



Spring 2022 Webinars

February 3. Farm First: Vermont's resource for farmers and their families managing stress. Leanne Porter, Farm First and Valerie Woodhouse, Honey Field Farm.

[Slides](#) [video recording](#)

For over 10 years, Farm First has been Vermont's resource for farmers and their families managing stress, offering referrals and short-term counseling. In this session, presenters discuss the unique stressors of farming, and the resources available to strengthen resiliency, including the new Farmer Peer Network. The development of a peer network for Vermont farmers, and how to become a peer educator, are also discussed.

February 10. Economic value of wild pollinators to blueberry farms: research and grower perspectives with Rachel Gray, Owl's Head Blueberry Farm and Dr. Taylor Ricketts, UVM.

[Gray Slides](#) [Ricketts slides](#) [video recording](#)

Rachel Gray is co-owner to Owl's Head Blueberry farm in Richmond, VT. She manages 3000 blueberry bushes on 5 acres with her family. In this webinar, Rachel shared her experience as a blueberry farmer, the financial considerations of deciding whether to purchase commercial bumble beehives, and ways to support wild pollinators on the farm.

Dr. Taylor Ricketts is Gund Professor and Director of the Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont. He shared an overview of the importance of pollinators in agriculture and summarized on-farm research findings about the types of wild pollinators found on Vermont blueberry farms, and the economic value of wild pollinators to Vermont blueberry farms based on this on-farm research.

February 17. Promoting pollinator vigor in cut flower production, Karen Trubitt, True Love Farm and Dr. Lynn Adler, University of Massachusetts.

[Adler slides](#) [Trubitt slides](#) [video recording](#)

Karen Trubitt owns True Love Farm with her husband Steven in Shaftsbury, VT. They run a cut flower and diversified vegetable operation on about 3.5 acres. True Love Farm mindfully considers pollinator health in a multitude of ways in their landscape, such as through their mowing practices, flower crop rotations, and chosen floral varieties that can provide food resources to pollinators while maintaining commercial sale viability. Karen shared her farm's approach to bee-kind approaches in this webinar event.

Dr. Lynn Adler is a professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Her work is centered on understanding the power of flowers in pollinator health and the role of flowers in pollinator-disease interactions. She was recently awarded a Northeast SARE research grant to test the potential for cut flower pollen to improve bumble bee health and has engaged in research focused on the medicinal value of sunflower pollen against bee pathogens. This webinar session summarizes findings about the effects of sunflowers and other cut flowers on bumble bee health.

February 24. Pollinator habitat plantings – what growers are doing, NRCS funding, Dan Pratt, Astarte Farm and Tom Akin, NRCS-Vermont.

[Video recording](#)

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers funds to support farm conservation efforts while also considering the financial sustainability of farm enterprises. You may already be familiar with NRCS programs that offer farm support for soil health, pest management, and cover cropping. But did you know that the NRCS also administers programs that enhance pollinator habitat on your farm?! Whether you have worked with the NRCS in the past or not, come learn about how the NRCS can help you augment on-farm pollinator habitat and how you can apply to be considered for pollinator support opportunities.

For over 20 years, Dan Pratt has been farming the 6.6 acres of land that is today known as Astarte Farm in Handley, MA. In 2014, Astarte Farm began transitioning to become one of the first 100% no-till commercial farms in the area, and since then, has continued to explore what it means to "grow sustainably." This evolved to include pollinator habitat. After managing farm owned honeybees for pollination services and struggling to keep up with the tasks required for keeping healthy colonies, Dan shifted efforts towards supporting wild pollinators and other beneficial insects in his diverse fruit and vegetable operation. Habitat installation was made possible by a combination of hard work and supportive programs and professionals, such as those offered by the NRCS. Come learn from Dan in this webinar about how a commercial farm has engaged with the NRCS pollinator support programs to establish pollinator habitat enhancement installation on the farm while also considering other farm priorities.

March 3. Invasive Pests to Keep an Eye On: Spotted Lanternfly and Jumping Worms. Judy Rosovsky, VT State Entomologist and Dr. Josef Görres, UVM Dept. of Plant and Soil Science.

[Gorres slides](#) [Rosovsky slides](#) [video recording](#)

Jumping worms include several species that are invasive agricultural pests. Dr. Josef Gorres is a national expert on this pest, and he discussed their ecology, how to ID them, and a range of recommended, and experimental, management practices including slow-the-spread techniques. Judy Rosovsky then provided information about the life cycle, biology and management options for the spotted lanternfly, an invasive planthopper that is spreading throughout the Northeast. It is both a public nuisance and an agricultural pest.

March 10. High Tunnel Tomato Roundtable. With Becky Maden, UVM Extension; Gerard Croziet, Berry Creek Farm; Ryan Demarest, Naked Acre Farm.

[video recording](#)

Panelists shared a few slides and described production practices for their high tunnel tomatoes, followed by informal discussion and Q&A on topics that included bed prep and amendments, fertigation and irrigation, grafting, plant spacing and pruning, ventilation and shading, and more.

March 17. Mindful Employee Management: How to bring on MORE Crankin' Crew, and LESS Crappy Conflict! With Hans Estrin, UVM Extension and Lisa MacDougall, Mighty Food Farm.

[Video Recording](#)

Panelists shared some of their experiences, ideas, and observations, then the floor was opened to discussion and Q&A about how to build (and manage) a better crew this season.

March 24. Getting Ready for the 2022 Blueberry Season - grower round table with Ben Waterman, Waterman Orchards in Johnson, Vermont, and Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension.

[Video Recording](#)

Ben kicked off the conversation with a brief overview of his approach to pruning, mulching and fertilization and what he's learned about these practices over the years. Ben and his family grow 5 acres of blueberries, with 20+ varieties. Sales are a mix of PYO, wholesale and farmers markets. The farm is not yet certified organic but uses only organic practices. It was established in 2007. Growers then shared their experiences and ask questions of the group.

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