



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – February 1, 2024
Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension
(802) 656-7534, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

2024 VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING

About 250 people attended the meeting on January 30 in S. Burlington. Slides from all the presentations are [posted here](#). If you attended, please fill in this [short evaluation form](#).

PYO MARKETING ON THE VVBGA WEB SITE

You can now list your PYO operation details for free on the VVBGA member web site. It's quick and easy to create a listing, and you can update it anytime, as often as you like. A public-facing section of the web site will allow customers to search all listings, by crop or location. That section will launch in late spring once there is a critical mass of VVBGA PYO farm listings, so please set yours up soon. **To create your listing:**

- 1) Login to your VVBGA member account, or join the VVBGA, at <https://vvbga.org/>
- 2) Click "Pick-Your-Own-Listing" on the left-hand menu.
- 3) Click the orange "Add Your Listing" button.
- 4) Click on each section of the listing. A drop down will appear. Fill in all the details relevant to your farm's PYO operation.
- 5) Hit the "Save" button at the bottom of the page after you complete your listing.

VVBGA and UVM EXTENSION WINTER GROWER WEBINARS

Wednesdays, noon-1:00 on Zoom. Through April 17. Free to all. The complete list is [posted here](#). You need to [register](#) just once to access any or all of the webinars:

February 7. Greenhouses, part 1: greenhouse start up. Planning for a smooth and efficient greenhouse season. Julie Rubaud of Red Wagon Plants in Hinesburg will share practices and lessons learned from her many years as a greenhouse seedling grower around production planning and scheduling for a highly diverse mix of plant species. Chris Callahan of UVM Extension will host, and he'll talk about planning for tunnel start-up and safety.

February 14. Greenhouses, part 2: growing bedding plants for early season sales. Join highly experienced grower Jack Manix of Walker Farm in Dummerston to hear about tips and recommendations for success with bedding plant production. Jack will discuss flat fillers, heated benches, efficient heaters, alarms, and the economics of growing bedding plants. Hosted by Vern Grubinger.

February 21. Habitat plantings to attract insect pollinators and insects that attack pests.

Kyle Doda owns 1000 Stone Farm, a 4-season certified organic farm in Brookfield. He will share his experience establishing and caring for pollinator and beneficial insect plantings on the farm. UVM entomologist Dr. Cheryl Frank Sullivan has been involved in beneficial insect-plant interaction research for many years. She will share information about beneficial insect habitat plantings and what insects these plantings can attract. This program qualifies for 1.0 Vermont pesticide recertification credit. Hosted by Laura Johnson.

February 28. Storage crops. What's storing well, what isn't. Growers will discuss their winter pack-out set ups and marketing through the winter. Hosted by Chris Callahan and Andy Chamberlin.

FARM LABOR WORKSHOPS

The [Farm Labor Dashboard](#) project help farmers build knowledge and skills they need to successfully recruit and manage the right employees for their operations. These online workshops are free but advance registration is required. Learn more at the Farm Labor Dashboard or email aglabor@uvm.edu

[Staffing Up Tuesday, Feb. 6, Noon-1:30.](#) Explore strategies to create the farm culture needed to effectively hire and retain the right employees for your farm. The session will also introduce tools and resources to help with job descriptions, interviewing, organizational charts that support those efforts.

[Practical Techniques to Optimize Employee Performance Tuesday Feb. 13, Noon-1:30.](#) Explore ways farm owners and managers can bring out the best in their employees, and learn about tools that can help establish consistent expectations, support supervision, and help your farm to be in legal compliance.

ADVANCES IN ORGANIC MANAGEMENT OF SWD – WEBINAR. [Register here.](#)

February 7, 2:00 pm. Spotted-wing drosophila is a devastating pest of small and stone fruits worldwide. This eOrganic webinar features a team of researchers from around the U.S. who are working to find organic management strategies for SWD. Recent efforts focus on release of the classical biological control agent *Ganaspis brasiliensis*. Information provided by Dr. Jana Lee (USDA ARS), Dr. Kent Daane (UC Berkeley), and Dr. Philip Fanning (UMaine).

NOFA-VT WINTER CONFERENCE

After a rugged year of extreme weather and crisis for Vermont's farmers, this year's conference will provide a space to focus on transformational work. The main conference will take place on **February 17**, at the University of Vermont in Burlington, with some online live-streamed offerings. **February 18** will feature deep dives into singular topics during all-day intensive workshops, in-person only at UVM. Full details and registration info are [here](#).

EASTERN NY FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONFERENCE

February 21-22, Albany NY, in person. Agritourism, Cut Flower, Grapes, Small Fruit, Tree Fruit, Vegetable sessions. The program and registration info is [posted here](#).

MASS TRAPPING FOR MANAGEMENT OF JAPANESE BEETLES – WEBINAR.

[Register here](#).

March 6, noon-1:30. Dr. Jaime Piñero is an entomologist at University of Massachusetts. He will discuss efficacy and implementation of a mass trapping system for managing Japanese beetle. This session is approved for 1 New England pesticide recertification credit.

UNH EXTENSION 2024 GREENHOUSE AND NURSERY WEBINARS

\$10 per webinar, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. If you have questions or need assistance, contact Jonathan.Ebba@unh.edu or call (603) 749-2529.

February 27 - [Injector Adjustment](#)

March 26 - [Mixing a Spray Tank](#)

April 30 - [Mycorrhizae](#)

June 25 - [Growing Media \(types, components, attributes\)](#)

July 30 - [Considerations for Growing with Wood Fiber](#)

August 27 - [Thielaviopsis Control](#)

September 24 - [Injecting a Drench](#)

October 29 - [Renewable Energy Sources for Greenhouse Environmental Control](#)

November 26 - [Mealybug](#)

December 17 - [Fertilizer Selection Basics/Water Analysis](#)

LEGAL FOOD HUB WINTER WEBINARS

Join by Zoom, Thursdays, noon to 1:15. Free. [Register here](#). Recordings will be posted on the Hub's free [Resource Library](#). Questions? Email legalfoodhub@clf.org

February 15. Cooperatives. *Attorney Erika Duniak, Vermont Law and Graduate School.*

Cooperatives as a business structure help maximize their resources and distribute profits equally among members. They can also foster a strong community since members work and vote alongside each other. This session covers different types of cooperatives and what to consider before filing.

February 22. Agricultural Labor Laws. *Attorney Sean Fontes, Partridge Snow & Hahn.*

Understanding guidelines for classifying employees (intern, part-time, seasonal, full-time, etc.) is important for remaining in compliance with labor laws. Join Attorney Sean Fontes to learn about employee rights, benefits, minimum wage, pay equity, and overtime for different employee types. This session is for employers at all stages of hiring but especially for first-time employers.

February 29. Easements. *Attorneys Andrew Marchev, Christina Reiter, and Veronica Gassert; Three Rivers Law.* Easements on a piece of property significantly influence how land can be used. Attorneys Andrew Marchev, Christina Reiter, and Veronica Gassert will present the different types of easements and common conditions found in each.

March 7. Branding Best Practices. *Christina Licursi, Wolf Greenfield.* As a small business owner, you want to develop and protect your brand, but you don't yet have the funds to file for trademark protection. Attorney Christina Licursi will cover steps you can take to have some level of protection from the beginning as well as when to take the plunge and file for protection.