

Warm House Good Food project

Over the last few months FIMBY has been part of the Warm House Good Food project in partnership with Sustainable Living Tasmania. The project works with people with intellectual and physical disabilities living independently.

FIMBY's role is to work with about 20 participants to plant vegetable gardens and have several mentoring visits after the planting to make sure things are growing well. The majority of the garden beds are raised beds made from salvaged materials to keep costs down as the funding provided to set up each garden is quite modest.

Juliet and her sister Ingrid (another gardener and trained special needs teacher) have been working together visiting participants and building their gardens. A couple of FIMBY regular workers have also been assisting, including Andy who has volunteered his time making some of the garden beds and carting soil to fill them.

Everyone is enjoying the project and participants are very happy with their new garden beds.

Didn't we have a lovely time . . .

Our inaugural FIMBY garden tour in late January was a great day, enjoyed by about 22 of our intrepid customers and guests.

It was a beautiful day (we had lunch on the way) and explored five very different FIMBY gardens, all established or refurbished in the last year.

Our hosts at each garden shared their successes, challenges and plans for the future, and we all had the chance to ask lots of questions and pick up tips and ideas from each other.

The day was also a great chance for our FIMBY people to meet each other, and talk to other people who are happy to share garden stories.

Our next tour will probably be in May, looking at Autumn and winter plantings, and we'll focus on the Kingston / Channel area. Let us know soon if you'd like to host a horde of curious and happy FIMBY folks at your place!



Announcing the FIMBY Network

From the beginning of April we are launching our new "FIMBY Network" for people who already have a garden and would like to share with and learn from other gardeners. Membership of the network is by subscription, costing \$160 per year.

Members receive our monthly newsletter featuring tips, reminders, planting guide and harvest notes, and more. Members will also receive invitations and discount rates for our garden tours, workshops, pickling parties (see our zucchini pickles above!) and seasonal feasts.

Members will also be given a password to log onto our online forum where they can post notices for other network members about produce swapping, tool sharing, trouble shooting and success stories!

Our Garden Craft program participants receive free membership of the FIMBY Network for their first year. Contact us to subscribe or find out more.



Harvest notes

Beans that have hidden and grown too large and tough for fresh eating can be left on the vine to dry, then podded like peas. The dry seeds can be cooked and used like cannellini beans. If you've grown borlotti's especially, harvest them as soon as the pods are dry and papery. After harvest, cut the vines off at the ground, leaving the roots to rot in place.

Potatoes are probably mostly dug by now, just so you can use the garden space. Don't wash your potatoes before storage, just brush off any excessive dirt, and make sure they are dry, then store in a strong paper bag in a cool, dark, dry place.

Carrots and **beetroot** can be left in the ground to keep growing until you're ready to eat them. They can become woody later in winter, so pick and test a couple every so often.

Tomatoes can be left in the ground until the first frosts. Then, if you have green tomatoes on the vine, you can pull the whole plant up by the roots, and hang it up in a sheltered place. The green tomatoes will continue to slowly ripen using the nutrients stored in the vine itself.

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HARVEST



fimby fresh news
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Welcome back!

We've had a busy and delightful summer helping people tend to their riotously productive veggie patches! We plan to produce this newsletter monthly from now on as part of our newly launched "FIMBY Network". See over for details.

Planting guide for April

April is a time when the summer crops are starting to look decidedly tatty as their production winds down. Many crops such as zucchini and cucumber are succumbing to heavy mildew attack, and sweet corn is pretty much finished.

As these summer crops finish it's a chance to clean out those garden beds, rake up any mulch and put it all on the compost. DON'T compost old tomato vines however, as they can carry disease.

Lime your newly cleared beds if you'll be planting alliums (leeks or garlic), spinach or peas next. A light cultivation can be helpful if the soil moisture content is just right (not too dry, not too wet).

Brassicas can go in as sturdy seedlings. This family includes broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kohlrabi, kale. Give them plenty of space, they get pretty big!

Leeks and **spring onions** can both go in now. We sow these in polystyrene boxes first, then transplant them out when they're big enough to handle.

Garlic cloves can be planted towards the end of April, and through May and June. If you select the biggest cloves to plant, you'll get bigger heads to harvest.

Broad beans and **peas** can be sown now as a winter growing green manure crop. They'll flower and bear crops in Spring, and enrich the soil in the meantime.

Roots such as **swede**, **turnip** and **radish** will still germinate well. If you have raised beds and a warm spot you can also try sowing **carrots** and **beetroot**.

Silverbeet or **rainbow chard** seedlings put in now should grow well before the really cold months, and of course don't forget the favourite winter green – **English spinach**. Sow seed directly, don't transplant seedlings or they'll bolt.

More new FIMBY sprouts

The FIMBY fertility magic continues with more new sprouts to announce!

CONGRATULATIONS to our customers who have had babies in the last several months:

Sue and Peter	son Richard
Yvette and Stew	daughter Stephanie
Jacky and Rodney	daughter Isabella

"When do I harvest my pumpkins?"

You've planted, fed and watered them, watched them grow, now when do you pick your pumpkins?

If you want to harvest pumpkins with the best keeping qualities, you need to leave them on the vine as long as possible, but don't expose them to frosts. While your pumpkin vine still has green healthy leaves, the pumpkin fruit will still be drawing nutrients from the plant. Once the vine dies back and the stalk of the pumpkin starts to wither or go woody, it's time to pick.

Always use secateurs (or loppers!) to cut the stem at least 10cm away from the fruit. You can leave up to a metre of vine attached to the pumpkin and then cut it shorter when it's really dried out.

Cure the pumpkins by leaving them in a sheltered spot for a week or so, then store in a cool dry place. Many varieties with hard skins will keep well for a year. Any fruit with skin blemishes or scratches are prone to fungus attack, so send them straight to the kitchen.



There's a whole lotta eatin' in this whopper from David's garden. His secret? Alpaca poo compost!

