



VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY GROWER NEWS – June 2, 2022

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

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

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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Shaftsbury) Off to a good start. Bedding plants sales were strong despite a 15% price increase, and we should probably have done 20%. Produce will be up the same percentage I assume when we open the food part of our stand next week. Strawberry bloom seems light this year. Perhaps from all the rain last year which led to some poorer than normal weed control. This year's planted berries look good so far. Greenhouse toms are growing well. Flea beetle are thick.

Just found cherry fruit worm moths in our blueberries and if we find more in a few days that is our biofix from when we time our spraying. (This is part of a Cornell monitoring program). Also monitoring for cranberry fruit worm which should be picked up any day as well. Have a fantastic crew of local folks again this year many of whom are very self-motivated and take great initiative. Feeling grateful to be able to do this work for yet another season.

(Westminster West) Finally getting some much-needed rain and cooler temps. Huge swings in weather this year but overall fine, although I notice my potatoes are struggling to root and emerge due to cold soils. Been dry enough to plow some areas that I haven't been able to deal with last few years and I think it looks like a drier year overall which after last year would be appreciated!

An acre of winter squash in and covered with remay, another acre going in by this weekend. Garlic looks awesome with excellent weed control on plastic mulch and ground cover between the beds. Greenhouse Tom's growing faster than we can sucker them, and early fruit yields look great. Celery growing fast as well in the tunnels. Doing variety trial for a firm in the UK that breeds celery, will report on results when done.

Plant sales were strong and winding down for us and a had successful fundraiser using sunflowers raised \$2,000 for World central kitchen Ukraine relief efforts at our farmers market and roadside. Have a great summer everyone!

(Newbury) First planting of peas flowering. Favas ae budding and should flower this week.

(Westminster) We continue to harvest kale, collards, and lettuce. There's more lettuce ready to go than we can sell at the moment: hot weather and some rain have made it grow faster than we expected, while some of our larger customers weren't quite in their purchasing groove this early. We just started picking strawberries, which look great. Although we have fewer plants this year, there are plenty of blossoms so it should be a good year.

The weeds are also very healthy but we've managed to stay on top of them so far. That will get to be a little more difficult once we start heavy harvesting. But we have had a few more local applicants for jobs, and all of our core H-2A Jamaican employees are here now.

Root crops are in the ground – carrots, parsnips and beets. We've had to irrigate a little but not constantly, since a convenient rain seems to come through just when we need it. Flea beetles are a continual problem, especially on collards and lacinata kale, so we keep them in check with Pyganic and Entrust, two organic insecticides.

(Winchester NH) Our CSA distributions began this week and the harvest timing has matched up pretty well so far. Our biggest challenge of the spring has been wind. Flea beetles are here! Very little damping off in our spring spinach successions, which we've often struggled with, whether or not we employ any of seed treatments like Rootshield or Actinovate. Not much rain but a few quarter or half-inch events have helped germination, though the carrot stands are a little thin.

(Salisbury NH) Terrible problems with root maggots, flea beetles really seem to love Lacinato Kale, cut worms and rows planted with only spotty results. Do cut worms possibly ruin the seed just as it sprouts? Do ants cart off the seeds? Guess I'll have to resort to using insect netting on more and more crops. Transitioning to no-till on many crops and it has been a real challenge. Weather has been giving some rain but more to damp down the dust rather than a good, soaking rain. Hoping that things will start to even out. Plants will get bigger and overcome some of the attacks. And keep planting, planting, planting.

(Plainfield NH) Labor and Covid have been the biggest impediments to moving forward this season. I got the virus, and though acute effects were minimal, it was like a persistent hangover. Certainly glad I got the vax, it would have been tough without. Over half our team has had Covid since April.

We are coming to grips with the fact it is a buyer's market for workers, and the new work week is down to 25 hours from 40, with locals not wanting more than a 3- or 4-day work week. Hold-ups with DOL, our booking group and the US and Jamaican Ministries have delayed arrival of many of our H2A Jamaican workers. That said, we seem to be getting stuff into the ground and the drip fired up, so we are fairly current with planting.

Weather extremes continue with very dry conditions, 90 degrees yesterday, today a high of 60....a pattern we have experienced for the last month. Strawberry crop looks so-so, with some root diseases showing up in some of the varieties on sandier soils. Blueberries are finishing up bloom and looks like a decent fruit set. Greenhouse sales have been strong,

(Little Compton RI) Opening up our summer farm stand this weekend. Concerned we are not increasing our prices enough to cover three months of oil heat for tomatoes, doubled farm supplies, doubled diesel, doubled plastics, etc. We are starting our greenhouse tomatoes at \$6.25/lb. and cherry tomatoes at \$7.50/lb. Test run at Providence farmers' market not one person blinked at the 15% increase from last year. Strawberries we are shooting for \$8.75 a quart and \$5.50 a pint. Ask me in two weeks, if my tail is between my legs!

Farming front has been very good. Extra cool temps have all the field crops growing well. We are full court press with irrigation and lessons from the past to not get behind with water is keeping us on it. Loving the new white Meganet 2” pipe that has click-in-place risers, so more even pressure and no more sloppy leaks and mud! Got our setup from Brookdale.

Doing a lot more stale seed beds this year. Spring stale seed bedding is not as effective as July-August because soil temps aren’t high enough to germ the worst offenders.

We’ve had two disasters with the golden clips Tractor Supply sells for 3-point hitch locking pins. Twice in two weeks they cracked in half ! Once dropping a sprayer on the main road into town and the other cracked while roughing in some fertilizer on a harrowed field! Both events were heart stoppers but also killed two PTO shafts. Note to staff: only use the black clips from now on as they have twice the metal strength.

Labor: we are at \$17.75 for good returning crew and may have to go up, as summer painters get \$60 an hour around here!

SPRING 2022 CROP POLLINATOR REPORT

Laura Johnson, Pollinator Support Specialist, UVM Extension

Here is a summary of pollinator observations from seven farms during the month of May in blueberries, strawberries, plums, and apples.

The following six species of bumble bees were identified on farms: Common eastern bumble bee, Tri colored bumble bee, Yellow-banded bumble bee, Brown belted bumble bee, Perplexing bumble bee, and the Two spotted bumble bee. Most farms had at least one of these species and one monitoring event revealed all six. A two page photographic identification guide of New England bumble bees can be found [here](#).

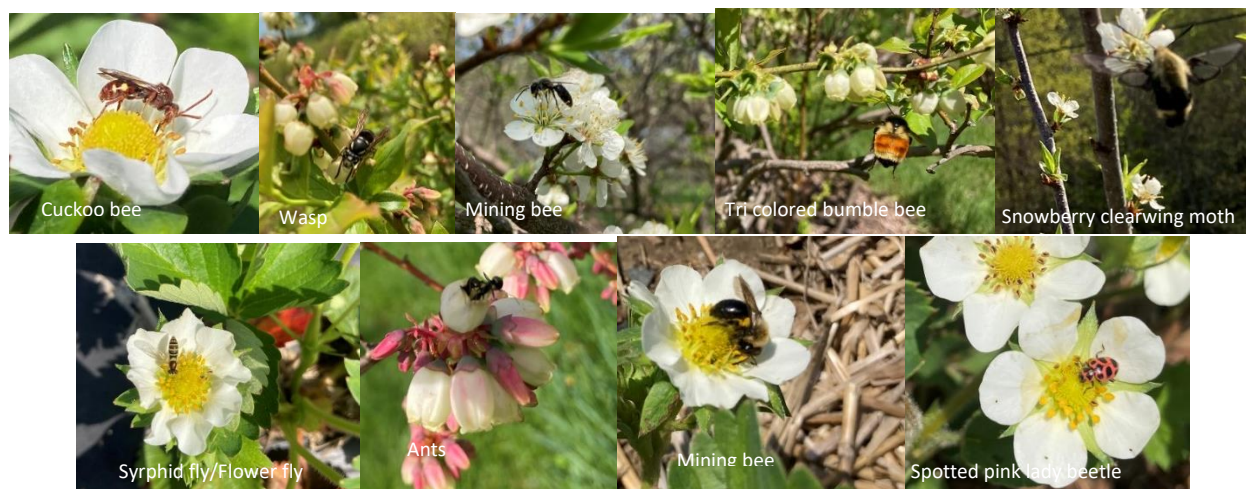
Other bees seen included honey bees and numerous species of mining bees, sweat bees, and cuckoo bees. Where no honey bee hives were present in crop fields, wild bees dominated blossom visitation. Mining bees and sweat bees were prolific and foraging crop blooms for pollen and nectar.

Non-bee specie abundance and diversity in flower visitation varied, depending on the crop. Each crop had an array of non-bee species, but strawberries appeared to be the most popular host of non-bees including flies, wasps, and beetles. While moths, ants, and cuckoo bees seek out nectar and don’t actively feed on pollen, they can passively pick up pollen grains while drinking nectar. For information on non-bee floral visitors, here is some reading on [flies](#), [moths](#), [beetles](#), [wasps](#), and [ants](#).

If you are thinking about monitoring pollinators in your own crop blossoms, there are a few things to consider when using the 10-minute [monitoring protocol](#) we are piloting on farms and with growers. If you use a cell phone, it is helpful to set a timer when counting. If you come to the end of a row while walking and time remains, turn, and start counting a new row until the 10 minutes are up. Monitoring in tree fruit can be tricky when branches and blooms are overhead.

Crops past peak bloom appeared to be less busy with pollinator visitation, but it is unclear if other environmental factors were also contributing to this observation. These May observations were generally done mid-morning through late afternoon, in crop flowers that continuously remain open once in bloom and when weather conditions were good. When monitoring pollinators in a crop like squash, remember that blooms will close in the afternoon so observations must be done in the morning.

Thanks to all the farms and those that participated in this effort. Please be in touch with any questions or comments. Laura Johnson, [UVM Extension Pollinator Program](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pollinator-program/), laura.o.johnson@uvm.edu.



VERMONT INSECT PEST SCOUTING REPORTS AVAILABLE

Funded in part by the VVBGA, UVM's Vermont Entomology and Participatory Action Research Team (VEPART) prepares scouting reports of major vegetable and berry insect pests and diseases found at UVM's horticultural research farm in S. Burlington and also at Cedar Circle Farm in E. Thetford. Reports are posted at <https://blog.uvm.edu/vepart-scouting/>

RESOURCES FROM THE UVM AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING TEAM

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan

New Blog Post: Exclusion Netting for Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD)
<https://go.uvm.edu/swdnetting>

New Videos:

[A series of 1-minute videos on produce farm cleaning tools](#)

[Honey Field Farm Visit](#)

[Full Belly Farm Visit, Monkton Vermont](#)

[Strawberry Mulching at Full Belly Farm](#)

[Bottom Watering Rolling Greenhouse Benches](#)

[Across the Fence TV Episode: Post Harvest](#)

New Podcasts at <https://agengpodcast.com>

[Ebb & Flow Bottom Watering Rolling Greenhouse Benches](#)

[Strawberry Production Systems: Matted Row vs. Plasticulture](#)

[Mulching Strawberries With A Round Bale Shredder & Overhead Frost Protection](#)

[Getting to Know Full Belly Farm \(VT\)](#)

[12 Greenhouse Tours – And Each One is Different!](#)

[Buying A Farm When FSA Loans or Family isn't an Option](#)

MAKE SURE YOUR FARM IS COUNTED IN THE NEXT CENSUS OF AG

Data from the USDA Census of Agriculture is used to allocate federal resources to states, to document the importance of agriculture, and to identify trends in the farm community that justify research. Taken every 5 years, the Census strives for a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. All sizes of farms, whether rural or urban, growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year. June 30 is the last day to sign up for the 2022 Ag Census. If you have never received a census survey go to:

<https://www.agcounts.usda.gov/static/get-counted.html>. In November 2022 data collection will begin, with a February 2023 response deadline. Title 7, U.S. Code, and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act, Public Law 107-347 requires only aggregated data, not individual or farm-specific data, to be shared. For more information, visit the NASS website at <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>

ON-FARM MEETINGS

Today! From 4 -6 pm. [Pollinator Monitoring and IPM on Blueberry Farms](#). North Hollow Berry Farm, 948 North Hollow Road, Stowe, VT 05672. VVBGA/UVM Extension. Free.

June 23 from 6 -8 pm. [Elmore Roots Fruit Tree & Berry Nursery Tour](#). 759 Symonds Mill Road Elmore, VT. Vermont Nursery and Landscape Assn.