



Vermont Vegetable and Berry Grower 2024 Winter Webinar Series

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January 10. Winter tunnel growing: lessons learned. Farmers share their practices for winter production, including varieties, planting dates, pest management, and cultural practices. Speakers: James Donegan (Trillium Hill Farm, Hinesburg), Sayer Palmer (Open Woods Farm, Grafton NH), Andy Jones (Intervale Community Farm, Burlington). Hosted by Becky Maden.

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[Donegan slides](#)

[Jones slides](#)

[Palmer slides](#)

January 17. Tools and equipment to get excited about. Casey Steinberg, Old Friends Farm in Amherst MA, shows some of their favorite tools for efficiency. Jon Cohen, Deep Meadow Farm in Ascutney, describes the tractor-mounted Colorado potato beetle beater he built. Diane Abruzzini describes her Northeast SARE project in which she worked with Jericho Settlers Farm to design and test a high tunnel gantry system with a harvest cart and a winter row cover roller-upper. Trevor Hardy, Brookdale Fruit Farm, Hollis NH, discusses stone buriers and direct seeders through plastic. Hosted by Vern Grubinger and Andy Chamberlin.

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[Abruzzini slides](#)

[Cohen slides](#)

[Steinberg slides](#)

January 24. Sourcing and selling pollinator plants. Commercial growers and plant sellers discuss ideas around defining plants as “native” and “pollinator friendly.” We will talk about how to ensure transparency for pollinator safe products for our customers and how to know if varieties you source are not only visually attractive to pollinators, but also provide essential pollinator food resources, pollen and nectar. Speakers: Sarah Salatino, Full Circle Gardens, Essex Junction and Spencer Hardy of the Farm Upstream in Jericho and the Vermont Center for EcoStudies. Hosted by Laura Johnson.

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[Hardy slides](#)

[Sallatino slides](#)

January 31. Why create an employee handbook for your farm? Do you struggle to find and retain good employees on your farm? Would you like to improve the morale and efficiency of your farm crew? Are you interested in improving or creating your own employee handbook to support these improvements? A panel of experienced farmers describes how and why their employee handbooks have helped, and share handbook resources, Featuring Hank Bissell, Lewis Creek Farm, Starksboro; Lisa MacDougall, Mighty Food Farm, Shaftsbury, and Silas Doyle-Burr, Last Resort Farm, Monkton. Hosted by Hans Estrin.

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February 7. Greenhouses, part 1: greenhouse start up. Planning for a smooth and efficient greenhouse season. Julie Rubaud of Red Wagon Plants in Hinesburg share practices and lessons learned from her many years as a greenhouse seedling grower around production planning and scheduling for a highly diverse mix of plant species. Chris Callahan of UVM Extension hosts, and talks about planning for tunnel start-up and safety.

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February 14. Greenhouses, part 2: growing bedding plants for early season sales. Experienced grower Jack Manix of Walker Farm in Dummerston shares many tips and recommendations for success with bedding plant production. Jack will discuss flat fillers, heated benches, efficient heaters, alarms, and the economics of growing bedding plants. Hosted by Vern Grubinger.

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February 21. Habitat plantings to attract insect pollinators and insects that attack pests. Kyle Doda owns 1000 Stone Farm, a 4-season certified organic homestead farm in Brookfield VT, shares his experience with establishing and caring for pollinator and beneficial insect plantings on the farm. UVM entomologist Dr. Cheryl Frank Sullivan has been involved in beneficial insect-plant interaction research for many years. She shares information about beneficial insect habitat plantings and what insects these plantings can attract. Hosted by Laura Johnson.

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February 28. Wash/pack case studies from Naked Acre Farm and Trillium Hill Farm. Hear what two growers learned while making wash/pack upgrades for their business. Ryan Demarest and Genica Breitenbeck of Naked Acre Farm built a garage-style building in phases as their budget and bandwidth allowed. James Donegan of Trillium Hill Farm built a wash/pack on the second floor of an old bank barn, with a fully waterproof flooring system. Hear how these projects got started, progressed, and what's next. Hosted by Andy Chamberlin of UVM Extension and the Ag Engineering program.

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March 6. A tour of the Pollinator Support Plan tool on the VVBGA web site. What does a hamburger have in common with pollinator support? This webinar answers that question and reviews what a pollinator support plan is, giving a tour of the pollinator support plan tool on the VVBGA website. Hosted by Laura Johnson.

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March 13. Production Q&A. What is on your mind as the new season begins? Vern Grubinger, Hans Estrin, Ann Hazelrigg, Becky Maden from UVM Extension and a crew of local growers discuss issues and share ideas as the 2024 season kicks off.

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March 20. High tunnel cucumbers. Christa Alexander, of Jericho Settlers Farm in Jericho and Andy Jones, of Intervale Community Farm in Burlington provide an overview of their season-long high tunnel cucumber production practices. Dr. Wenjing Guan from Purdue University talks about her research on high tunnel cucumber cultivars, grafting, and production practices. Hosted by Becky Maden.

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[Alexander slides](#)

[Guan slides](#)

[Jones slides](#)

March 27. Cultivation equipment and strategies—what’s new and what’s still working. Sam Oswald Tilton from Glacial Drift Enterprises in Minneapolis, MN shares principles of mechanical cultivation (Sam has been featured on the [Thriving Farmer Podcast](#) and has extensive experience with cultivation on all scales). Justin Rich from Burnt Rock Farm in Huntington describes his mechanical cultivation strategies and his favorite tools. Hosted by Becky Maden.

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April 3. Gearing up for a season of disease and insect pest management on your farm.

UVM’s pest and disease specialists cover strategies to help you avoid unwelcome problems. Margaret Skinner and Cheryl Frank from the UVM Entomology Lab discuss how to prepare for high tunnel pests. Ann Hazelrigg from the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic discusses early season diseases. Vic Izzo, senior lecturer in UVM’s Department of Plant and Soil Science shares strategies to avoid Colorado potato beetle this season.

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[Slides](#)

April 10. Tour of the new VVBGA Pick-Your-Own marketing platform. See a short demonstration of how to set up your farm’s PYO listing, and what it looks like to potential customers. Q&A about using the platform. Hosted by Julie Callahan and Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension.

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[Slides](#)

Updated 4/11/24