



University of Vermont

Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 1, 2026

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

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Underhill) A cool and damp spring pushed the sweet corn schedule back about a week. We're trying some transplanted and direct seeded in bioplastic this year to try to get corn sooner than August. The transplants are looking good so far.

Pumpkin planting looks to remain on schedule after this next cool weekend. Some of our best ground this spring was after cover cropping with buckwheat last year, so we're looking forward to adding more of that to the rotations.

Bare root strawberries are planted and getting established well. Many flowers and herbs are healthy and growing. Tomatoes are waiting for their new high tunnel which is being built this week. Looking forward to more growing space since we turned half our existing high tunnel into bench space for our starts.

(Marlboro) Good blossoms on the blueberries. The Nelsons are a bit later and do not seem quite as vigorous. Healthy growth on all the raspberries except Himbo Top; they are in their second year and may yet catch up. Cold way to start the veggie year but the grass has not been slowed by the cold. Local farmers have taken first cutting, in plastic wrap, already.

(Huntington) I appreciate having multiple greenhouses in springs like this, where for days on end it's too cool and/or rainy to get field prep and planting done.

Getting on the ground in the singles of April like we did this year helps with timing later in the spring. Though it's been kind of cool and wet, we've had pretty good luck that the rainy spells have come just after our planting spells. And while 57-degree cloudy days might be dreary, they are great for all the transplants we've been setting out the last few weeks.

One of the highest risks to our winter squash plantings (just planted this week) is when we get a hot and windy spell, as certain varieties are just not rugged enough to handle the beating, especially if the plants are on the larger side. So, we transplant out as young as possible (usually 2-2.5 weeks old) to avoid big, bushy, easy-to-blow-around plants, and hope for gentle weather.

We did end up buying the hilariously expensive flail mower attachment for our Grillo tiller, and it works awesome. I'm just trying to un-remember the price tag.

I'm instituting a new cultivation regime, with more frequent passes to help mitigate the increased weed pressure we were gifted by the 2023 and 2024 monsoon summers. We added another skinny-tired tractor last fall, so hopefully we'll be able to take better advantage of narrow cultivation windows, like a few we had this month. Turns out more tractors make farming easier. Go figure.

(Westminster) Despite the up and down temperatures and some dry spells – mostly due to wind that dried fields out – things seem to be doing well. We started harvesting lettuce and kale last week, and picked our first pint of strawberries on May 29. The crop looks quite good. All varieties are blossoming at once, so it could be a short but intense strawberry season.

Surprisingly, there are still few weeds, maybe because of cool weather and because we were able to prepare planting beds early, suppressing the weeds.

We've begun setting winter squash transplants, and sweet corn will be knee high by the fourth of June.

Labor is in good shape. Our Jamaican employees are here – the 27th year on the farm for some of them. We also have more local workers this year than in the past few years.

Markets are good, with prices up a bit. And we're still selling beets and turnips in storage from last season. We did a good job sidedressing beets with high-potassium fertilizer and applying Solubor, that discouraged disease and they held up well in storage.

We've had only two crop failures so far. Onions were lost to seed maggot and a block of collards burned after we covered them too soon.

(Elmore) Flowers in our plum trees like we have never seen before. This may lead to a great crop of fruit that will need propping up so as not to break the branches. Water table is high for the end of May but plants in the earth are dry. We got a frost last week that singed the leaves on the kiwi vines and made the asparagus look and taste a little different.

Brought in food and drinks to celebrate crew's dedication for working in the fields through a cold and wet springtime. Weeds are early and thicker than ever; covering every inch of the place it seems.

(Waterbury Center) Cool temps have slowed down all our cut flower crops, which is good to have a longer season of tulips and ranunculus. However, lost 1200 tulips due to Botrytis from wet and cold weather. Really good lilac season, frost didn't do that much damage.

Wet, cold weather is not great to get dahlias in the field. Later planting means later (if any) blooms, depending on fall frost date.

Spittlebug is appearing more than usual in high tunnels. Assassin bugs and other biocontrols have not been available from our supplier due to USDA not completing the new permit applications. Therefore we're using lacewing larvae and nematodes to deal with other soil-borne pests and borers.

(Hinesburg) Harvests of overwintered hoophouse greens started slow but ended up abundant. Overwintered hoophouse onions are abundant and selling well, first as scallions, now as spring onions. They are not bulbing up as big as some years, and I wish I knew why?

I've used nematodes for several years, to combat the onion thrips. I added a wetting agent this year (smaller droplet size), and I'm getting better thrip control.

Installed some automatic rollup sides last week, with the help of Robert Arnold of Smart Farm Innovations. They are awesome. Looking forward to having the money to invest in them for the rest of the tunnels.

Flea beetles are everywhere, even on flats of seedlings on the benches in the seedling house. That's not a good start.

Hit our target CSA numbers, but it takes more marketing every year.

(Westminster West) Tunnel tomatoes, ginger, celery, carrots, potatoes etc. are doing well. The winter squash transplants are ready to go in any time now. Early garlic in tunnel doing well; been harvesting scapes for last week, bulb size looks good. Field garlic looks epic this year, all on white plastic. Sweet onion crop on white plastic is slow due to cold weather but should size up when it warms up.

Melons under cover are doing well in spite of high, cold winds! Potato crop is suffering from cold soils and slow emergence, finding some rotted pieces, I think delayed planting is in order.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Nice Spring but quite cold and cloudy. Little windows for field work but still able to get job done. Spinach in the greenhouse were great and we finally found a way to get over tip burn. Aphid under control with our aphidius farming.

Lots of cantaloup damaged from agribon on top of them. Lots of wind but also cantaloup plant were started in 50's so they were lot bigger at transplantation. I hate working with hoops so I will go back to 72's next year!

(Plainfield NH) A spring with lots of moisture. Great planting weather and not hot enough to drive the weeds. We have been extensively using rowcovers and drip. A couple of frosts have been by. First generation CPB is trying to Hoover up the eggplant. Tunnels look good, little pest pressure there yet. Strawberries just past full bloom and fruit set on the blueberries looks good.

One thing different this year is we hired a real mechanic to work one day a week on our machinery. It is pricey, but I can safely say it's worth it. He can switch out a tractor alternator in a minute, as task that would take me a couple of hours. He will work on any mechanical problem and or repair with good nature.

Retail greenhouse sales are strong so far. Not sure if profit will be there with input costs having skyrocketed, but there still seems to be buyer enthusiasm for what we are producing, and that is encouraging.

(Little Compton RI) Cool weather is costing us with delayed harvests and extra labor to row cover crops, but is going to benefit us big time with sales of greenhouse grown crops like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant because local field grown crops will be late. So far farmers' markets are great and prices are 12% higher than last season with no signs or grumbling about new pricing.

Leeks, sweet potatoes and winter squash remain to plant in the field. Opportune rains saving us money versus two weeks ago all our farms needed drip everywhere.

Help is not showing up as early as we have expected but still hopefully summer families will have 20-somethings looking for first experience.

Beekeeping: new RMA chemistry showing promise as no drone cells have any signs of Varroa mites; name brand is Norroa.

Our new wildlife problem is turkeys! They went after strawberries and watermelon a bit last year. Keeping the high power pellet rifle at the ready as first strawberries will start picking this weekend.

(Argyle NY) Greens in high tunnels were amazing after marginal winter production due to the cold and some late plantings. Best late-spring spinach ever; we think mostly due to switch to NatureSafe 10-2-8 preplant fertilizer at 400# N/acre in September. Swiss chard was most productive ever; there was a huge change when we started using hot water treated seed. Leaves were so big we could not sell them!

Hot water treating spinach, parsley, and brassica seed has been part of our system for over 10 years with good results. For several years we've also steamed the soil with a positive effect on plant production, quality, and disease pressure. We are testing steamed seed to control arugula leaf diseases and so far the trials look good, but diseases are worst in the fall, so time will tell. We are interested in having others chime in on this, and be part of the experiment if possible. Contact us at arnold.pvf@gmail.com

In the tunnels sugar snap and snow peas on hortanova fence are just starting to produce and crop looks beautiful. Overwintered onions are already sized up and tops falling over but those in the smaller 17' tunnel are behind. Several steamed rows in the tunnel were absolutely weed free and others had some chickweed so we need to monitor steaming time and temperature better.

Chandler strawberries from September-planted plugs, 2 rows per bed, are beautiful and abundant; will see what happens this week when it warms up.

Irrigation has been running for weeks with most rains barely hitting us. We still seek a few long-term workers for our farm as we slow down, but business is great, customer support wonderful and reduction in acreage helps!

VVBGA 2026 ON-FARM WORKSHOPS

Full workshop descriptions are [posted here](#).

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, Shrewsbury.

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

PEST SCOUTING AND MONITORING PROGRAM

The VVBGA with support from USDA Transition to Organic program provides funding to Dr. Vic Izzo and his team at UVM to provide regular updates on pests of commercial vegetable and berry crops. The reports are distributed on the VVBGA listserv and also [posted here](#).

TIMELY AG ENGINEERING RESOURCES

Farm Cooler Checklist <http://go.uvm.edu/coolercleaning>

SWD Netting Resources <https://go.uvm.edu/swdnetting>

A Guide to Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting <http://go.uvm.edu/clean-sanitize-disinfect>

Post-Harvest Handling Handbook 66 <http://go.uvm.edu/handbook66>

A Vegetable Farming Must Have: Harvest Tote <http://go.uvm.edu/harvesttote>