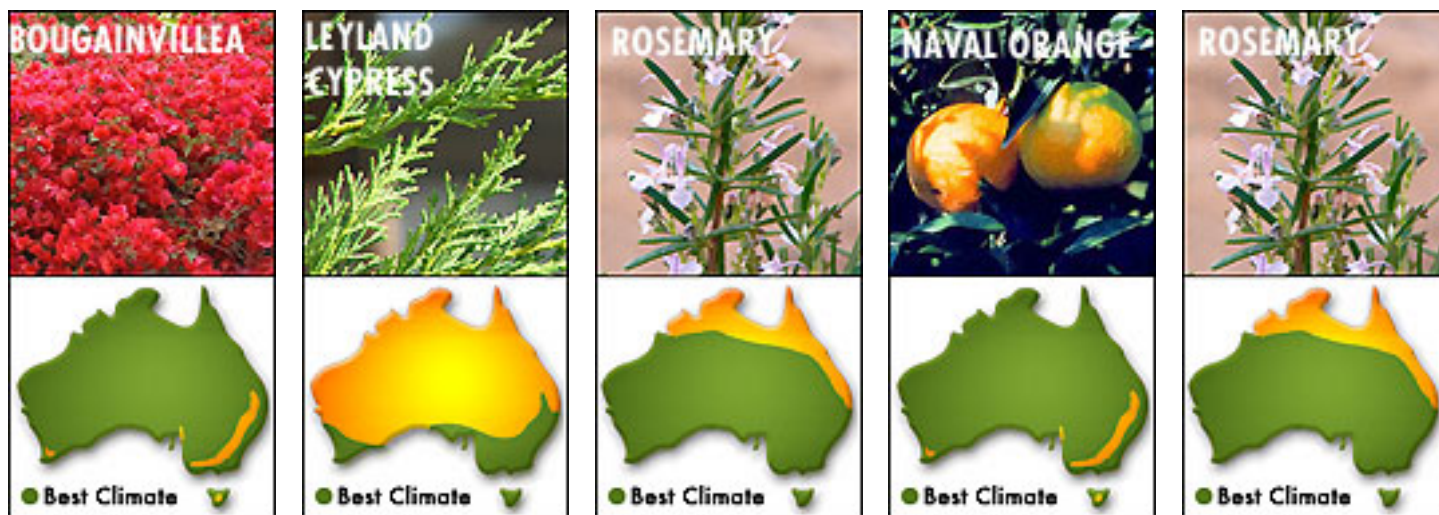
Semi-mature trees and hedging plants provide the framework to the new garden with decorative shrubs and climbers adding some colour and interest.

**Trees:** Leyland cypress (*x Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Leightons Green'), European olive (*Olea europaea*), manchurian pear tree (*Pyrus ussuriensis.*), navel orange (*Citrus sinensis* 'Valencia'), mandarin (*Citrus reticulata*).

**Shrubs:** rosemary (*Rosmarinus* 'Portugese Pink'), camellia (*Camellia* 'Marge Miller'.

**Climbers:** bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* 'Scarlett O'Hara'.

**Ground covers:** native violet (*Viola hederacea*).



## 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 \$13,955. The use of smaller plants would have reduced the cost to \$7,841.

## Product details

- Pots came from Terracotta Works, Melbourne (03) 9553 5995 Sydney 1300-303-829 Website: [www.terracotta-works.com.au](http://www.terracotta-works.com.au)
- The barbeque came from Barbeques Galore delivered with a full gas bottle and cost \$435.90 all up.
- The tiles on the feature wall from Bisazza Tiles (02) 9838 9233, website: [www.bisazza.it](http://www.bisazza.it)
- Most of the plants we used are readily available 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, building or landscape suppliers.



## Getaway details

### Accommodation:

JONAH'S  
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Phone: (02) 99745599

### Acknowledgements

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

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