University of Vermont
Extension
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – November 2, 2026

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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Hinesburg) Weather has been great for working. Did our "last" winter squash harvest three times. It never quite got cold enough to damage the fruits, and more kept ripening. Hoophouse greens are growing in well.

Also been nice weather for pests. Dramatic damage by seed corn maggot on our overwinter onion planting. Cut worms, a problem as always, beneficial, nematodes, helpful, but not before lots of damage is done.

Building another hoophouse. Hoping for less employee turnover next year. Felt like I was training every day.

(Westminster) Climate change has its pluses and minuses. On the plus side, the growing seasons are longer, especially with later frosts in the fall. The problem is we've gotten accustomed to the longer season, but this year, since August, there have been considerably fewer growing degree days than we've gotten used to. The storage crops are maturing later than we like. Our storage cabbage is not heading up like it should and our late plantings of beets aren't making size.

Other than that, the fall harvest has gone well with plenty of dry weather. Winter squash has held up well, with the exception of Red Kuri. And we've been able to get ahead of winter cleanup, taking care of some maintenance projects we've put off for years.

We've also been able to manure some fields for early spring crops, saving time next spring. That also helps us meet the days-to-harvest organic requirements. We're always looking for ways to efficiently use manure, because it's difficult to make compost for 200 acres of vegetables.

And our greenhouses are full of greens for our winter market. So it's been a good fall on the production side, although margins are thinner than ever. The price of everything – fuel, boxes – keep rising, but farmers don't get paid any more.

(Huntington) In a year when one falls a little behind in August/September, it certainly is nice to have a pleasantly droughty October to help catch up. We did get 3.2" of rain here in October, but that was mostly over 2 events and we were only kept out of the field for 2 days all month.

After 2 excessively wet years and one kinda dry year, a quasi-unmemorable weather year like 2026 was a welcome change. Most our storage crops did well, the barns are full, and orders are strong with our local wholesale customers. Pricing has been tricky this year, as we do have increased costs, but so have our customers. I exist in a state of low-level paranoia about demand destruction during any economic downturns, but so far, my paranoia has been just that.

We had one of those magical Brussels sprouts falls where there just aren't very many aphids. I wish I could take credit, but I have no idea why they fluctuate from year to year. It certainly is nice to have an "on" year with that crop, though. Field kale is still going strong, and the multiple 23 degree nights we've had have made our galinsoga magically disappear.

I look forward to bumping into farmer friends at NH and VT meetings this December and January.

(Orwell) We're continuing to sell the last of the summer tunnel crops: tomatoes, snack peppers, and eggplant. A late tunnel of zucchini is coming in strong, with the most beautiful zucchini of the year. It went in later than planned, but the plants grew so quickly and fruit continues to form despite shorter days and cooler nights.

Sunny weather has pushed along tunnel greens so we've enjoyed an early harvest of those crops as well. We've seen a little evidence of winter cutworms this fall, but no devastation yet. We're trying to stay on top of rodent and pest control by mowing the edges of tunnels, removing weed fabric and other hiding areas, and keeping a close eye on early signs of damage, with the hopes of having a steady supply of greens all winter.

We're also getting a jump on some fall projects, including fixing damaged rollups and doors, taking down old tunnels, and building new ones. The crew seems to love the shift in projects, skilling up with tools and carpentry, and having a little more time to enjoy the delicious produce from the farm.

(Underhill) Sold out of pumpkins! Could have sold more if we had them; it was a tough season for that crop this year. It did make clean up a little quicker, and sales slowing down sooner wasn't all bad either. Total farmstand sales just about match last season.

Winter rye has a nice stand, next year’s strawberries are looking good so far, garlic beds are made and planting going in this first week of November. A slower paced fall is already getting us excited for next season.

(Shrewsbury) This year our farm had success growing fall vegetables following legume-heavy cover crops, with reduced or eliminated N applications. It's been rewarding to grow more of our own N through legume cover crop mixes, and to learn more about how to calibrate our fertilizer applications relative to the cover crop and cash crop.

Spring sown oats/peas (heavy on the peas) grew a great stand terminated early July, and grew a nice crop of fall beets, bok choi, salad turnips, and spinach without any other fertility inputs. Yellow blossom sweet clover terminated in early July was the sole fertility source for kale, chard, potatoes, and daikon radish that looked great.

Rye/vetch/crimson clover terminated in early June preceded an early July planting of head lettuce, kale, chard, scallions, fennel, and cabbage. It was sufficient to feed the faster crops of lettuce and cabbage, but the scallions, kale, chard, and fennel needed some additional N topdressing.

For next year we've seeded overwintering legume cover crops to see if we can expand our N contributions. We've added winter peas to the rye/vetch/crimson clover mix to see if that can help feed the subsequent cash crop, and are also trying that same mix with the substitution of MN equinox barley for rye (faster maturing and shorter growing).

We've seeded a few fields of balansa clover on its own and with other cover crops to see if that can be a useful nitrogen fixing cover crop on our farm.

We have enough legume-heavy overwintering cover crops seeded that we will try terminating some a couple weeks early...losing some of the N contribution but expanding the cash crops that we can grow following a legume cover crop into earlier planted vegetables. I don't expect those early terminated cover crops to provide all of the N fertility for the following cash crop, but it would be a win if we could reduce our application rate.

(Plainfield NH) Save for a few rows of carrots for bunching, everything is out of the ground and binned up. All the covers are in that are going in, and the business of wholesaling fall roots begins in earnest. We are also moving produce through a 100-member local CSA.

We have been working to manage invasives on the field edges as the bittersweet has gone extremely aggressive in the last 10 years. Strawberries going into winter looking good, but the black root complex seems to continue weakening the plants over the winter, so we are guardedly hopeful that conditions will make them overwinter more successfully than they did last year.

We are gathering machinery and bringing it back for annual cleaning and servicing. Half of the H2A crew has flown south, three remain to help us with pack out, raspberry tipping and blueberry pruning until Thanksgiving. The business of tax prep and making decisions about future farm trajectory will begin later this month.

(Argyle NY) It’s been glorious autumn weather. Went down to 25 degrees several times; we didn’t lose anything we didn’t want to! Biggest problem has been dryness; we are watering all fields, tunnels, and cover crops from our pond.

Flipping tunnels from summer to winter has dragged on due to limited help. Still harvesting cherry tomatoes, peppers and green beans in the tunnel. Seychelles and Monte Gusto beans have been amazing producers. Beds in one tunnel will be steamed soon for planting Chandler strawberries and spinach.

Outside we are harvesting arugula, bok choi, and other greens. Saturday was our last harvest of dahlias which were in the same spot for 2 winters inside a low tunnel and survived great with a couple rowcover layers and straw. This fall we are digging them to get split. Potatoes are finally down and will be harvested next week.

Our online store allowed us to reduce deliveries to simplify things and reduce our workload. We continue to search for good quality, organic produce for items we don't grow anymore. Sales are consistent with a great customer base.

This summer we had a new pest called the spinach flea beetle (red-headed and large) which devastated our Swiss chard. Took weeks to figure it out as it is nocturnal. It made lace of the leaves every day even with spraying Pyganic in evenings. These beetles also eat spinach and other greens, so beware!

Some celery seed we bought was not hot water treated so the crop came down with Cercospora that spread onto our treated seed crop that had been clean. Celery has always been a money-making crop for us.

We have been working with an arugula research group. Results are not consistent, but steam treated seed seems to help with bacterial diseases. Get more info from the webinar, below, and at the NEVF conference in December.

ARUGULA AND BRASSICA LEAFY GREENS WEBINAR
Nov. 11 from 12:00-1:00

The Northeast Arugula Team (NEAT) has studied bacterial disease resistance, flea beetle predation, and time-to-bolt in arugula. They conducted on-farm variety trials and compared practices that address production limitations. Join this webinar to learn about research findings, cultivar recommendations, and high tunnel management practices. Free to attend; register here to get the link for the webinar. Questions? Cameron Cedeno, cjc315@psu.edu or 724-732-2238.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 6 from 1:00–3:00. Weather Network & NEWA Training. Cate Hill Orchard, 697 Shadow Lake Rd., Craftsbury Common, VT. Free. Join Terence Bradshaw, Director of the UVM Horticulture Research and Education Center, for a hands-on grower training on getting the most from your on-farm weather station and connecting local weather data to management decisions tailored for apples, berries, grapes, and vegetable crops. You'll learn how to install, maintain, and use weather station data to better understand conditions in your fields and make more informed decisions about frost protection, pest management, and crop timing.

December 15-17. New England Fruit and Vegetable Conference. Manchester NH.
January 19. VVBGA Annual Meeting, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee VT. Details in December.
February 14-15. NOFA-VT Winter Conference, St. Michael's College, Colchester VT
April 16-17. VT Farm Show. Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, VT