



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – August 4, 2014
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Montpelier) So far a very solid season after getting off to a cold and slow start. Tomatoes are outgrowing the garden symphilans and looking to have a very nice crop in another week or so. Slicing tomatoes look great; very impressed with the grafted plugs I purchased. At \$2.50 per plant not sure I will ever graft my own again. Vermin pressure is very high this year. A lot of woodchucks but bigger concern is the deer. Population appears to be way too healthy and numerous. Not a good thing for my fall production. Peppers, eggplant, squash, beans are all in and doing very well. Trying my hand at ginger in one greenhouse row. Plants look healthy and doing well. A few aphids in the greenhouse peppers which we will get with a bit of Safer's soap. Tomato hornworm infestation seems really high this year. A one-time application of Dipel was extremely effective. Starting to see some early foliar disease on some of the heirloom tomato plants. Mostly early blight and a bit of Botrytis. Time to start thinking about winter plantings.

(Burlington) From constant irrigation, straight into Late Blight conditions: I love farming in New England! Can't really complain about much, though, season is going great so far, though there is a lot still to go. Most of all CSA members can't quit smiling. Looking forward to our Farm 25th anniversary party in a few weeks. Fall crops are in and look pretty good, though we are having some Brassica issues as Swede midge seems back to its normal levels here after an anomalously low 2013 population. Melons have been great so far, but continue to have issues with Fusarium root rots on Watermelons that take down the vines early. Actinovate mixed into the potting soil in the greenhouse has not seemed to help. Loving the tip fill on organic seed 'Natural Delight' sweet corn; very good tips even when slightly under mature. Not quite as sweet as Luscious, our previous organic seed choice for corn, but really good corn flavor.

(Tunbridge) Onion crop is doing well, two-lb Walla Wallas. Have sprayed nematodes at transplant and one month later; seems to be working on the onion maggots. First tomatoes ready. Garlic is large and in and drying nicely. Need to break the tops on the shallots next week as they do not look ready to quit. Red onions will be sized up next week. Got 3 weeks off of last shells and snaps. Beets and carrots have great quality. Potatoes have slight scab, but over all they look good. Tons of beans. The first cucumbers are still going strong, may look into trellis options next year as picking them is slow. Peppers have rebound after a rough start with suspect potting soil.

The help is all taking various amount of time off this month- then some leave for college. It was nice having enough help while it lasted, unfortunately I got kind of use to it.

(Waterbury) Finished harvesting garlic and it looks better than last year. In general bulb size is about one third larger. Harvested the first of our earliest cantaloupes, Halona variety, and they are delicious. The first Sweet Baby watermelons are about a week away from ready. In addition to that we are trying a seedless variety Sorbet from Johnny's that has already produced fruit, to my surprise, but is still a few weeks from ripe. High Tunnel Prelude raspberries in a lull right now, but blossoms and small fruit are appearing on primocanes and we should be getting another flush in a week or two. No effects from SWD yet. Field grown Sweet Chocolate peppers for seed are looking good, no color change yet, but getting there soon.

(Westfield) The garlic is all in and it looks like we have a good crop. Weeds are still numerous, but less every day. For the last three years we have been battling potatoes aphids in our tomato greenhouse, and after what seemed to be a losing the battle, the beneficials are now taking control. The quantity of release of beneficials needs to be much, much higher than for green aphids. Field crops are doing well with the heat and regular rain. We are expecting our first melons this coming week.

(Brookfield) Things are about 1-2 weeks behind but coming along nicely. Sold first field tomatoes; yellow and green beans producing well and selling as fast as we can pick them. Bees have been pollinating everything in sight (I hope). Potatoes finally looking good, they grew slowly to begin with and potato beetles have been an issue, have spent quite bit of time fighting them. Crows have also been a problem more this year than normal- from pulling corn, eating strawberries, to pecking summer squash. Some new ground has quite a bit of weeds so been working on that especially in potatoes in the hills.

(West Brookfield) Heirlooms tomatoes are coming in in force. Plowed a new 5 acre plot this spring and it is proving to be the best field at our farm. Next to no rocks and the weed pressure is very low as well. All the crops that are planted there seem to be growing well. This season has been the best my farm has had in 7 years. There is some disease that has just popped up at the edge of my pumpkin patch. Still trying to figure out just what it is before it spreads too far.

(Westminster West) Garlic harvest all done and hanging in barns now. Nice crop, good size. Started picking Candy onions, also nice size and very mild, almost sweet flavor. Winter squash crop is both setting fruit and some early types are coloring up nicely. Seeding cover crops (peas and oats) on fields for next year's veggie crops. Tunnel tomatoes rolling in full strength now, nice yields and no sign of late blight here yet. Keeping up with spray programs on fall crops, onions, potatoes, looking nice. Fall raspberries in tunnels also coming in better now, large fruit and no sign of SWD, yet. Leeks seem ready early, shallots almost ready. Decent demand from most outlets, farmers market holding its own. An interesting note: while weeding the squash field

about 1 month ago on a hot day, we actually saw the black plastic mulch starting to melt in various parts of the field! The sun was overhead and it was hot but we have never seen this happen, has anyone else noticed this happening? It was NOT Biotello, just embossed mulch.

(Londonderry) Late-day rains continue to keep standing water in most fields. Raised beds are the way to go and those crops are fruitful. Others, like cukes and peppers showing signs of mid-summer stress and too much moisture. Harvested a beautiful crop of garlic from seed saved on the farm for over 14 years. One of the best yields yet! The wet conditions forced early harvest for fear of rot. Blueberries coming in very strong but all four varieties coming at once due to late ripening. Birds and daily T storms are a challenge. Heavy Rains have caused significant erosion and leached side dressings not to mention the weed pressure! Meanwhile, sales at markets are strong and chefs are wanting more!

(Hampton NY) Summer squashes, peppers and cucumbers are starting to produce on a regular basis although with reduced yield due to the 50 degree nights. Winter squashes have lots of fruits and have not been attacked by anything yet (insects, disease or animals). Cantaloupes were planted late and are just flowering. For the first time, aphids are in the garden. I am wondering if I would be better served to reduce the number of ants to slow their movement as the pyrethrin/sulfur spray did not seem to reduce their numbers. Rotating applications of fungicides have kept the mildews and tomato diseases at bay although with the heavy dews lately I am watching the yellow squash and winter squashes closely. Third sowing of string beans look good and should begin harvesting next week. Gladiolas and sunflowers are just starting to bloom. The Fizz variety of kale has fizzled out for us and we will be back to Vates next year.

(Salisbury NH) Rain has been coming just about weekly in a nice amount except for last storm almost 3 inches. Tomatoes are slowly ripening in unheated hoop house. Weeds have definitely won the battle on carrots, onions and some lettuce. Still need to work on our timing for succession crops. Need a good way to get rid of purslane, it is like the hydra, any tiny pieces become more and more plants. Pepper plants are small and only a few peppers per plant in field and hoop house. Every year the weather turns cold, windy and rainy as soon as we put in the field tomatoes and peppers. Blueberries and raspberries are great. Customers have been slow coming but with Market Basket supermarket issues and good weather traffic is much better.

(Argyle NY) It has been a good growing season except for summer spinach, but we have started our fall spinach seedlings with many varieties. Getting our Chandler strawberry tips today from Canada to plant under the misters in the greenhouse to have plugs for the September-planted annual bed system. Onion and leek crops are wonderful, with no diseases and very little thrips damage for a change; we are harvesting huge sweet Candy and Walla Walla, and the low tunnel/overwintered Forum onions are dried down, huge, and selling/storing well. Garlic crop was healthy, disease and insect free but quite small we think due to getting the straw mulch on it

very late, so the very cold temperatures affected their growth for most of the late fall/winter. We just started the potato harvest and though the leafhoppers came in by the thousands a few weeks ago, two sprays of Pyganic seem to have knocked them out, though we will continue with copper/Serenade every 10 days to ward off late blight which is very close. Tunnel cherry and large tomatoes are producing great, the Salanova lettuces are amazing for efficient salad mix production, and we are seeding our final field seedings with beans, herbs, turnips, and kohlrabis then setting our sites onto the winter high tunnel seedings shortly. Our Lely/basket weeder system for cultivation is doing a good job on weed control, and the flaming of the fall carrot crop 4 days after seeding did a great job as well. Still looking for fall/winter helpers and interns, and can't believe it is August already with cool nights.

(Plainfield NH) Harvesting full complement of summer vegetables plus picking blueberries until dark. Finishing summer raspberries later this week, will try to start pruning. Troops are tired but doing a good job. Sales are good and rains have been timely- perhaps a little too wet, but limiting the time of moving irrigation pipe about. First legs of strawberry renovation completed and starting to seed down winter covers. Trying tillage radish for the first time, probably in combo with oat. Also will use peas/oats and the rye vetch workhorse and some mustards. Biggest insect problem here again is scarab beetles (Japanese primarily) defoliating blueberries and the fall raspberries. Erwinia was diagnosed in Rebas and Yukons, otherwise the rest of the potato crop looks fine. Worried about recent sightings of bear, but they haven't shown up in the corn yet.

GET READY FOR LATE BLIGHT

Late blight has been reported nearby in southwestern NH, eastern NY, western MA and southeast ME. It would be prudent to protect tomato and potato crops. For more information on the disease and its management see Meg McGrath's (Cornell Extension) excellent web site: http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_tomato.htm

SALT WATER TEST FOR SWD INFESTATION

SWD has been caught in states all around us but only in small numbers. Based on past years' experience we are poised for a rapid population increase over the next few weeks. Some infested raspberry fruit have been found in CT. It is a good idea to test ripe soft fruits for infestation by submerging them in salt water and looking for larvae. Dissolve 1/4 cup salt in 4 cups of water, place a sample of about 100 ripe, healthy fruit in a shallow dish or tray. Pour salt water over the fruit until fruit is completely covered. Mash fruit lightly with a potato masher. In 10 to 15 minutes, larvae will float to the surface. They are 1-4 mm long, white, and tapered at both ends. You will probably need a hand lens and good lighting to see them. Although they could be other species of drosophila larvae, not just SWD, the latter only attack sound marketable fruit so if you only sample ripe, not overripe fruit, any emerging larvae are probably SWD.