



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –June 18, 2013
Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension
(802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Warren) Somehow we seem to have squeezed through the rainy stretch relatively unscathed. Found time to get bi-weekly seedings in pretty much on time and even kept up on mechanical cultivation and tillage. Sales are really strong locally and we are just loving the group CSA concept. Paring things down to just a few crops in higher volume seems to be simple enough for me to handle and I'm shocked at just how much more I can get done without having employees to manage. It has been really satisfying to see how some simple investments like a rear set of forks to carry 2 pallets instead of one, extra carts for the wash house and caster wheels on everything can knock a day's worth of labor off the work week.

(Elmore) We have never seen such a great fruit set! Everyone who has been waiting for plums, cherries, pears, apples-this is your season! Of course it is so wet and uncomfortable walking or tilling, but there also seems to be less insect pressure, due to...? This will be great year to have a cider press, a lot of freezer space and a dehydrator to put up what looks like a banner year of fruit in northern Vermont. It is also a good spring to show the benefits of a greenhouse; collards, cabbage and Swiss chard inside are 15 times the size of the same planted in the garden on the same day. On the downside, sales are way down on bedding plants and vegetable seeds from our retail stand; could it be the weather or because everyone is offering them now?

(Royalton) My fields are wetter than they were after Irene. I sunk 4 inches into the soil, trying to direct seed summer squash and cukes for a later crop. Sprayed Pyganic for asparagus beetles, and it took care of the problem. Corn is up and just waiting for some heat. I planted it in April, taking a chance, and it's doing well. Lettuce and basil are dealing with the soggy conditions, garlic looks good and avoided the winter kill because of the mulch. We have an overabundance of woodchucks this year, so not sure how the Brassicas are going to fair. So far, no root maggot, although it sounds like a bad year for that. The artichokes are taking off in these Mediterranean conditions. Waiting for a drought next.

(Williston) The rain in the past few weeks have saturated the soils making it hard to prepare beds and plant. Regrowth on herbs is coming back pale yellow due to the rain leaching out the nitrogen. I have side dressed with Pro-booster hoping to give the plants a hit of nitrogen. Flea beetles have hit the tomatoes and eggplant in the hoop house. Leaf hoppers are in field on oregano,sage,mint. Using Pyganic 5.0 every 5-7 days to beat them back. Having a running battle with galinsoga in hoop house and fields but trying to keep on top of it. Have laid down landscape fabric in perennial herbs to help with weed control this year. Cover crop of buckwheat is looking a bit pale but the few sunny days have perked it up a bit. Looking forward to the forecast of sunshine later this week and hope to get into field and finish planting soon.

(Rochester) Our Patriot blueberries, of which we have more than an acre, are not sizing up correctly and we are not sure whether it is frost-related, incomplete pollination, or a combination of the two. They were about 50% in open bloom when we had a night in the mid-20s and it was wet for a week after the remainder opened up. Still, we will get some fruit from them, and the other varieties (about 3 acres) look good. Nova raspberries look very strong even at 14 years of age; Reveille are looking piqued, suffering again from the spring frost; the more recent plantings are showing the vigor one expects from youth.

(Wolcott) Too dry, too hot, too wet, too cold. Black plastic mayhem, remay nightmares, insect destruction and now over-fertilization. What's next? Is it November yet?

(Weare NH) Fortunately, harvests are starting to pick up and I am able to bring more to the market. Tunnel plants growing impressively, hard to keep up with stringing and pinching. Going to have to remove row covers off of many varieties soon as the plants are pushing against them. Got another section of field tilled yesterday so another round of seeding can be done for fall root crops. Unfortunately, had a major breakdown on one of the implements, so that will eat up a good chunk of time and probably \$ this week to get it fixed. Trying insect netting on some greens to see how it works with flea beetles, so far so good. Nothing looks like it's been hit with buckshot! Putting in another round of cucumbers this week both in tunnel and field.

(New Haven) Fields still very wet making it impossible to finish planting. Crops that are in are doing well with little bug pressure.

(Plainfield) Welcome to our new climate of extremes. Good thing this farm has both very well drained land as well as some water retentive clay loams. It is difficult to know from one week to the next where a crop is going to be planted, making it difficult to stick to my crop rotation plans. Enjoying mechanical cultivation work. It is always fun to take the old AC G out for a spin.

Tine weeder working great on on corn, beans, and potatoes. Side dressing is needed to get some better color into winter squash and corn transplants. Using Entrust to bang away at flea beetles on kale and collards. Third time over seems to have gotten them under control. Some cucumber beetles on the greenhouse cukes. Trying yellow sticky traps and pheromone lures. Spring plant sale is over, did very well. Now comes the hard work, selling produce.

(Salisbury NH) Cool weather is keeping everything from growing much. If it isn't raining, it has been cool. We have also tried perforated plastic this year. It really heats things up but then we find ourselves rushing out to vent it when the sun does come out. Peppers, eggplants and tomatoes in the field all look sad. Onions and leeks are doing fine. Every year we plant about 3 plantings of stringbeans and they all end up catching up with each other. Potatoes seem happy with the rain, even in one garden that had some standing water. Never enough lettuce, spinach and carrots to keep customers happy. The hoophouse produce goes fast and then the field items aren't quite ready. Cucumbers in hoophouse have good growth but the field cukes are miserable. One success story was a trial of summer squash and zucchini in a raised bed that we covered with plastic. Covered at night and off during the day if the sun was out. Have baby squash that hopefully will be ready in 1-2 weeks. Asparagus almost done. We are putting in 100 crowns this year as we never have enough. Even though we seem behind, our customers are even further behind.

(Middle Granville NY) Finally starting to dry out. A few sections are still under water- probably won't be planting anything there except cover crop. Flea beetles and root maggot bad this spring. Had an influx of cucumber beetles but after 2 sprays of Pyganic cleaned them right out. No leafhoppers or potato beetles yet. First GH tomatoes ripening, picking beets, broccoli, peas, greens still going strong. could start pulling baby carrots but still have good quality in storage so trying to move those out. Overwintered onions not sizing like last year, didn't cover the as well and spring has just been crazy- only getting up to 3 inches before tops falling over- last year we had 4+. Strawberries took a hit from the weather although did spray with Milstop and Actinovate which seemed to help. First hilling of potatoes this week, a little too late but couldn't get in earlier. Have seeded a few sections down with rye between plastic for weed control but with the wet weather we have had to weedwack it down- no weeds though... Farmers markets good, wholesale so-so depending on the account.

(Plainfield NH) Wet weather and persistently cool nights (high 40's) slowing vegetable growth of warm season crops and hampering strawberry picking/ ripening with some minor fruit rots issues. Will open PYO later this week. Flea beetles are a problem but no other glaring insect issues at this point. Despite the generally cool weather we are seeing the emergence of scarab

beetles already (rose chafers) and saw a friend's strawberry bed that had a lot of Asian garden beetle injury from feeding on roots. The variety Cabot is proving to be problematic in second year production, both on our farm and others. Cabot performs famously the first year of production and appear to be healthy through flowering the second year but then immediately succumb to a variety of root pathogen issues. We are considering dropping this cultivar from the mix. We like easy and Valley Sunset looks to be the solution although we are trying Record and Mayflower in that time frame. Sales in ornamental greenhouses have been strong since the snows of Memorial Day weekend, and other than the eggplants and tomatoes getting beat up by the rowcovers in some of the winds we got when they were covered, the melons, cukes and squash are off to a good start. Crows are working over strawberries (prior to netting) and pulling corn this year. Deer fencing and spraying aromatics for the deer are activities underway for that problem.

(Hampton NY) Cucumber beetles showed up in mass this week and are attacking everything in sight. As much as I hated doing it, the threshold warranted dusting especially since I am going away for a week. Slugs have done some damage and the squash beetles are in the zucchini. Cucumbers have some very small fruit along with both varieties of summer squash. With all the rain that has fallen recently, I have been foliage feeding the garden as the beans are showing signs of nutrient deficiency. I am also applying some time release fertilizer to help carry through the wet weather forecast for next week. Beets, carrots and turnip need replanting as the seedlings washed away last week. Deer have also showed up and have eaten the tops off nearly half my tomatoes; they like the heirloom varieties best. Peppers are doing well, same with broccoli, cabbage, kale, collards and chard. All gladiola bulbs are in and a few of the "dinner plate" dahlias. Sunflowers are up and nearly 2 ft. tall. Greenhouse sales are still going strong with plenty of heirloom tomatoes to sell.

(Sudbury) The rain has been good, our soil has drained well and we've hardly used our "new" drip irrigation system! It still remains my security blanket for July and August. All crops have responded very well to the moisture especially the weeds and we have spent this past weekend rediscovering our vegetables among the weeds and, between the showers, we have been pretty successful. We are aggressively challenging last year's major problem, cucumber beetles, with the planting of more parthenocarpic cucumbers and enclosing them on a trellis surrounded by remay - will this work? We've also expanded black plastic and row covers for peppers, and at least early for zucchini and winter squash. Expanded garlic planting this year is looking fantastic with the rains and garlic scapes are popular at the farmers' market. While each year always has its surprises we are hopeful that this will be a good year as it is starting that way.