



Greer's garden

How's this for a before and after set? In mid August Hazel and Zarven helped build these beds at Greer's place in Howrah.

Now just two and a half months later Greer is harvesting copious greens daily including lettuce, kale, asian greens and spinach. Carrots and beetroot are well on the way and peas are just starting to bear as well.



Broad Bean Bounty

Broad beans are a great "green manure" crop to grow over winter, since they have root nodules which fix nitrogen in the soil. Crops such as zucchinis, cucumbers or sweet corn planted around now after broad beans finish can benefit from this extra nitrogen. The bean plants also provide welcome bulk material for composting or chopping and digging back into the soil.

But as well as being a valuable crop in the rotation plan, broad beans are DELICIOUS and bountiful when not much else is available. Try roughly smashed small podded raw broad beans with a bit of mint, garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper, a dash of olive oil. For extra zing stir through grated pecorino cheese. Serve on toast. YUUUUUM!

Or make a salad with blanched broad beans, double podded if they're big, with new potatoes, and hard or soft boiled eggs. Extra yummy with crispy bacon or pancetta for non vegetarians.

Or simply blanched, double podded and warmed with butter and a sprinkle of salt. So good.



Harvest notes

Planting guide for December

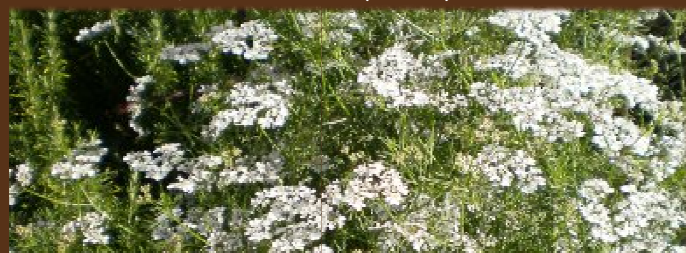
You can plant just about anything in the garden in December. The soil has warmed up enough for tender plants like capsicum and chilli, and if you get sweet corn and small varieties of pumpkin in pretty quickly there will still be enough of a growing season to ripen them.

If you plant climbing beans and bush beans at around the same time you can get a great spread of harvest. The bush beans are up quickly and flowering in 6 weeks or so. The climbers take longer to get going, but once they start to fruit they will bear for months. With all beans pick regularly to encourage formation of new flowers. If you want to keep seed its best to select a healthy plant with good looking beans, mark them off and let them mature, rather than just keep the ones that you miss and that get too big and tough to eat.

Succession plantings of root crops and leafies as you clear garlic and leeks from beds are useful for extending the harvest. And zucchini, cucumber, pumpkin, sweet corn and tomatoes all love to be planted after peas and broad beans are finished. Just break off the legumes at the ground and leave their roots in place, then plant seedlings in between the plant stumps.

You can even still plant potatoes, particularly keeping varieties like kennebecs for harvest next Autumn.

Just about everything that has grown through winter will bolt to seed as the warmer months come along. This includes root crops like carrot, beetroot, parsnip, and greens like silverbeet, most asian greens, spinach, leeks and herbs like coriander. Some of these you can leave a while longer in the garden to harvest their beautiful and edible flowers, like coriander (below).



You can also leave many of these plants to set seed, then you'll have a forest of little seedlings eventually which you can transplant around the garden. There are often many useable parts even when plants go to seed. Leeks can be cut up for soups and stews, and the central flower stem is a delicious delicacy only available to the home grower.

Garlic should be ready for harvest around now too.

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HARVEST



The race is on

It's a busy time in the garden as peas and broad beans are harvested, pulled and new summer crops are planted. Most people have their tomatoes in by now, plus zucchinis, cucumbers, beans and pumpkins and sweet corn if there is room. By the end of the season you won't be able to look at a zucchini in the eye, and the pile of tomatoes waiting for processing will seem endless. But for now the race is on for the first ripe tomato, the first respectable sized zucchini, the first bandicooted potato. Go sun, go rain, work that warm soil worms!

Sustainable Living Expo – great fun

FIMBY teamed up with Dove Tail Timbers to share a display space at the Sustainable Living Expo in early November. It was a great weekend in the newly spruced up Princes Wharf Shed. We had a beautiful wooden garden bed made by Bodie on display which caught many an eye. It was so enjoyable chatting with customers, friends and new contacts about gardens all weekend. We heard some great stories!



Above: Juliet is extra spunky in her FIMBY uniform.

Growing weeds – on purpose.

Most people, when they pull out weeds, shake the soil off the roots so that the plant dries out and doesn't re-root itself for another growth phase. But Claire, always resourceful, asks what the weeds are as we pull them out, and REPLANTS the ones she wants as chook fodder or to use for making weed tea. Her favourites, in cultivation in their very own raised bed, are nettles, chickweed, and fat hen.

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Workshops and activities

Garden Tour and end of year Feast

Sat 4th December, Free for members

It's a crazy busy time of year, but our last gathering for 2010 will incorporate a small tour of a few very diverse FIMBY gardens. Please RSVP to Christina for catering purposes.

10.10 am Christina's @ 20 Wellesley St South Hobart to car pool if you want to. We'll depart at 10.20am.

10.30 am Disa and Scott's @ 12 Cook St Lutana. They have a series of colourbond raised beds, plus berry patch incorporating an old swing as netting trellis, and the most amazing 90 year old espaliered pear tree you've ever seen.

11.30 am Sue and Leigh's @ 4a Marieville Esplanade Sandy Bay. A small garden that's managed well to be surprisingly bounteous, with peas that climb the huge cumquat. Also kiwi vines that have had a recent drastic prune after 30 years of light tinkering.

12.30 pm Return to Christina's place for a look around and lunch. Please bring anything you'd like to contribute, especially if it's from your garden! Let Christina know if you have any special dietary needs. After lunch we might do a spontaneous hot composting demonstration (I have a big pile of weeds and broad bean plants that need chopping up!).

Workshops coming up in 2011

We have some exciting sessions planned including making garden art and sculpture with Allison Jones, some biodynamic preparation demos, and a hands-on practical session to create a fully netted large enclosure for wild life exclusion. Keep your eye on the web for details.

