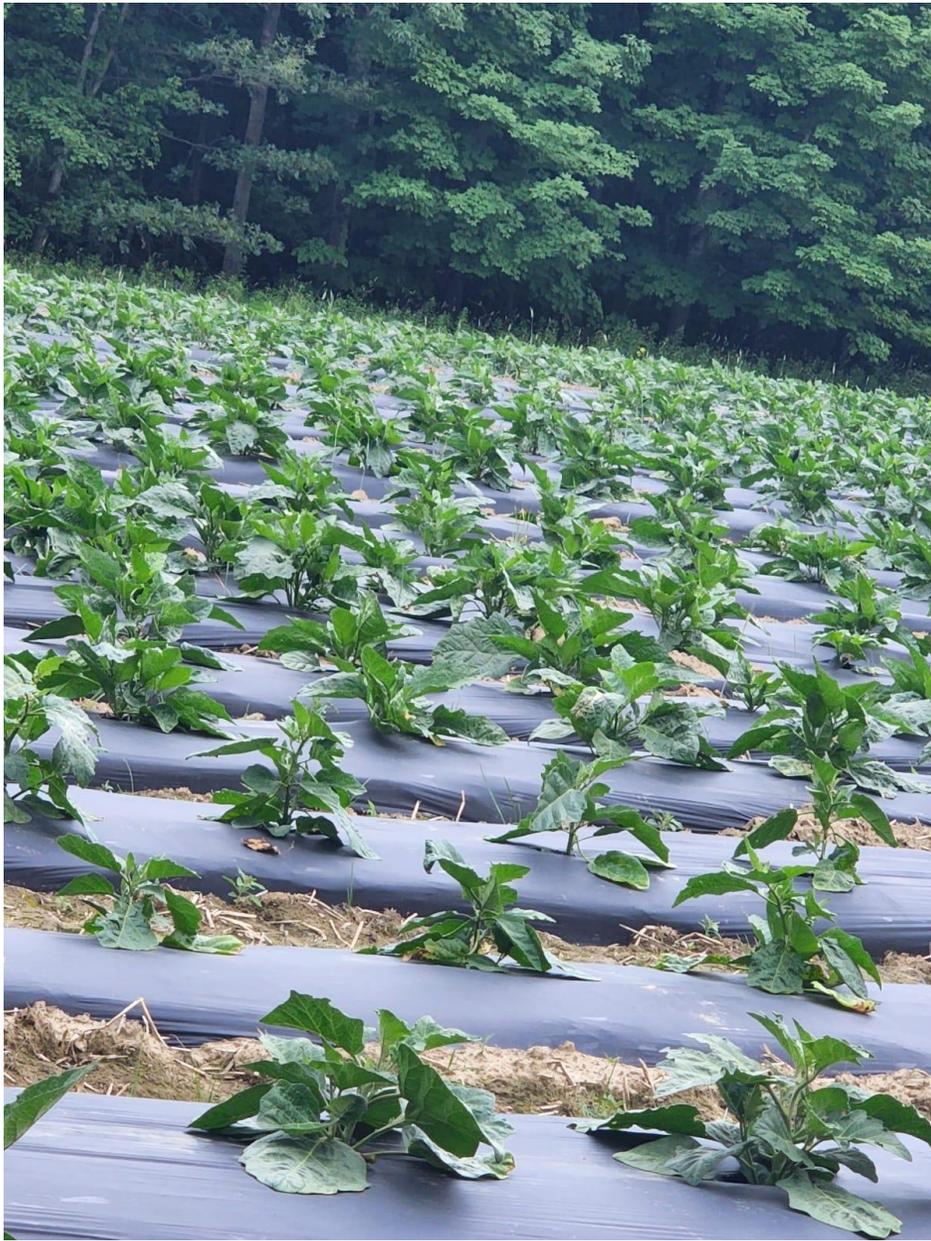


# Growing and marketing African eggplant

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JANINE NDAGIJIMANA





My family is from Burundi. I had a business selling vegetables in Rwanda and wanted to grow my own.

I began with a garden plot through New Farms for New Americans, with support from the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV).

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In 2015, I began the farm on land belonging to Gene Button, a retired farmer in Colchester who has worked to conserve his land with the Vermont Land Trust.

I have about 10 acres in production.

*Image credit: Vermont Food Bank*



My main crop is African eggplant (“intore”). I grow about 8 acres of eggplant.

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I start the plants in a heated greenhouse.

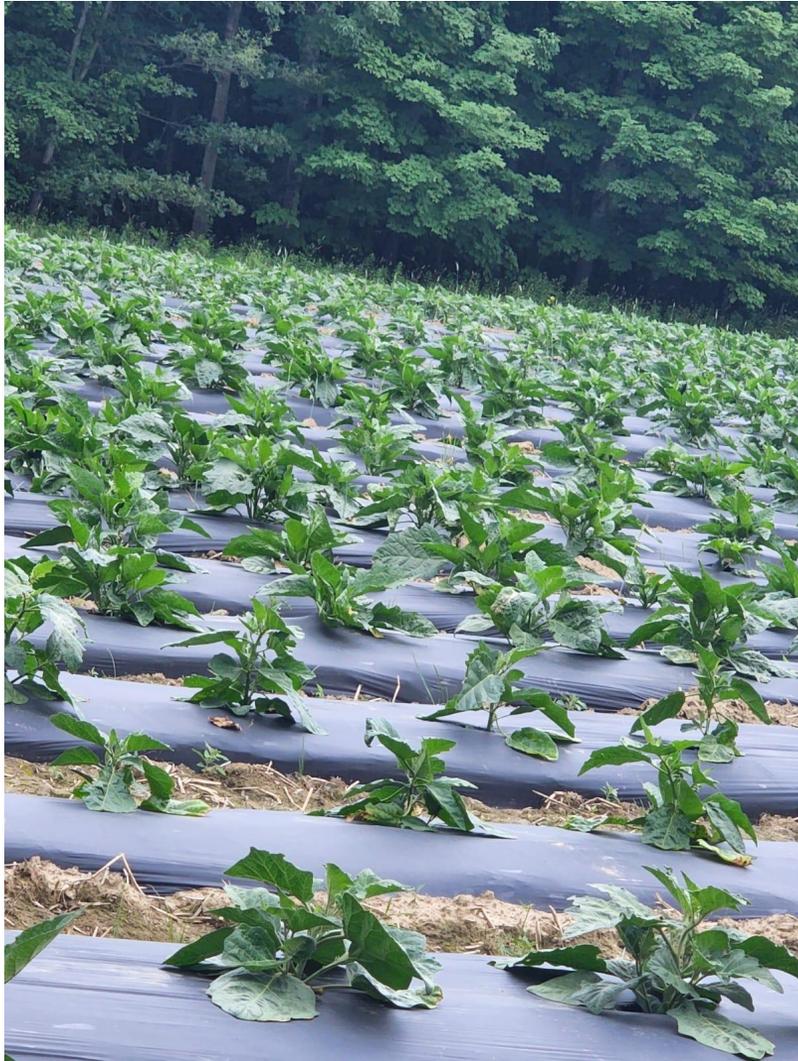
# I use organic fertilizers and cover crops for fertility

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We use a waterwheel transplanter and plant into plastic mulch



We are working with NRCs to install irrigation—dry years have been hard.

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I hire community members for labor during the season.  
My family also helps.



Colorado potato beetles are a big challenge.

Rotation is difficult.

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We grow other specialty crops that are hard for immigrants to find locally. These varieties are important to the cooking of Africans living in Vermont

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Maize is a staple of our cuisine



Also pumpkins and beans

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I sell crops directly to community members, to the Vermont Food Bank, and to New Americans throughout the US.



I also save  
seed from my  
crops.  
I sell them to  
my community  
and through  
True Love  
seeds.



Thank you!

