



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – October 19, 2010

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 257-7967 x303 vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

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

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) Takeaways from 2010 growing season: 1. Saturated media extract soil tests really helped our hoophouse tomato crops. (Obviously, sun and temperature were also a factor.) 2. Rotation distance matters. Having a field separated by 1/2 mile and vegetative barriers proved to be the difference in managing Swede midge. After losing 60%+ of our 2009 fall broccoli to Swede midge damage, we had a great fall crop in 2010. (Until we lost the final 25% to flooding.) 3. Zone tillage could provide good weed control in our winter squash if we have an excellent, thick, stand of winter rye. (We had a good yield this year, but lots of weed biomass in both the rolled-rye (better) and the flail chopped rye (worse), despite much extra hand hoeing. 4. Stale seedbeds are great, and I am less anxious about ruining our soil from repeated trips over the beds, now that we have more acreage in rotation. 5. CSA is great when disaster strikes (at the right time). Since we'd been paid months before, the pain of losing most of our fall Brassicas was much less. And since the flood came late in a good summer CSA season, members still did well and the farm did too.

(Plainfield) Happy to be getting done. Not my best season, not my worst. Still waiting on my rutabagas to size up. Great daikon. Yields of winter squash and carrots hurt by weed control problems. Cabbage ruined by clubroot. Some pleasant surprises: good crop of fall raspberries, best ever popcorn crop, nice late green leaf lettuce. Late planting greenhouse spinach; I hope it catches and overwinters. Hope to sell out of most everything by Thanksgiving and avoid most winter storage issues. Looking forward to more time to rest and think out a plan for 2011.

(Salisbury NH) We really got hit with bug damage this year. The Brussels sprouts were probably planted too early. The bottom sections ended up with lots of sprouts that were 'leafy and loose' not nice looking at all. The middle ones were good sized but bug eaten. Didn't spray enough for cabbage looper maybe. Final one third of stalks have tight sprouts and little bug damage. We picked the last of peppers. Not many made it to the red stage. Sweet Red Carmen is our favorite and even as a green pepper they taste good. Late plantings of broccoli, cauliflower and romanesca are probably not going to produce much. Leeks, beets, spinach and carrots are about the last things in the field. Picked the last row of string beans which had a slight hit of frost but were okay. We had Chinese cabbage and nice lettuce started but made the mistake of letting our chickens roam free. So much for trusting them! They made quick work of the beautiful greens. We did find out that they don't seem to like red lettuce. Our red romaine and leaf lettuces were left alone. I'm sure their eggs will be very nutritious! Hoop house plantings are experiment to see what grows in our area. Lots of lettuce mixes--All Star, Spectrums Greens mix, Wildfire. Spinach - Tyee. A small amount of snow peas. Scallions. We direct seeded a few weeks ago and they are not germinating well. Should these have been done as transplants? Napoli carrots. Pac Choi. Radishes. By the way, Johnny's has been running out of Rover radish. Does anyone have another source? We added on to our hoophouse and need to close in the end and this weekend's wind made that impossible.

(Argyle NY) Prior to the rains last week (1.3"), we got 1/2 acre of potatoes harvested and planted most of the garlic. We still have some potatoes, all the carrots, and other root crops to put in the root cellar over the next 2 to 4 weeks. On some of the land where crops are just coming off, we are spreading rye straw (with seed in it) about 2 to 3" thick with a newly acquired Tomahawk round bale shredder. We did this years ago in the fall and had good results in increasing organic matter and holding the soil for the winter, plus allows us to have some early ground to work in the spring if needed. After 2 more weeks, we drop to just 2 markets per week (both on Saturdays) and they will operate all winter. Our 2 high tunnels are each half planted with winter greens, with transplanting of kale, Swiss chard, Asian Greens, and spinach happening over the next 2 weeks to fill them. It's hard to pull out all the tomatoes when they are still producing! The last of the sweet potatoes came out today from the one tunnel, so it will be re-worked and planted this week. Now is time for the irrigation breakdown; we've been down to 29 degrees. We did just start harvesting our last patch of beans and our first patch of broccoli! We're hoping for a warm November for our final outdoor markets, which go until Nov. 20th; then onward with lots of winter farming; how fun!

PEST NEWS FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Ann Hazelrigg

Downy mildew found on basil; this disease is a relatively new one for basil, showing up in Vermont in 2008. It is likely to be a more common problem in the future. Symptoms include yellowing plants that look like they have a nutritional problem. The undersides of the leaves are covered with dirty looking spores that make the crop unmarketable. The basil downy mildew fungus (*Peronospora belbahrii*) can be spread in contaminated seed, through marketing of infected basil leaves, and as wind-dispersed spores. Using seed not infested with the basil downy mildew pathogen, selecting a less susceptible variety, and applying fungicides are the primary management practices for downy mildew. Minimizing leaf wetness and reducing humidity to obtain conditions unfavorable for disease development may suppress downy mildew, especially in greenhouses. While it has been documented that seed can be infested with this pathogen, the extent to which this occurs is not known. There have been only a few situations where infested seed appeared to be a likely source of the downy mildew pathogen. For varietal resistance, more management considerations and pictures of the disease go to <http://vegetablemendonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/BasilDowny.html>.

Swede midge has been confirmed in Brassicas at second Chittenden county farm. Swede midge is another relatively new pest to Vermont affecting only brassicas. The larvae of the fly feed on and disfigure or destroy the growing tip of the plant. Multiple small heads may develop or the growing point may just rot. The first discovery of Swede midge in the US was in 2004 on a broccoli farm in Niagara County, NY. The insect is native to Europe and southwestern Asia and has been known in North America only since 2000 when it was identified in Ontario, Canada. Once on your farm, it is difficult to eradicate. However, with the use of best management practices you should be able to keep insect populations low enough to avoid economic damage. Proper management incorporates as many strategies as possible and should minimally include: use of clean transplants, 2-3 year rotation of non-Brassicas, post harvest crop destruction, Swede midge detection and monitoring and insecticides. More info on the pest, symptoms of damage and management can be found at: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/ent/swedemidge/index.html>. Please let us me know if you have either of the two problems above so I can track their extent; (802)656-0493 or ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu

PLEASANT VALLEY FARM TOUR AND OPEN HOUSE

On Sunday Oct. 24 from 1-4 pm everyone is welcome at 118 S. Valley Rd., Argyle NY to walk around on their own, ask questions of us, or join in tour from 2-3 pm. Come see all fruit and vegetable fields (about 6 acres), washing station (nearing GAP certification), high tunnels with winter crops, greenhouse with radiant heated rolling benches, solar system, farm equipment, flower gardens, root cellar, farm animals (chickens, pigs, and horses) and more! See how we grow and prepare all we sell at the farmers' markets each week year-round! All ages welcome. Contact us for directions: Paul and Sandy Arnold, arnold.pvf@gmail.com or 518-638-6501.

MARKETING COURSE and ON-FARM ENERGY COURSE FOR GROWERS

Both these 3-day courses will be held at the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce in Berlin, VT. The On-Farm Energy course takes place Nov. 16, 30 and Dec. 7; the Marketing course is on Nov. 4, 18 and Dec. 9. Each course fee is \$125 for books, materials, lunches (\$25 discount for taking both courses). For intermediate to advanced growers, these courses will help you develop practical, action-oriented plans for the 2010 growing season. You will learn how to select and implement strategies that match your farm operation. For more information call 802-434-4122 or email info@nofavt.org.

WHOLE FARM PLANNING COURSE FOR BEGINNING WOMEN FARMERS

Apply by Oct. 29 for this free 10-session course being held on Tuesdays in Hartland, VT and Saturdays in North Haverhill, NH. It is geared toward women farmers with 1-10 years of experience managing a farm operation. It offers training in creating a holistic goal, financial planning, marketing, decision making and other skills that will support women farmers as they develop their farm businesses, as well as basic soil and pasture management. Limited to 15 participants. Six sessions take place this winter and 4 farm tours take place during the spring and summer. More info about the course and application materials are at http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/?Page=whole_farm_planning.html or contact Jessie Schmidt, 802-223-2389 or newfarmer@uvm.edu. Applications are also being accepted for farmers interested in serving as paid mentors for this course; you must have at least 10 years of farm management experience interest in Holistic Farm Management; apply by Nov. 15.

NAP CROP INSURANCE

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non commercially-insurable crops. NAP can provide a safety net when low yields, loss of inventory or plantings occur due to natural disasters. Consider coverage if you don't have it, or review your coverage and add or remove any crops for the 2011 growing season. The cost of NAP coverage is \$250 per crop with a maximum of \$750 per producer, or \$1,875 for multi-county producers. (Limited financial resource producers may request a waiver of the service fees.)

Note the following deadlines to apply for coverage: Nov. 20, 2010: for forage and perennial crops, including mixed hay, alfalfa and pastures; strawberries, blueberries and other perennial fruit shrubs and fruit trees such as cherry, plum, pear and nectarine; rhubarb and asparagus (apples and peaches are insured under RMA program, with the same deadline). Jan. 1, 2011: maple sap. Mar. 15, 2011: annual spring seeded crops, including lettuce, kale and other greens, squash and pumpkins, peppers; tomatoes, broccoli, onions, garlic etc. (field corn and sweet corn are insured under RMA with the same deadline). For more info contact your local Farm Service Agency office. <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/>

SEASON EXTENSION AND HIGH TUNNEL WEBINAR SERIES

This on-line program takes place Nov. 1, 3, 8, 16, and 18, 2010; each is a 1-2-hour program. The first three webinars focus on pest management in various season extension systems, especially for tomatoes and winter crops. The last two webinars focus on soil, water, and nutrient management, plus a summary of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) high tunnel pilot project initiated in 2010. Pre-registration is required at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/season_ext and the cost is \$30 (for any or all webinars). Webinars will be recorded and available on-line soon after original airdate. For more info: Ann Hazelrigg, (802) 656-0493 or ann.hazelrigg@uvm.edu.

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

Oct. 20, 3-5:30 pm. Johnny's Selected Seeds Twilight Walk, Albion ME.

Nov. 3-4. Northeast Greenhouse Conference, Worcester MA.

Nov. 6-7. Farmer to Farmer Conference, Northport ME

Nov 8. GAPS Workshop for Growers. Colchester VT.

Dec. 10. GAPS Workshop for Growers. White River Jct. VT

Jan. 31, 2011. Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Annual Meeting, Montpelier VT