



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 18, 2014
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Guilford) This might be our latest strawberry season ever, we picked some Cavendish and Sparkle this week. Still no sign of SWD, but we want to order large amounts of Proteknet for blueberries and raspberries. Great pea crops, but why can't they get quality control up on pea seed? Always shell peas in with sugarsnaps. Weeds are loving the weather and took advantage of all those harvesting days so we're battling our way out. Deer and woodchucks hitting us hard this year. It may go down as Year of the Mammalian Pest for us, after Year of the Snail, Year of the Slug, and Year of the SWD.

(Plainfield NH) Wrapping up PYO this weekend. Had a better season than expected after an initial onslaught of leaf spot disease and plants getting off to a real slow start vegetatively after the long winter. Harvest got off to a slow and late start for us as well, but good picking weather helped. Old workhorse varieties performed the best: Cavendish, Annapolis, Valley Sunset and Lamour. Will miss Noreaster from Nourse which was a dependable for PYO on our soils. Now picking raspberries, black caps and blueberries while harvesting summer vegetables and greenhouse tomatoes for the farmstand and accounts. Plants that should be transplanted out in the field are backing up in the greenhouse and the weeding and cultivations are less than timely. Weeds have exploded the last 10 days, put on tremendous growth making cultivation challenging. Have a potato leaf blight (currently being diagnosed at UNH) and one of the heavy hatches of Jap Beetles in many years. Some thrips injury and purple blotch in one onion plantings. The 7-member field crew is swamped, putting in 12 to 14 hour days now that blueberries are ready. This time of year always puts a hole in our labor strategy and is extremely tiring for all of us as we try to hold it together. Can't say enough good things about the dedication my guys (male and female) have been showing.

(Wolcott) Red and black currants are heavy with fruit. Blueberries are in the green stage so time to get the netting ready, this helps us to allow them to get to their full sweet flavor without worrying that we better pick them before the birds do. Looks like a great plum year. We fruited Rubicon strawberry and happy with the size and flavor. Kolomitka kiwis are loaded and stores love them. Still very dry up here in elmore, even with the hard rains and thunderstorms, not sure why.

(Westminster West) Greenhouse raspberries starting to come in and are very large so far. We haven't run drip in the houses until now just too busy but it doesn't seem to have made any difference. Thinned and cut back heavily this year might have helped. Winter squash running and setting lots of fruit but as always won't know the yields until harvest time. Very few squash bugs so far. Onions looking good, trying to keep up with copper applications as well as thrips control, also haven't had to run drip yet but will commence as I need to fertigate. Garlic harvest starting today, some varieties really large and no signs of last year's problems. Tunnel tomatoes coming in heavy now and selling all we can pick. Lettuce from tunnels looks great and moving fairly well. Just finished planting fall carrots and beets on raised beds a bit earlier than last year so I guess 'on time' for a change! Mostly winning the war on weeds. Potatoes looking great too, no bugs yet? Gotta find time to enjoy summer a bit more is this year's resolution.

(Waterbury Center) Wrapped up our strawberry harvest last week. It lasted about three weeks, with sunny weather for harvesting. Still happiest with Jewel. Extrapolated to a per acre basis we harvested about 8,000 lbs/acre on certified organic land. Yields were affected by some as yet unidentified problem, possibly winter injury coupled with disease. Constructed low tunnels with 4 mil plastic over six 250 foot beds in case of rain like we had last year, which didn't happen, but they were insurance anyway and did seem to help with gray mold. Now we'll try to get a second fruiting season from June bearers on plastic by removing plastic, renovating, and hoping plants will fill in the beds. Mother plants just seem exhausted. Started harvesting Prelude raspberries two weeks ago inside high tunnel, nice big berries. Problems with mites but overhead irrigating has gotten them under control. Garlic, peppers, cantaloupe, and watermelons all looking good.

(Hampton NY) Squash bugs, deer and hail Oh My! What started off as a really good May and June has rapidly gone downhill in July. The crops were looking good with first harvest of peas and string beans anticipated for end of June. Then the deer came. Gone are all the peas, a 125' double row of string beans, the tops of all Early Girl and Lemon Boy tomatoes and most leaves on half the sunflower plants. I have since cubed bars of Irish Spring Soap around the crops that they prefer which is keeping them away for now. On July 3rd the hail came. Summer and winter squash plants will recover but the remaining tomatoes have split stalks. I think they'll survive but will be delayed. Now the squash bugs. No one ever said farming was easy. Have been picking cucumbers for a week but yields are down. Burpless cucumber should be producing in early September. Second sowing of string beans are flowering; third sowing leafing out; fourth sowing just went in. Should start harvesting frying peppers next week; bell peppers in two weeks. Butta yellow zucchini are doing poorly this year. Zinnias and Daisies going on the stand this weekend.

(Warren) No major disasters, all crops looking good so far. Markets are steady and I have enough product to fill every order. High tunnel peppers and tomatoes are looking great, loaded with fruit. Kind of the calm before the storm. With the exception of salad greens successions and turnips everything is in the ground. Weeds are as under control as they are going to get and there is a week or so before bulk carrot, beet and onion harvests begin so I'm off on vacation for a week. A big lesson I've learned is that if you happen to stumble across employees worth keeping, do whatever you can to keep them around. An extra couple bucks an hour is a fantastic investment when you figure the cost of retraining folks each year. My guys are over the moon about having the place to themselves for a week and I'm equally happy about becoming non-essential in terms of day to day operation.

(Burlington) Strawberries were outstanding. Best crop in 22 years of growing. Chalk it up to no frost after early April, unexplained lack of TPB, and a nice balance of sun and rain beginning in mid-May. Only complaint is that our tertiary fruit didn't have great flavor, while the king and secondary berries were delicious, and so were the quaternaries. Only guess is not enough leaves and reserves to support good sugar production, because the weather cooperated. My favorite part of the farm right now is a cover crop section we intend to crop next year that has serious compaction, and it has a super stand of 6' sweetclover, red clover, rye, and vetch with a wonderful scent.

(Marlboro) Both raspberries and blueberries are starting. Blueberries are loaded and all the rain coupled with the fruit load has the canes bent right to the ground. Spraying will be a challenge! So far, no confirmed SWD. Have captured some flies in the traps, but they don't seem to be laying eggs in berries. It is so nice picking before the SWD arrives. Vegetables are making up for lost time, now that the nights are finally out of the 40's. Just started to harvest garlic and the heads are huge.

(Rochester) The long and cold winter didn't seem to impede the insect pests: raspberry cane borer is more widespread this year; rose chafers chafed the raspberry foliage at the same rate; and Japanese beetles are now out in force. New cane growth in the raspberries is very vigorous and the fall bearers might do very well. Winter damage will leave us with a weak yield in the earliest blueberries but the later varieties look strong. We were given an on-farm demonstration of a compact sawdust/mulch spreader from Quebec company called A. Therrien & Fils, and were very impressed. Growers with small plantings or narrow alleys might be interested. They have a YouTube video of it in action on their site <http://atherrien.net>

(New Haven) All crops are on target. We are picking summer squash, cukes, onions, greens, carrots, beets and beans. Corn is slow to mature but we will be picking by next week. Pumpkins and winter squash all on target. We will start planting fall cole crops next week. A little rain would be nice.

(Monkton) Great strawberry season, over twice the yield of last year, only a trace of fungal diseases, and hardly any tarnished plant bug damage. PYO demand also seems to be up. Blueberries, currants, and raspberries look good and the traps are out for SWD. Garlic harvest has begun and bulbs look great although a few rogue, mysterious (even to the plant diagnostic lab) virus specimens have appeared. Other crops look good although we over-planted summer squash. Anyone need extra zucchini? Overall, a pleasure to work in good weather!

(Hinesburg) Partway through garlic harvest. There is some minor leek moth damage, but overall the bulbs are significantly larger and of much better quality than last year.

(Williston) Japanese beetles are on the rise. Hand picking daily seems to be keeping them under control. Potato beetle on the eggplant have been doing damage but more hand picking has decreased numbers. I found a hornworm moth 2 weeks ago in my hoop house tomatoes and will spray Dipel. Wholesale market sales are picking up after a slow late May/June. Hoping basil will be okay for a while before mildew shows up. Had trouble with my Mazzie fertilizer system and found the in-line filter was plugged up from fish/seaweed fertilizer. Need to put whole system before sand/gravel filter. Last few quick heavy rains of up to 2" rain mean I need to get fertilizer in fields.

(Grand Isle) We will finally be picking sweet corn tomorrow. We are using Trichograma wasps this year for corn borer in our sweet corn. So far, so good. Also we are trialing Malwina strawberries. We didn't have time to clip the flowers from the new plants, and the fruit is large, good looking and very sweet. Very little bug pressure so far. Good weather to work in; life is good!

(Argyle NY) Our annual bed strawberry season was better than average with Chandler, but heavy rains did cause some loss of production. We think about putting them in tunnels to control the weather! They are scheduled to be turned under tomorrow. We have some experimental ever-bearing varieties that we are keeping data on and will be working at keeping out insects. The first week of August we will get our new Chandler tips in Canada and root them in our greenhouse for the Sept planting. Blueberries have lots of winter-kill and we have zero apples. Over-wintered Bridger and Forum onions have surprisingly been our best crop ever; the Forum we planted in early December from sets now have their tops over and they are ready for drying down or fresh onion sales; we just finished selling the earlier Bridgers. We have never had disease on these onions and they store for many months. Most crops are doing well, except the greens that had a little hail damage last week. Leafhoppers just appeared in a flurry 2 days ago so we had to break out the Pyganic. Markets are a little slower this summer and we will be searching for fall farm workers.

SWD INFORMATION

The first few spotted wing drosophila adults of the year have been captured in CT, NH, RI and Hudson Valley - but as Alan Eaton of UNH says “Don’t get too excited.” Yet. Populations are expected to rise a lot in August in most parts of Vermont, as in past years. It will be interesting to see if SWD shows up in northern-most areas. The time to set out traps is just before fruits starts to color; but low traps catches are not a guarantee the pest has not attacked fruit. There is no need to spray a crop for SWD until fruit is first turning ripe – they do not attack unripe fruit. Details on traps, netting, sprays and cultural management are posted at:

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

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC – Ann Hazelrigg

Field tomatoes: Septoria (little black spots with gray centers) and Alternaria (early blight-larger brown spot with target appearance and advancing yellow margin) leafspot diseases showing up now on lower leaves. Stake tomatoes, keep up adequate fertility and protect new tissue with a fungicide on a 7-10 day schedule into the fall. Tomato hornworm feeding noted.

No late blight reported yet in VT but it’s been confirmed in western NY, Long Island, and southeast ME. Plan to protect tomato and potato crops; depending on the weather it may appear here soon. You can track progress of the disease on a map and read management info at:

<http://usablight.org/>

GH Tomatoes: Lots of Botrytis (gray fuzzy spores on dying tissue) and leaf mold (yellow spots on upper side of leaves with brown spores on undersides) showing up after the rainy weather. Keep RH below 85%, prune lower leaves up to first fruit cluster and clean up fruit and infected leaves. Also seeing ghost spot (small white rings on green fruit) where Botrytis spores have infected fruit and stopped. <https://negreenhouseupdate.info/photos/botrytis-greenhouse-tomato-ghost-spot>. Add fans, open up ends, etc. Also seeing hot spots of two spotted spider mites. Look for off-colored/bronzing foliage and check leaf undersides with hand lens.

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/insects/mite-twospotted-spider>. Can spot treat and use predators.

Cucurbits: No downy mildew in the area as yet and we are still at low risk at this point. To track progress, look at the national map <http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/scripts/map.php>. Powdery mildew showing up. Squash bugs hatching and feeding, see:

<https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/insects/squash-bug>. Use azadirachtin/Neemix for nymphs for organic growers and acetamiprid (Assail 5.3 oz/A) for others. Squash vine borer trap captures have hit 100 at one farm in CH Co, but no damage in the field seen.

Brassicas: The second peak of flea beetle damage may occur on newly planted fall brassicas. Alternaria is showing up in brassicas, and adequately fertilized crops are less susceptible. Black rot diagnosed in kale. 'V'-shaped yellow lesions are the main symptom. Both pathogens can be seed borne and hot water seed treatment is effective for both. Swede midge damage seen in growing points of broccoli with severe tell-tale scarring on petioles/stems in Chittenden County. All stages of imported cabbage worm in brassicas now; adults, pupae and young larvae feeding in crops. Easier to control/manage when larvae are small.

Beans: Lots of Mexican bean beetle spiky yellow larvae seen feeding on beans. Feeding occurs on the underside of leaves, but causes death of leaf tissue in a lace-like pattern. Feeding damage over 10-20% can cause yield loss. High numbers cause circular spots/feeding damage on pods. Potato leafhopper may be causing hopper burn on leaf edges.

Onions: Botrytis and purple blotch seen. Lots of damage from onion leek moth destroying garlic scapes and leaves. Thrips numbers increasing.

Basil: Downy mildew not found in VT so far but it is coming soon. Get as much basil grown, harvested and turned into pesto ASAP since once it shows up, it is hard to keep it disease-free.

Mint: Four-lined plant bug damage seen on mints causing disease-like angular black spots on foliage.

Parsley: Septoria leaf spot on flat leaf parsley diagnosed. Look for brown spots with black dots inside the spots.

Corn: for discussion of European corn borer and earworm trap captures from scouting in MA and VT see: <https://extension.umass.edu/vegetable/publications/vegetable-notes-newsletter/>

UPCOMING EVENTS See: <http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/?Page=meetlist.html>