



Vermont Vegetable and Berry Grower News – November 3, 2025

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

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westminster West) Blue skies and a bit of rain helped push late crops to the finish line. Cabbage, carrots, leeks and Gilfeathers all needed the water. Cover crops look best in years, considering how dry it was, I'm amazed! Oats and peas, daikons mixed with ladino clover mixed look great.

Finished getting 18,000 garlic cloves in, with ground cover between the beds for weed and erosion control. Tomorrow we start planting garlic inside a tunnel, tripling last year's amount. Yield was great and labor was down, so trying more crops like in tunnel.

Summer farmers' market finished last week with our sales up 15% over last year despite the first 6 market days being rainy. Winter indoor market started this past weekend and sales exceeded last year's opening day. So retail sales are not a problem but wholesale not as good. Squash moving, potatoes almost sold out, but not a stellar crop compared to last year. Turmeric and ginger sell in spurts, other minor crops did well. Planning next year and can't believe it's been 55 years doing this! Going to a gym regularly now to keep ahead of Father Time.

(Hinesburg) Finishing up transplanting the last of winter tunnels. We struggled with winter cutworm in recent years. Tried adding nematodes at transplant this year. They may be helping on kale and carrots, they are looking good. Asian greens are getting hammered. Maybe we overlooked the nematodes on them? Or it hasn't helped? Spinach transplants were devoured by pill bugs. Started some late replacements. We will be way off our expected fall spinach yields.

All that's left to harvest outside is some lettuce, salad turnips, and kale. Last planting of outdoor Salanova is fantastic. After several years of damaged leaf tips on the last couple plantings, I remembered to hoop them this year. I think the wind beating the row cover on frozen leaves did damage in past years. The hoops keep some of the pressure off. Several plots of rye and vetch are greening up. The latest plot of rye has just barely germinated, we will see how it does.

(Hyde Park) This was my final week with full time help, and my trusty part-time helper has started a new winter full-time gig. So I'm on my own, hoping I can rope my wife in for a day a week.

Construction season starts now and we have many building projects on the docket. Some may even get done. Due to the incredible help I had this season, the field is in great shape heading into next season, clean and ready. I've never seen such a beautiful and complete pile of sandbags, ever.

We are still selling carrots and cabbage, though the deer have found the cabbage. Electric fence worked well until desperation became stronger than fence shock. Otherwise nice fall field crops. After a year's reprieve from winter cutworm, they came on strong but only in one tunnel of spinach which had already succumbed to what looks like crown mites. Seems like spinach is harder to grow here than it should be. Cutworm damage in other tunnels with spinach is minimal. After a couple applications of beneficial nematodes, cutworm presence slowed down so I think nematodes are working. Spraying anything else has not worked; I don't even try any more.

Tunnel lettuce was disappointing this fall even with "nice" weather. Uneven, slow growth compared to past years but still plenty to sell. Non-lettuce mixed greens and salad mixes are going strong and sales are steady. I may protect them this week from nights in the teens. Chickweed is a major concern for my tunnels though less this year due to tarping, mulching, and great help. Vigilant hoeing just after germination helps.

I have my annual farm meeting this month, with attendance of one, where I will hone what to grow in hopes of having weekends off and more family time. If anyone has hacked the code, please let me know. Though it was another challenging and stressful growing season especially early on, I feel ready and excited to start planning a new one.

(Orwell) Transitioning away from summer crops to fall/winter is happening, tunnel by tunnel. Each year we think about tricks to speed up removal of tomato plants and flip quickly to greens. We hardly use plastic clips any more and this helps. We also started windrowing plants alongside the tunnel, then flail mow them and put chopped material in the compost. Much less material, that composts quicker, and hopefully less disease carry over.

Customer appetite for summer crops drops this time of year but we can still move several cases a week of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and zucchini along with greens. Ventilation improvements in two tomato tunnels kept plants producing from early June until end of October with less disease pressure than ever.

This year we are going to be more vigilant about thrips in our prep house. We refuse to rip out our joyful rosemary and fig plants, but these are winter habitat for the pests, so we will monitor and release beneficials in early spring. Winter greens are establishing nicely, the paper pot transplanter is critical for allowing us a little bit of time to prep houses before planting.

(Underhill) We are thankful for a strong pumpkin crop to make up for a poor sweet corn crop. Retail sales were steady though October. We've always closed after Halloween, but will try pushing the season through Thanksgiving this year since we still have squash and local goods in the farm store. Looks like the popcorn matured enough, so will be harvesting that between rain showers; the stalks are starting to lodge. We got garlic in but it was challenging to plant into raised beds that were formed in August, so the soil had become quite hard.

(Waterbury Center) Cut flower grower. This season the dahlia crop was limited due to high heat causing slow flowering, and heavy tarnished plant bug pressure. We used biological controls and IPM to control insect pressure. This is a major crop for us. Now we are digging dahlia tubers in the field, preparing for winter storage, which is similar to potatoes.

As soon as crops started being really productive we had frost in the field on Sept 20. Used row cover tent in high tunnels on dahlias and cutting chrysanthemum crop which prevented frost damage there. Ornamental cutting kales and winterbury survived in the field (which is usual), so we are able to go to the farmers market till the end of October. We had a great Winterberry/ilex crop, which was demolished by heavy rain. This never happened before; another crop loss.

High tunnel tulip bulbs are planted, and the field bulbs are next. Dusting bulbs with sulfur to prevent fungus and blight. Holland is using less toxic fungicides, increasing the potential of diseases. Hoping for a stretch of drier weather to get these in and not pack down the soil. Black aphids are intensive in the high tunnels.

(Randolph and Rockingham) Despite the federal shutdown, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets has come through with USDA-funded awards for the Specialty Block Crop Grant program, allowing projects that were proposed and reviewed last winter to begin. Amid the current crisis, it's clearer than ever that state-wide networks and coalitions of farmers are critical to small farm survival.

Sarah Shaw of Hillside Botanicals and Julia Etter of Nomad Farm are excited to begin work on a statewide Herb Grower's Initiative, in partnership with the VVBGA, to explore challenges and opportunities around the technical aspects of growing and marketing medicinal and culinary herbs as a commercial crop. Look out for announcements regarding focus groups, conversations and ways to contribute your voice to the landscape of commercial herb growers across the state. If you have questions, please reach out to Sarah (sarah@hillsidebotanicals.com) and Julia (nomadfarmvt@gmail.com).

(Plainfield NH) The big news on our farm is the hurricane and how our past and present H2A Jamaican laborers and their families fared. House construction in Jamaica is usually block walls with rafter and tin roofing. Suffice to say all our guys will spend the winter procuring materials and trying to get a roof over their families. Fortunately there were no physical injuries or deaths that occurred in our crew's families. They put a positive spin on that fact and most are staying to the end of their contract period to bring home as much income for their families as possible, making the best of an impossible situation.

Still about 3/4 of an acre of carrots in the ground. Everything else is binned up. We have been broadcasting and cuffing in high rates of winter wheat and vetch in hopes of having a November warm enough to get it out of the ground with at least a little root growth. Multiple light frosts but no sub-30 degree freezes yet. Other tasks are pressure washing and storing machinery, and lots of filter and oil changes. A long list of shop projects for the winter is developing as we start to look closely at some of our "Age In Place" machinery.

Wholesale sales have been very good, with a fair amount of stuff coming out of the greenhouses and also for fall CSA. Soil samples taken and sent off to the lab. Garlic will be planted in the next week or two.

We invested in a mini excavator and flail head to maintain field edges. It is impressive how dominant invasive species have become in the last few years. We see expanding populations of bittersweet, fox grapevine, burning bush, and multiflora rose. Our strategy is to suppress the populations but unfortunately we can only do this in the fall when we have the time. If we were able to do it earlier, in the summer, we would be more successful as we would diminish plant reserves and stop the plants from photosynthesizing.

(Little Compton RI) Last root crops/potatoes safely in storage. Only brussels, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower left to fret over. Sprouting cauliflower is hit with farmers' market patrons and restaurants! We like JSS Song TJS-65; there is a purple version I think from Osborne Seeds. The harvestable heads are huge, like 18" across, but no matter, we snap them into good size florets and let folks scoop them up. Getting over \$6/lb.

We continue to have Alternaria issues; worst on cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. We may have to use our old Agtec gooseneck blower/sprayer to get the copper or whatever deeper in and through the canopy to get protection. OSO not showing promise on Brassicas though some say it works well on field tomatoes.

A problem in our area is "wheat rust" jumping to oats and (I have heard) jumping to rye! It may be coming in on organic seed. There is an article by a Canadian university claiming that this problem is also out West. So we are gathering info with hopes to submit a SARE grant to investigate it further.

Our very late potato planting (July 12) came in just fine with lucky intermittent showers in Sept/Oct. Our soil steamer is in constant use as we plant 11 greenhouses with mixed greens to sustain our winter market sales. Finally doing a thorough test of winter rye/buckwheat blend, to see if indeed the buckwheat plants dissuade Canada Geese from ruining our beautiful winter covers.

(Argyle NY) After a dry season, we were glad for rain to refill our spring which is freshwater used for the house, wash station. It was lowest we have ever seen. We got 2" this week, which put a halt to potato harvest. We hope to get the last of them out this week before cold comes in, but need soils to dry a bit.

Fall crops have done great. Leeks are insect free thanks to the netting we put over them for months. Some small Farmer Friend tunnels will be place over the last fall lettuce/salmon, and the dahlias, which will overwinter in the tunnel with a few layers of rowcover. SO much easier than digging all up! Temps will be monitored over winter with our Monnit system.

We planted rainbow chard in spring as usual and had our typical issue with tons of Cercospora spots on it, even inside a tunnel. So we hot water treated that same seed, planted our summer/fall beds and they are the nicest plants we have had in decades. Not 100% sure the disease was seed

borne, but sure seems like it! We had similar situation with parsley, and great results. We own our own hot water bath, and treat all spinach seed and most Brassicas.

Fall onions should be planted this week. Some will be in a Farmer's Friend tunnel on steamed beds, and others on biotello plastic. We are trialing Shakespeare onion for overwintering (sub for Forum); not sure of storageability. Increased planting of HiKeepers, which we know will do great! We start oversized onion sets in late winter for scallion production which works nicely.

Flipping winter tunnels using our the soil steamer w got last year; works well and it's quick, so all beds are steamed as we flip them. Very pleased with steaming results on many levels.

STILL picking yellow Mont Gusto beans in the tunnel, which have been amazing and beat the green beans by far! Have to rip them out this week but we love pole beans in the tunnels for the summer as only 2 plantings are needed and they just keep on going. Tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, eggplant and peppers are last crops to pull this week. Still productive with only a few nights of heaters running in the tunnel, and good flavor in the cherries. Celery still abundant in the tunnel and will hold into January with covers. Fall greens looking good, especially spinach. No sign of crown mites but plenty of worms. We have a tunnel trial with 4 types of arugula seeds; half were steam-treated by High Mowings, in hopes to help manage bacterial disease we always get. Great to hear from others if they experience it too. We have had it for years randomly and it can create a lot of loss. Contact us arnold.pvf@gmail.com

Chandler strawberry plugs are planted in the field and also in a tunnel for earlier May production. Most other fields have cover crop, some just emerging due to lack of moisture, but should be ok. Still struggling with not enough workers as we try to reduce our long working hours, but hopefully will find a few part-timers for the winter.

SUPPORT FOR JAMAICAN FARM WORKERS AFTER THE HURRICANE

Vermont hosts over 400 Jamaican farm workers on our fruit and vegetable farms every year. These hard-working people are part of our community, many if not most return to the same farms each year. Now they need our help. Quite a few Vermont farmers have set up on-line fundraising so they can give money directly to their H2A guys as they return home and begin to rebuild. Pick one or several funds if you are able to contribute. Here is a partial list, on the VT Tree Fruit Growers Assn. page <https://vermontapples.org/jamaican-apple-picking-crews-fundraiser/>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS

Thinking about grants or financial assistance for projects on the farm? A full list of funding opportunities for Vermont vegetable and fruit farms is at <https://go.uvm.edu/vegfundlist>. Need help finding and applying for funding? Contact Julie Callahan for help with any type of funding for your farm, Julie.callahan@uvm.edu. Contact Rachel Stievater for help understanding and accessing NRCS-VT programs, Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu.

SARE Farmer Grant- Open to all Northeast Farms

Grants to explore new concepts in sustainable agriculture through experiments, surveys, prototypes, on-farm demonstrations, etc. Awards range from \$5,000 to \$30,000. Applications are due December 9. <https://northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/farmer-grant-program/>

Vermont Specific Grants:

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Business Enhancement Grant. Supports projects such as infrastructure development, market development, workforce training and research and development. \$10,000-\$50,000 awards, no match required. Applications are due December 11. <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/business-enhancement-grant>

Vermont Working Lands Advanced Wood Heating Initiative. Supports installation or upgrade of systems that use locally sourced wood, wood residues, and wood waste. Reimburses up to 50% of project costs up to \$25,000. Grant funds awarded on first come, first served basis. Contact molly.willard@vermont.gov or 802-261-1681 with questions or to request an application. See this [example](#) of a funded project.

Historic Preservation Barn Grants. Support capital building projects for repair and adaptive use of historic agricultural buildings. Up to \$20,000; 50% match required. Applications are due December 1. <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/barn-grants>

SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND DIRECT MARKETS

UVM researchers want to hear from farmers with markets that interact directly with “end user” customers, either on the farm, at farmers’ markets, through agritourism, or other events. Take their survey to help them understand real-life decisions you make when considering sustainability. Individual responses are anonymous. Aggregated results from all farmers will be shared back to the farm community and policy makers along with recommendations aimed at improving support for agriculture. It takes about 15 minutes to complete the survey. At the end, you have the option to enter your contact information to receive a \$25 “cash” e-gift card, available to the first 200 respondents. Take the survey [here](#).

VERMONT AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT IMPACT SURVEY

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets urges farmers to complete the [2025 Agriculture Drought Impact Survey](#). This is for agricultural businesses, organizations, and individuals who raise animals, meat, poultry and/or grow feed and other crops including produce, maple products, Christmas trees, and horticultural plants, in Vermont. You can see the results of the survey compiled at this [dashboard](#). So far, 127 farmers have responded; 60% said this year was the worst drought they’ve ever seen. Over 60,000 acres have been affected with losses of \$11.3 million reported. This data may support requests for financial assistance to farmers.

FARMERS GET FREE REGISTRATION FOR FARM TO PLATE GATHERING

Farm members of the VVBGA can attend the F2P Gathering for free. It will be held Nov. 20-21 at the [Burke Mountain Hotel](#). Farmers and farmworkers can select the "No-Cost Registration" on the [registration page](#). In addition to a session on developing the produce supply chain, there will be sessions on climate resilience and policy, factors behind and efforts to stop farmland loss, farm viability, farmland access financing/funding, and different ways to engage in mutual aid across the state – and more! And as always, great opportunities to network, meet new people, and be in community with one another. See the [full agenda and link to registration](#).

HIGH TUNNEL PRODUCTION CONFERENCE, DECEMBER 10-11

The event will be at the Fireside Inn, West Lebanon, NH. Day one starts with a morning tour of tunnels at [Edgewater Farm](#) in nearby Plainfield, NH. The afternoon has farmer-to-farmer sessions on tunnel cucumbers and winter greens. Day two sessions are on high tunnel environmental controls, irrigation and nutrient management, diagnosing abiotic issues, habitat and trap plants for pest management in tunnels, tunnel tomato economics, plus a grower round table. There is also a trade show. Registration is \$120 for both days; \$90 for additional people from the same farm. Fee includes lunch on both days. For New England applicators, 5.75 pesticide re-certification credits are available; credits are pending for New York. See program details [here](#) and register [here](#). Questions? Cheryl.Frank@uvm.edu.

HOLD THE DATE – VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday January 20 at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. Details coming next month.