



2024 On-Farm Workshops for Vegetable and Berry Growers

These events are open to all--and they are geared for commercial growers. If severe weather is predicted, an event may be cancelled, and a notice will be sent to the VVBGA listserv.

Tuesday May 22, 4-6 pm

BLUEBERRY PLANT HEALTH AND POLLINATORS

Covered Bridge Blueberry Farm, 128 River Road, Underhill, VT

Cost: Free, just show up.

This hands-on event focuses on blueberry plant health and supporting blueberry pollinators. Host Lisa Hoare will provide an overview of the farm's management practices and goals. Vern Grubinger will discuss cultural practices including nutrient management, pruning, and mulching. Dr. Taylor Ricketts and Leslie Spencer of the UVM Gund Institute will describe how to optimize habitat to support pollinators, and we will go into the field to capture and ID pollinators. Ann Hazelrigg will answer questions on insect pests and diseases, and Larry Parker will describe the Farm Service Agency's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and waiver for free coverage for qualifying individuals.

Tuesday July 9, 4-6 pm

ORGANIC BLUEBERRY AND STRAWBERRY PRODUCTION

Clear Brook Farm, 47 Hidden Valley Rd., Shaftsbury VT

Cost: Free, just show up.

Andrew Knafel started the farm 30 years ago and today he and his crew farm 45 acres of certified organic crops and cover crops, including over an acre of strawberries and 1.5 acres of blueberries. Andrew will describe his production practices to manage soil fertility, weeds, insects and diseases in small fruit. Equipment used for cultivation, spraying and mulching will be viewed and discussed. UVM Extension folks will be on hand to provide additional production information, and NOFA-Vermont folks will explain the Transition to Organic Partnership Program.

Thursday July 18, 9 am-noon

HIGH TUNNELS, RAISED BEDS, LOW FUSS! SOIL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Walker Farm, 1190 US-5, East Dummerston, VT

Free but [please pre-register](#), space is limited

Join the Windham County Conservation District, USDA NRCS and Becky Maden Vegetable Nutrient Management Specialist from UVM Extension for an engaging morning at Walker Farm. We will learn how Walker Farm utilizes their high tunnels, hear what programs and tools are out there to manage your soils. Most excitingly we will have on the spot soil analysis for anyone who brings a soil sample! Questions? Email Heather at: blunk.wc.nrcd@gmail.com

Wednesday August 14, 4-6:30 pm

PROTECTED GROWING WITH HIGH TUNNELS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Cedar Circle Farm, Pavilion Rd., E. Thetford VT

Cost: \$40 for NOFA members; \$50 for non-members; free for BIPOC.

If possible [register in advance](#).

In our changing climate, many farms are utilizing protected growing spaces to have more control over aspects like temperature and water. Commercial growers, learn about siting a new high tunnel and managing water, heat, and wind for new and existing structures. Tour protected growing spaces at Joe's Brook Farm and learn how to address different high tunnel concerns with experts from UVM Extension. This workshop earns one RAP Agricultural Water Quality education credit.

Monday, August 19, 4-7 pm (rain or shine)

TOUR OF NORTH POINT COMMUNITY FARM

2172 Military Turnpike, Plattsburgh, NY

Cost: \$10 per farm

Hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension. For VT attendees: NPCF is a 15 minute drive from the Plattsburgh ferry dock, 34 minutes from the Rouses Point Bridge, 42 minutes from the Essex Ferry dock, and 1h9m from the Crown Point Lake Champlain Bridge.

Join us for a tour of this diversified vegetable, berry, and flower operation in the North Country. Farmers Marisa and Mike will give us an overview of their decision-making as they expand their business, increasing their high tunnel production, investing in new tillage equipment, and transforming an old dairy barn into an efficient wash-pack shed with food safety in mind. We'll end the evening with local food refreshments and an opportunity to network with growers from NY and VT. Register at <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1958>

Wednesday, August 21, 4-6 pm

CULTIVATING ORGANIC PRACTICES FOR A THRIVING FARM AND COMMUNITY

Earth Sky Time Community Farm, 1547 Main Street Manchester, VT

Cost: \$35 for members; \$45 for non-members; free for BIPOC.

If possible [register in advance](#).

Innovative organic practices contribute to a thriving diversified farm. Hosted by Bonnie and Oliver of Earth Sky Time along with Becky Maden, UVM Extension Nutrient Management Specialist. Learn about how 5 acres of no-till permanent beds are maintained without disposable plastics, understand their method of planting soil blocks on bare ground with a water wheel transplanter, mulching crops with a modified manure spreader, green chopping adjacent pasture for mulch, prepping beds with specialized equipment, and irrigating with a modular system. Plus, meet Vermont Organic Farmers staff to ask your burning organic certification questions and learn about the Transition to Organic Partnership Program. This workshop earns one RAP Agricultural Water Quality education credit.

RESCHEDULED TO NEXT SPRING DUE TO FLOODING:

Wednesday, August 28, 4:30-6:30 pm

RENOVATING AN OLD BARN INTO AN EFFICIENT WASH PACK SHED

Lewis Creek Farm, 3071 Route 116, Starksboro, VT

Cost: free, just show up

Join owner Hank Bissel, and UVM Extension produce safety specialist, Hans Estrin to discuss strategies and lessons learned from over four decades of renovations and tweaks made to the farm's "Old Red Barn" in which 25 acres of wholesale and retail crops are graded, washed, packed and stored. Many changes have been made over the years to improve efficiency, product quality, and produce safety in this old, less-than-perfect structure. Topics discussed will include farm-hack construction and workarounds, equipment and product flow, bang-for-buck equipment, managing birds and rats, cleaning SOPs, employee training and empowerment.

Wednesday September 4, 4:00-6:00 pm

COVER CROP SEQUENCES TO SUPPORT POLLINATORS AND SOIL HEALTH

UVM Horticultural Research and Education Center, 65 Green Mountain Dr., South Burlington VT

Cost: free, just show up

This growing season, ten Vermont diversified vegetable farms tried season long sequential plantings of flowering cover crops. Cover crops were allowed to bloom to provide pollinators with pollen and nectar forage in addition to supporting soil health goals. We will talk about this work, ideas for cover crop varieties plant, when to plant, and what is being learned about advantages and tradeoffs of this practice approach related to soil health and pollinators. Come explore if this might fit into your management practices and what opportunities there are to incorporating a similar approach on your farm.

Sunday, September 15, 2-4 pm

SMALL-SCALE CUT FLOWER PRODUCTION AND FLORAL DESIGN BASICS

By Hand Farm, Newfane, Vermont

Cost: \$70 for members; \$80 for non-members; free for BIPOC.

[Advance registration required.](#)

Learn how to garden like a cut flower farmer! Using primarily no-till cultivation methods and hand tools, Laura Xiao of By Hand Farm grows cut flowers on a small plot of leased land. During a tour of the farm, Laura will share cultivation and harvesting techniques as she takes you through the variety of flowers she grows. Following the tour, Laura will lead a demo on basic principles of floral design, where attendees will have the chance to play with flowers and arrange their own bouquets to take home. This workshop is perfect for gardeners and homesteaders looking to begin or innovate their cut flower production. Specific farm location details will be sent to registrants via email in advance of this workshop.

Monday, September 16, 4-6 pm (rain or shine)

HIGH TUNNEL TOMATOES, PUMPKINS AND SWEET CORN PRODUCTION

Drinkwine Produce, 1512 Street Rd, Ticonderoga, NY

Cost: \$10 per farm

Hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension. For VT attendees: Drinkwine Produce is an 8 min drive from the Ticonderoga ferry landing and 17 min from the Crown Point Lake Champlain Bridge.

Henry Drinkwine will provide an overview of his practices for maintaining high yields of tomatoes, including pollination and soil fertility management. In the second half of the meeting, CCE specialists will review IPM for sweet corn and pumpkins, with hands-on scouting and identification of key pests and diseases. Register at <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1957>

Wednesday, September 18, 3:30-5:30 pm
BEST PRACTICES FOR ON-FARM MARKETS
Walker Farm, 1190 US-5, East Dummerston, VT
Cost: free, just show up.

This meeting will explore farm-to-market communication systems and best to wash, pack, stock, maintain, and sell beautiful fresh produce at Walker Farm's busy farm store. Join Jack Manix and his team at the hopping retail market as they share choice stories, lessons learned, and key practices, from their 1973 beginnings; and co-hosted by Hans Estrin, UVM Extension. Topics include best practices for farm-to-market communication, employee management and retention, customer interaction and loyalty, SOPs for "pack-out," stocking, and market cooler management, displays, point of sale information, and store organization and cleaning.

Tuesday September 24, 4-6 pm
CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND SOIL HEALTH PRACTICES
Evening Song Farm, 680 Shunpike Rd, Shrewsbury, VT
Cost: \$35 for members; \$45 for non-members; free for BIPOC.
If possible [register in advance](#).

For 12 years, the farmers at Evening Song Farm have focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation by improving soil health and fertility with management strategies such as no-till planting through cover crop residue, undersowing cash crops, and transplanting through clover sod. Fellow farmers are invited to learn about the implementation of organic practices at two different scales through a tour of Evening Song Farm accompanied by Justin Rich of Burnt Rock Farm in Huntington. Plus, learn about organic certification and how adaptation planning can identify strategies and prioritize actions that will increase water quality, farm success, and resilience. This workshop earns one RAP Agricultural Water Quality education credit.

updated 8/16/24