

Jan and Peter's garden in Sandy Bay is a bit of a 'poster child'. Having moved from a country property down the Channel, they were keen to grow their own vegies. They had an area of lawn next to the drive in the front of the house, and wisely realised that it was the sunniest part of their block. FIMBY visited and talked through options for materials and sizes of raised bed, and they choose the beautiful hardwood beds made by Bodie of Dove Tail Timbers. Great access and fairly level ground meant that the installation of three large beds took our crew less than half a day. Jan and Peter have been delighted with the incredible harvest so far. Although we think the lettuces have been a bit overwhelming.



Late October 2010 and the pre-cut dovetail sleepers are assembled. Its a bit like Laurel and Hardy with the team handling these long pieces. There are 4 possible orientations for every section! No pernicious weeds in the lawn meant we can just smother it out with imported soil.

Mid November 2010 just 4 weeks later and the beans and greens have germinated beautifully in the rich weed free soil. You can see the soaker hose irrigation which works well on these friable soil mixes. Jan and Peter have hooked it up to their existing irrigation network.

Mid January 2011 and the beans are producing bucket loads, the zucchinis and cucumbers are rampaging, and the third generation of mizuna, lettuce and rocket are on their way. Peter and Jan also have a bed of incredibly lush basil and tomatoes, and their beetroot are provoking major garden envy in this FIMBY reporter!

Planting guide for January

A great time to undertake succession plantings of root and leafy crops. Short rows of seed, planted every three weeks or so between now and late March, will spread the harvest of carrots, beetroot, lettuce, asian greens well into the Autumn and winter months. Remember – the glut will end, so be prepared with a new generation!

If you have a warm garden it's not too late to plant seedlings of zucchini and cucumber to extend your harvest of these too. Later in the season we see mildews attack the cucurbit tribe, and younger plants are a bit more resistant to this fungal assault.

You can begin to plant seedlings or seed of the brassica tribe now: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and brussel sprouts. These will grow strongly in the warm months and then slow down but continue to develop as winter set in. Beware the grubs of the cabbage white moth – they can decimate your brassica babies at this time of year. A weekly 'find and squish' mission, or regular sprays with Dipel (a biological control agent) are essential. If you're not committed to vigilance, forget about Brassicas for now.

Leeks can be sown in boxes ready for transplant when they are sturdy seedlings. Spring onions can be sown now to, as well as Swedes and turnips.



Harvest notes

Beans and zucchini and even cucumbers demand almost daily picking when they hit their full production. If you're heading away for more than a few days, ask friends or neighbours to help themselves. Regular picking keeps these plants producing more fruit.

Pinch out the flower buds of basil as they form to keep the plant bushy and leafy as long as possible.

Harvest the root crops as they get big enough – you may need to bull a few to see their size. Carrots and especially turnips and Swedes should be thinned progressively to allow room for full size development. Ian and Anne at Lymington did a great job at thinning their Swedes and now have a beautiful tennis ball sized crop to show for it.

Tomatoes can be picked once they start to change colour, and brought inside to ripen fully in the kitchen (not on a sunny windowsill and never in the fridge). Although "vine ripened" tomatoes attract a premium, a high temperature day can spoil the flavour of your toms.

Garlic should be out of the ground by now. If not: GO DIG!

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HARVEST



Summer Bounty

Zucchini, beans, carrots, beetroot, and lettuce lettuce is on the menu for most FIMBY folks by now. A few people still have late peas, and a lucky few already have some ripe tomatoes. It's getting into the real harvest season, when friends and workmates are probably starting to avoid eye contact as you approach with bulging bags of greens and zooks to give away! Amidst all this bounty don't forget to keep planting small batches of seeds to extend the harvest well into Autumn.

Bandicooting spuds

Most people can bandicoot potatoes around about now. "Bandicooting" potatoes is when you dig down through the mulch and surface soil to find a few potatoes, and pull them out, without disturbing the whole plant too much. The roots left in the soil will continue to form potatoes, and you can do your main harvest in a few months when the tops have dried off and died back. Early harvested potatoes don't keep well, their skins are too delicate.



Above: these pinkeyes are still growing. If you pull the whole plant too early you're sacrificing future kilos of spuds. Just wiggle your hand in and steal a few for delicious eating if you can't wait.

Changing their opinions.

Jo in Bellerive has created an amazingly productive garden by revitalising several existing areas and installing raised beds. Cleaning out impoverished soil and gravel, topping up with compost-enriched soil, and planting according to the micro climate has helped. But most of all Jo's enthusiasm and attention has created a thrilling harvest which is making her family revise their pessimistic opinions! She even has a thriving young avocado tree.

fimby fresh news

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Workshops and activities

FIMBY Summer Garden Tour

Sat 29th January, Free for members

We're trying this one again, in quieter times! Feel free to join us for all or part of the tour. Please RSVP if you're coming for lunch.

10.10 am Christina's @ 20 Wellesley St South Hobart t 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.

11.15 am Pete's Patch at the Botanical Gardens. Just for a sticky beak at what's growing there.

12 noon 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.

12.45 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.

Workshops coming up soon

Garden art and sculpture with FIMBY client and artist Allison Jones.

Ergonomics in the garden with FIMBY team member and physiotherapist Ben Turnbull.

Your ideas here! If you would like to offer a workshop, or have a subject you'd particularly like to learn about, let us know.

