



**Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – November 1, 2023**  
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## **REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**

(Hinesburg) Outdoor fall greens and hoophouse greens look good. I expect that the supply of fall greens is up, because wholesale orders are light and fall CSA signups are not where we'd like. October farmstand traffic has been up the past 2 Octobers. Mild weather helps. Winter cutworm damage seems lighter this year, or is it the bed prep, tarping, flaming sequence? No sign of aphids in the hoophouses. Pushed garlic planting back an additional few days this year.

(Rochester) In the spring of 2022 we cut nine hundred of our blueberry bushes down to the crown in the hope of eradicating, or largely eradicating, the stem blights *Fusicoccum* and *Phomopsis* which had widely infested our Jersey, Blue Crop, and Blue Ray varieties. For several years we had treated them with lime sulfur in the spring to apparently no effect, so we decided to forego two years of yield in the hope the plants would rebound free of these diseases. It seems to have worked. Most of these plants have responded with strong upright growth that at this stage appears to be very healthy and have now formed what appear to be excellent buds that will fruit next year. Going forward we will probably do the same to other plants that are struggling or stressed as we find them during the pruning process.

(Guildhall) 2023 has been our longest harvest in quite some time. We started October 2, and have been just crawling thru it since. As I write, we've only 2 acres to go, so very nearly done. We started on a 20-acre field of clay that, though it didn't technically flood, had standing water in it most of the summer. The incredible amount of clumpy soil coming up the harvester kept us in first gear the whole way and meant unloading trucks took 2 hours instead of 40 minutes.

Quality was a mixed bag on that field. No rhizoc or scab, but silver scurf on the Soraya, and hollow heart in Soraya, Waneta, and Algonquin chefs. Gold Rush, Peter Wilcox, and Marcy did well avoiding the hollow. Quite a lot of rot in the Waneta on that field as well. On the sandy fields all varieties did significantly better. In particular, for reasons unknown, the Red Norlands this year were the best I've ever grown. On the whole yields were significantly lower than usual. On the clay yields averaged 28,000 lbs, on the sand 35,000 lbs. This is in contrast to our usual averages which run north of 40,000 lbs.

Markets are alright. In general our markets are steady. However we sent samples to the repacker at the terminal, perfect golds, truly perfect. Repacker offered \$24 a cwt and he wouldn't budge. I think we need \$30 to cover all the extra expenses and flooded acres this year, but watching 120k lbs. not get sold because of 6 cents a lb. is pretty darn lame.

(Burlington) Nice to have a warmer drier October to wrap up our wet season. On balance, things turned out better than I expected in mid-July, due in part to the favorable conditions. I am interested to see how long we can reasonably store the short-season summer cabbages we replanted after losing all of our storage cabbage in the field.

While we had Brussels sprouts survive flooding, they were set back enough that a large number of them did not size up enough. Grandevo seems to be keeping our modest cabbage aphid population under control. Replanted carrot and beet crops have been great, and we harvested almost all of them out without significant loss to deer. Winter greens look good in the tunnels, though we are struggling with some aphids in our herbs and kale.

Sales have been solid for our winter CSA shares, despite our advertised reduced offerings. Somehow less butternut, fewer and smaller cabbages, and a reduced portion of root vegetables isn't deterring our signups. Summer CSA shares finished strong with a lot of high-quality October crops. I am curious to read the results of our summer CSA survey and see how our membership thought things turned out.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Snow on Monday morning October 30, no killing frost here yet. Interesting for all the greenhouses crops that do very well, especially spinach and the other winter greens. We usually rely on killing frost to kill weeds late fall, this has not happened yet. Galinsoga grew more than expected and probably went to seed. Looking backward to the fall, we had exceptionally nice hot dry weather for all the harvests and to take all the plastic out of the field. Market very slow, hard to sell and prices in Montreal are down. We decided to reduce our production capacity by not seeding some of our greenhouses. What is the point of producing if we cannot sell? Feeling good, tired but from a "good" fatigue. Looking toward winter for rest and some solutions for next year!

(Winchester NH) Standouts from this fall on our vegetable farm have been: no flea beetles, no Alternaria on the kales or cabbages (did 4 applications of OSO brand zinc salts make the difference?) and unusually variable growth of the oats in several of our fall cover crops. Peas, vetch, clover, and triticale all look more uniform and happy, growing in the same ground.

(Little Compton RI) Very tough retail month of October with so much rain on the weekends. City farmers' markets can be very profitable but after 5 rainy Saturdays the patrons were spending their dollars elsewhere! Our best fall profit margins were on beans, broccoli and cauliflower; winter squash, lettuce and greens a close second. Funny after making great gains during the summer with Chinese broccoli (Happy Rich, etc.) they were almost completely overlooked when the beans and cauliflower displays were big and effulgent!

Still very short on labor and so having to make difficult decisions on what to harvest when fall weather threatens. Potato vines were dead for a month and a half. Luckily, they gave us a bountiful crop with surprisingly little silver scurf. Got three more weeks of hail Mary beans to cover and uncover to try and have beans for Thanksgiving. This season we planted Honey Nut every 12 inches. We feel it helped bring up the pounds per square foot vs planting at 18 or 24 inches.

Just built our last big greenhouses from Beiler Greenhouse structures in PA, came with a Mennonite crew of three that did more work in 21 hours than our crew of four could do in a month and a half. Hiring them is my best farm investment in three years!

(Argyle NY) Pleasant Valley Farm. Hard to believe our farm has not had a frost yet though last night was close at 32 F. Great to not have to rowcover early in the season but we have been irrigating a lot this fall. Warm temps this fall kept tunnel crops producing and tomatoes, eggplant, peppers were all ripped out green over last few weeks. Trying to get all the winter crops transplanted in has been a challenge with too much work and not enough help. We will have a lot of Salanova lettuce coming on and using emergency heat as necessary to kick on when less than 24 F under 1 to 3 layers of covers.

So far, not a lot of disease or insect issues except for cutworms and our new difficult to control pest, pill bugs! There are hundreds under plastic and they ate basil and other crops. We continue to hot water treat our spinach seeds and think it is important, as well as doing drenches with biologicals like Rootshield, Actinovate, and Botrystop, which we feel helps combat white mold of lettuce. Venting 24/7 also helps.

Garlic planted and overwintered onions to be planted soon. Potatoes still green (planted late) but not for long and we will harvest soon as well. Cover crop down and hoping we have more hours of rest after the busy Thanksgiving season.

Our online store for local folks has stayed steady with wonderful grateful customers. The new NYC venture delivering to CSAs has been a bit of a struggle but picking up, and our goal is to hire a full time administrator for our farm soon! Know anyone?

## **AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING UPDATES**

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan, UVM Extension

Now that the season is slowing down it's a good time to think about remotely monitoring your greenhouses or coolers so you can spend a little more time by the wood stove and less time out in the elements checking on things. Our blog post on this topic highlights some of the options to meet this need, see <http://go.uvm.edu/monitoring>.

Fall is also a great time to start thinking about upgrades and improvements for the next year. If you are considering a wash pack upgrade, we have over a dozen post harvest case studies from small to large scale operations who've made improvements that worked well for their operations. Read lessons learned, see photos of equipment or videos from growers who shared their projects here: <https://go.uvm.edu/phcs>

We have 4 new YouTube Videos out which answer you common questions regarding cleaning and sanitizing. We highlight the 4 steps to cleaning and sanitizing. What is an appropriate detergent for farm use? Safely dispensing Sanitizers and how to use sanitizers on a produce farm. See <https://go.uvm.edu/agengyt>. For additional cleaning resources in various formats visit <https://go.uvm.edu/scrubresources>

New Episodes of The Farmer's Share Podcast: <https://thefarmersshare.com>: Paul Chamberlin – Chamberlin’s Garden and Farm Market: EP12. The Naked Acre Farm Home Front - Ryan and Genica: EP13

## **2023 HIGH TUNNEL CONFERENCE**

The "Revitalizing Your Tunnel Vision" conference will be held December 6 and 7 at the Fireside Inn and Suites, West Lebanon, N.H. This conference is for high tunnel vegetable growers and agricultural service providers of all experience levels. Take advantage of this opportunity to fine-tune your high tunnel crop production skills and visit the trade show. Registration is \$100 for first farm attendee, \$75 for each additional registrant from the same farm. Check out the conference agenda at <https://www.uvm.edu/~htunnel/events.html> and register online at <https://bit.ly/TUNNEL23>