



Vermont Vegetable and Berry News –July 23, 2013
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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Montpelier) We are irrigating like crazy and unable to transplant due to the high heat and the fact we wanted things on plastic. Started transplanting with no plastic until it cools off. Have missed a few plantings of lettuce. Tomatoes appear to be growing out of soil/compost problems in the greenhouse. Basil was torn out and replanted. Peppers were a total loss. Waiting to see if broccoli is going to do anything or just button and bolt. Squashes appear to be doing well but I am already finding squash bugs in the plants and the first round of nymphs. Strangely cucumber beetles are not doing much in the greenhouse cukes. No CPB seen yet either. Looking forward to October already. Winter production is a hell of a lot easier than this.

(Weare NH) Returned from a 5 day trip to find my helpers are worth their weight in gold. Cukes, eggplants and toms are prolific in the tunnel. Cantaloupes apparently don't like my raised beds, which is a surprise, but their anemic performance spells it out loud and clear. Potatoes look awesome, seeded root crops are starting to thrive. Brassicas, I cannot keep up with and am looking for additional sales outlets. Onions, leeks, cabbages, summer and winter squash all look excellent; starting to harvest one of my favorites, Caraflex. Getting some lettuce bolt, but no surprise there. Most herbs are looking good, except cilantro. Peas were a dud for me this season, tried something new, it didn't work at all. Beans, peppers, broccoli pushing my limit on ability to keep up the harvesting. Still seeding trays for fall crops and lettuce. Anyone else seeing early tip browning on garlic? Wondering about harvesting earlier than usual, maybe the heat?

(Craftsbury) We really needed rain 2 days ago and then we got 3 inches in an hour. Careful what you wish for. Crops doing really well all in all. Heat is always good for us in the North and we've had a lot of that. Learning more about pests, diseases, and soil nutrition with the goal being to grow a lot more food in the same amount of acreage. It's fun and seems to be paying off. Have been getting out to see other growers and never cease to be impressed by how valuable and useful that is. There is so much cool stuff going on within a couple hour drive.

(Williston) First drought, followed by flooding and now it's getting dry again. Raspberries almost done, blueberries going strong. Not much corn or pumpkins this year, hope to make up some of the lost income with a corn maze. Need to do a lot of re-mulching of berries due to last month's flooding. I like it better hot and dry than monsoons.

(Shelburne/S. Burlington) Delayed winter tunnel seeding slightly so not to try to germinate during 95 degree weather. Will finish first round of seeding early next week. Swede midge is definitely in my hoopouses in the kale. The winter growing transition is on in full force and it feels like summer just started this year. So, beginning to rip and prep beds for planting.

(Abington CT) What a year! Maple season: dry, then monsoons. Once things dried out and warmed up we had great improvement with most crops, the big exception being the salad greens. We have the full array of pests (3 kinds of cabbage worms, CPB, squash bugs and beetles, etc.), but none so bad that they cannot be controlled to an acceptable level with covers, DE and/or hand picking. We just planted our sweet corn and hope for a late frost;; cucurbits are doing well and the rain shut off just in time for the tomatoes and onions to recover. The onions were looking stressed with yellow tips, but have doubled in size and the early blight was getting a good hold on the tomatoes, but the heat has helped the plants grow ahead of it. Hornworms are out heavy and we are actively hand picking them. The heat wave was very limiting as I could not use the horses or steers most of the day, out at 5 am and in by 9 am, but we are mostly caught up now. I am trying Salanova this season and thought it was great in June, but the summer planting is disappointing, it could have been the rain, the heat, the holding too long before planting or all of the above; I hope fall weather will improve its yields.

(Plainfield) Middle of July is a real hump in the work flow of the growing season. Corn is tassling and will need a Bt spray on the silks soon. Fruit set on peppers and eggplants is very good. Low TPB population this year, maybe from all the rain. Greenhouse cucumbers aborting a lot of fruits, maybe from too much heat or not enough fertility. Finally able to work some of the heavier land. Setting out Swiss chard, bok choy, Chinese cabbage. Some plantings lost to weeds where we could not get a tractor in to cultivate, but overall weed control looks good. Top dressed Cheep Cheep on winter squash, which was showing some yellowing. Guardedly optimistic about the possibility of getting out of this season with my shirt still on. I know it has already rained too much, but most of the land I have planted needs an inch of rain a week anyway. Time to irrigate.

(Little Compton RI) A warning from growers in southern New England; watch your garlic and think about harvesting it early! We were shocked how mature the bulbs were. A good proportion had begun to split. Quack grass and nutsedge are having a field day with all the wetness and the flow of nutrients. Remember late July is when you need to get an employee out there with a mower for the next few weeks keeping those seed heads from maturing (some quack grass can set more than one seed head); otherwise you will be banking that seed for years to come. We are getting good at weed-whacking our winter squash just before the vines run. We decided that a good cover of copper fungicides would be smart to protect the squash before getting splattered with weed juice. In the past, it has seemed that fungal problems follow quickly behind emergency weed-whacking next to squash, peppers and other crops. Melons growing well this year but I am expecting the flavor to be washed out; our peaches certainly taste that way.

(Plainfield NH) The weather continues to impact our farming season with washouts, lighting strikes, intense heat, although for the last two days we have basked in its moderation. Crop losses mount in onions, garlic, strawberries and a couple of small blocks of corn, either directly or indirectly from an inability to cultivate between rain events and ineffective hand weeding on larger weeds. Insects continue to be problematic with hoppers working on bean plantings, and large scarab beetle population (mostly Japanese beetles at this point). Neighborhood farms in Norwich and Bradford report heavy infestation of CEW in early plantings for the second consecutive year, something I usually don't start scouting for until mid to late August. Are they now wintering over in the Upper Connecticut Valley? UNH Extension is running some trapping trials here, and 21 squash vine borers showed up in their traps last week. This is a pest I did not think caused economic damage here, so it will be interesting to see what happens; five years ago was the first time I ever heard of it. That said, if you can get something to market, it sells. Our retail and wholesale sales are very healthy, in no small part due to the problems home gardeners are having, as well as our fellow farmers.

(Salisbury NH) Finally a few days with some sunshine. It still seems like we try to spray and then the rain comes. Most of our broccoli died; during the multiple weeks of cold, wet weather some started to wilt. Pulled up several plants and there was NO root, think it was root maggot. Beets looked similar. We have never had so many problems. Almost all varieties of stringbeans have some kind of virus probably spread by leafhoppers but Cooperative Extension said we also had thrips. Have to carry the magnifier to the field. At our age we can't see anything that small with reading glasses! Squash bugs galore as well as striped cucumber beetles. Love Raider cucumbers. Planted in hoop house and trained up string; beautiful, straight cukes. Doubt if we will get winter squash this year because of prior rainy weather and wet fields.

Customers at farm stand seem to forget all about the 5-6 weeks of rain and think we have a great growing season because the day is sunny and hot. Others who have their own gardens are coming because they gave up. Still haven't hooked up the drip irrigation although it would help with nutrient loss.

(Barton) Very good weed growth. Many crops lost due to wet weather. Mesclun mix seems to be doing well under shade cloth. Tried hoops with Agribon but wind kept ripping it out of the ground. So far the shade cloth is best option for us, though it is expensive. Tomatoes are finally here. Cherry tomatoes are ripening nicely and larger ones are filling in. Squash was a 99% loss due to wet/lack of germination and then cuke beetles. Hope it dries up a bit so we can use our drip irrigation at least once this year. Beets and kohlrabi doing well though choked with weeds. Also quite a slow year for sales but maybe the sun will help if it comes out again.

UPDATE FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC – Ann Hazelrigg

Conditions are good for many different diseases; we are seeing a lot of the following.

Tomatoes.

Bacterial canker: 3 samples of this from GHs in the past month. Usually shows up just as the plant is starting to produce fruit. Can show up just as a scorch symptom or browning on the leaf edges and between the veins so it can look just like the plant isn't getting enough water. Sometimes long black cankers or streaks will develop on the stems but often you don't see this. As the disease progresses, the entire plant wilts. Cut open the stem or cut below the green outer portion of the stem to see the diagnostic brown streaking of the water conducting system. If you see this, cut the plant off at the base and get it out of the GH. The bacteria is often seed borne but can be moved from plant to plant easily through wounding from suckering. If you have this in your tunnel, take out all symptomatic plants and watch the surrounding plants for symptoms. This disease can quickly wipe out the entire planting. See: http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_Bacterial.htm#Click
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/3000/3120.html>

Leaf Mold: Lots of growers seeing this now in tunnels due to recent high humidity and earlier wet weather. Starts lower in plant as yellow diffuse spot on upper leaf surface. If you turn over the leaf you will see the diagnostic brownish/purplish spores of the fungus. There are resistant varieties to this fungus. Best management is decreasing humidity by opening sides, vents, end walls, pruning off lower leaves, and using lots of fans to reduce relative humidity below 85%. <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/ipm/veg/htms/tomdis2.htm>

Blossom end rot: black/brown rot on calyx end due to lack of water movement through plant that transports calcium. Reduce humidity, irrigate sufficiently; usually the next cluster of fruit are fine. http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Tomato_BlossRt.htm

Septoria leafspot (small black spots with gray centers) and Alternaria leafspot (bull's-eye appearance) showing up now on lower leaves. If you are using conventional fungicides or coppers, this will protect tissue from these diseases as well as late blight.

Here is a good site for all tomato issues, with a diagnostic key;
<http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/DiagnosticKeys/TomLeaf/TomLeafKey.html>

Kale/Crucifers,

Black rot: bacterial seed-borne disease that shows up as V shaped lesions and yellowing on leaf edges. http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/factsheets/Crucifers_BR.htm

Pumpkins/Squash.

Plectosporium blight showing up. Look for white diamond shaped spots on petioles and stems. Damage causes plants to wilt/die quickly.

http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/Pump_PlectoNews04.htm

Garlic

Fusarium basal rot samples coming in on newly harvested garlic. Look for pinkish cast, rot at base of bulb and white/pink fungus. Seems like I usually find onion bulb mites along with the rot. Not sure if mites were there first causing wounds, then the fungus gets in or it is the other way around. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r584400111.html>

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

SWD UPDATE

While traps in some locations are catching several hundred (sometimes a thousand) 'fruit flies' at most locations in Vermont there are only a few SWD among these, with the exception of one southern site that had 48 SWD caught in raspberries last week. SWD trap catches at trial sites inside the insect netting are very low thus far so it appears to be working. Traps with yeast bait only (plus drop of dish soap) and no drowning solution also appear to be working; side by side comparisons have been set up to confirm this.