



University of Vermont  
Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

## Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – May 4, 2026

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension  
(802) 656-7534, [vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu](mailto:vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu)  
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

### REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

**(Westminster)** After five or six days of encouraging warm weather, everything just stopped. Beets were emerging but they haven't grown a centimeter in the last few days. And the asparagus still hasn't shown itself.

We managed to not freeze the sweet corn in the cold frames and have several plantings in the ground. Now if it just doesn't get too cold in the next week. We have four acres of kale and collards under Remy to defeat the flea beetles.

It's pretty dry here, although not serious yet and it has allowed us to get ahead of the field work – spreading compost and transplanting. We seeded down 25 acres of medium red clover over emerging winter rye to give it a chance to grow, and will also clip the rye later. Fifteen acres of orchardgrass/alfalfa have been seeded as well.

Our H2A workers were due to show up at the end of the week, so we look forward to them. And our farmstand opens May 1 for the season. The annuals and perennials all look great, a lot of that due to organic potting soil.

**(Pownal)** We have been very busy pruning the blueberries and raspberries, which is now completed and we have fertilized all our bushes. We have weeded a great deal. Sure wished weeding was easier for us old folks. Maybe that helps keep us younger. Have not seen any signs of mummyberry. Gardens yet to be plowed and tilled, perhaps next week. Each year I refer to an excellent pruning article, in Growing publication back in 2013 titled Pruning Highbush Blueberries. I still hate cutting those bigger branches that produced for many years. I enjoy rereading each spring.

**(Dummerston)** The year got off to a cold start, but now spring is in full swing. We've had a good balance of wet and dry weather so veggie crops in the field are coming and are mostly looking good but strawberries seem a bit sparse. I think it's due to deer damage during the winter; they dug down through the mulch and ate the crowns in some places.

My small spring greens CSA program has been going well in spite of the harsh winter and some poor germination of greens early on. Regular season CSA membership is getting close to full.

**(Plainfield NH)** Retail greenhouses are now open, and despite the less than ideal weather, sales are off to a reasonably good start. Vegetable greenhouses are filled up with cukes and tomatoes.

Finishing up blueberry pruning, buds are expanding but no blossom yet. Strawberries uncovered and watching for deer damage. Frost control set up although buds are pretty deep in the crown.

H2A folks are now on board so we will put a crew to plant onions this week. I will stick some sweet corn tomorrow, and Ray planted about an acre and a half of beets and carrots just before a timely rain. Drought is still a concern here, so far cool temps, even with the April winds, have preserved soil moisture, but we are operating freely in areas that are usually wet holes until early June. Keeping our fingers crossed there is adequate rain for planting.

Fighting insects in the greenhouses: aphid populations spiking but were able to get ladybugs to supplement our releases of *Aphidoletes aphidimyza*. A couple of older stock plants have mealy bugs. *Cryptolaemus* is the recommended predator, but I don't see them as very effective. Salting the tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers with *neoselius fallaciosus* to combat spider mites. They always show up and if you see them it is usually too late to control biologically. Got inspired by the recent Tri-State IPM program to try *Anystis baccarum* (Craze Mite) which consumes a variety of insect pests.

**(Little Compton RI)** Coolest Spring temps in two decades on our ocean-front farm. Extra windy too, with little moisture to go with it. Fortunately, our greenhouse crops are doing well. We steamed our greenhouse tomato high tunnel soils for the first time and have seen an increase in vigor and fruit set!

Obviously, the price of oil is making us worry about how much to increase our prices. Good news, at our first outdoor farmers market 3" potted herbs for \$6 weren't balked at and sold well. New hot herb is Aussie Sweet with a Martha&Snoop stamp of approval, which helped.

Canada geese ate a few rows of kohlrabi transplants. They were dispatched by security and haven't returned.

Local help looks dismal! Was hoping that AI putting laptop grads out of work would be to our benefit but hasn't turned that corner just yet.

**(Claremont NH)** Enjoying a very much welcomed rainfall, .62 inches this week. Swapped out remay with proteknet so that way light rain would be able to effectively water the crops, I have found that MegaNet sprinklers do not have the capacity to effectively irrigate through remay. The fluctuations in temperatures are doing weird things such as, our hakurei is bolting. We tried overwintering beet seedlings in a caterpillar and seemed to be doing great until they all started to bolt this week. Our beet bed that we seeded early this spring is about the same size as the overwintered ones, so no real gain there.

This weather is also pushing greens along a lot quicker which is a bit dizzying when we are timing harvest for every other week CSA pickups right now.

With these temperature and moisture fluctuations I find myself relying more and more on proteknet vs remay.

The Santee F1 sprouting broccoli seems to be a winner for overwintering broccoli. All the plants are showing good consistency with the sprouts. We just need to double the density for next year. We are also excited about an early garlic planting that we put under low tunnels this winter and have under remay and it is fast outpacing the normal garlic! The winter-over carrots are also off to the races and are looking really nice and we hope to have fresh carrots for June 1.

We borrowed Vern's PAR meter for measuring light transmission through our plastic. This allows us to have a better idea of which tunnel's plastic needs to be replaced. For context, new plastic allows about [88% PAR transmission per layer](#) (12% reduction), depending on the additives in it, so a double layer is 88% of 88% = 77% or 23% reduction. It looks like our oldest 2 are at 65% (2021) 3 caterpillars are mid 70s (plastic replaced in 2023), 2 High tunnels at 80% (built in 2023) and the 2 newest caterpillars are low 80s (2024 and 25). We have 2 tunnels on the schedule for a new plastic this year and probably 2 more next year. Looks like we are getting 4 to 5 years of life. Could be pushing it too far but things are still doing fine.

We also built/building a 16x40 deep winter greenhouse that has 2000 gallons of water in IBC totes. It is mostly complete but we are using it for this growing season and it has been holding 15 to 20 degrees above the lows overnight which has been amazing not having to worry about heating that structure!

Lastly, lots of bumble bees on the wandering charlie.

## **VVBGA'S PICK YOUR OWN WEBSITE**

Please create or update your listing! Last year 723 people visited the PYO website with almost 2,000 views of individual farm listings. Thanks to the 47 farms so far that have created listings to market PYO apples, berries, flowers, pumpkins and more! Help us build on that success by creating a listing or updating your listing with current information. It takes just 5 minutes to create a listing that you can update whenever you want. Customers can find your farm at [vermontpickyourown.org](http://vermontpickyourown.org) using a [map](#) or [list](#).

How to create a listing

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

A visual guide to creating your listing [is posted here](#). The first 4 minutes [of this webinar](#) is an intro to the PYO site; the next 5 minutes describe how to create your listing. Reach out with questions or for help creating a listing: [julie.callahan@uvm.edu](mailto:julie.callahan@uvm.edu), 518-944-7149

## **VVBGA 2026 ON-FARM WORKSHOPS**

Mark your calendars! These events for commercial growers are free to attend, thanks to our funders. Full workshop descriptions are [posted here](#).

**May 7** from 4 -6:30. Planning for orchard success. Stargrazer Farm, Brookfield

**May 8** from 4 to 6:30. Planning for orchard success. Mad Tom Orchard, East Dorset.

**May 19** from 4 to 6:30. Blueberry check in at Wild Hill Organics, Fairlee

**June 23** from 4 to 6:30. Strawberries, tunnel tomatoes and marketing at Fully Belly Farm, Monkton

**July 23** from 4 to 6:30. Soil health and pollinator strategies on organic veg farms at The Farm Upstream, Jericho

**August 5** from 1-3. Vermont Herb Growers' Initiative workshop at Zach Woods Herb Farm, Hyde Park.

**August 25** from 4-6:30. Reduced Tillage, Insect Scouting, and NRCS practices on a small-scale diversified vegetable and cut flower farm at Stone's Throw Farmstead, Shrewbury.

**September 23** from 4-6:30. Interseeding, Living Mulches and Cover Cropping Equipment at Hurricane Flats, South Royalton

**October 21** from 3:30-6:00. Root crops (harvest, storage and marketing) and electric tractor, High Meadows Farm, Putney

## **VVBGA WINTER WEBINARS ARE POSTED**

If you missed a webinar or want to review any of them, the slide presentations, YouTube recordings and podcasts of all eleven 2026 winter webinars are linked in [this document](#). If you attended or listened to a recorded webinar, please take 3 minutes to fill out [this evaluation](#). All past year's webinars are also posted on the [VVBGA youtube channel](#), [spotify](#), and [apple podcast](#).

## **TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PROGRAM (TOPP)**

The VVBGA receives funding from the [Northeast Transition to Organic Program](#) to support webinars, workshops, and pest and disease scouting reports. Don't miss the TOPP-funded workshops listed above focused on organic blueberry production, soil health and pollinator strategies, reduced tillage and insect scouting, and creative cover cropping. Visit [this site](#) for a list of region-wide TOPP funded events and activities.

## **PEST SCOUTING AND MONITORING PROGRAM**

Keep your eyes out for pest reports on the VVBGA listserv. If you have pests or diseases you'd like prioritized, [fill out this form](#). Thank you to Ann Hazelrigg at the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic, Vic Izzo and his scouting team at UVM, and the Transition to Organic Program for funding.

## **SOIL HEALTH UPDATES**

Early May is a perfect time to plant field peas and oats. Sown now, this cover crop mix can provide a significant amount of nitrogen to subsequent cash crops, typically a third to a half of the cash crop's needs. Seed at 100 lbs. per acre field peas (remember to inoculate!) plus 20 lbs./acre oats; incorporate the cover crop at bloom.

Because it is mediated by soil microbes, the release of crop-available N from cover crops takes time; it is quicker when conditions are warm and moist (but not too wet). A good guesstimate is that N availability from a cover crop will peak at 4 to 6 weeks after incorporation. Most cash crops will still need at least 50% of their N need applied as fertilizer at planting. To read more about estimating plant available N from cover crops, read Becky's [fact sheet](#) on estimating spring nitrate availability. For support with cover crop and nutrient management planning, contact [rebecca.maden@uvm.edu](mailto:rebecca.maden@uvm.edu)

## **WATER QUALITY GRANT – EQUIPMENT OPPORTUNITY**

There is a new application timeline for VAAFMs' Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP) grant! Applications will be open from June 1 to July 15, 2026. CEAP provides funds for purchase of equipment that shows a clear water quality benefit (e.g. grain drills, cover crop choppers, precision fertilizer equipment, no-till planting equipment). For more details check out the UVM CEAP for Vermont Vegetable Farm fact sheet (<https://go.uvm.edu/ceap>) or the VAAFMs website (<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/ceap>). Please reach out to Julie if you need any assistance applying for this grant. [julie.callahan@uvm.edu](mailto:julie.callahan@uvm.edu)

## **SWEDE MIDGE MANAGEMENT RECORDED WEBINAR**

The webinar is posted on the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Eastern NY [YouTube channel](#).

## **JOIN OR RENEW YOUR VVBGA MEMBERSHIP**

To become a farm member or commercial member, go to <https://vrbga.org>. To renew an existing farm membership go to <https://vrbga.org/user/login>. Please contact [vrbga@uvm.edu](mailto:vrbga@uvm.edu) if you do not remember the logon or password for your farm's VVBGA account.