



**Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – January 10, 2024**  
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<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

## **2024 VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING**

This event is on Tuesday January 30 at the DoubleTree Hotel in S. Burlington. The agenda includes a dozen presenters and is focused on crop production. We have 30 trade show exhibitors registered so far. To view the program, exhibitors, and registration details please visit [go.uvm.edu/vvbga24](https://go.uvm.edu/vvbga24). Pre-registration closes on January 26.

Thanks to our 7 sponsors who help keep the annual meeting fees low: Farm Credit East, Harnois Greenhouses, High Mowing Seeds, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, Rimol Greenhouse Systems, Vermont Compost Company, Vermont Economic Development Authority, and the Vermont Produce Program.

## **VVBGA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

To join or renew go to <https://vvbga.org/user/register> and log in to your VVBGA account or create an account. VVBGA member dues are \$70 per farm, \$80 after January 31. If this payment poses a barrier to participation, a lower payment can be selected, no questions asked.

Commercial membership in the VVBGA is \$100 per company or organization, per year. Go to: <https://vvbga.org/commercial-membership>

So far, 163 farms have renewed their membership for 2024. That's 41% of last year's members. We have 42 commercial members so far. A total of 27 donations have been made to the VVBGA research and extension fund ranging from \$10 to \$300 and totaling \$1870. Thank you!

## **VVBGA and UVM EXTENSION WINTER GROWER WEBINARS**

Wednesdays, noon-1:00 on Zoom. January 10 - April 17.  
For complete list go to <https://go.uvm.edu/webinars24>

Register once for access to any or all of the webinars:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctd-usrj4uEtBY5S2391huNJOoQ7r2Zdkg>

**January 10. Winter tunnel growing: lessons learned.** Farmers share evolving practices for winter production, including varieties, planting dates, and cultural practices. Speakers: Christa Alexander (Jericho Settlers Farm), Andy Jones (Intervale Community Farm), Sayer Palmer (Open Woods Farm, NH), James Donegan (Trillium Hill Farm). Hosted by Becky Maden.

**January 17. What new tool/equipment/ device are you excited about this year?** Casey Steinberg from Old Friends Farm in MA will share some of their favorite tools for efficiency. Diane Abruzzini and Christa Alexander from Jericho Settlers Farm will describe a high tunnel gantry system they co-developed. Trevor Hardy from Brookdale Fruit Farm will discuss stone buriers and direct seeders thru plastic. Hosted by Andy Chamberlin who will also share photos of new equipment.

**January 24. Sourcing and selling pollinator plants.** Commercial growers and plant sellers discuss ideas around defining plants as “native” and “pollinator friendly.” We will talk about how to ensure transparency for pollinator safe products for our customers and how to know if varieties you source are not only visually attractive to pollinators, but also provide essential pollinator food resources, pollen and nectar. Speakers: Sarah Salatino, Spencer Hardy. Hosted by Laura Johnson.

## **NEW ENGLAND CROP MANAGEMENT GUIDES**

Vegetable Management Guide. <https://nevegetable.org/>

Small Fruit Management Guide. <https://ag.umass.edu/fruit/ne-small-fruit-management-guide>

Updated Strawberry Production Guide. <https://scholars.unh.edu/extension/1670/>

Tree Fruit Management Guide. <https://netreefruit.org/>

Floriculture Management Guide. <https://greenhouseguide.cahnr.uconn.edu/> (older, free).  
<https://www.negreenhouse.org/pest-guides.html> (\$43)

## **NEW GRANT PROGRAM FOR VERMONT PRODUCE FARMS**

The new Meat and Produce Agriculture Development Grants program will make awards to farms between \$35,000 and \$300,000, with no match requirement. Applications close on February 26, 2024. This one-time funding from the State totals \$1.6 million. Eligible operations must be registered and operate in Vermont and conduct or be expanding into produce production or processing. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, infrastructure improvements, equipment and material upgrades, safety and quality improvements, staff and management training, and implementing improved operations management. For details see <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agriculture-development-grants#MeatProduce>

## **PROTECTING GREENHOUSES AND TUNNELS FROM STORMS**

<https://ag.umass.edu/greenhouse-floriculture/fact-sheets/reducing-storm-damage-to-your-greenhouses>

<https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/preparing-your-greenhouses-for-hurricane>

<https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/PreventGreenhouseCollapse.html>

## HIGH TUNNEL CONSTRUCTION VIDEOS

A 6-part video series covering the intricacies of greenhouse or high tunnel construction. developed by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Filmed in collaboration with experts from academia, business, and government, these videos provide a complete guide to greenhouse construction, including best practices, tips and tricks, and the correct order of events to create a functional and lasting greenhouse.

<https://extension.unh.edu/resource/constructing-greenhouse-or-high-tunnel-video>

## HIGH TUNNEL SOIL TESTING

This fact sheet explains what type of test to use and how to sample properly.

<https://www.uvm.edu/~htunnel/factsheets/SoilSamplingHighTunnelsBeckyMaden.pdf>

For established high tunnels growing in the ground we recommend using the U. Maine Soil Test Lab's Long Term Combined High Tunnel Package for \$30 per sample. This includes the Basic High Tunnel Test PLUS Saturated Media Extract for all major and micronutrients. Results show both season-long nutrient availability and short-term nutrient intensity.

## CHANGES IN MINIMUM TEMPERATURE ZONES FOR VERMONT

USDA recently issued an updated map of plant hardiness zones. What changed in Vermont? See: [https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Vermont\\_New\\_Plant\\_Hardiness\\_Zones.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Vermont_New_Plant_Hardiness_Zones.pdf)

## CROP INSURANCE WEBINARS

**Crop Insurance. An Introduction for New England Vegetable and Berry Growers.** Jan.16, 10am-11am. Register at: [https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_nlC8JUAcQnGtoWgBRlvU8A#/registration](https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nlC8JUAcQnGtoWgBRlvU8A#/registration)

This workshop is for those with little to no prior experience with insurance and wondering what the options are and if they are right for your farm. Or for those looking for a refresher or updates. We will hear about Farm Service Agency's Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Risk Management Agency's Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro-Farm Revenue Protection Programs.

**Crop Insurance. Demystifying the How and Why Behind Each Program.** Jan. 18. 10am-noon. Register at: [https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ZibjxknoRCC76fZ8EKc40w#/registration](https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZibjxknoRCC76fZ8EKc40w#/registration)

A deeper dive into NAP, Whole-farm revenue protection, and Micro-farm revenue protection programs to help you decide which program is right for your farm. Regional experts from FSA and RMA will provide tips and tricks on how to be successful applying for coverage and getting a claim, including what records you need to keep and why. We will do our best to answer questions during a facilitated Q&A.

## **FRUIT GROWER WEBINARS**

<https://ag.umass.edu/fruit/news-events/northeast-extension-fruit-consortium>

Jan. 31. Strawberry Breeding and Cultivar Update. Dr. Beatrice Amyotte, Agriculture Canada

March 6. Mass Trapping for Japanese Beetle. Dr. Jaime Pinero, UMass

March 13. How to Effectively Engage with the Press. Dr. Jessica McBride, UConn

## **GROWER SURVEYS**

Research and Extension folks seek your input to guide their work!

Strawberry production survey. [https://unh.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cFih3kdqJUHSawK](https://unh.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cFih3kdqJUHSawK)

Heirloom tomato survey. [https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6zKLM2NddBQigOG](https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zKLM2NddBQigOG)