



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – June 22, 2010

Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension

(802) 257-7967 x303 vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu

<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry>

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Montpelier) Cucumber beetles are the pest of the season so far. Aphids in the greenhouses appear to be under control on the pepper plants. Few to no TPB so far. The occasional squash bug. No CPB seen yet. Flea beetles are very present in the field and in the greenhouses, but not in a new field planted with cabbage and broccoli. All fields are planted and the cloudy wet weather has given the transplants a great start. Everything is looking very happy and moving right along. New bed shaper/mulch layer is a beautiful thing, paid for itself on the first day. Starting fungal spray program using a rotation of Cease (bacillus subtilis) and Regalia (Japanese knotweed extract) in greenhouse crops and field tomato. Very paranoid about late blight and I have way too many home gardeners in the neighborhood. Deer have been very absent this year, not sure why. No woodchucks yet. Farmers' market is doing ok; not sure if it's lack of visibility or if people are still cautious with spending; attendance is high but small purchases. Wholesale demand remains very solid. Still need to tinker with planting schedule/rotation to fill June production gap. Transitioning from winter to summer production is still a bit tricky. Perhaps just the excuse I need to buy another greenhouse. The recent heat should really trigger everything. Now to get after repairs and maintenance. Need to get potting shed set up and work on late season temporary field houses.

(Shaftsbury) Sprayed Entrust and Aza-direct for onion thrips this past week. First corn is in silk from under remay; sprayed dipel for early, invisible corn borer. We were late getting some main crops transplanted, but they are in the ground finally. Some look ok, some not so good. Hopefully this heat will push them along. Direct seeded beet plantings with Cercospora leaf spot, but less of a problem in transplanted beets at lower density and better weed control. Spring-seeded pea and triticale cover is being plowed down with difficulty, very rank. Business at the farmstand is cooking along. Sometimes I think we should just sell cheese, bread and cookies.

(Westminster West) Started picking summer squash and zucchini from high tunnel, looks really nice. Some cuke beetles showing up on field plantings of winter squashes. The fields that are under remay look clean and growing fast. Onions looking good, could use another good rain. All the storms seem to be going around us! Garlic scapes all picked and started pickling them; hot, slow work. Garlic looks great. Still shipping potted plants and veggie starts although that will really slow down by end of week I'm sure. Finally had a good farmers' market day this past Saturday. Took a chance and planted a new field that I haven't really prepped much, but I had so many extra squash and bean plants I just went for it! If I don't grow it I can't sell it; hopefully this bit of optimism will pan out.

(Plainfield) Longest day of the years is always a tough time, just so many projects to do. Time to hill potatoes, spray for SCB in winter squash, weed everything. Just switching from picked strawberries to U-Pick. Later fruit set has too much TPB damage, but there are still a lot of nicely formed green berries out there. Greenhouse tomatoes setting fruit. Trying to count blessings.

(S. Royalton) Finally finished all the major field plantings and now working on succession plantings of greens and root crops. Haven't had too much insect problems yet after early flea beetle and cucumber beetles were controlled but the weeds are growing like crazy with all the hot weather and warm soil temperatures. Blueberries set fruit well despite the cold temps we had in May. Should be picking field cukes zucchini and summer squash in another week.

(Plainfield NH) Wrapping up an extra early strawberry picking season; started May 27, the earliest in our 35 years of having strawberries. Not a remarkable crop, but better than no crop. The swelling population of cedar waxwings wreak havoc in the fields. Shotguns grant some degree of satisfaction, but not much control. Scare eyes are less than useless, and propane cannons worry the neighbors more than the waxwings, We used about 1.5 acres of netting this year for the first time, and I am afraid to say that is the only thing that is effective. We just have to figure in bird netting and deer fence as a fixed input cost in berry production from here on out, just like straw. The first arrival of mummyberry on our farm was originally diagnosed as Botrytis shoot strike. I thought blueberries were going to be a no spray crop; guess not. The weather finally settled into a dry pattern and we're trying to find time to finish later plantings and deal with weeding and watering; we are out of practice because of the last two summers. I am seeing signs that the very early heat has confused the timing of native plants as well - I noticed milkweed about to bloom last week. My brother in law dairy farmer has field corn waist high. Does this mean foliage season will be moved up to Labor Day?

(Salisbury NH) Picking broccoli, scallions, cauliflower, peas, lettuce, spinach and a few others. Early planted red potatoes are blossoming. Already had a customer driving in looking for Walla Walla onions. Nice to be known for growing good things but people really don't have a clue what is in season. Blueberries starting to turn (in come the birds!). Seascape strawberry plants look okay but if we had drip they would be better. Wind is still an issue; 4 inch pots outside hoophouse on landscape fabric keep tipping over. Cut worms, Colorado potato beetles and striped cucumber beetles have been active. Surprisingly we have peppers and tomatoes coming so we might actually have some before August! We'll try copper this year to hopefully avoid blight. Need help trying to grow peas. What does it take for fertilizer requirements? We plant early spring and the cool weather is nice but once the seeds germinate the plants just sit there. We like Knight and Lincoln but haven't been happy with growth and yield. Is it all about the water? Again, no drip irrigation yet so maybe we can blame it on that.

(Grand Isle) Our PYO strawberry season is drawing to a close. It was not a bumper year but then it wasn't too bad a year either considering the problems with blossom damage from frosty nights in May. We are busy harvesting nice snap peas, spinach, lettuce, greenhouse cucumbers, and biennial sweet William and campanula flowers. In these long June days of "too much to do" and "too little sleep" it is hard to adequately measure the contribution of excellent employees. On a day when one person voluntarily comes in early to work (to weed onions) and another person brings a big batch of homemade cookies for everyone at break time, spirits are lifted and the work load on the farm feels more manageable. We tip our hats to hardworking, reliable farm employees.

(Argyle NY) It's been a great growing season so far with most crops coming in early. Strawberries on the annual bed system just finished and we had a nice crop; blueberries are just starting to turn and it's only June! We had a successful trial with high tunnel onions grown from sets (Bejo Seeds via Johnny's) which we've been harvesting for several weeks.

Next winter we'll plant earlier and hope to have onions starting early to mid-May when storage ones are usually finished and summer ones haven't started. One high tunnel is producing lots of pickling cucumbers, basil, summer squash, and we just started with beans last week. The second high tunnel is filled with sweet potatoes. We've had full-size beets for a week, Swiss chard is in full field production, and carrots are almost ready. No disease or insect issues but we just started experimenting with the new netting (BioThrips) from Dubois Agrinovation for flea beetle exclusion and we really love it; great to be able to see the crop through the netting. We are watching for late blight and mildews daily. Great weather for cultivation and keeping weeds in check, and nice having full irrigation. The peas which we transplanted from 200 cell speedling trays were a great success and are producing wonderfully but the early sugar snap peas mostly had black spots on them which we get every year that we are trying to identify and control. Farmers' markets are booming and busy.

GET READY FOR LATE BLIGHT

Late blight has been confirmed on tomato plants in CT, PA, Long Island, and on potato in MI. Hopefully we'll have lots of hot dry weather which limits spread of the disease but better to prepare for the odds that it will be here soon. We have had several false late blight alarms because other diseases, especially in the greenhouse, can look similar, such as gray mold and even leaf mold, see: <http://www.extension.org/article/18337>. There are excellent images and resources on late blight at Meg McGrath's Cornell site: http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_tomato.htm. If you are in doubt send sample for positive ID to: Ann Hazelrigg, UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic, 201 Jeffords Building, 63 Carrigan Drive, UVM, Burlington VT 05405. (802) 656-0493. Your tomato and potato crops should be thoroughly and frequently scouted. Organic growers can apply copper hydroxide as a protectant (NuCop 50WP or ChampWG). Chlorothalonil is a conventional protectant fungicide; mobile fungicides for late blight are: Previcur Flex (FRAC Group 28), Ranman (Group 21), Revus Top, Revus, and Forum (Group 40), Curzate and Tanos (Group 27), Gavel (Group 22), Presidio (Group 43; tomatoes only), and Omega (Group 29; potatoes only). These fungicides need to be used in alternation to manage resistance.

RESULTS OF VERMONT RETIAL PRICE REPORTING

Thanks to those growers that took part in the first attempt at reporting – results have been summarized and posted at: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/ProducePriceReports.html>. Hopefully more growers will enter more crop prices as the season goes on, making this tool even more useful. Stay tuned for the next call for reporting, with the next e-mail call for 'reports from the field'

SLUGS AND SNAILS

(adapted from Capital District vegetable and berry program weekly update – good newsletter! Contact Laura McDermott to subscribe: lgm4@cornell.edu.)

Slugs and snails lay eggs in early fall, which may explain why the populations are so high this year. With the wet season last year, a very healthy population exploded this season. So using chemical control products in mid-September will help curb next year's population.

For more on slugs/snails check out the fact sheets at: <http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/Berries/genipm.html>. An organic product (OMRI listed) is iron phosphate, Sluggo AG. Spread bait around perimeter of field and then between the furrows near the base of plants. If the area is heavily watered, use the highest labeled rate. Reapply as the bait is consumed or at least every 2 weeks.

FARM TOUR AT PLEASANT VALLEY FARM JUNE 27

Paul and Sandy Arnold will host a farm tour/open house at Pleasant Valley Farm, 118 South Valley Road in Argyle, NY on Sunday, June 27th from 1 to 4 pm with a walking, organized tour from 2 to 3 pm. Wander on your own and ask questions, or join the tour. They have 6 acres of intensive vegetables and 1 acre of fruits grown with organic methods. Other items to see include 2 large high tunnels with automatic venting, radiant-heated polycarbonate greenhouse with rolling benches, 10kW net-metered solar system, perennial gardens, and efficient post harvest systems. Weather permitting a few equipment demos are planned. For directions or more information: arnold.pvf@gmail.com or 518-638-6501 or Facebook | Pleasant Valley Farm.

UPCOMING GROWER MEETINGS (many more also listed at: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html>). Details coming soon.

July 15 – High tunnel innovations at High Meadows Farm, Westminster. 5 pm

July 21 – Organic small fruit production at Adam's Berry Farm, Burlington. 5 pm