



University of Vermont

Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Vermont Vegetable and Berry Grower News – October 3, 2025

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<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Jericho) We upgraded capacity on our irrigation system this year to keep crops going. Happy to have the sun and so far no flooding this year. Used weekly soil EC testing this summer to monitor soil fertility on tomatoes and cucumbers in the tunnels and found we did a much better job keeping up with crop demands while not overfertilizing. Found the method easy to do and not too time consuming. Crop yields definitely improved (though other variables to consider).

Conversion to winter greens going as planned thus far - trying a few later seeding dates on some crops to balance out our warm/prolonged autumns. It's getting tricky to not overlap with field production in the early winter (which no longer feels like early winter). Fall crops are growing fast. Need to get the beets harvested before they are the size of babies' heads. Markets strong, customers happy, crew awesome! Hoping for another great snow year.

(Richmond) We had an amazing blueberry season, our best since buying the farm 10 years ago and possibly in the history of the farm. They just kept going! The lack of SWD pressure was helpful and all the sunshine made them very flavorful. Bloom was excellent and clearly we had great fruit set despite it being cool and wet back in the spring.

We are grateful that we installed irrigation over the last couple of years so the drought didn't impact them. We did leaf analysis this summer to help guide our transition from granular fertilizer to water soluble through the irrigation tape. We also applied a lot more mulch over the last year and that may have contributed to our record breaking crop this summer.

(Rochester) Droughty conditions and two frosty nights on September 20 and 21 have caused a poor fall raspberry harvest.

(Underhill) I'm not sure where the pumpkins got their water from, but they sized up great to be one of our best crops, plentiful and with good stems.

A frost on 9/21 put an end to the sweet corn and PYO flowers a little sooner than desired, and it killed our popcorn too, which looks to not have developed enough to reach maturity, bummer. It did help us get started on fall clean up earlier, and get winter rye on all our corn ground by the end of Sept.

We got to borrow a no-till drill this year, so looking forward to seeing how it works compared to the Brillion we usually use for seeding fall cover crops. We got 1"+ of rain the week prior so soil conditions were good for seeding.

Fall farmstand sales are steady, though the customer base swung from locals to tourists when the sweet corn stopped. "See you next season!" one regular said, as we were just ramping up our fall displays. "We're still open through Halloween" I replied.

(Orwell) Days get shorter, night temperatures drop, but dry sunny days continue. This has contributed to low disease and a high quality in late season tunnel tomatoes. We are pleased by results of increased ventilation during humid part of the summer, with peak-mounted fans pushing hot humid air out of the tunnel. We also installed automated roll ups on a couple of tunnels and quickly realized that our previous intuition of when to open and close the sides doesn't line up with information from the thermostats. Now the controllers are a good cue for when the crew should open up the other tunnels!

We had terrible cracking on our later planting of tomatoes, not sure if it was varietal or heat/water related. Every year we convince ourselves we need a late planting, and most years it seems like a waste of labor and input costs. We are noting two things: 1) the market is weak this time of year; and 2) if we do a good job with the main season tomatoes, we don't need the late planting.

Outdoor cover crops are doing better than anticipated. Consistent morning dew has been just enough to move them along. We have a nice field with strips of oats and daikon. We may overseed the oats with clover and leave that as living cover next spring, growing crops where the radish was. Fun to think about creative ways to reduce soil disturbance, and our work load, with cover crops.

(Plianfield NH) Big frost event tonight, we have row covered everything of value. The frost will tone the pace down, and the farmstand will close Columbus Day (or whatever it is now called) and the fall CSA will start the following Wednesday.

Fall wholesale is a big time of year for us; we haven't yet started moving potatoes. We had a surprisingly good yield of all root crops. Potatoes, sweet potatoes carrots all did very well considering the heat and (continuing) drought. We were able to drag the travelers around and get some water on at the critical times.

Fall raspberries produced well as we focused drip on them. The planting is very old and other than the more recently planted Anne and Jaclyn varieties, has reduced cane growth indicating virus. Still, fruit load has been good and SWD was contained or not around.

Still picking a little Hail Mary sweet corn, and cherry tomatoes in the field are still productive and healthy, even most of the first plantings.

Even with the cold and rain of spring, then extreme heat and drought, we are actually looking at a pretty decent year. There is climate resiliency in diversity. We have a nice selection of greens in the greenhouses along with a house of nice tomatoes just starting, should be in good shape regardless of what freezes tonight.

(Little Compton RI) Barely scratched through this summer's drought! Had to give up on two wells that got too low and endangered the \$3000 pump. Desperate to keep a late-planted (July 2) potato crop alive, we put one line of drip centered between the two hills. It did a great job and kept plants going till the some late rains that bulked up the potatoes. Biggest pest was potato leaf hopper, it kept reappearing.

We learned not to have winter squash seedlings in a greenhouse with cucumber plants. Two spotted spider mites (always on GH cucumbers) jumped to the squash and got planted outside in the dry summer heat and went crazy. The crop was suffering but I thought it was cuke beetles and keep spraying to fight the wrong battle. When harvesting in September we saw millions of spider mites on the squash. We gave them a spray bath in our Nolts veg washer with high concentration of Oxidate which seems to have worked. We had another situation where a strong Oxidate spray cleared out a spider mite infestation in raspberries.

Alternaria in cauliflower is just unstoppable! Trying to chose varieties that are resistant. We found OMRI approved OSO to be ineffective so we rely more on copper.

I heard there was some ozone damage to crops during the worst of the heat wave. A lot of the problems we had this season were exacerbated by lack of water.

VVBGA ON FARM WORKSHOP - OCTOBER 14, 3:00-5:30

HIGH TUNNELS FOR YEAR-ROUND ORGANIC VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Intervale Community Farm, 281 Intervale Rd, Burlington, VT 05401

Cost: Free. No pre-registration required.

Intervale Community Farm serves ~700 CSA members throughout the year, growing an array of certified-organic produce on 20 acres and in 29,000 sq. ft. of high tunnels, from older, small structures to newer, larger structures. Andy Jones has been the farm manager at ICF since 1993.

He'll share an overview of the farm's operations. We'll tour the high tunnel complex that includes two new Harnois structures for production of greenhouse tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers in summer, followed by greens in winter. Andy and ICF staff will talk about tunnel management, transition from warm to cold crops, and winter greens including varieties, planting, disease management, environmental conditions and harvest. UVM personnel will offer observations about soil fertility and pest management. This event is supported by the [Transition to Organic Partnership Program](#).

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT UPDATES

Fall is an excellent time to test your soil, allowing time to make soil fertility plans for next season. Samples can be sent to the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab and cost \$17 each for analysis. Soil samples must be taken every 5 years and analyzed by a lab that uses modified Morgan extract to comply with Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices. If cost is a barrier, financial assistance is available to help cover costs of soil sampling.

It's not too late for fall cover cropping! Getting a cover crop on your soil now can help prevent winter and early spring erosion—and provide soil health benefits for cash crops that follow the cover crop in the spring! Winter rye and winter wheat are hardy grains and excellent late season cover crops; wheat tends to be shorter and less vigorous than rye, so a good choice for growers with limited equipment for spring termination. They can be seeded as late Nov 1; increase rates by 30% if seeding mid October or later. Check out the Northeast cover crop selector tool or Managing Cover Crops Profitably for more information.

Contact Becky Maden for support with soil sampling and cover cropping decisions:
rebecca.maden@uvm.edu

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS

Thinking about grants for projects on the farm? A list of funding opportunities for Vermont vegetable and fruit farms can be found at <https://go.uvm.edu/vegfundinglist>. Here are grants open for applications in the next 2 months:

SARE Farmer Grant, open to all Northeast farms

Grants for farmers to explore new concepts in sustainable agriculture conducted through experiments, surveys, prototypes, on-farm demonstrations or other research and education techniques. Awards range from \$5,000 to \$30,000. Application deadline is December 9.
<https://northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/farmer-grant-program/>

Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP)

Grants toward purchase of equipment to support water quality on Vermont farms. Successful CEAP applications for vegetable farms include grain drills, precision fertilizer equipment, and flail mowers. <https://go.uvm.edu/ceap>. 90% cost share of up to \$50,000 depending on equipment type. Application deadline is November 1. <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/ceap>

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Business Enhancement Grant

Grants to support Vermont farm businesses through projects such as infrastructure development, market development, workforce training and research and development. Awards of \$10,000-\$50,000, no match required. Applications open October 17 and deadline is December 11.

<https://workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/business-enhancement-grant>

Vermont Working Lands Advanced Wood Heating Initiative

Grants to install or upgrade systems in Vermont that use locally sourced wood, wood residues, and wood waste. Reimburses up to 50% of project costs up to \$25,000. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact molly.willard@vermont.gov or 802-261-1681 with questions and to request a grant application. [Case study example for Mettowee Mint](#).

Historic Preservation Barn Grants

Funding for projects for repair and adaptive use of Vermont historic agricultural buildings. Up to \$20,000 per project; 50% match required. Application deadline is December 1.

<https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/barn-grants>

Need help finding and applying for funding? Contact Julie Callahan for help with any type of funding for your farm: Julie.callahan@uvm.edu or Rachel Stievater for help understanding and accessing NRCS programs: Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 12-13. Northeast Greenhouse Conference and Expo. Manchester NH.

<https://www.negreenhouse.org/>

December 10-11. High Tunnel Production Conference. Lebanon NH

<https://extension.unh.edu/event/2025/12/high-tunnel-production-conference-enhance-your-tunnel-vision>

January 20, 2026. VVBGA Annual Meeting. Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee VT

February 19, 2026. No-Till and Cover Crop Conference, Burlington VT