



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 23, 2012  
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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Jericho) Thankful for the rain, not so thankful for the leaf hoppers. Lots of huge beautiful crops and not enough time to harvest it all. Loving the rye straw mulch that we produced this spring that is now keeping \*some\* of the weeds at bay. Great crew, great weather.

(Warren) We seem to have weathered the drought OK. Recent rain was appreciated. We have been overhead irrigating direct seeded crops fairly regularly but that seems to be a poor substitute for real rain. The crops on drip are another story. All of the light and warmth that comes with a drought coupled with 1-2 inches of water per week does some pretty great things to potatoes and onions. Harvesting Walla Walla right now and trying to sell a bumper crop of fennel. Bulk harvest of carrots and beets starts next week. Weekly sprays of Seacrop have made mildew on mesclun lettuce and alternaria on carrots nonexistent, two problems that have plagued us from the start. Cucumber beetles totally ruining GH cucumbers, always something.

(Westminster West) We had THE best strawberry year ever. Our small farm is in one of those cold spots so our berries come in 2-3 weeks later than others right around us. Our first pick was on 6/10 and last on 7/9. Though we need it, not a drop of rain on them as they ripened and were picked. We calculated 2700 lbs, that's a lot for us! We sold every one we picked and was difficult to keep up with demand and ripening rate in the heat waves we have had. The chipmunk population explosion, the grey fox and the raccoons were helping themselves to them too. Leafhopper have been out for a couple of weeks on most everything, especially eggplant. Three weeks ago I found some moths the size of a small sparrow in our tomato houses; turned out to be the tomato hornworm moths which I'd never seen in all these years. Well now we have a lot of hornworms to take care of. They seem to be early this year too. Tomatoes are ripening and growing well in the protected and watered hoop houses. The crops outside need rain. Started to renovate berries for next year. Garlic is early too and it is a beautiful crop. Good size, harvested on time, tastes good too!

(Cambridge) Battling cucumber beetles, potato leafhoppers on both potatoes and beans and awful, awful cabbage worms. I had tried direct seeding the winter squash under row covers which worked really well last year to beat the little stripey buggers but this year the warm conditions under the covers got the weeds off to a better start than the squash and they were swallowed up. Next year I may delay planting after knocking back weeds a few times. Am pulling garlic this week - looks pretty good. Onions are also very happy with the sunshine. Blueberries are thriving even with the dry conditions. Worst raspberry year I have ever had which is to say, there are none. I don't know if it was the funky weather in the spring but even the fall plants look sad.

(Plainfield NH) An inch of measureable rain here in the last 50 days. Every of irrigation pipe pressed into service. Being at the north end of a power pool on the Connecticut River is compounded by low flow in the river. Irrigation is keeping things alive but not growing well. What was a nice potato crop is turning up scabby potatoes for our inability to keep the hills wet while bulking. Meanwhile blueberry harvest is far advanced, we will be done 2 weeks early at this rate. Picked first melons last Thursday, also a record for earliness. Trying to renovate strawberries, but with proceeding caution because of lack of water. If there is an upside, lack of pathogen and pest pressure is low because of lack of southerly storms.

(Monkton) The rain last week brought some vigor back to the field. We were able to eke out some salad greens and spinach for market. Peppers and eggplants, which we got in late, are starting to flower. Japanese beetles on the kale and cabbage. Next year we'll try to get row cover on in time. Our garlic harvest was inspiring! 10-15 volunteers showed up and pulled and hung an estimated 750# in about 4 hours. We're thankful for their help, and looking forward to getting the garlic a little drier so we can start shipping it off.

(Woodbury) Still dry and wishing it would rain. Our irrigation system works in a crisis, but I have been reluctant to use it. Too much gravity around here between the plants and the pond to really move water around in a cost effective way. Winter squash looks great, good set of fruits so far, and health in the vines. Didn't get it as clean as I would have liked before the patch filled, but am doing my part to support a good food source for ground beetles. Unheated tomato houses coming on to keep output at current levels, main house slowing down. Markets still strong, but we are starting to see the good season for home gardeners leading to slower sales for us before home gardens get too weedy. Still selling plants at market to a receptive audience. TPB in the greenhouses having an impact on basil; in the field the row cover keeps them out of the picture. Potatoes are looking scabby; they are in our driest field and have been pretty thirsty. Some hopper burn as well. Been a great season so far on our boat.

(Shrewsbury) Our SWD traps hung toward the tops of the Blueberries seem to be attracting racoons, deer, or something that tears down the trap and large bunches of green berries. We lost a pint off bushes last night. This is the second trap attack in 10 days. The first pulled a different trap down and put large tooth holes in the side of the trap container and yellow sticky strip inside. Blueberry plants are loaded but heavy pressure from more robins and cedar waxwings than usual. And a new phenomenon - numerous chipmunks climbing into bushes.

(Keene NH) Our potatoes had the triple threat this year: Colorado potato beetles, three-line potato beetles, and now we got hit hard by the potato leafhopper. New potatoes look great but are small. Harvested a third of the garlic so far; huge heads look fantastic. Peas got mowed down earlier this season by woodchuck but came back and are quite productive now - good because all of the strawberries came in so early that they went to spring CSA and so the u-pick options for summer CSA have been more limited. We're hoping for rain; have one field with irrigation and watering seedings in by hand on the other two. Been trying to work Murphy's law by leaving all the windows of my car and farm truck open but so far no luck.

(Salisbury NH) Very dry. Thunderstorms left only 1/4" of rain. Pest pressure building. Trying to keep up with the weeds; lots were imported with both chicken manure and compost over the past few years. Field tomatoes coming like crazy finally; very good tasting. Hoping to avoid late blight so we can enjoy the harvest. We have been running out of mesclun mix and spinach running low due to bolting issues. Making some new raised beds to put in a shady area. Broccoli is forming some heads so maybe it won't all be a total loss due to heat. Peppers and eggplants low fruiting due to high temps. Have raised prices and people don't seem to comment. Some summer squash and zucchini had tiny root system when we pulled them up (as they weren't doing well), others have finally kicked in. We tried some of the Seeds from Italy (advertised in Growing for Market). At first the zucchini didn't look that appealing but the growth is nice; stays skinny even when it gets longer. We'll see if it sells because it looks different with stripes. Blueberries dried up too quickly and we got tired of fighting the cedar waxwings that got stuck in the nets (just draped over the bush). Fall raspberries looks nice so far but really need rain.

(Hampton NY) Survived the second wave of cucumbers beetles, now finding potato beetle larvae on eggplant. Picking and squishing seems to be keeping them under control for now. The squash beetle eggs I missed are hatching mostly in butternut. Powdery Mildew in the yellow squash, butternut, blue hubbard and pumpkins. Tomatoes just starting to ripen and selling well at roadside stand. Sales in general are picking. Having so many farmers' markets in the area has definitely taken its toll but it's all good.

## CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM FOR FARMS AND FOOD VENTURES

Revolutions <<http://threerevolutions.com>>, invites your participation. If you are a farmer or food entrepreneur with a good idea, visit [threerevolutions.com](http://threerevolutions.com) and start a campaign. Help get the word out through tweets, blogs, emails to your networks, newsletter articles, etc. Visit the site and back an entrepreneur. The projects are great, the bar is low (\$10 minimum, no account needed) and the rewards are enticing. There are four projects now and more on the way.

## TEST YOUR GARLIC SEED FOR NEMATODES

If you plan to sell garlic seed, it is strongly recommended that you test it for garlic bloat nematode, to avoid spreading it to other farms. You may also want to test any seed you purchase prior to planting it to reduce the risk of getting this pest. Several farms in VT have had 'bad' looking garlic test positive this year, while 'good' looking bulbs are OK. This emphasizes the need for rigorous culling of seed stock. The cost of analysis is \$40 per sample at Cornell, here is the link to fact sheet on the nematode and test order form with instructions. You may want to send two sets of samples, good and bad looking bulbs:

[http://blogs.cce.cornell.edu/cvp/files/2012/05/Garlic-Nematode-Info-Test-Form\\_rev4-Apr-2012.pdf](http://blogs.cce.cornell.edu/cvp/files/2012/05/Garlic-Nematode-Info-Test-Form_rev4-Apr-2012.pdf)

## UPDATE FROM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC – Ann Hazelrigg

Tomato. Leafspot diseases starting show up in the lower leaves. Larger bulls eye spots with advancing yellow margin are early blight caused by *Alternaria* and the smaller spots with gray centers are *Septoria*. How far they advance up the plant will depend on our weather and wetting periods. So far, we have been pretty dry, so they have not amounted to much this year. Control would be same for both. Suspected broad mite injury on a home garden tomato. These minute pests can cause severe russetting on peppers and tomatoes.

[http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/DiagnosticKeys/TomFrt/Broad\\_Tom.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/DiagnosticKeys/TomFrt/Broad_Tom.htm)

Blossom end rot showing up on first fruits in tomato.

[http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato\\_BlossRt.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_BlossRt.htm)

Check for spider mite injury in greenhouses after the hot weather. Plants will have an off color (bronzing). Mites will be easy to see on leaf undersides with a hand lens. Late blight-now reported across the lake in NY and just south of VT in MA. The warm dry weather is not conducive for the disease, so maybe we can hold it off until fall!

If you see plants suddenly wilt, check for bacterial canker. The disease can look like severe scorch on the leaves. Sometimes you will see long black cankers on the stem, but that does not seem so common. Cut open the stem of the tomato at the base so you peel off the "bark" of the stem and look for browning in the vascular system. If you see that, you can send to the PDC for confirmation. Be sure to cut the plant off at the soil line and get it out of the house. Watch neighboring plants for the symptoms and remove if necessary. Minimize pruning in the house, or be sure to sterilize knives between cuts. The bacteria are easily moved plant to plant in this way. [http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato\\_Bacterial.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_Bacterial.htm)

Onions. Downy mildew seen in the Rutland area. This fungus causes brown/purplish sporulation on the foliage and collapse of tissue. The grower thought it may have come from some plants he had overwintered in the field.

[http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Onions\\_Downy.htm](http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Onions_Downy.htm)

Onion leek moth damage found in the Burlington area. Look for "window paning" on the leaves. The pupae has netting around it. Check out pictures, and let us know if you are seeing this on your farm. <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/08-009.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS – more info: [www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html](http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html)

July 24, 3-6 pm. Integrating Oilseeds into Diversified Agriculture. Wood's Market Garden, Brandon, VT

July 26, 4- 6 pm. Tractor Cultivation Tools for Diversified Production. Cate Farm, Plainfield VT.

July 28, 10-noon. Introduction to Commercial Medicinal Herb Production. Zack Woods Herb FarmHyde Park, VT

Aug. 1, 4-6 pm. Johnny's Hand Tools and High Tunnel Demonstrations. See weeding, seeding, transplanting, cultivating, and harvesting tools in action. Try them yourself; learn how to set up a high tunnel. Johnny's reps will be on hand to discuss tools and supplies. Alchemy Gardens, W. Rutland, VT. Held in collaboration with RAFFL and NOFA. [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org) or 802-434-4122.

Aug. 4, 9am -4pm, Northeast Rice Growing Conference. Akaogi Farm, Westminster VT

Aug, 6, 3-6 pm. Organic Greenhouse Tomato Production. Wood's Market Garden, Brandon VT

Aug. 8, 4-6:30 pm. Organic Sweet Corn Production. Clearbrook Farm, Shaftsbury VT

Aug, 9, 9am - 6 pm. Organic Seed & Breeding Field School. Training for seed growers, plant breeders, researchers and students at High Mowing Organic Seeds, Wolcott, VT. Cost: \$100 includes lunch and evening social hour. This training will include talks by leading plant breeders from around the country as well as hands-on participatory activities that focus on: plant breeding and selection, research trials and seed production. Limited registration, for application form: [kathy@highmowingseeds.com](mailto:kathy@highmowingseeds.com).