



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – September 7, 2010

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

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster West) It really couldn't get much drier, could it? All the field crops are essentially done, just finishing getting the rest of the butternut squash in the next few days. Tunnel raspberries and tomatoes doing fine with berry yields starting to go up daily. The Putney Farmers Mkt. had a very successful opening day this Sunday, with huge crowds all day long. The upside of this drought is that we haven't lost any time due to rain days.

(Royalton) Late blight has been confirmed in the area, although we've not seen it yet. Our tomatoes are producing like crazy. Brandywine and other heirlooms seem much more resistant to early blight; Rutgers was a total failure. Hillbilly, Aunt Ruby's German Green, Cherokee Purple, Amish Paste, Nature's Riddle, Black Cherry, Japanese Plum very hardy and heavy producers. All the cukes gone and the melons wilted off, but are flowering again. No varmits in the corn this year, so we have an abundance. Ripe pumpkins as of two weeks ago, and butternut, acorn and Australian butter squash. Galansoga has got the upper hand, as it does every fall, but the beets, carrots and peas are well established and will outlast the weeds when the frost comes.

(Sudbury) Things are finally beginning to wind down in our first year of farming. Thought the zucchini was finally finished with the powdery mildew but new leaves and fruits are pushing the season. It's been a so-so farmer's market year but successful one with our restaurant client. Looking forward to our fall crops which include Red Kuri squash and Rouge vif d'Etampes pumpkins. Some beds are now empty which means the Fall cleanup isn't far away.

(Little Compton RI) We have noticed a fair amount of bad bean seeds this year. They come up and the cotyledons are barely open before they get this brown staining/rust looking fungus and then keel over. Sandy Arnold said it is due to seed damage at some point in its curing. I noticed some seed companies now put a sticker on the outside of their bean bags that warn you to be careful about dropping the bag etc... Maybe we need to treat them more gingerly. Speaking of ginger, we just harvested some ours and it came out great this summer. It loves heat and water and they got plenty of both this season. Next year we plan to put them in a walk-in tunnel to push them further.

Flea beetles came back with a vengeance last week and really put the hurt on a number of delicate fall greens. Usually this time of year, their numbers are so far down we don't need to keep remay on everything. The big hurricane was a big nothing. Typical of this season, some parts of our state got two inches of rain; we got a total of .30 "At least it helped lock in the last planting of Broccoli and Cauliflower. We will start topping Brussel sprouts this week. Never all at once. Does anyone have a definitive answer as to when it is best to top Brussels sprouts?

(Argyle NY) August was a record-breaking sales month for us at the farmers' markets; what great support of local folks for those wanting locally grown items. Even with the heat, our greens have done real well and the mini-heads are still popular at \$1 each. Our onion crop is one of our best ever, despite some thrips which we sprayed for. Our area has had tremendous insect pressure from flea beetles, mites, potato leaf-hoppers and tarnished plant bugs...the worse we've seen in many years. Fortunately, though late blight was 20 miles from us, none hit the local farms. It's been a challenge to get spinach to germinate in the fields, but we transplanted a bunch after germinating them in speedling trays in the air-conditioned house!

We're irrigating daily and are very dry again, but it keeps the diseases down. Our winter squash is maturing early, as are most crops; we've already turned on our root-cellar! It's harder to get fall workers, but hopefully the work load will reduce soon. We bought strawberry tips from a Canadian farm and they were wonderful...they've grown into nice plugs and are ready for transplanting out this week. The final brassicas are going out tomorrow and we'll start seeding for the high tunnels over the next few weeks. Very busy, but enjoying the cooler temps and shorter days!

(Moretown/West Brookfield) Late Blight has once again sank its teeth into my tomato crop. Other than that it's been a great season with minimal disease. But of all the diseases to getaaarrgh.

(Plainfield) Potatoes starting to sell, quality nice. Field has gotten weedy since the vines died, making harvest harder. Bolero carrots sizing up after irrigation. Love that rain gun, wish I had a traveler. Big planting of green beans coming in. Lots of paste tomatoes ripening in this run of sunny days. Demand for corn strong. Weekly Dipel sprays on the silks have kept worms away. Just starting to pick Napa, Bok Choi and daikon. Renovated strawberries are so weedy I am thinking of plowing them in. New planting looks good.

(Rochester) Blueberries have been picked out--earlier than usual, but of course they began earlier too. The yield was excellent this season, despite losing some Patriots in blossom to the spring frosts. Blackberries are ripening about 10 days ahead of schedule. We have nice fruit set in the raspberries on the Nova and Reveille primocanes and with a little luck we might get a good yield before the first Fall frost hits.

(Plainfield NH) Hurricane Earl brought us no relief from this drought, which coupled with unbearable heat and drying winds has given the farm a parched appearance. Rye and vetch seed sits and sulks in field waiting for some moisture to help germinate. What Earl did bring us was CEW. I sprayed some late corn last Thursday and emptied the trap, yesterday the trap count was in excess of 80-100 moths in 4 days. That exceeds our previous record count by 60 some moths. I have never seen a *Heliothis* trap just packed with moths like that, although I understand that has happened in southern NH this summer. For us this has been a summer of pestilence that has been hard to ignore. After last week we find we are pulling out the irrigation pipe again to keep the fall raspberries viable, help fill out the sweet corn ears and trying to keep the small greens coming along. Last week in that heat we put in 9500 strawberry plug plants, no mean feat given the hot conditions. There is weeding to be done in the matted row beds, but not until we finish digging potatoes and getting the pumpkins and fall vines binned up, all the while taking care of the day to day harvest. The greenhouse meeting scheduled for 9/14 will also force me to try to get some clean up done but with a diminishing crew, continuing drought and shortening days it seems a bit harder to knock the special projects off the list.

POTATO STORAGE TIPS

Sandy Menasha, Cornell Extension, Long Island

To store and maintain high quality tubers practice the following points: These are some of the common factors each year that lead to serious storage problems. 1. Don't begin to store potatoes until the latter part of September when tuber and air temperatures have cooled down. Greater storage "problems" usually occur in potatoes dug during the warmer parts of September. 2. Don't harvest and store potatoes from wet areas. Many of the potatoes from low areas are diseased or more prone to disease. 3. Proper vine-killing 2-3 weeks before harvest will help tubers set skin, making the tubers more resistant to skinning and bruising. 4. Pad all deflectors and sharp points. 5. During harvest maintain proper ground speed and chain speed ratio to keep the conveyors as full of potatoes as possible. This allows for the potatoes to "flow" from one chain to another reducing rollback and the potential for blackspot. 6. Agitation chains should be minimized and excessive bouncing should be avoided. 7. Reduce the height of drops to 6 inches or less during harvest and handling of potatoes. 8. Remove all soil and debris during the harvest operation and while conveying tubers into storage. Excessive soil in the storage will prevent proper air movement and increase the chance of storage rot.

AVOID ONION DISEASES IN STORAGE

Bess Dicklow, UMass Extension

Storage Disease Management Tips: 1. Control other diseases and insects in the field to prevent entry of storage rot organisms. 2. Black Mold can be reduced by applying calcium carbonate to protect wounds caused by leaf clipping. 3. Bruising and other mechanical injury should be avoided when bulbs are harvested, stored, or transported. 4. In some instances, treating of bulbs with fungicide before storing may be recommended. 5. Cure onions and garlic with hot, dry conditions. A healthy onion with a well cured neck is rarely infected with neck rot during storage. 6. Inspect garlic and onion before storing and discard all symptomatic bulbs. 7. Practices that hasten curing include undercutting bulbs to sever all roots, avoiding nitrogen fertilization late in the season, and proper plant spacing. 8. Ideal storage conditions are at 32-34° F with 70-75% relative humidity.

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 See <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html>

Sept. 14, 5-7 pm. High Tunnel Design and Installation Edgewater Farm, Plainfield, NH

Sept. 15, 4-6 pm. On-Farm Soil Management, Arethusa Farm, Burlington, VT

Sept. 22, 5-7 pm. Implementing GAPS on a Wholesale/Retail Vegetable and Fruit Farm. Paul Mazza's Fruits and Vegetables. Essex, VT