



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –July 11, 2013
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PEST AND FLOOD UPDATE

Spotted wing drosophila catches to the south of us (RI, CT, Hudson valley) are rising both in traps and in raspberry and blueberry fruit. While hundreds of other fruit flies have been caught in traps, very few SWD have been caught so far Vermont; just two females in the south and one male in mid-State confirmed. However, the population could suddenly explode in a week or two. It would be prudent to protect ripening fruit. For information on trapping, identification and management of SWD see: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/SWDInfo.html>

Late blight has been confirmed in NJ western NY. Plan now to protect potatoes and tomatoes in the near future. This disease can quickly devastate those crops once it arrives and weather conditions are conducive for infection - warm and moist. Locations with confirmed late blight are shown at: <http://www.usablight.org/>. Conventional fungicides should be rotated to avoid resistance, see: <http://nevegetable.org/crops/disease-control-17>. For organic growers copper fungicides offer the best suppression. OMRI-listed and VT-registered materials include Badge X2, Champ WG, Cueva, and NuCop50 WP. Scout tomatoes and potatoes regularly and thoroughly, especially areas that are shaded or poorly drained. When spraying, get good coverage of all foliage; reapply at the shortest labeled interval when weather is favorable for late blight. Leaf wetness from dew or mists favors infection even if it is not rainy. Images of late blight and other diseases: <http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/index.htm>.

Alas, flooding has once again caused severe losses for some farms in the flood plain, mostly in the northern half of the state. For information on dealing with flooded produce and fields see: http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Flooded_Produce_FAQ.pdf.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Westfield) We have a few more days for our strawberry harvest. As you can imagine it is constantly wet and the gray mold is starting to spread, but so far the crop has been good. At least we have a crop! The winter squash didn't notice the cool wet June for they are huge, full of blooms, and starting to have fruits. On the other end of the spectrum, field cucumbers are pleading for mercy. Greenhouse tomatoes are in full production. There is some leaf mold in one corner.

(Rochester) We caught a male SWD in one of our yeast traps July 8, apparently the first male reported in Vermont this season (others have reported females, which tend to appear first. We did not capture any females). The trap was in our ripest summer raspberries, Prelude. These yeast traps seem to be very effective, unlike the vinegar traps we tried last year which did not attract many bugs once there was ripe fruit. We are gearing up for a spraying protocol using Entrust with some Pyganic, and based on Rich Coles' research we will be using half the labeled dosage of Entrust and adding sugar. Will report on how effective it is.

(Warren) Still holding on here. Mad River came within inches of flooding on the July 3 but spared us. Somehow we manage to get two seedings of salad greens in on time every week. Just finished bulk harvests of movable high tunnel started spuds and carrots. Nice to have product in the walk-in so can sell at our leisure. In general things are looking really good. We are seeing little if any disease and insect pressure. Not sure why but I'd like to think it has something to do with the trace element rich rock dust that we applied a few years back and the bi-weekly sprays of sea minerals. Every time there is a wet stretch like this I'm amazed at how fast things grow and wonder what would happen if I could give crops 2+ inches of water per week in dry bright weather.

(Elmore) Still raining; can't even walk in the fields, let alone mow around them. A great season for weeds; we cannot get to them with machinery. Fruit trees are very happy with the best crops ever, even cherries. Berries are heavily set, I just hope the sun will come out and dry things so they do not mold and so we can walk among them for harvest. Currants are very large due to the water

(Williston) It's wet. Raspberries not doing so well. Blueberries started PYO on July 8; they are loaded with berries. Need sunshine. Lost some of this year's planted Xmas trees, it's so wet. Larger Xmas trees doing well. Unable to plant much sweet corn, no pumpkins at all. Glad it came as rain though instead of snow!

(Charlotte) We have seen the blueberry maggot fly, but otherwise the blueberry crop is fantastic.

(Williamsville) I'm catching up with the weeds! Transplanted hoop house beets are booming. Trellised hoop house cukes are coming on strong. Best broccoli year by far. Field zukes and cukes are weak. Tilled in one bed of parsnips because I failed to keep up with weeds. First Japanese beetles. No bean beetles yet. Some brown beetle is eating the basil. Biting insects notable this week. Peas are peaking. All scapes are harvested. Expecting green beans and cherry tomatoes shortly. Six feisty baby skunks chase me around the farm at dusk.

(Royalton) In fifteen years I've haven't seen the fields as waterlogged as this summer. We have heavy clay which really is an advantage in most years: we don't have to irrigate. We can't get our hay in, which is now going by, and we can't direct seed anything. The corn loves the weather and is tasseled, though corn borer moths are at an all-time high around here at night. The garlic is ready almost three weeks early and is smaller in size. Apples are full of fruit, as are blueberries. Thank goodness for hoopouses, where plants are thriving in the tropical heat and water can be regulated.

(Montpelier) It's wet and stuff is rotting in the fields. Greenhouses are moving forward but one house is not producing due to some unidentifiable issue in the soil. Have ruled out almost all causes, the odd part being the other two houses with almost identical soils that are producing quite well. Very good year to be growing on raised beds with plastic. Cucumber beetles are wreaking havoc and no way to really get after them with the constant moisture every day. I have light soils so in the morning I sink up to my ankles when I step in a bed; by mid-afternoon they have firmed up, then we get another inch of rain.

(Ferrisburgh) Everything is too wet! Corn growth is all over the place although should start picking in about 10 days. Starting to see a little powdery mildew in the vine crops. Sweet potato vines looks good. Will start digging first planting of red and Yukon gold potatoes next week. Ripe tomatoes came in this week. Everyone at the farmers' market is anxious for them. It'd be real nice to do a complete market without rain or humidity.

(Plainfield NH) What fields? Last week we had over six inches of rain in less than two days with one to three feet of water across the fields, more than in Irene. I know some of you got more than that. A little discouraging to get wiped two years out of three. Anyway, back to seeding trays for fall crops, might be dry enough to get ground prepared by then!

(Burlington) Despite losing several crops to flooding this past week, it's about time to dislodge the irrigation pipe from the weeds and get ready to run the sprinklers. Harvests have been good so far, though plant diseases are beginning everywhere. CSA members are happy and surprised that we are having great cucurbits and tomatoes, given the weather. They are complaining something fierce about the mosquitoes at the farm: for once they are totally justified! Potatoes so far are the best looking crop on the farm. A tolerable strawberry crop, probably because it was on the sandiest field on our sandy loam farm. Usually we hate growing in that field during the summer, but lucked out this year. Trying out some new copper (Cueva) with low metal per acre and safer label, as well as some microbials for diseases.

(Huntington) Sweet potatoes good; winter squash good; potatoes OK, though 30-inch high plants didn't love last week's deluges. Storage onions are lagging and already have purple blotch. Greenhouse crops have been a welcome refuge on stormy days. Greens have been 'problematic' given 19.9 inches of rain since May 1. However, our thoughts are with those who have had it much worse.

(Brookfield) Gravely-loam usually ALL well drained but not this year. Lost one acre of pumpkins except two 300 foot rows that might make it. Lost many plants because we could not get them in the ground. Of our two acres of potatoes a quarter acre washed away; peas really were doing well, but now are yellow and pods a one inch long and done, we did fertilize them started looking green, rained 4 inches one night and 2 more the next day, just got another 1 inch today in a hour. May have squash, cucumbers, field tomatoes?

(Plainfield NH) Saturated soils. Five inches of rain on July 2 created the worst havoc I have ever experienced. Nothing that five ten-wheelers of erosion stone can't fix as two of us spent a day and a half getting access roads around the home farm passable. I had 6-inch gullies in fields that are flat with Hadley soils. And the rains continue on a daily basis, half inch here, three-quarter inch there on a daily basis. Most stuff looks OK but what is the fertility of the bare ground crops? Bottom line: 30 to 40% loss in strawberry crop and one acre of onions looking pretty sad. Weeding and cultivating is challenging, I have crab grass plants that I have turned over so many times I am beginning to give the bigger ones names. On the flip side my potatoes were taller than the neighbor's field corn for about a week and have closed in nicely after the second hilling. Strawberry plants (I don't mean fruit) love having all this available moisture. Now picking raspberries, and the Japanese beetles have emerged in huge numbers, seemingly later than normal. Blueberries netted, a light crop but size is very good.

(Salisbury NH) Sorry we jinxed everyone by ordering shade cloth and drip irrigation. At the rate we're going we could have left everything in the box! Had about 3 really hot, humid days but then another deluge. Beginning to think we are growing hydroponically. Some crops doing fine despite the weather: Brussels sprouts, leeks, onions, even potatoes. Others really hurting. Leaf hoppers galore on potatoes and string beans. Try to spray but then we get rain. Good weather for germinating carrot seeds. Glad we have some tomatoes in our hoop house, high and dry. Barely starting to get summer squash and zucchini. Lettuce has been spotty for germination (might be older seed problem). Keep starting spinach but it is bolting quickly. Trying 4 different varieties to see which might survive better. Salanova transplants rotted with all the rain. At this point we prefer Skyphos (red) and Nancy (green) lettuces for performance, taste and looks. Red potatoes almost ready to start harvesting. Beans flowering.

(Hampton NY) The one good thing about all the rain is that it makes pulling weeds that much easier. That said all this rain, 6 inches last week, with a few hours of intense sun, is germinating weed seed galore! Garden Stand will open on July 9 with cucumbers, summer squash, green zucchini, yellow zucchini, string beans, limited broccoli, kale, Swiss chard and basil. King Arthur peppers are just starting to produce along with the Bianca peppers. Red Flame chili peppers have 3 to 5 inch green peppers galore on them and cherry peppers are coming along. Nothing yet on the Poblanos or Gourmet peppers. Eggplant is starting to flower and winter squash is beginning to spread. Peas died, tomatoes have been devoured by deer, along with the hosta, and the squash bugs are laying eggs all over the place and I have seen some nymphs. Cucumber beetles have temporarily died down but I am seeing a few breeding pairs. Time to sow another seeding of yellow and purple string beans and I am giving up on reseeding the beets and carrots until the jet stream pattern changes. Will have some zinnias for cut flowers this week and the gladiolas and sunflowers are coming along nicely.

(Argyle NY) In 25 years of farming, we have never seen a season like this with so much continuous rain. We have gotten over 20 inches this year and hope the forecast is correct for less rain now. We also got half inch hail a month ago as another challenge! Hoping to seed all the fall beets and carrots in 2 or 3 days if the fields dry out. Extra fertilizer has been important and lots of hand weeding since tractors in mud aren't very effective. Despite the loss of greens like arugula, spinach, and some lettuce varieties, many crops are doing well including garlic, onions, blueberries, cukes and squash. Very few insects are around but bottom rot, early blight, and other diseases are increasing. We are still happy with the Salanova lettuces for fast and good quality salad mix. High tunnel crops are mostly happy except pollination is down. I guess one good thing is we haven't had to irrigate! Customer support has also been good at markets.