



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – November 5, 2014  
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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster West) Ended our last farmers' market last week and had a record day of sales. This extended mild weather sure has made things a bit easier and stuff keeps on growing! Two pound leeks and huge yields on late carrots and beets sweeten up an unusual year. Cutting Chinese cabbage from tunnels and just finished up picking Raspberries from tunnels as well. Cover crops are thick and lush with oat and pea fields over 3 feet tall. Winter squash selling steady, usual shrinkage in the soft rind varieties even after a peroxide wash at harvest time, although I think better than last year. Production note, we tried different color plastic on field onions and my early thought were that the reflective silver was holding back the growth, but by seasons end, the yields were about the same, maybe even better. Couldn't tell about the thrips, as we sprayed the entire field so had almost no damage anywhere. I wouldn't use silver on sweet early onions but no problems on late storage. Onions holding well with decent sales and bunched carrots and beets flying outer here! Just finished planting garlic now we can focus on greenhouse maintenance and reskinning some of them. Continuing on field drainage projects in anticipation of plowing up new fields for rotating crops. We have had a series of farm stand thefts that finally resulted (a bit late) in my installing a video camera with memory from which we actually identified the perps as well as catching them in the act just several days ago which resulted in the State Troopers going all out and nabbing them in their home. I urge people to use cameras to identify thefts and to report them as well.

(Plainfield VT) Another good PYO berry year. All of my blueberries, elderberries and raspberries were picked (thank you pickers!). I think the market here is bigger than what I can grow. It was great to have a year without SWD. My production was down about 20% from 2013, which was an exceptional year. I have given up on fall raspberries. Polana did the best overall, but the plants kept dying, and I thought I started with vigorous raspberry growth, my rows became almost empty. That fall raspberry patch is becoming a dig-your-own Echinacea patch. I am adding more summer raspberries. I have been spring side-dressing with pro-holly. I had some witches broom on the blueberries, and decided to mark the plants and cut it out, rather than remove the whole plant. I hope it won't come back. I dipped my clippers in chlorine solution, and sprayed the cut stems with the same solution.

(Weare NH) Still harvesting kale and some root crops. Field cleanup, amendment application and later this month, dormant cover crop seeding to be done. Tunnel planted with spinach, lettuce, kale, scallions and carrots.

(Newburyport MA) First SWD outbreak came with the warm temps of October 15 and 16. A lot of damage to late ever-bearing strawberries. But the flies were short-lived and we have nice berries to pick this first weekend in November. I really like Evie 2 for nice large, late fruit with good flavor. Fields still filled with beautiful greens and root crops. Greenhouse celery, herbs and chard look great. Swiss chard cv. 'Celebration' still looks good in the field with no leaf diseases all season. Soil conditions perfect for planting winter cover crops. Winter CSA and farmers' market sales a little weak.

(Rochester) The fall raspberry season came to a close on Columbus Day weekend with night of 23° F. While it is a shame to see developing fruit destroyed, one can't complain about a berry harvest that extends ten days into October. And, we were happy to switch out of picking mode, move onto other tasks, and take an actual day off.

(Richmond) We enjoyed 2 months of PYO fall raspberries, Aug. 16 to Oct. 15. We saw a little SWD in early Sept but it never over took our patch like last year. I hope others had the same success. We did not use any spray, just tried to keep berries picked by PYO customers and ourselves. We plan to be back next year.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Overwintering the farm; witloof and butternut are the only thing left in storage. Some grasshopper problem in the greenhouse. They chew on overwintering green onions. Time for break and time to see what I did right or wrong during the past season.

(Little Compton RI) Lots of grub issues for the first time in 30 years on fall root crops: watermelon radish, diakon, Hakkurie turnip, etc. It must be a fly of some sort that lay their eggs mid~late September. Unmarketable wholesale and the CSA will just have to put up with the cosmetic issues. Wondering if it will be a yearly thing going forward. Getting big money for our wholesale broccoli and cauliflower. I finally learned my lesson getting cheap broccoli and cauliflower seed; it doesn't pay. I found some Winterbor kale buried in the wrong seed box and have been printing money with it since October. When all the kale seed disappeared we were forced to try Ripbor. We were disappointed with its longevity as a kale leaf producer and even had some some self-destruct in the summer heat. Can't wait to get back to the Winterbor cultivars again. Tried some new stuff from Territorial Seed. They look OK but they are all variations on Red Russian Kale and as a result have limited crowd appeal. Three plantings of Delicata are now a thing we do each yea; it helps us deal with the short shelf life. Wish the NOP would allow Biotello; we are using it on some conventional crops and it is worth every penny. I just hate pulling gobs of plastic to put in landfills!

(Plainfield NH) Temperate weather is enabling us to do fall clean up and making it easier to wash and pack out root crops. Sales are still strong. Finished tying raspberries and tipping ends, need to do some work on the trellis structure. Hopefully get some time in the blueberries to do some pruning and detail work. We are vigilant but having difficulty eradicating a few tenacious buckthorns from the blueberries and some borage that escaped a nearby cottage garden which is freely propagating itself to nuisance levels in the blueberries as well. Also need to spot spray some enlarging patches of quackgrass in the blueberries and rhubarb before we mulch. I am spending a great deal of time doing annual maintenance on the machinery before we store it. Rolling up sides on high tunnels, soil sampling, and trying to get as much valuable machinery under cover for the winter as possible. Next big project is mulching strawberries, but currently berries are showing no signs of heading into dormancy. Only 2 nights into the high 20's so far this fall.

(South Burlington/Shelburne) This fall, and especially October, has been unseasonably warm, which means more growth than we normally see for our winter greenhouse crops. That is fine with me, it means more early harvesting, and therefore more revenue early on. I am still stockpiling the majority of the crop for December/January/February harvesting, but getting off the critical lower leaves so I capture that revenue and keep the plants in good health. I have not covered the winter crops at all yet. I am using just one layer of Covertan-30, and only covering the spinach when it gets below 15 degrees. My covers are higher up than most since I grow tall crops (full sized kale, chard, collards) I have 3-foot tall covers for all my crops. Even in last year's coldest temps, the one layer of tall covers served my crops just fine. I still think we are collectively 'over-covering' but this is just based on my experience and my experimenting. I was so pleasantly surprised by the way the crops tolerated the extreme cold last year. As we start to actually get some cold temperatures, I will 'wean' the crops off the warm air by hardening them off for several weeks, meaning I will cover a little more actively so they can adjust to the cold temperatures, and then when they seem hardened, I will be less apt to cover so often.

I had heavy pressure from the imported cabbage moth this late summer/early fall, and had to pick off worms every other day. This is this first time I have had so many. I had absolutely no fall flea beetles or Swede midge, which I was expecting after last year. Happy to not have those pests, but the cabbage moths were intense. Instead of transplanting my Brassicas in mid-August, I potted them up to keep them out of the greenhouses for an extra 3 weeks. Not sure if this is what helped with the flea beetle/midge pressure, or if just was a low pressure year for those pests.

## FDA SESSION IN VERMONT ON FSMA REVISED RULES - NOV. 17

FDA Deputy Commissioner Mike Taylor and subject matter experts will be in Vermont to take part in a 'listening session' regarding the recent revisions to proposed rules that will guide implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The session will take place Nov. 17 from 9am to 1pm in the Chase Center at Vermont Law School in South Royalton, VT. It was arranged by the Vermont and Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture. FDA experts will provide an overview of each supplemental rule and then attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. The purpose of the session is to inform the public, producers, and processors about changes the FDA has made to the previously released rules since the closure of the initial comment periods. The revisions to the draft rules are based on the unprecedented level of comments and valuable input received from farmers and others directly affected by the rules. The FDA is accepting comments on the revised rules until December 15th, 2014.

## VVBGA WINTER MEETINGS: JAN. 20-21, LAKE MOREY INN

Mark your calendars, the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association will hold two days of meetings on Jan. 20 and 21. The all-day meeting on Jan. 20 will focus on post-harvest tools and practices, followed by the annual meeting on Jan. 21. These events will take place at the Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee VT. More information about these meetings and 2015 grower memberships will be available in about a month. Commercial memberships for 2015 are due by Dec. 1, 2014 in order to reserve exhibit space and/or an ad in the annual meeting brochure. For details see: [http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VV&BGA/2015\\_Commercial\\_Membership.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VV&BGA/2015_Commercial_Membership.pdf).

## TECHNICAL TIPS

From the blog of Chris Callahan, UVM Extension Agricultural Engineer: a 'How-To' fact sheet to install a low-cost do-it-yourself outside air exchange for vegetable coolers in cold weather: <http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/2014/11/02/simple-diy-outside-air-exchange/>.

From Joshua Falkner, UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture's Farming & Climate Change Coordinator: a plan for Low-Cost Sand Filters to let farmers use on-farm ponds to safely irrigate their crops <http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/resources/SandFilterHowTo.pdf>.