



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – July 18, 2016
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Burlington) Amazing spring; haven't had this quality in head lettuce or broccoli in many years. Intermittent cool spring weather explains much, I'm sure, but I also think that some of the nod for broccoli goes to 'Lieutenant' broccoli, an early cultivar identified by the Eastern Broccoli Project as notably tolerant of the humidity, temperature, and diseases faced by eastern broccoli growers. Insect pressure is up this year, with bad CPB, PLH, flea beetles, cucumber beetles, and other beasties afflicting us. Still looking for that second good organic option aside from Entrust for potato beetle control; this year I took to flaming the large larvae that made it past the first (and only) Entrust spray. Plant tops look awful, but at least the damage stops, unlike if I leave the larvae out there to keep eating. Wondering what other growers do for spider mites in greenhouse/tunnel cucumbers; ours seem to have a magnetic attraction vastly stronger than the nearby tomato plants.

(Charlotte) We are having our best black raspberries in years. The weather has been great. The blueberries are doing very well but did start a week later than usual. We are seeing signs of the blueberry maggot flies earlier than we did last year. Blackberries are blossoming and should have a decent crop this year.

(South Strafford) Morrill Mountain Farm. Abundance of blueberries and black currants; the bushes sag with the weight. I managed to beat the currant saw fly assault on the red and white currants, but the birds beat me to the berries. Birds like them as soon as they start turning their beautiful red, before they are quite ripe. I don't like the netting, but maybe I have to go back to it. Anyone out there have a successful approach to letting their red currants ripen?

(Holland) Nature has been on our side up here. The high CBD hemp plants I am growing have taken off like wild weeds. Weeds have been an issue though, but as of yesterday July 14th the 20 acre plot has been completely de-weeded, by hand. Growing organics is demanding but so rewarding in the same time! Deer have been an issue but we are almost done putting up the deer fence. They don't eat the stuff yet but have been walking all over the small plants. The mix of warm weather and rain is great.

(Waterbury Center) Blueberry bushes are loaded, raspberries are looking good, and garlic quality looks good. Rain has been timely. No complaints here!

(East Dorset) Blueberries are plentiful. Picking started several days early this year most likely due to the warm weather. Fortunately, the pickers are plentiful as well. We see more pickers asking questions about sprays and organic treatments.

(South Royalton) In spite of the dry weather all the crops we have been able to irrigate well look great, all those years of adding organic matter are paying off this year. Thought we had found leek moth in our onions but after looking up and comparing to web site it turned out to be salt marsh caterpillars which stay on the outside of the leaves and are easy to pick off, unlike leek moth which is inside the leaf. Also caught a horn worm moth in one of the tomato houses last week so will need to be on guard for hornworms soon. Garlic about ready to start harvesting.

(Plainfield) Greenhouse cucumbers and cherry tomatoes producing well. Aphids have settled into the greenhouse eggplants, in spite of sprays. Late carrots came up well but have had a tough go of it, between being baked by the sun and pounded by heavy rains. Winter squash just starting to run. Peppers beginning to size. Corn tasseling. Greens selling, enough to pay crew. A lot of hope in those fields. Weeds should take the weekends off.

(Plainfield NH) Confluence of crop potential and forgiving weather during harvest allowed us to get off a great crop of strawberries. Disease pressure was low with dry weather; even now there is little leaf spot and just a bit of PM in the berry beds. Blues were loaded and we are now hustling to get them off the bush and to a good home. Summer brambles doing well and about halfway through them, but soft rots are always a problem here, even with a spray program. Grateful for the recent rains, but prolonged wet periods will challenge fruit quality. All the scarab beetles have arrived, and we have been through one life cycle of hopper. Minor issues in onions and potatoes that we seem to have in check at the moment: thrips in onions and some blighty looking spots in our potatoes, located in a low, damp field this year. Squash vine borer here in large numbers but not spraying the summer stuff. We just grow for retail and kill window is too short to be a valid control window in my book. But I am monitoring it in the fall vines and may change my tune if the numbers of catches in the trap doesn't drop down here in the next weeks. Weeds are always a challenge, and you can never have enough boots on the ground at this time of year as heavy pressure will continue for the next 4 weeks. But still a better year for us management wise than the last two.

(Little Compton RI) We are in the worst drought conditions we have ever experienced. As I speak with fellow sufferers the question of damage control and financial survival come up. Nothing our brothers in CA haven't been thorough. We are about three weeks from shut down of 70 of our field crops! Tomato greenhouses hooked up to automatic watering are fine. All the field crops daily await their allotment of water. Lucky our green sprouted potatoes just got the last water they needed to bulk their spuds. We can give them no more. Fall carrots and beets may just not be seeded. Why add to the list of water needs? My experience is that nothing will break this but a tropical front coming up from down south. It has been five years of seasonal droughts from June to mid-August. We have become accustomed to making walkaway lists. Thinking through vegetables like celeriac: if you can't get the water it needs, it will not transpire and move calcium, so it will get hollow heart. Thus, it is off the water list! So we make decisions weekly on what we cannot afford to invest time and water in. Cover crops out of the question. This is as serious as I have ever seen it.

(Hampton NY) Deer have eaten the buds off my first and second sowing of sunflowers so am going to put bird netting over the 3rd sowing which is just starting to bud. Peppers are growing well and I have been able to harvest enough every day to keep up with stand sales. Small grilling peppers (Yum Yum mix) sales are off this year. First sowing of Burpless cucumbers are slowly producing but not enough to keep up with demand and the second sowing is just starting to flower. Regular cukes are just starting to show small cucumbers. Green and yellow beans will be ready to pick by the weekend and I should put in another sowing, but I seem to be losing my ambition. Zucchini, yellow summer squash and patty pans are all producing and selling well. My Sugar Babies have a ton of watermelons just starting to show and the cantaloupe are looking good as well...as long as I can keep the deer out. Cucumber beetles have found the new garden so bee-friendly control measures will be taken. Timely rain has eliminated the need to water although between the humidity and sporadic rains I am concerned about powdery mildew.

FREE TESTING OF GARLIC FOR FUSARIUM

Fusarium infections can cause garlic to decline or die late in its growing season, or it can cause sunken brown lesions during storage. See:

http://www.science.oregonstate.edu/bpp/Plant_Clinic/Garlic/Fusarium.pdf

A survey of Fusarium in garlic is being conducted for the next two years by Cornell Extension to help understand the impact of this disease on garlic production. Growers can submit samples for diagnosis of this disease for free. The submission form with instructions is at:

http://rvpadmin.cce.cornell.edu/uploads/doc_460.pdf

UVM EXTENSION NORTHWEST CROPS AND SOILS FIELD DAY

Alburgh, Vermont. Thursday, July 28th, 10am to 3:30pm.

The theme this year is “Eat It, Drink It, Feed It, Fuel It – Conducting Food System Research Crop by Crop.” The cost is \$25 per person and \$10 per farmer. Highlights include: tour of the research trials: small grain and dry bean trials, green manure underseeding, organic weed control strategies, and more; new research crops: milkweed and industrial hemp; Innovative equipment; tasting tent. More info and the link to on-line registration is at:

<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2016-Field-Day-Flyer.pdf>