



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –October 1, 2013
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Charlotte) The fall raspberry harvest has peaked and is slowing down. Two consecutive cold nights about 10 days ago drastically lessened SWD pressure to a more manageable level. We have continued a frequent harvest schedule to stay on top of the berry ripening and to minimize the infestation. Looking forward to frost.

(W. Rutland) For the first time the garlic did not perform as well as other years. I think 5 weeks of constant rain then 8 to 10 days of 90+ heat coupled with obscene amounts of manure is not a great combo. We will use a bit less manure and get back to better growing. It was a super hot pepper year and planting peas late this spring yielded great crops. Second year that Columbus and Cascade hops had super yields while the Goldings and Fuggle vines performed poorly. Seems on our ground the European varieties perform sub-par to the American varieties. Time to wrap it up for another year, with winter rye and an experimental cover cropping of red and white clover in separate fields; not sure why except the contrast should be pretty.

(Rochester) The cooler nights have slowed the pace of SWD damage, enabling us to pick fall raspberries and blackberries ahead of being spoiled. We would not be comfortable selling them to stores but at the farm we can tell customers they must be refrigerated and that in any case raspberries are fragile and should be consumed or processed quickly, which everyone understands. Any fruit with signs of early infestation goes into the freezer and ends up as jam.

(Williston) Sweet corn and blueberries now done. Lots of fall raspberries. Small green pumpkins, hope they get a little more size and start turning orange in the next week or two.

(New Haven) We are still in summer mode; tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, zukes, cukes, sweet corn all doing well. Pumpkins and winter squash doing well thanks to weather. Cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage and sprouts all on target. Bug pressure has been heavy but Pyganic is keeping them in check.

(Plainfield NH) Just trying to get stuff harvested before the killing frost. Deliveries, harvest and wash taking all day and the crew is graciously working 12 hour days 6 days a week. Still picking corn and tomatoes from the fields, greenhouse cukes as the ones in the field are essentially not doing anything because of DM and low light and temps. Still trying to catch up on field clean-up and potato harvest, doing a little raspberry pruning of summer canes and picking fall raspberries. A small spray program coupled with keeping the plants picked pretty clean is providing marketable fruit. We know SWD are there because of the traps, and overripe fruit on the ground have plenty of larvae in them. I think PYO would be a harder nut to crack. Corn is hit with Northern Corn Leaf Blight as we have morning fogs. Cameo is more susceptible to the blight than Providence or Montauk, although tip fill not great in Cameo, the sugars are still high.

(Monkton) We are near the end of the berry season. After losing the last two weeks of blueberry season last year to SWD I maintained a tight spray schedule and have avoided it in the fall raspberries, blackberries and ever-bearing strawberries. We only see an occasional overripe missed berry that exhibits the stained raspberry core. Except for corn and early strawberry loses, it has been an exceptional growing year. The size of produce is much larger than normal, thanks to timely rains all summer. The take-away is that even though we have our produce on drip irrigation, we just haven't kept them wet enough, and that is especially true for blueberries. Harvesting the last of the winter squash this week and our huge pumpkin crop is cut. We managed to avoid the frost so still harvesting everything but cukes.

(Williston) Season is winding down with one frost the beginning of September and spotty lighter frosts. Still harvesting perennial herbs and some annuals. Kept last batch of basil going by covering with remay during the cool evenings and no sign frost damage or downy mildew so far. Hoop house is planted to winter crops of kale, chard, cilantro, scallions and spinach. Had hornworm in tomatoes in late August and sprayed with Dipel but did not see a mass kill. Garlic crop was not as good as last year; cloves were smaller and yields were down but managed to get decent seed for this fall. Had some problems with leafhopper and whitefly this summer; kept in check with Pyganic 5.0. I purchased a Dramm B-4 backpack sprayer (electric) and I love it! It is light, easy to operate and gives great spray coverage. Great company to work with for and troubleshooting. Purchased a Rainflo mini-layer which cut my weeding in half. It forms a raised bed, lays down drip tape and lays plastic all in one pass. I spread straw between the rows and had great weed control along with all the other benefits like a clean product with no mud splash. I also put down landscape fabric in my perennial beds which decrease weed problems. Cover crop of pea/oat/vetch is growing great with warm weather. Farmers' market crowds are down but I'm still doing okay. Holding off till mid-Oct. to plant garlic with warm/dry weather. Overall an okay year especially with hoophouse in the mix.

(Underhill) Tomato plants in our main house are barely hanging on with one or two wholesale orders still ripening on the vines. We used a little nighttime heat when we had 2 nights in the 20's. We won't be doing that again! \$\$\$\$. This was a good year for organic high-tunnel tomatoes and other covered crops; basil, peppers, cukes, etc. Outdoor production was way down, however it was mostly due to the (new-to-us) organic varieties of squash and cukes we were trying for the first time. Those organic crops had low production in all beds and they shut down hard during rain periods and withered and stopped production a good month earlier than what we were used to. We'll go back to our old varieties. We have begun seeding some beds for the winter-greens and now we have to irrigate because of this glorious fall harvest weather. Our late season organic #1 tomato prices are all over the place. Some buyers want us to reduce our prices to the lowest prices for the year, and other buyers are willing to pay top-dollar again for our beauties. Are other growers in northern Vermont still supplying good #1 tomatoes? We grew heirloom organic tomatoes in buckets this year for the first time (in another tomato house). They were mostly all slow to start and took forever to reach maturity. However, now we have some plants loaded with big beautiful heirlooms - they are not quite ripe, so we are moving them (one advantage of growing in buckets) to a semi-heated area; they are still worth \$3.50 pound wholesale.

(Dummerston) Still no frost but the warm weather crops are looking tired; a few eggplants and peppers and cherry tomatoes hanging on. Fall spinach didn't germinate very well, seems to be a damping off problem. I may try transplanting more of it next year. Have a good crop of winter squash and pumpkins. Storage carrots and parsnips look great in the field. Getting ready to do some sub-soiling.

(Royalton) The bush beans desperately planted in the middle of July yielded an incredible bounty: Italian Flat, Purple and Yellow. I sold them all at a premium. The okra is full bore, the Delicata I planted as foundering seedlings in August are all doing well. Harvested the Mongolian Sunflowers; huge, yellow flowers with seeds that are over a half an inch long. The Calypso and Rattlesnake dry beans are all harvested and drying in the hoop house. Still harvesting field tomatoes, and the fall spinach, beets, and lettuce are producing well. Gilfeather turnips are sizing up; will most likely put a low tunnel over them. Fall brassicas are thriving and pest free. The season has definitely been a challenging one, but fall is proving to be bountiful.

(Burlington) Nice to have a bit of sun and cheer to balance out the dreary spring and early summer. Makes me hope that our lagging sweet potatoes and replanted fall brassicas may actually make it. Fall brassicas are looking better than recent years, due to in part to low Swede midge damage. We ran an organic broccoli spray trial on Swede midge with all sorts of treatments and replications, only to find that our pressure was way below average. Great news for the CSA members and pocketbook this year, but not much use for research. Probably our rotation distance from last year (nearly 1 mile) made the difference. The smaller scale Quebec growers are using white poly mulch and growing nearly all of their brassicas under exclusionary insect netting to avoid the Swede midge. Seems like it is working for them; these are CSA growers with up to about 1.5 acres in brassicas annually. "Expensive, but reliable" is how one grower described it. I hear that Swede midge has made it up the Winooski river valley to Richmond; the rest of you should keep an eye out for blind seedlings and multi-branched plants, especially in broccoli, but also funky morphology in kale, kohlrabi, and Brussels sprouts.

(Argyle NY) This has been a tough year; from June 1 to July 10 we had 23.5 inches of rain. The air spaces in the soil filled with water, and oxygen was not available to plant roots; for a time I could smell the anaerobic condition a few inches down, even on well drained ground with drain tile installed. Long season crops like squash and onions had losses of 50 to 100% below average. Lots of disease and weed issues. Fall crops were hard to establish. From other growers I know that winter markets will be in short supply of some storage crops. Fall greens are growing well. Tomatoes still productive in high tunnel; just a touch of late blight. We tried establishing rye/vetch cover in with the fall lettuce; broadcast and cultivated mid-September. Cover is up, growing with the lettuce. The trick is to do it late enough so rye does not compete with lettuce.

(Hampton NY) The last planted sweet corn field started producing last week and we should have corn for another 2 weeks. Frost hit most things not covered and it has been cold enough that peppers are covered every night. Collard greens are getting sweeter with the cold temps and Kale is still producing well. Tomatoes in the field are falling to Septoria and Anthracnose. Rye is being put down and landscape clothe is being rolled up this fall to help reduce insect populations that have been overwintering under it. Makes for more work in spring but I am hoping it will help. Starting to look through seed catalogs for next spring.

(Weare NH) Toms and eggplants still putting out from the tunnel. Transplanting spinach, lettuce, arugula and chard into tunnel where cukes taken out. Carrots and onions are dug. Beets coming out as needed, will start digging leeks soon. Deer enjoying lettuce and kale in field. Still field harvesting peppers, celery, broccoli, kale and lettuce. Seeded carrots and scallions for spring harvest.

(Salisbury NH) Running out of time and daylight to get chores done. We have another hoop house to install before the snow flies; will finally have one for heat loving plants and one we can keep cool for spinach, lettuce, etc. Grafted tomatoes this year (first time for us) are great; up to the ceiling of the hoop house. Loaded with fruit and still have lots of green tomatoes at this point. No heat so we will be at the mercy of weather. Peppers and eggplants made a good recovery. Winter squashes were terrible this year; got planted late because of wet weather. Might get last broccoli planting to come before weather turns. Customers at the farm stand have been buying more. Rented an excavator to finally take care of drainage issues for hoop house area. String beans under perforated plastic planted 7/25 producing. Peas should be ready soon. Not a bad year sales-wise, though weather was a killer. Spinach, lettuce, chard, etc. planted in hoop house should take us out for another 3 weeks.

(Argyle NY) Prepping, seeding and transplanting into three Rimol 34 x 144 high tunnels for winter production. Kale, escarole and Swiss chard ready to transplant and the first weekly succession of the Salanova lettuces; we'll track their performance all winter. They performed great last winter on a 6"x6" pattern and were super winter hardy in zone 4. Have many crops to harvest and either get in the root cellar (cabbage, beets, potatoes, carrots, kohlrabi, turnips) or cure (sweet potatoes, winter squash). Our onion crop was disappointing but other fall crops are looking great. We are trialing paper mulch on some fall kale. Strawberry plugs (Chandler, plus some trials) all planted for annual production; garlic is next. Tomatoes are still producing well after a slight late blight issue. We are using a new automatic disk filter/ and fertilizer injector for our pond water drip irrigation; it is working well. Heavy apple crop; some firsts for markets which customers love since organic apples are hard to find in the East. Markets still busy and we are interviewing for winter interns.

(Fairfax) Beautiful weather and great crops. Can't ask for much more. Slogging through and keeping at it during the summer sure has paid off. Wholesale prices just continue to rise. There doesn't seem to be large supplies of vegetables out there. Interesting note in American Vegetable Grower: California is having its usual problems with labor, and they talked about how growers are finally offering more money to keep workers. So instead of the usual \$8/hr. they are up to 10 and 11. They are now offering bonuses for workers that stay the whole season, something we have been doing for 15 years. The ag. industry is now competing with better paying jobs in Mexico! When I read between the lines it means increased wages for agricultural workers and increased pricing of product. Two things that need to happen.

(Little Compton RI) With help from our extension agent we got the lowdown on what has been eating our Swiss chard and beets the last few years. Hawaiian beet webworms, *Spoladea recurvalis*, which are native to North America and sometimes build up to large numbers. The moths flying now will lay eggs and the larvae will probably cause a lot of damage this fall feeding on spinach, beets, Swiss chard and edible amaranth. The caterpillars also feed on lambs quarter and pigweed. We have also seen them flight around peppers but can't tell the difference between CEW and them. They also love the new mustard seed some folks are using to gas away various soil pathogens. We will spray with Dipel to get the numbers down to avoid problems for next year. We will plant Swiss chard and beet far away as possible. Other than that we are ahead, for once, in getting fall crops in: 5 acres of broccoli, Brussels and cauliflower finally coming in well. Amen; a lot to make up for July losses due to June rains.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC – Ann Hazelrigg

Lots of foliar pathogens, including *Cercospora* on beets (round purplish spots), *Alternaria* on brassicas (target shaped spots with black spores). Leafspot diseases build up in the fall since dews and fogs are more prevalent. Be sure when finished with one planting of a crop to till it under so it does not provide more inoculum for the next planting coming up.

Potatoes: Seeing some scab on potatoes and beets. This soil borne disease causes corky raised or sometimes sunken lesions. The second link is an interesting discussion on how difficult/elusive control can be sometimes.

http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Potato_Scab.htm

<http://extension.psu.edu/plants/vegetable-fruit/news/2012/some-thoughts-on-common-potato-scab>

Never wash potatoes after harvest according to Dr. Steve Johnson, potato pathologist in Maine. This just drives bacteria into skin. He said if you absolutely have to wash, do it after 5-10 days so the skins can suberize more. Leaving potatoes out in the field after harvest hit by rain will elicit the same problem.

Celeriac: *Fusarium* yellow diagnosed in one bulb. If you see dieback in the upper part of the plant and the roots look fine, cut the bulb crosswise. If you see a brown distinct ring around the bulb, a bit in from the 'bark' this is most likely *Fusarium*. This can be common in celeriac and is a soil borne disease. Be sure to not rotate with solanaceous family plants, peas or squash.

Also saw *Cercospora* leaf spot causing distinct leaf spots on celeriac foliage.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/00-093.htm>

I have NOT seen celeriac bulb rot this summer, but have in previous years. May be more prevalent in dry years? It is typically due to calcium deficiency followed by soft rotting bacteria. The whole plant seems to turn to mush.

<http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2823&q=377614>

Strawberries: Seeing black root rot on some plantings. This is a combination of a lot of different problems/pathogens including Phytophthora which causes red stele disease. Be sure to dig up entire plants to look at the root systems if you are seeing dieback in the tops. I suspect some of the worst infected plants will not overwinter well due to lots of infection during the really wet part of the summer. When looking at infected roots, if you can strip away the outer part of the root and a red/brown center is left, that is red stele.

http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/3000/pdf/HYG_3028_08.pdf

Tomatoes: Have not heard of a lot of late blight lately, but it is out there. Lots of leaf mold present in high tunnels. Yellow discoloration on the upper side of the leaf, with brown velvety spores on the undersides. Management is decreasing humidity (hard this time of year due to lower night temps and condensation) and use of resistant cultivars.

http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/vista/pdf_pubs/941.pdf

ADIOS FROM CHRIS HILLIER

Greetings from your friendly Johnny's sales rep! I wanted to let you all know I've decided to resign from Johnny's. I've been the sales rep for the Northeast for the past 6 years – it's been wonderful to work with all of you, to meet you, see your farms, and to learn what you need to make your businesses successful. Thanks for making my time at Johnny's so enjoyable. Cheers to all of you for creating such a strong local ag. movement. I'm proud to have been a small part of that. Keep up the good work! Thanks, Chris.