



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 10, 2012
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Huntington) Last week our longest rainless streak in 4+ years ended (13 days) with a slow, soaking rain. Hot days, warm nights, good rainfall, and frequent irrigation are helping push along our sweet potatoes, onions, and winter squash, with bulk harvest season just around the corner. Rains came just in time to hopefully keep scab in check on susceptible potato varieties, and a 4 year old packet of Entrust did its job knocking back the surge of CPB larvae. After a slower start, onions planted on silver mulch have just about caught up to those planted on black mulch. It'll be interesting in a month to see if the silver mulch helped mitigate thrips damage and bacterial diseases.

(Royalton) The softneck garlic is three weeks ahead of schedule; pulled it all this week and found about 3% of heads already splitting. Hardneck is not far behind. I still have scapes that I'm selling. Tarnished plant bugs seem diminished this year, so far. Crows ate my direct seeded corn, so replanted some this week, betting on the effects of climate change. The potatoes are showing a bit of leaf damage from leafhoppers, and I sprayed once for CPB with spinosad. First cut of hay is in; second cut looks well on its way. We beat the army worms, only by a hair, as they are out there. Maybe that's why the crows ate the corn, to spare me the pain of watching fully mature plants munched to the ground. Snap peas are in full force, black currants were hit hard by the cold after those 80 degree days in April, and are not producing much. It looks like a banner year for blackberries and elderberries though.

(Woodbury) Summer is in swing here, and our successions are starting to fall apart. I started tilling in lettuce plantings that couldn't make it through the heat. Even some varieties that I would consider bullet proof bolted, although it was partially a result of lower demand for lettuce these days. Even though we have gotten some good rain, the soil is still very dry down below; seasonal lake levels are down too. Tomato houses are cranking and we have yet to bring tomatoes home from market. Sales are good. This seasons' experiment: Does potato bug defoliating lead to lowered late blight potential as a result of reduced surface area of the patch? I smell a grant proposal.

(Westfield) Strawberry season is over and it was not the best one, beside the clippers we have for a second year in a row a flock of cedar wax wing, I feel lucky they didn't know my place before. I guess next year we will join the club and get a net. Crops in the greenhouses are doing well, in the field the word is weeding and certainly irrigating this week.

(Salisbury NH) Had a little rain to help the dry conditions. Hot weather early let us plant potatoes April 21 and have been harvesting for a couple weeks; nice baby Red Norlands. Hoop house spinach, lettuce and chard getting too hot but the ones planted outside didn't germinate well and we replanted a couple times in different areas. Peas came in fast and we pulled up vines on July 3. Legacy peas are tricky. Seemed like some small pods wouldn't have decent sized peas and then they did while others had barely a flattened pea. The hot weather took them out quickly. You could feel the difference in the pods when picking; drier ones had peas that tasted like starch. Cascadia peas were very plump and looked like they were over ripe but not the case. Stokes lists them as an edible pod. As a small pod they taste terrible but when they get fat and round they were nice. Almost ready to pick Provider beans. If we had drip we'd be further along. Summer squash have lots of small fruits but nothing pickable yet. Broccoli looks like it's going to bolt. We made the mistake of moving the plug delivery date out one week compared to last year and it seems to be killing us due to hot weather. Napoli carrots planted in the hoophouse March 25 were wonderfully sweet. It was a test patch and we wish we had more. Walla Walla onions large enough to harvest; red onions a little behind. Traffic picking up at the farm stand and people haven't blinked at a few higher prices. Tractor in the shop waiting for clutch from England. Troybilt is tedious but will have to do. Picked a few cherry tomatoes; waiting for field tomatoes to turn.

(Plainfield) So far, only earwigs in my Spotted Wing Drosophila traps. I have traps on my raspberries and my quickly ripening blueberries. I finally found a use for those U shaped wires that are inside political lawn signs-they make great holders for SWD traps. I'll gather more after this election season. Early raspberries came ripe this week, earliest blueberries slightly preceded them. Other early blueberries are coming. It is going to be a good year the bushes are falling over with berries. I fertilized my blueberries for the first time this year with Proholly, we'll see how that goes. Some of my bushes have phenomenal growth (a couple of feet); and a few have hardly any; and a couple have mostly berries-and almost no leaves. I lost the majority of my fall raspberries. I called Nourse and they said it is usually a number of things. I do not irrigate, and I didn't realize what heavy feeders fall raspberries are so now I am starting regular feeding.

(Plainfield NH) Picking blues and renovating strawberries. Trying to beat back the weed growth that was left unchallenged during strawberry season. Lots of irrigating due to not being able to win the intermittent thundershower lottery. A little early blight on some potatoes, and had to spray for scarab beetles on small fruit last week. Settling into steady hum of mid-summer harvest.

(Plainfield) Dry and sunny conditions have made this a good season for summer fallow, reducing weed seed bank that has accumulated in previous wet summers. Nice fruit set in peppers, winter squash starting to run. Busy pruning and training greenhouse cherry tomatoes. Still moisture down there, but will have to irrigate soon if no rain. High soil organic matter is helping to retain moisture.

(Ferrisburgh) Broccoli and cauliflower in full harvest with warm weather. Tomatoes are fantastic ripening quickly. Cukes are in while peppers are a bit slower this year. Although it's been dry and hot and looks to continue that way we are able to get water to the crops. Bugs of all kind, and we are battling the birds and deer for who gets the harvest first.

(Wolcott) What a magnificent growing season so far. Last week's storm didn't do any damage and gave the good soaking we needed. Squash, melons and cukes are in full flower and we're hand-pollinating and emasculating like mad; we've got a crew of six on it nearly full-time for the next few weeks. We've begun detassling the hybrid corn crops and all the corn is looking gorgeous so far. Got the great news that the Vermont Specialty Crops Block Grant program approved our award towards a new seasonal high tunnel specifically for working out the kinks on how to grow overwintered brassica seed crops – which we hope some of you with NRCS tunnels will feel compelled to try some day.

(Hampton NY) Yellow squash and burpless cucumbers are producing a few fruits per hill every other day. Slicing cucumbers are just starting to produce; soon we will have cucumbers coming out our ears. Zucchini are not producing like have in the past and I suspect it's the variety as we changed from last year. Kale, Swiss chard, collard greens and broccoli all tolerated the heat of last week and are holding up well. Sweet frying peppers are really turning on the production and I have some small green bells. Hot Cherry and Sweet Jalapeno peppers are producing really well. I was shocked to see 3 pumpkins near soccer ball sized when I finally made it to the other end of the garden. Butternut and Blue Hubbard have some small fruit on them as well. The melons have blossoms galore; watermelons are running but not producing flowers yet. Picked first cherry tomatoes and the rest have lots of green fruit. Checking tomatoes daily for leaf spots and various blights.

Powdery Mildew appearing in the squashes. Cucumber beetles gearing up for round 2 and I just found first batch of squash bug eggs hatching. Found my first ever nest of yellow jackets under the landscape fabric while weeding; stings on my wrist and leg and plotting my revenge.

(Weare NH) Many plants are fruiting including toms, squash and cantaloupes. Plant growth is explosive. Very little disease or bug problems so far. A bit of black leg in the potatoes but rooted out the affected plants, rest look fine. Cabbages early, peas slow. Greens great! Doing a lot of weed cultivation and weed whacking. Lots of transplanting for succession crops and prepping for fall crops.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC (Ann Hazelrigg)

Late blight is all around us – but not yet confirmed here - it has been found in MA, ME and NY so be on the lookout. Hot dry weather is not very conducive for the disease but that can change fast. Images at: http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_tomato.htm to refresh your memory. Continue to scout potato and tomato crops especially in low-lying and shady areas. It is important to send suspicious samples to the lab for correct ID - I am happy to look at samples that you want to be sure of.

Potato leafhopper damage showing up on potatoes. The tip burn can be confused with late blight but late blight would not just affect the tips or edges of the leaves. See: <http://nysipm.cornell.edu/%5C/factsheets/vegetables/potato/plh.pdf>. I have had a few cases of early blight on potatoes (target shaped spots) and also Botrytis leaf blight on potato that can look a bit like late blight. Also have seen some black leg in potatoes. This disease causes a seed piece rot and also black stems at the base of the plant. It likely came from infected seed pieces followed by rainy cool weather. <http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/pdfpubs/2493.pdf>.

On mints and basil: Four lined plant bug injury. The damage looks like an angular leaf spot disease but it is actually feeding injury. <http://www.vegedge.umn.edu/vegpest/CUCS/4line.htm>

Cucurbits have powdery mildew showing up. Also angular leaf spot on squash. <http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu/PhotoPages/Cucurbit/Foliar/Foliar1.htm>. LOTS of cucumber beetles and squash bugs. Some squash vine borer damage but it seemed to be more prevalent in stressed plants. <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/squash-vine-borer>

Onion leek moth damage found in Burlington garden. This relatively new pest causes 'window pane damage' on the foliage. Pupae are covered by 'netting' and are distinctive.

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

I have seen lots of curling, twisting of foliage of tomatoes in home gardens due to the herbicide contaminated compost issue. If you experience that symptom and have used compost let me know. Early blight (target shaped spots) and Septoria leaf spot (small spots with gray centers) showing up on lower tomato leaves. Also Magnesium deficiency causing interveinal (between the veins) yellowing.

First capture of both male and female spotted wing drosophila confirmed in western MA on July 3. No SWD found yet by informal network of growers monitoring in VT. If you grow fall raspberries I would strongly suggest monitoring for this new pest. It's easy to set up plastic cup traps with apple cider vinegar and yellow stick card inside. Lots of info at:

<http://www.ipm.msu.edu/swd.htm>.

UPCOMING EVENTS, for details: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/meetings/meetlist.html>

Currant Production and Processing. Cherry Hill Farm. Springfield VT. 5 pm July 17.

Organic Weed Control in Vegetables. Hurricane Flats. S. Royalton VT. 5 pm July 18.

Integrating Oilseeds into Diversified Ag. Woods Market Garden, BrandonVT. 3 pm July 24.

Tractor Cultivation Tools for Diversified Production. Cate Farm, Plainfield VT. 4 pm July 26.

Commercial Medicinal Herb Production. Zak Woods Farm, Hyde Park VT, 10 am July 28.