



**Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –June 11, 2018**  
compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension  
(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, [vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu](mailto:vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu)  
[www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry](http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry)

## **REPORTS FROM THE FIELD**

(Starksboro) April was a disappointment, but May more than made up for it. Getting a little dry at this point. The strawberries are just starting and there are a ton of blossoms, but the first fruit, the king berries are surprisingly small, despite plenty of irrigation and no frost. Unusual. Everything annual is off to a good start. We'll see.

(S. Royalton) Things are definitely growing slower this year. Between the early cold weather and now the total lack of rain (.5 inches the past three weeks) we have yet to see the blast off stage of growth that occurs this time of year. An example, spuds planted in mid-May just broke ground a few days ago.

(Brookfield) Dry, having to run irrigation more frequently. Pest pressure from flea beetles and leaf miner is strong. Cucumber beetles showing up on winter squash planting but only minor damage 1 bug every 10 plants. Still cold nights 43 last night.

(Hinesburg) Things are getting dry! We have been irrigating a lot. But we prefer this over non-stop rain like last year at this time. We have harvested our first zucchini and summer squash and they were a hit at market yesterday. Transplanted corn is nearly knee high. Starting to see adult CPB and a few egg clusters. Scouting every couple days to monitor. Generally, season is starting off well. Always waiting for the shoe to drop and chaos to take over!

(Charlotte) We lost our blackberry crop to the fluctuating temperatures of winter, but they are coming back for future years. The blueberries are on track for early July picking, and the black raspberries are looking to have a great season. Haven't seen any big damage from pests, other than rabbits, in the blueberry patches. Broad leaf weeds are always a nuisance and have been doing a lot of hand weeding. Hiring our crew this year has been challenging but looks like we are finally set.

(Rochester) We seem to have beaten back the Fusicoccum and Phomopsis cankers in the blueberries this year with lime sulfur, and most of the afflicted plants are responding with strong growth and nice fruit set especially in Jersey. We stripped a lot of buds off the Blue Ray during pruning because they tend to over produce. At the time it seemed we might have been taking off too much but now that the berries are starting to size up we think we still didn't remove enough.

This season we put in 725 raspberries and in a spring that was already foreshortened due to a late start we are behind on absolutely everything. But the place looks great. The absence of any frost during bloom was a great blessing and pollinator activity has been strong.

(Cabot) Cabot Smith Farm. So far, so great. Our plants are all in and the fields have experienced great early moisture levels. Our rye straw looks gorgeous and will be ready in about a week. Our strawberries, who come behind most everyone, are doing well, earliest variety is starting to white. Everything else is flowered out or in green berries. No bugs, no birds now if it can just stay that way better go knock on some wood.

(Westminster West) Received less than 1.5" rain in last 7 weeks, that's way off the usual pattern. Irrigating as much as possible but the wells are dependent on water levels and those are dropping fast. I recently purchased a deep subsoiler at auction and have come to realize how important this tool is and how I should have bought one 20 years ago! The shanks go down 24" and are doing amazing work breaking up the tight hard pan we have here. I can see that it will open up some fields that have had poor drainage for years and improve growing conditions. Of course we are finding new big rocks it brings up!

Garlic scapes aplenty now! Garlic looks real nice. Onions greening and growing fast. Squash under remay and doing ok. Almost sold out of all herb and veggie starts much earlier than we planned. Terrible April, crazy busy May and a steady June. Hard business to plan sometimes.

(Grand Isle) Island Blueberries. Cherry fruit worm and blueberry fruit worm traps are out. Have not observed any catches. Dukes and Northland look like a great crop. Bluecrop looks a bit low, but we did heavy pruning the last two years on them. The new Reka are coming along nicely. Still working hard on the new insect exclusion netting support. Weeds are going to need some attention soon.

(Benson) Moving pipes and pumping water is the order of the day. It's been great to be able to tractor cultivate, let the weeds die and then drop another inch of water on these crops. Everything looks good in the fields, weed pressure is low, and we have been able to keep on schedule with direct seeding and transplanting. Bunched beets and garlic should boost sales in three weeks or so. Winter storage roots have been helping to keep sales at a good level up until now and probably for two or three more weeks.

I sprayed my rotten egg solution this past week on young beets and carrots that deer were starting to munch on, and wanted to remind everyone that you do not have to purchase any of the very expensive commercial deer repellents. Take six eggs, break into a five-gallon pail, fill with water and stir. Let sit for a couple of weeks until very stinky, then spray. This is very effective, to the point that I don't need deer fencing at all any more. The savings for my five-acre operation with little or no deer damage and no need to buy deer repellents is thousands of dollars per year.

(Newburyport MA) Arrowhead Farm. This spring has proven the value of tunnels and greenhouses. We have been harvesting heavy crops of high quality vegetables for weeks now: Asian greens, spinach, celery, chard, lettuce, red onions, snap peas, three color beans, cherry tomatoes, basil, and strawberries. Nothing from the field yet except bok choy and rhubarb.

Market sales for these crops have been strong. And as we continue to boost wages for our crew, we are raising our market prices as well, roughly 20%, and receive few if any complaints. We feel we need to establish higher prices ahead of the curve, as labor and energy costs continue to accelerate.

Field crops are mostly in the ground and starting to grow. We have three successive plantings of onions; sets for June/July harvest, Texas transplants for July/August harvest, and our own multi-seeded plugs for late summer harvest. Tomatoes, cucumbers, and specialty zucchini cultivars are flowering. Beets, strawberries, lettuces, snap peas, and Asian greens coming along nicely. Plantings this week will include winter squash, cabbages, and second successions of beets, Asian greens, lettuces, leeks, snap peas, and cut flowers. Still waiting for warmer nights to transplant peppers.

We have mulch trials going in our three most recently planted tomato houses: one with black poly, one with white poly, and one with red poly. Should be interesting.

As the transplant houses have emptied out, we have been replanting lemon grass, Thai basil, and Thai hot peppers in gallons. Also planting water spinach (yes we have a permit) in 12" hanging baskets. Also making room to dig, divide, and pot a thousand rhubarb plants next month. And we continue to seed basil microgreens in the houses. We have harvested our last plantings of pea shoots, and getting ready to start pea tendrils harvest in the fields next week.

Starting a new lot of feeder pigs every four weeks. Hard to keep up with demand for sausages and bacon. Also have brought in some Hereford feeder cattle for steaks and burger patties. The more diversification the better. We have, however, dropped high labor crops like sweet corn and snap beans, preferring to buy these crops from local growers with mechanical harvesters.

Irrigating 24/7; nights still in the forties; low to no insect pressure; crops starting to grow; and markets off to a strong start. Shaping up to be a good year. And life is so much better as we continue to downsize!

(Plainfield NH) Irrigating taking center stage here as the weather report looks dry for the coming week. Good greenhouses and bedding plant sales here, and the demand still seems relatively strong for this time of year, although we always get a bump when the farmstand opens, which will happen this week.

Skimming off the strawberries so as not to encourage the little avian rats to move in and start slashing up the crop. We have the netting ready, however and as soon as we see more than one cedar waxwing buzzing around they will go on. Strawberry season is the time for us that things can get unraveled as we get stretched thin. Never have yet gotten that dialed in.

Trying no till corn this year with the help of a NRCS planter. The crimping did not kill the rye, but the seed heads were just starting to shed pollen, so maybe it's too late to do it. Put some glyphosate on it this morning to insure that it does die down, along with the vetch and weed understory. I do like the idea of not plowing, especially this year when moisture is at a premium.

Keeping up with weeding and succession planting, even though a short field crew. Finishing up our new wash and storage barn and excited to experience the perceived efficiencies built into it.

(Little Compton RI) Always an interesting time of year with a new crew. As we go into our greenhouse cucumber and pepper houses and prune off all the first fruits I try to explain that putting a fruit load on a young plant that is trying to stay vegetative is so important in greenhouse production. Just like breeding a young heifer before she is fully mature, plants need to mature above and below ground before they will have the internal structure to produce many pounds of fruit the next five months!

We are trying a tip from JM Fortier and putting a misting system above one greenhouse cucumber unit to see if his idea of increasing humidity around the plants will keep the spider mite population down. We have found a custom mix of cheap dish soap and rubbing alcohol will handle hot spots. We also buy in biocontrol sachets from IPM labs to help control mites and thrips. We get a new round of sachets with every three feet of cucumber growth.

Farmers' market is great but due to extra cool spring not much coming in to sell. Just planted our first strawberries and asparagus to increase early farmers' market sales next year. Concluded that over-wintering onions in single-hoop low tunnels just isn't worth the trouble. They are way behind! Picked up some used 15' Rimol inflation busters to house the winter onions next year.

Happy Rich broccoli greens in the high tunnel have been a good addition to spring sales. Transplanted in January they are getting ripped out now for a late eggplant crop. Not a highly profitable venture but an item that keeps the high end restaurants buying our last winter storage onions, potatoes, etc.

(Argyle NY) Pleasant Valley Farm. Crops are doing great, with the tunnels transitioning over to summer crops, including some edible flowers as part of our new business plan. In the tunnel, we have nice Happy Rich broccolini, but it is showing a few gray cabbage aphids, which we will attempt to control. Strawberries (Chandler with CA system) are at peak and looking really nice, with netting necessary for protection.

The overwintered onions are fantastic this spring despite the very cold winter, and we have been harvesting large \$2 yellow ones (Keepsake) for several weeks. Very few of all the varieties are bolting. The reds (Electric) will be ready in another week. There are a few thrips on the onions, but they are growing far from the summer onions. Peas are starting this week, the garlic is showing scapes, and we are in full production of all greens.

Like everyone, we are very busy with trying to keep up with transplants going into the fields, cultivating, and harvesting, and seeking more part-time workers. The sweet potatoes are starting to leaf out, and we are experimenting with several types of nematodes to control the wireworm which has been very devastating to our crop for several years. Irrigating a lot.

## **PEST ALERTS**

Potato leafhoppers have arrived early this year! For info on lifecycle and management see:

<https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/leafhopper-potato>

Leafminers are being widely reported in spinach and chard, see:

<https://ag.umass.edu/vegetable/fact-sheets/leafminer-beet-spinach>

Powdery mildew is already being found in tomato tunnels – see article in last newsletter:

<https://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/newsletter/datenavbar.htm>

## **LEEK MOTH UPDATE**

There have been several reports of leek moth damage in onions, scallions and garlic from the first larval generation this year. Leek moths were pupating last week, so the second flight is about begin throughout much of Vermont. Adult leek moth populations will likely to reach peak numbers over the course of the next two weeks, and will continue to fly through the beginning of July.

The few known management options include covering plants with row cover at night to exclude the nocturnal female moths from laying eggs. Where this is not feasible or cost effective, chemical controls should be applied. Spinosad (Entrust, organic) and spinetoram (Radiant SC, conventional) have been shown to be effective chemical controls but must time timed appropriately, especially in onions because of moth feeding behavior. Canadian research has consistently found that properly timed insecticide applications made 7-10 days following a peak flight of leek moth adults can effectively manage damage resulting from the following larval generation. For more information about leek moth see:

<http://web.entomology.cornell.edu/shelton/leek-moth/control.html>

We are currently exploring the use of Trichogramma, caterpillar egg parasitoids, as another potential option for leek moth management. If you would like to learn about this and all of our leek moth related projects, please join us for our NOFA-VT sponsored event at UVM Catamount Farm in S. Burlington on July 18 from 4-6 pm, see:

<https://nofavt.org/events/organic-pest-control-study-leek-moth>

If you have any questions or concerns about leek moth, contact Vic Izzo at [vizzo@uvm.edu](mailto:vizzo@uvm.edu) and/or Scott Lewins at [slewins@uvm.edu](mailto:slewins@uvm.edu)

## **NEW FACT SHEET ON PACKSHED FLOORS**

<http://go.uvm.edu/floors> is a blog post all about floors with produce safety in mind. Also available as PDF/print fact sheet at: <http://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/files/2018/05/UVM-Ext-Floors-Fact-Sheet-v1.0-2018-06-05.pdf>

## **ALLIUM TWILIGHT MEETING JULY 12, 5 -7 PM**

Join University of Vermont Agriculture Engineer Chris Callahan and Cornell Cooperative Extension Vegetable Specialist Crystal Stewart for a field walk at High Meadows Farm in Westminster West, Vermont, to discuss garlic and onion production and postharvest handling. The event will include a focus on Fusarium control practices, a hands-on demonstration of Allium Leaf Miner identification and discussion of control strategies, followed by a discussion of post-harvest handling best practices and ways to achieve these conditions at your farm.

High Meadows farm is a 65 Acre organic, diversified vegetable farm just a short drive from the center of Putney, VT, it is Vermont's oldest certified organic Farm. Howard Prussack and his team have been providing the community and greater New England with premium organic vegetables and potted plant plants since 1979. Registration page coming soon. contact [chris.callahan@uvm.edu](mailto:chris.callahan@uvm.edu), 802-447-7582 x256 for more information.

## **REDUCED TILLAGE FOR ORGANIC CROPS FIELD DAY JULY 31, 9-3**

Six different In-field demonstrations will be discussed by agricultural specialists and growers from NY and Vermont at the Reduced Tillage in Organic Systems Field Day on July 31 from 9 am to 3 pm at the Cornell Willsboro Research Farm, 48 Sayward Lane, Willsboro, NY which is just a few miles from the Charlotte/Essex ferry.

This field day is geared toward vegetable, row crop, and small grain crop with organic practices will be featured but the methods will benefit both conventional and organic growers. Topics will include roller-crimping, zone tillage in high residue, in-row cultivation tools, stale seedbed and weed seed bank management strategies and grower experiences with reducing tillage on their farms. The overall focus of the day will be improving soil health.

Speakers are Jean-Paul Courtens of Roxbury Farm, Kinderhook, NY; UVM Agronomist Heather Darby; Research Farm Manager Mike Davis; Jack Lazor of Butterwork Farm, Westfield, VT, Chuck Bornt and Kitty O'Neil, Cornell Extension, Bryan Brown and Ryan Maher, Cornell Small Farms Program; and Cornell Weed Ecology and Management Professor John Wallace.

Free admission, lunch is included. The first 50 attendees will receive a program resource booklet that will also be available online after the event. <https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=953>