



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 1, 2014
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Warren) No major catastrophes so far this season. That's a first for me. The one major complaint is that I neglected to dunk the winter squash with Surround and ended up paying the price. Spraying in the field once there is already an infestation is just not the same. They are growing through it but are set back for sure. Fields are definitely a little weedier after last year so I'm spending a lot more time on the cultivating tractor this year. Hardly used it last season because it was always so wet. Forgot how satisfying it is. High tunnel tomatoes and peppers are looking fantastic. I'm starting to use a lot of oat/pea cover crop in the movable tunnel field and I think it is making a real difference. Greens harvests have been going along merrily thanks to the purchase of several of those new Johnny's harvesters new field carts and some pallet bins that allow us to move forty 1-3/4 totes out of the field and into the wash house at once. Now my salad greens gig just ruins my Monday mornings, not my whole life.

(Elmore) Vegetables are slow except in the high tunnel with concentrated solar and drip, the largest fullest lettuces ever! Very dry in the fields and in the pots, we have to water and do rain dances. Looks like a great year for berries, fruits and nuts though. Grass needs mowing more than I remember-why can't this growing energy transfer to the squashes and broccoli?

(Rochester) The cold winter did nothing to reduce the population of rose chafers which have emerged in large numbers. However, raspberry cane borer infestation is light this year. Our earliest blueberry and raspberry varieties are suffering some die back and weak leaf development which we put down to cold stress in the late dormant period. Working hard to eliminate wild brambles around the farm perimeter to deprive SWD of habitat.

(Brookfield) We have had a slow start as we are in a cooler pocket, but crops are growing well. Field tomatoes looking good with tomatoes coming fast, our first year with strawberries to sell, sweet corn needs more heat, direct seeded pumpkins and squash looking real good, and transplants, peas doing well, Had a good year selling bedding plants. We have had good rains on a regular basis. No problems with insects, yet! Crows did get some sweet corn.

(Westminster West) Plant sales are winding down finally with sales increases in almost all categories and switching over to full time vegetable production in the fields and tunnels. We had 4" of rain within 6 hours last week which over whelmed the newly installed 4" storm drainage pipes we put in just days before. Still, the drainage prevented far worse damage on our hilly fields but I think I will switch to the larger 6" pipes going forward. We never used to get such large amounts of rain in a single storm, but it seems like this is what's normal now with climate change and I need to adapt to stay in business I guess. Potatoes are up and hilled and look nice with just a few CPB sighted so far. Two acres of winter squash under remay looking nice with squash bugs trying to get thru the covers unsuccessfully! Garlic scapes are all in and bulbs sizing up well with the new rains. Onions are also looking very nice with a huge difference between the silver mulch and black mulches. We have used silver and white last 2 years with good success against thrips and bottom rot but the results this year, so far are much more pronounced growth wise with the silver onions being much smaller, with a variation in growth between one side of the bed against the other side and I don't have a good answer as to why yet. I will report the final yield results at harvest time!

(Plainfield NH) Full on strawberry season here, but an enigmatic year. Winter injury, more leaf spot than usual early on, plant development altered by spring environmental issues lead up to a reduced crop potential, but last year we had all kinds of crop potential but game called on account of rain. We could still make money on this one if the weather holds and the PYO stays strong. Setting up some new SWD traps in the raspberries which are showing color, doing so for the USDA. These are red spheres with both an attractant and pesticide imbedded. Will be doing monitoring with the cups and yeast enhanced vinegars. We'll see what we learn, we haven't been hit with SWD hard here in the past, but there is still time, this could be the year. A new pest on the front for us is squash vine borer which has showed up in the traps in large amounts this week in high numbers. This will be a hard one to control and I expect to see a lot of injury when the larva hatch out and start to feed, if the numbers in the trap are any indication. A welcome and timely rain last week has quieted the irrigation pumps for the time being. The blues, which were also hit with winter injury, are sizing nicely. Harvesting greenhouse tomatoes, squash and cukes along with greens from the field.

(Hampton NY) We've got our first harvestable zucchini from the field! Yellow summer squash is getting close. Unfortunately, we don't have enough to open the stand yet. Hopefully 4th of July weekend we can open. Tomatoes are all growing well and the early varieties are loaded with tomatoes. String beans and peppers are in bloom. Lots of baby cucumbers on the vines of both straight 8's and burpless, but cucumber beetles are also present and squash bugs in large numbers. We have been diligently checking leaves to squish their eggs. I had hoped by pulling up the landscape cloth over winter that I would have smaller populations; no such luck. My neighbor already has powdery mildew. I have started spraying copper fungicide as a preventative measure.

Gladiolas are all up and doing well and we had more sunflowers seeds than expected overwinter and germinate which means less transplanting. Soil temps in the rows is between 75-85 degrees F at 4 inches depending on the day and there is still good soil moisture below the tops couple of inches in our gravelly-sand soil. Irrigation lines are all hooked up with leaks fixed for a more efficient system. This year I am planting oats in the rows that will be fallow; not only will it cover the soil but it will add different texture to the visual landscape.

(Ange-Gardien, Quebec) Great season so far, heat and good rains at good interval. Have not started irrigation yet. Cantaloup are full flowering, canary and triploids are coming. Cucumber beetle not a big issue, nor are "fausse teigne du poireau" in garlic. Market for garlic flower is not that easy, you really have to give the pesto recipe to the clients. Sweet potatoes look great as they really enjoy last week heat. Good experience with overwintering field lettuce; Oakleaf and Curly Red did go through winter giving me a good 2-3 week primeur on normal field lettuce. What are your success about that?

(Williston) Corn and pumpkins now are all planted, starting to come up. Blueberries and raspberries are full, starting to see some color. Maybe a few days behind last year, warmer weather they may catch up now. Weed season in full strength. It's been a good growing season, frequent rains and sunshine. Hay fields a bit behind, hope to see more hay getting in the barn this next week.

(Charlotte) The strawberries were slow to start and fast to leave, but the fields were not very good this year. Planted a large crop for next year. The blueberries and black raspberries will be later this year, too, but they will be a nice crop. Trying to till some unused fields so they can be ready for next year's plantings.

(New Haven) Summer squash, cukes, zukes all doing well and on target for harvesting. Early tomatoes, peppers and eggplant have a good fruit set. Last tomato planting on June 29 and it looks good. Fall crops all on target with little bug pressure. Heavy aphid and white fly pressure in eggplant and peppers oils are doing the job. Farm market is open for the season.

(Plainfield) Generally a superior growing season. Nice balance of sun and rain, still good soil moisture in spite of heat. Dry enough to use clay loam fields that have been idle last couple years. Hoping that club root is finally subsided, growing a few brassicas to test it. Using the pelleted chicken manure at higher rates has got kale and winter squash roaring along. No serious pest outbreaks. Biggest downer: onions never grew, just sitting there with rotten looking tips on the leaves. Upper: Cherry tomato greenhouse loading up with green fruit. See you at a workshop.

(Little Compton RI) We had a small train wreck with our greenhouse tomatoes. A windy day put extra strain on our three year-old 3/16th inch metal cable that carries all the tomato twine and 8 foot tall plants, and two snapped! Upon close inspection, the core had rusted out. It was galvanized. Lesson learned, we immediately went and bought stainless steel 1/8th inch cable. We will inspect that before next season. Our region has a green and black aphid infestation, even the field lambs quarter weeds are covered! Predators released in the greenhouses are keeping up to the challenge but lettuce fields are a mess. We are very dry and making plans to give up on winter squash in unirrigated fields if it comes to that. One good thing about being an older farmer is you know earlier when you are beat. There is always a quick fall crop to get your fertilizer investment back if you have quit the first crop in time and can get the field re-set. Toughest part is the looks you get from your help who can't believe you are giving up on something they have worked hard at; I tell them "this is farming."

SWD INFORMATION

A grower update, two case studies, latest list of labeled insecticides, and useful links are at: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/SWDInfo.html>. The June 25 issue of New York Berry News was all about SWD, see: <http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/nybn/>.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC – Ann Hazelrigg

Onion leek moth: still getting lots of reports, mainly from home gardeners but be on the lookout. There are 3 different flights of the adults so you can have all life stages going at once. We are probably at the second flight of adults. Pupae are distinctive with a net-like covering, sort of like diamond-back moth larvae on brassicas.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/08-009.htm>

Brassicas: lots of rhizoctonia wirestem samples coming into the lab. If plants are struggling, look at the root and lower stem to see if it has that 'wirestem' appearance. This happened earlier in the season during wet/cool conditions, but plants show symptoms later due to stress of no roots.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/IPM/english/brassicas/diseases-and-disorders/rhizoctonia.html>

Look for Swede midge damage on Brassicas: rotting growing points, after maggots feed and soft rot bacteria move in, and scarring on leaf edges and petioles.

<http://web.entomology.cornell.edu/shelton/swede-midge/damagecrops.html>

Tomato: not seeing any leaf spots yet, but I suspect they'll show up this week with all the rain last week. Keep up fertility to 'outrun' the disease, rotate every year, use mulches, protect healthy tissue with fungicide program. Late blight reported in NY on Long Island on potato. Hot dry weather slows the disease. To track this disease go to www.usablight.org

Leaf mold (*Fulvia fulvia*) seen in high tunnel tomatoes due to high humidity. Keep RH below 85%; roll up sides, open ends, keep air moving with fans, prune lower leaves to increase air circulation, and select resistant cultivars.

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/diseases/fulvia-leaf-mold-tomato>

Sweet corn: European corn borers have been trapped in Chittenden county. Caterpillar infestations are likely going up in pre-tassel corn this week, so scout. Infestations will vary from field to field but some fields are over the 15% threshold. Treatment may be most effective as tassels emerge so you can target the more exposed caterpillars feeding in the tassel or moving down the stalk. For more details on sweet corn pest ID, monitoring and management see:

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/publications/sweet-corn-ipm-guide> and

<http://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/ipddl/publications/5101e/>

Cucurbits: squash vine borer moths have been captured in pheromone traps in Chittenden county. UMass recommends spraying when 1 moth found per trap if you are organic. This pest is very site specific. Wilting plants are usually seen in July/Aug. Check base of plants for frass and feeding damage. Downy mildew is not in the area yet. It is present in southern US and blows up on storm fronts, like late blight and potato leafhopper. Crops infected this year include: butternut, acorn squash, giant pumpkin, cucumber, cantaloupe, watermelon, and summer squash. We often see it wipe out the last planting of cucumbers in VT. The current CDM forecast indicates a low risk for Southern New England. You can track the disease at <http://cdm.ipmpipe.org>.

Potato: three-lined potato beetle are now hatching along with Colorado potato beetle on potato, however, they prefer feeding on husk cherries and tomatillos and are generally not damaging in potato. Treatment is similar to CPB. Larvae are distinctive because they carry feces on their backs. For more pest/disease info go to:

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/publications/vegetable-notes-newsletter/archives>.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The following events are part of NOFA-VT summer workshop series; most are co-sponsored by the VT Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, University of Vermont Extension and the USDA Risk Management Agency. For details see:

<http://nofavt.org/upcoming-events-calendar?type%5B%5D=Farmer>

July 16, 5-7 pm. Make It or Break It with Mid-Summer Organic Storage Crops. Burnt Rock Farm. Huntington, VT

July 31, 5-7 pm. Profitable Small Acreage Production. High Ledge Farm. South Woodbury, VT

August 5, 5-7 pm. Designing Your Farm Retail Space. Killdeer Farm & Farmstand. Norwich, VT

August 11, 5-7:30 pm. Dos and Don'ts of Establishing a Commercial Blueberry Stand. Waterman Berry Farm, Johnson, VT

August 14, 3:30-6 pm. Pest and Disease ID and Scouting. High Meadows Farm, Putney, VT.

August 27, 2-7 pm. Tractors, Tools, and Tricks for Mechanical Cultivation & Pizza Social with the Vermont Young Farmers Coalition. Digger's Mirth Collective Farm, The Intervale, Burlington, VT.

September 9, 4:30-7:30 pm. Behind the Scenes at Kilpatrick Family Farm. Middle Granville, NY

September 30, 4-6 pm. Season Extension and Winter Storage. Luna Bleu Farm. S. Royalton, VT

December 1-2. Post Harvest Handling and Storage conference. Lake Morey Inn. Fairlee, VT. Stay tuned for details.