



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 16, 2015
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Tunbridge) Nice to have the heat, it got the cukes to size up. Planted coral peas on dry ground. Then it got really dry and I worried about them, then we got that last somewhat late frost and they looked yellow. Then it started raining. In the end we had the best coral pea harvest yet. Three weeks of picking them. The green arrow and early sugar snaps that went in during the dry spell did not germinate well. I did not plant as many as usual as I did not know if I would have enough pickers. Now we do not have as many peas as we usually do. Tough to face our pea buyers at market. We do have a lot of help this month which is interesting both in management, and what a farm can look like when everything is weeded in a timely manner. Transition time between jobs can take forever with a large crew. Everyone is waiting for the person who is looking for their water bottle etc. In a few weeks we will be bare bones again so we have been working on wood and trying to take care of other issues, like vehicles. Lettuce has been great, it loved the rain. Basil luckily went on the dry section so it looks great. Walla walla onions may be ready this weekend, earliest ever. We covered them in the beginning and it really moved them along. Fresh garlic is huge, and selling well. I like to try to move as much out fresh so that I don't have to bring it in the barn. I was worried because the garlic was in a wet area, but since we had a lot of help we kept on top of the weeds and it had nice air flow. Saw the first Sun Gold today, but I am sick to think of late blight around so early. I still have flashbacks to spotting it years ago about this time. What a disaster, let's hope we all make it through with our red tomatoes that we can then turn into the color green.

(New Boston NH) Despite a late start and generally feeling 2-3 weeks behind this season crops looks great. Weed pressure is lowest I can ever recall. While we are keeping up with cultivation the overall pressure seems extraordinarily low. Bumper crop of summer squash, zukes and cukes with our spring planting broccoli coming into it now. Lots of chard/kale we can't find market enough for. Winter squash and melons showing lots of fruit set. Hoping Regalia and Actinovate can fend off powdery mildew. Potatoes in flower, dug some for CSA and a few other markets. We'll probably hold off another week to dig for wholesale markets. Colorado potato beetles being held at bay and getting concerned about late blight conditions. Peppers and eggplants were looking pretty sad, just sort of squat bushy plants that have suddenly taken off.

(Barnet) We finished picking strawberries this week and are all breathing a collective sigh of relief. It was a good long season and fruit quality was high despite the wet weather. Now we have to dig our bird netting out of the tall, tall grass as we ended up not using it very much—light cedar wax wing pressure this year. Between the birds, the frosts, the weeds, the plants and the picking, the cost of producing berries sure adds up quick. At least they make people happy.

(Westminster West) We had a mini twister event last Saturday with a half acre of remay sucked hundreds of feet into a clear sky, shredding it and depositing it among the tall trees in the surrounding hills! We even managed to get a video of it. Crops are doing very well with just enough rain to keep things moving along. Garlic crop almost ready and size is quite large. Tunnel tomatoes coming in strong and no disease issues yet. Potatoes looking clean, CPB controlled well with Entrust and Pyganic combo. Keeping copper on onions and spuds, Running fertigation daily in all fields and crops really responding to it. Farmers market still steady sales wise and wholesale about the same as last year. Cover crops on next year's fields up although not as thick as I should have done. Trying to squeeze in a vacation in the NE Kingdom then home to get ready for the first VVGA summer party. Aug. 2, here in Westminster. I hope to see many of you there! Jazz band, BBQ and hay rides for the kids. Kick back, let's talk some shop and have some fun! Info and tickets at <https://vvbgasummerparty.eventbrite.com>.

(New Haven) After a slow start to the season, things are picking up! Cukes and summer squash are finally producing. Looking great and pickling cukes are prolific. Snow peas are stunted in height but producing well as are snaps. Beans are ready for harvest. The hot weather has been helpful all around. Flea beetle pressure has lessened and Brassicas are doing better. Broccoli is starting to produce. Ever bearing strawberry patch is taking a break from fruiting but lots of blossoms. Lettuce is bolting and slugs continue to be a problem. Tomatoes in the field look great with some red fruit already. Eggplant plants are sizing up with not much for bloom and no fruit yet. Second planting of beets that were direct sewn nearly all washed away. We seeded more in trays to transplant, which should also be helpful with the insane weeds this year. This is my first field report; hope I did it right!

(Charlotte) The blueberries are doing very well this year. We have seen the blueberry maggot fly this year. We are tilling up new fields this year for plantings of next year. Our pumpkins have done well in our back field but not so well in the front fields. Blackberries that we planted this spring are doing very well.

(Waterbury Center) Strawberry harvesting has finally wrapped up, and I would say the season was a good one. There was a heavy fruit set to begin with, and despite the heavy rains, we got some sun mixed in, especially during the weekends for PYO. Raspberries are going strong and seems like they also have a good fruit set, maybe just because of the year, or maybe due to

pruning heavier than I have in the past. Japanese beetles are starting to show up, but their numbers are still low. Pretty sure I've seen signs of SWD in strawberries and raspberries due to mushy fruit, but haven't positively ID'd any yet. Garlic is looking good also.

(Ange-Gardien, PQ) Have a lot of problems with crows and big fauna. Garlic look great and will be harvesting soon. Missed my fertilisation in my melons, I will see how my soil can help me up. Sweet potatoes look good and really enjoy heat. Building a new greenhouse with soil heating keeps me busy.

(Plainfield) Season seems to be straightening out. Finally able to work some of my wetter land. Irrigating again on the sandier ground. Prompt use of Entrust has controlled outbreaks of flea beetles, cucumber beetles, and potato bugs. Super Sugar Snap yielded well. Starting to pick cherry tomatoes and Asian eggplant from the greenhouses. Winter squash starting to run. Kale and chard selling, new plantings growing well.

(Burlington) CSA members are happy despite being a little short on cooking greens. Who knew you could run short on kale so early in the season? I guess that is the way of the Swede midge world. Looking back at our annual CSA survey results from 2001, kale has climbed from the 22nd to 11th in the popularity ranking in 2014. Did we all drive this, or was it the Foodies? Most crops doing well, we are now busy irrigating. Onion downy mildew has arrived as is usual for a wet year. Hoping we can stall long enough for a good crop of our yellow storage onions. Early mini onions, early yellow onions and sweet onions finishing off nicely. After a slow start, we had the longest duration strawberry season in 20 years, just finished yesterday. Same varieties don't make it past July 4th most years. We pulled the straw off a little later than usual due to April cold, but does that explain it?

(Westfield) Strawberries are on their last few days, the season was good despite too many rainy days. It looks like the combination of Regalia and Milstop works well for keeping the grey mold at bay. All the crops are enjoying the warmer and drier weather and the field vegetables are finally coming a week or two behind. Huge difference between crops: winter squashes are setting fruits while the watermelon are just starting to run.

(Proctorsville) The season has been tricky so far. Either all sun or all rain. Had to replant a few crops in the fields. Very bad basil year for us. With the help of our intern we have been able to stay on top of weeding. Crops are finally beginning to produce in numbers. Tomatoes in the high tunnel are fantastic! It's our first year trying the roller hook trellising system and so far we love it! Mesclun and lettuce greens in the HT aren't producing as well as we had hoped.

(Huntington) We've definitely seen our chemical and fertilizer bills spike this year. We totaled 15.9" between 5/29 and 7/2, and it was almost comical to go out and sidedress spinach, kale, and potatoes between semi-weekly 1.5" downpours. Nighttime lows finally reaching the 60's of late have been a blessing, as have skinny tires for all the spraying we've been doing in closed canopies. Nothing like constant rain to turn me into a paranoid nozzlehead. One thing I might be noticing is variable Cu tolerance between different onion varieties. No acute phytotoxicity in any, but 'Bridger' has shown less vigor than in the past, and less vigor than all the other varieties. For the first 6 weeks after transplanting, everything appeared to be growing as expected, but since commencing Cu sprays mid-June there has been a small but noticeable divergence. However, we have not seen any downy mildew or other foliar fungal disease, so even if it is mild Cu phytotoxicity it might be worth it. I'm thankful for patient wholesale buyers as we've dealt with the ups and downs of this so-far sub-par growing season. But if rainy 2015 follows rainy 2013's template we should get some nice GDDs to bulk up the storage crops; fingers crossed.

(Craftsbury) Had poor control of CPB with Entrust, even though worked pretty well in past years. Got good kill of CPB spot sprayed with low rate Pyganic and high rate stilet oil solution.

SWD UPDATE (adapted from UMass Extension Berry Notes)

Monitoring for SWD in MA and CT is now finding more consistent trap captures of SWD fruit flies, but in very low numbers. Both male and female SWD are being found in traps. Reports are also increasing in surrounding states. Growers of susceptible crops in VT should prepare. If you are going to apply exclusion netting, be sure the support structure is up ahead of time and the netting is applied and completely sealed before any fruit begin to ripen. If you confirm SWD at your farm with traps or the salt water test for fruit infestation, you should harvest frequently and thoroughly, promptly refrigerate fruit. Trellising raspberries and blueberries to hold heavy fruit laden canes up off the ground can create air space between the humid shady ground which SWD like and the fruit, lessening infestation levels. If you will implement a spray program (organic or conventional) make sure recommended materials are on hand and you can rotate among them as directed at intervals of no more than 7 days to avoid developing pesticide-resistant SWD. If a significant rainfall occurs after a spray application, the material may need to be reapplied. Once harvest begins you should conduct salt water tests regularly on your fruit to monitor for SWD infestation. Information on that test, netting options and efficacy, recommended insecticides, etc. can be found at: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/SWDInfo.html>

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC (Ann Hazelrigg)

Diseases are rampant due to the rainfall over the past few weeks. Some growers have had to replant some crops a few times due to damping off early in the season. If you need help with ID you can send a picture or a sample. <http://pss.uvm.edu/pd/pdc/>

Be sure to look at the UMASS veg notes for VT scouting results and more in-depth info:
https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/newsletters/july_9_2015_vegetable_notes_0.pdf

Here are some things that have come into the clinic recently:

Potato: Late blight - so far found in Hinesburg and Craftsbury. Scout your fields! Lesions are nickel sized and start higher in the plant since they “rain” out in storms. The leaf underside will show white sporulation under moist or humid conditions. It is such an aggressive pathogen, you need to keep tissue repeatedly covered with fungicides. (editor’s note: we were unable to get the company to sell EF400 into VT, hopefully we can trial it next year.) Continual reapplication is necessary due to all the unprotected new growth and the normal weathering and break down of the products. Also, if we get a heavy downpour of 1-2 inches, that is enough to wash off recently applied fungicides so reapplication is necessary. If the weather turns warm and dry, the disease will die down, but will pick back up when the weather conditions are conducive. Rain, fogs, dews and high humidity all are favorable conditions for the disease. Early blight also prevalent now. This fungus causes a bulls-eye spot, often with an advancing yellow margin, on the foliage and typically starts lower in the plant. Fusarium stem rot was diagnosed. This disease causes blackened stems and a meltdown of the plant. Can also look like black leg (bacterial). This is usually hit or miss in the field. Potato leaf hopper and 'hopper burn' is early this year. The insect blows in on storms and causes scorching on the leaf edges on the foliage of beans, potatoes and other crops. <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/potato-leafhopper>

Tomato: no reports of late blight. Please let us know/send a sample if you suspect it. Leaf spot diseases (Early blight and Septoria) should be picking up and starting on the lower foliage. These diseases can remain low in the plant or can move up through as the season progresses. It just depends on how much rain we get. Lots of calls about Mg deficiency in high tunnels-chlorosis between the leaf veins low in the plant. As long as it stays low, no worries. Also some concern from growers on physiological leaf curl or roll in tomato.

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/PNW616/PNW616.pdf>

I suspect Botrytis and leaf mold (yellow spot on upper leaf, velvety purple/brown spores on the undersides) will be a problem in poorly ventilated houses.

Basil-No downy mildew yet. Looks like nutritional disorder on the upper side of the leaf and looks dirty (spores) on the underside.

<http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/BasilDowny.html>

Fusarium wilt diagnosed in greenhouse basil. Lots of stem browning. See link for info and pictures. <http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-fusariumbasil/>

Also watch for four-lined plant bug damage. This sucking pest causes angular black leaf spots that look like a disease.

Cucurbits-While scouting we have seen squash vine borer adults in So. Burlington but no damage yet. Look for wilted plants and check for frass at the base of the stem.

http://www.extension.org/pages/65684/biology-and-management-of-squash-vine-borer-in-organic-farming-systems#.VZ_72fn1Zps

This weather (saturated soils) is perfect Phytophthora weather. This fungus-like organism has a motile spore that swims in water and is attracted to plant roots. If you notice a wilt or blackened canker in your peppers, cucurbits, beans and your soil is poorly drained or you noticed standing water this can be a huge problem. You need a multi-pronged approach to deal with this soil borne disease. http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Cucurbit_Phytoph.htm

Onions/Garlic-Downy mildew seen at Intervale.

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

Thrips and damage noted at the Hort Farm in So. Burlington. White rot of garlic diagnosed. Lots of dying plants and lots of black sclerotia (hardened overwintering fungal bodies) on the bulbs. Growers will move out of this field and go to new ground plus carefully examine all garlic that they use for seed. <http://plantclinic.cornell.edu/factsheets/garlicdiseases.pdf>

Lettuce- bottom rot (Rhizoctonia) common at one farm due to all the wet weather.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Organic strawberry production, vegetable equipment field day in Hudson Valley (European cultivators), growing greens short course, cover cropping, Pest ID, tunnel tomato workshops and more...mark your calendars. <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/?Page=meetlist.html>