



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 10, 2010

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 257-7967 x303 vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster West) Finally received a decent rain! Good timing as our spring was getting mighty low. Although it might be a bit too late to change the yields in the winter squash fields, it will help the pumpkins size up. Already almost ripe orange pumpkins and almost ripe winter squashes are out there in the fields. Spider mites rampaging thru the raspberry tunnel, sprayed M-Pede and pyganic mix and killed most but quickly the population bounces back. Picking some really nice fall raspberries though. Tunnel tomatoes still doing well; good prices and market. The buckwheat cover crops grew from seeding to bloom without a single rain, amazing! Late storage onions looking really nice and large, started selling the early sweet and yellow varieties. Mums and asters are growing fast and we actually see a bit of early color and will probably start delivering some next week. Awaiting delivery of our NRCS-funded high tunnel next week, something to keep us busy before fall harvest begins.

(Plymouth) Our crops are loving this hot and relatively dry summer. Good thing we hydro-fractured our well 2 years ago; we've been needing to irrigate, and don't mind doing it, because it's a better scenario than the past 2 drenching summers. Lettuce is struggling in the heat, and bolting. Hoping that 'Webb's Wonderful' will head up in spite of the heat. Heirloom tomatoes in greenhouse have been ripening with abandon. Super crop of peppers in the greenhouse as well, with many turning red. Eggplant's a disappointment, as bugs took the young plants down early on. Broccoli in the field continues to make huge side shoots. Planted the starts out in April and reaping the benefits of that: strong, sturdy plants and few bugs. Harvested almost all of the garlic already. Onions sizing up nicely, and the 'White Wing' is huge and marketable now. Drowning in cucurbits! Growing weird cucumbers: Poona Keera from India, and Richmond Green Apple from Australia. Both are available from Fedco seeds. Tasty and very interesting.

(Hinesburg) I am a 99% positive that we have late blight again in our new tomato field. I gambled with the drier weather that I might not need to apply copper. Next year I will not make the same mistake.

(Warren) Fall cole crops are all in and looking good. Fall cabbage planted June 15th has been receiving some serious root pruning in order to check its growth. Potatoes dying back a little early due to leaf hoppers. Summer carrots succumbed to Alternaria. Fall planting is Bolero which has always been bulletproof for us. Onions from Florida which nearly died from the cold snap the middle of May are looking really good considering. Summer squash will be gone soon due to powdery mildew. Can't say I'll miss it. Field tomatoes looking really healthy and disease free. We thought that we had late blight in early July and I've sprayed with copper. Wondering if that's why crop looks so good. Farm store sales growing weekly and we are wondering how we will find the time to put together the pile of greenhouse frames on the side of the driveway.

(Plainfield NH) So far no late blight. Probably as much to do with the weather as the fungicides; we are extremely dry with only 1.5" of rain since the first week of June. Blueberry crop was great, tomatoes from greenhouses have done well and sales are strong at our farmstand and with wholesale accounts. Maybe people are really trying to buy local or see real value to doing so, which is encouraging. Many apple growers in our valley lost their crop in that May cold snap, but for some remarkable reason our peach trees which flowered at the same time and have an incredible crop. We know the blueberries took a hit, and we spent 14 nights irrigating strawberries and whacked them all out, and yet the peaches set fruit. It has been a pleasant surprise and created some additional interest and traffic between the blues and fall raspberries. I am enjoying it because the track record is one out of 8 years. Harvesting onions this week; finishing summer pruning of raspberries and taking down netting in blues and will start cleaning them up. PM starting to show in the fall vines despite spray program, but pumpkins are pretty well colored already and fruit set is high on squashes as well. CEW trap counts high last week in corn.

(Fair Haven, VT/Hampton, NY) Things are really popping around the farm especially the weeds! After several weeks of constant work we finally have deforested them of the weed carpet that engulfed us during the week of 100 degree weather in July. The woodchuck that had cleaned out the Brussel sprouts and started on the broccoli was fixed with an ankle biting electric fence. Other crops look good and starting to come on, though a little later than everyone else's since we plant after we have our fruit field set for the season. Planted some more beans but the seed must not be any good since we got one hill for every 6 we had planted. Blueberries had a wonderful year and it made up for the lack of summer raspberries since we had heavy snow damage on the canes. We also had a loss on our young cherry, plum, and apple trees due to the frost in June.

(Plainfield) Regular showers have eliminated the need for irrigation, but made it hard to get ahead of the weeds. Ace Peppers are rolling in, in quantity. Demand for our cherry tomato mix exceeds what we pick from a whole house of them. Maybe we need two houses of cherry tomatoes next year. Onion tops going down, time to pull them; nice size. Just started picking corn. Hopeful for a good fall harvest of winter squash, potatoes, cabbage and carrots. Planting fall mustards and arugula this week.

(Rochester) Our abundant blueberries are definitely making up for the paucity of raspberries this season. The bushes are groaning under the weight of them, and pick-your-own customers come in astonished at the quantity and quality of the fruit. It is easy to pick a gallon bucket in well under an hour. We should have some first-ever summer blackberries in a few days--those on high ground that got through both last winter's mild temperatures and May's cold snap. Fall raspberries and blackberries will be early, as everything else has been this year, so we are praying for no September frosts to give us plenty of time to harvest them.

(Little Compton RI) The drought continues to draw down our energy and spirits. We have two people spending half of each day moving T-tape and pipes. This means two less people to cultivate and sow fall greens and root crops. These prolonged droughts quickly make you slash crops of secondary importance and focus on what will bring in the strongest dollar. Bye bye okra, red dragon beans, etc... To us, fall broccoli and cauliflower are almost as important as spring greenhouse tomatoes. Not just for their monetary reward but for customer satisfaction. Crops are all under stress but can only get water every other day. Weird things are occurring; arugula that is so sharp one customer accused us of trying to poison her!

At a local organic farm some weeds had over taken a Parsnip planting so two women went in to do battle for two hours. After they were done one took a shower and the other took a bike ride. The one that didn't shower ended up in the emergency room with severe rashes all over her arms and legs! She has been on medication for two weeks and the scars look serious. Apparently, parsnip plants can turn on this particular toxin under heat and water stress. This event occurred at the height of the heat, humidity and drought we were in about three weeks ago. Yesterday we hand weeded our parsnips with no problem whatsoever. However, we did it first thing in the cool morning air and washed all our exposed hands and arms immediately after we were done. Man, it's the first 60 years of farming that are the hardest; then I hear it gets easier!

(Monkton) Garlic harvest complete and the crop drying in our old dairy barn is a pretty sight. We've continued to grow out the 10 distinct varieties trialed in a national SARE study several years ago (read the study at www.bignewsforgarlic.com) The porcelains like Music and Howard Prussack's excellent German White, various rocamboles, and Silverwhite, a silverskin, seem to do especially well here.

LATE BLIGHT CONFIRMED IN NORTHERN VT

Late blight on tomato has recently been confirmed by the Plant Diagnostic Clinic on samples from Lamoille and Caledonia counties at several locations. Now is the time to protect crops with fungicides to get them through the rest of the growing season. Labeled materials are listed at: <http://www.nevegetable.org/>. If you suspect a crop is infected send a sample to: Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic, 63 Carrigan Dr., Burlington, VT 05405.

Ann reports getting lots of potato samples with brown, dead edges on the foliage. This appears to be due to early blight and potato leafhopper 'burn.' Red potatoes came into her clinic with enlarged lenticels, then secondary invasion from soft rotting bacteria. Stinky and oozy. Enlarged lenticels can be common if the weather is wet before harvest. Septoria leafspot (small black spots with gray centers) has really taken out a lot of tomato plants in home gardens.

RETAIL PRODUCE PRICE REPORTS

The latest retail price reports from growers in Vermont and vicinity will soon be posted at: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/ProducePriceReports.html>. Please report prices at: http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/?Page=marketing/price_survey.html&SM=marketing/sub-menu.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 18, 5-7:30 pm. Johnny's Selected Seeds twilight walk, highlighting fruiting crops, flowers, mulch trials and caterpillar tunnel. Albion, ME. Directions at www.johnnyseeds.com or call 877-564-6697.

Aug. 20, 3:30-5:30. UVM Vineyard Open House. Visit the research vineyard and see eight varieties of wine grapes and eight varieties of table grapes. Learn about growing grapes in Vermont. S. Burlington. See: <http://pss.uvm.edu/grape/UVMvineyard/UVMvineyardhome.html>.

Aug. 22, 10 am-2 pm. High Mowings Seed field walk, featuring summer crops including cucumbers, summer squash, melons, watermelons, beans, beets, carrots, lettuce, fennel, snap beans, edamame, napa cabbage, tomatoes and peppers. Wolcott VT. Directions at www.highmowingseeds.com/ or call 802-472-6174.

Aug. 26, 4-6 pm. Insect and Disease ID and Management on Organic Farms. Hurricane Flats Farm, South Royalton VT. See <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html> or call NOFA 802-434-4122.